

THE  
PRESENT TESTIMONY,  
AND  
Original Christian Witness Revived.  
IN WHICH  
THE CHURCH'S PORTION  
AND  
THE HOPE OF THE KINGDOM,  
ETC.  
ARE SOUGHT TO BE DEVELOPED FROM SCRIPTURE.

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לֹא בְחַיִל וְלֹא בִכְחַ כִּי אִם-בְּרוּחַי

Zechariah iv. 6.

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VOL. XIII.

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## CONTENTS OF VOL. XIII.

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NO.	PAGE
I. Psalms . . . . .	1
II. Discipline and Unity of the Assembly . . . . .	166
III. Remarks on 2 Timothy . . . . .	185
IV. Judah's Captivity in Babylon . . . . .	197
V. Meditations on Subjects of Interest . . . . .	215
VI. Observations on the Apocalypse . . . . .	226
VII. The Psalms . . . . .	241
VIII. Song of Solomon . . . . .	257
IX. The Captives Returned to Jerusalem . . . . .	264
X. Observations on the Apocalypse . . . . .	283
XI. The Spirit of "The Christ" . . . . .	300
XII. Meditations on Subjects of Interest . . . . .	303
XIII. The Hopes of the Coming . . . . .	309
XIV. False Aids Judged . . . . .	327
XV. The Dispersed among the Gentiles . . . . .	329
XVI. On the Revelation . . . . .	355
XVII. Some Consecutive Remarks on the Contents of the Epistle to the Colossians . . . . .	394
XVIII. The Epistle to the Ephesians . . . . .	413
XIX. Meditations on Subjects of Interest . . . . .	443
XX. The Typical Character of Gen. i—ii. 3 . . . . .	456
XXI. The New Birth . . . . .	460

### POETRY :—

Verses . . . . .	165, 253, 263, 319
The End . . . . .	182
"What want I with the World?" . . . . .	183
Rest in Jesus . . . . .	214
The Vessel . . . . .	254

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Jesus the Best Friend . . . . .	255
The Christmas Rose . . . . .	320
Du bist ein Mensch . . . . .	321
Rev. v. . . . .	325
1 Cor. xiii. 12, 13, and Phil. iii. 20, 21 . . . . .	409
A Word of Worship . . . . .	410
The Song of Faith . . . . .	411
“ We talk of the Land of the Bless'd ” . . . . .	442
Lines in answer to Hymn on p. 442 . . . . .	473
“ Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? ” . . . . .	474
“ In everything give thanks. ” . . . . .	475
<b>FRAGMENTS . . . . .</b>	<b>225, 248—253, 256, 299, 302, 308, 324, 354, 393</b>
Heb. xiii. 5, 6 . . . . .	282

# THE PRESENT TESTIMONY.

ETC., ETC.

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N<sup>o</sup>. I.

PSALMS.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE book of Psalms has evidently a peculiar character. It is not the history of God's people or of God's ways with them; nor is it the inculcation of positive doctrines or duties; nor the formal prophetic announcement of coming events. Many important events, doubtless, are alluded to in the Psalms, and they are immediately connected with various prophetic revelations, as, indeed, with precepts, and with all the other parts of the divine word to which I have referred; but none of these constitute the character of the book itself. The subjects, too,—of which the various parts of Scripture I refer to treat—necessarily find their place in the thoughts expressed in the Psalms. But the Psalms do not directly treat of them. The Psalms are—almost all—the expression of the sentiments produced in the hearts of God's people by the events (or I should speak more correctly if I said—prepared for them when in the events) through which they pass, and, indeed, express the feelings not only of the people of God, but often, as is known, of the Lord Himself. They are the expression of the part the Spirit of God takes, as working in the heart, in the sorrows and exercises of the saints. The Spirit works in connection with all the trials through which they pass and the human infirmity which appears in those trials; in the midst of which it gives thoughts of faith and truth which are a provision for them in all that happens. We find in this book, consequently, the hopes, fears, distress,

trusting Him, the Creator, the Helper of the oppressed, the Comforter of the lowly, the Lover of the righteous, who turns the way of the wicked upside down. He shall reign for ever, even Zion's God to all generations. The character of this praise, after what we have gone through, is most simple. In the next Psalm—

Ps. cxlvii.—The saints take their place now in Jerusalem and Zion to say what He is. He is their God; He builds up Jerusalem and gathers together the outcasts of Israel, healing the broken in heart and binding up their wounds. Ver. 4, 5, His greatness is celebrated and His goodness and judgment. Ver. 7—9, His goodness in blessing the earth. Ver. 10, 11, His pleasure, not in animal strength, but in them that fear Him. Ver. 12, The song of praise returns to celebrate His ways towards Jerusalem again. Ver. 15—18, His dealing with the seasons in power. Ver. 19, 20, His showing His word and judgments to Jacob as he had not done to any nation. They might have seen the creative and providential power of Jacob's God, but His mind and laws were His people's.

Ps. cxlviii.—This psalm calls first on heaven, and all in it, to take their part in the great Hallelujah, and praise Jehovah who had created and sustains them in their place; and then on the earth, with all in it, to join in praising Him whose name alone is excellent, and His glory above the earth and heaven, but who exalts the horn of His people, the praise of His saints, (the godly ones we have seen throughout, but who now are fully Israel,) a people near to Him. The great Creator whom heaven and earth must praise is the god of Israel, and Israel His people.

Ps. cxlix.—Here the call is upon Israel to praise; the creation and Israel, we have seen all through, to be coordinate (the new creation and the church,) and to form the sphere of the Psalms. Still, it is now in the congregation of the saints. Israel's relationship is double; Jehovah has formed him for His praise; he is king in Zion. The reasons of praise are then given. Jehovah takes pleasure in His people: but we learn who have this place. He beautifies the meek with salvation. Then he

can say, Let the saints be joyful in glory; but if the high praises of God are in their mouths, the sword of earthly judgment and vengeance is in their hands to execute it on the nations and peoples, to bind the mighty ones who had once oppressed them. It was the judgment written. Such honour have all His saints. The persons here in view are thus evident, as is their position—the meek in Israel now delivered, and the Lord Jesus king in Zion, execute judgment on those who had oppressed them. Such is, indeed, as said, the judgment written, and confirms the view I have taken of the last two books, only now it is complete in its statements. The millennium itself is not described. The Psalms are the introduction to it, and by their connexion of Christ, as seen in the Gospels, and the remnant of Israel with the last days, throw the greatest light on the Gospels themselves.

Ps. cl.—The hundred and fiftieth psalm is a general closing summons to praise Jehovah—only, remark, it is now freely in His sanctuary, as in the firmament of His power, with all the various instruments of the temple—praise for His mighty acts—praise for His own excellent greatness—and every thing that has breath is called to praise Him. It is a loud and chorus-like termination, full of power and energy, suited to the Jewish state and temple-service.

Here we close this most interesting and instructive study, as to which I could hope only to give the outline of general principles which might enable the reader to use the Book; not its varied and beautiful contents in detail, this would have required volumes, both on the prophetic connection of its contents and the exercises and feelings of faith, so far as we can apply them to saints now.

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. . . . . He sets  
As sets the Morning Star, which goes not down  
Behind the darken'd west, nor hides obscured  
Among the tempests of the sky, but melts away  
Into the light of heaven." . . . . .

(STEPHEN, Acts vii.)

N<sup>o</sup>. II.DISCIPLINE AND UNITY OF THE  
ASSEMBLY.

TWO principles seem to be at work at the present moment which it may be well to notice in connection with the title of this publication—the present testimony. We are living in a time when all things are in question, and principles of every kind abroad. If there are such as seem to destroy the very position of the saints as a testimony in the midst of Christendom—a conscious and intelligent testimony—it is not amiss that attention should be drawn to them. The two principles I refer to are—

First,—the denial of the obligation of a Christian assembly to maintain purity, in order to be owned such, or rather the denying that if it allow evil within itself it becomes defiled, and,—

Secondly,—the denial of the unity of the body, as regards the Church here on earth.

I have heard in such various quarters, both as to morals and doctrine, that no assembly of Christians can be defiled by any evil in it; and even that it has to go on and leave it to the Lord to lay His hand upon the evil and put it out,—that I must suppose it to be a principle generally admitted. And what has been often alleged in individual argument on the second point noticed above, is now maintained in a tract which has been voluntarily sent me, I suppose for my edification, and which I therefore now take notice of. I am ignorant who is its author, and discuss its principles briefly, as a subject that it is well to bring before the minds of many.

A tract has also been sent me on the first point; I have heard by report who is its author, but shall here simply discuss its principles. The two questions are,—Can there



*Discipline and Unity of the Assembly.* 167

be corporate defilement by allowed evil in morals or doctrine; and is there any unity of the Church of God upon earth.

It has been openly contended, that if fornication be allowed in a body of Christians, it is no ground for separating from it. This has been met by others; indeed, exposing it in daylight was the best way of meeting it. To say that Christians were to separate from the world, to detach themselves from the great body of the professing Church because of ecclesiastical evils, and then to affirm that positive immorality did not defile their community; but that, supposing it was allowed, saints should still own such a meeting all the same, was a proposition so monstrous, such a preference of ecclesiastical notions to the unalterable morality of God in the Gospel, that one can only wonder how it was possible any Christians could have got into such a state of moral darkness. It was a solemn witness of the effect of false principles. With the individuals or their meeting, we have, of course, nothing to do, save as the charity of Christ demands. We speak of principles; and let us see where these would lead. Those who are inside such a meeting of Christians are not allowed to break with them. They are bound to accept the companionship of sin,—bound to accept disobedience to the apostles' rule, "put out from among yourselves that wicked person." They must live in constant communion with evil, and constantly, in the most solemn act of Christianity, affirm the fellowship of light and darkness. But this is not all. In such kind of meetings, a meeting in one place receives, as did the scriptural Churches, those in communion in another, and, when formally done, by letters of commendation. Suppose the fornicator, or even those who have maintained his continuing in the meeting, another allowance thus of sin to be commended, or to come, as in communion, from the supposed meeting; and if they receive him deliberately at home, they must of course give him, so far as they are concerned, the same title abroad, and he is received elsewhere, and thus the deliberate wickedness of a majority of the meeting to which he belongs, or of the whole of it, if you please, obliges thus every Christian

182      *Discipline and Unity of the Assembly.*

truth. So where the unity of the assembly on earth is denied, the blessings attached to it are lost, as far as our personal profit goes, and these benefits are nothing less than the action of the Holy Ghost on earth, uniting us as members to Christ, and acting as He sees right in the members down here. To deny the defilement of the assembly by the allowance of sin, and the unity of the body on earth by the presence of the Holy Ghost, is to destroy all the responsibility of the one, and all the blessing of the other, and in these points to make void the Word of God.

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THE END.

To ev'ry trial comes an end :  
 The hardest yoke at last must break,  
 Anguish and pain, and ev'ry woe,  
 Must hasten then their leave to take.  
 Robes of sorrow soon will shine,  
 Changed for golden tints divine.

Through the dreary desert passed,  
 Now we pluck the roses fair,  
 We have reached our Fatherland,  
 And our pilgrim's staff rests here.  
 Tears were sown whilst there below,  
 Now joy's fullest rivers flow.

Egypt at length is left behind,  
 See Canaan's beauties, ever new,  
 Mount Olivet's ascent is climbed,  
 Mount Thabor's glories burst to view.  
 Jacob at last has found a place  
 Secure from Esau's hostile race.

The End ! the End ! oh thou sweet word,  
 Crosses are blessings in thy light ;  
 The rocks are pierced, and now apace  
 Sweet balsam flows. Oh, precious sight !  
 Observe, my heart, and dwell on this—  
 The End draws nigh ! 'tis certain bliss.

*From the German.*

## WHAT WANT I WITH THE WORLD?

WHAT want I with the world  
 And all its treasures?  
 In Thee alone, Lord Jesus,  
 Are my true pleasures.  
 Thou art my soul's delight;  
 My joy I find in Thee!  
 My rest and peace art Thou!  
 My heart's tranquillity!  
*What want I with the world?*

The world is as a smoke  
 Which vanishes in air;  
 And, like a shadow fleet,  
 That stays not any where:  
 My Jesus, though, remains,  
 When all things else decline;  
 My heart's true confidence,  
 Jesus alone is mine!  
*What want I with the world?*

The world seeks its renown  
 Among the grand and great;  
 Thinks not how quickly glides  
 Its phantasy and state:  
 But sweeter far to me  
 Is Jesu's love alone;  
 And this my heart's desire,  
 To see Him on His throne.  
*What want I with the world?*

The world seeks worldly wealth;  
 Its hope on mammon rests;  
 Its comforts rise and fall,  
 With money in its chests:  
 There is a nobler prize,  
 On which my heart reclines;  
 The joys of Jesu's love,  
 Which in my spirit shines.  
*What want I with the world?*

*What want I with the world ?*

The world is sorely tried,  
 If scorn its portion be;  
 And most, when over-reach'd  
 By deeper subtilty:  
 I bear the cross of Christ,  
 His pleasure to fulfil;  
 His favour my delight;  
 My peace to do His will!  
*What want I with the world ?*

The world so high esteems  
 Its fleeting fancies gay;  
 Its follies to retain  
 Would barter heaven away;  
 She hangs her hope on that  
 Which care can only yield:  
 I love my lord and God,  
 My fortress and my shield.  
*What want I with the world ?*

What want I with the world?  
 As grass it fades away;  
 The stamp of death is there;  
 It hasteth to decay;  
 Health doth itself depart;  
 All earthly creatures fade:  
 Jesus sustains; my heart  
 Is by his love repaid.  
*What want I with the world ?*

What want I with the world?  
 My Jesus is my life,  
 My substance, and my joy,  
 In this poor scene of strife:  
 To Him I gladly bow;  
 I worship at His feet;  
 He is my heaven, my all;  
 Therefore do I repeat,  
*What want I with the world ?*

—*From the German.*

Nº. III.  
REMARKS ON 2 TIMOTHY.

A FEW remarks on the second epistle to Timothy, may, I think, not be without their use at the present moment. I will embrace in them, as throwing great light on the second, a short comparison with the first, as to its general character.

We get, in both epistles, what is evidently of the deepest interest, the confidential communications of the Apostle to one to whom, above all, he could open out all his heart, and express himself freely. But their characters are very different, and the rather as he could express all his personal feelings. Besides the interest of this, moreover, the general instruction of the Spirit in them is full of import. The first, as is soon perceived, bears in general the stamp of the quietness which characterises a peaceful development of what was subsisting, in the main as it had been first established. The second is thrown into individual duties and earnestness, because that which had been established had departed from all consistency with its original standing. The first just guards the truth which was possessed, but is little occupied with it. Individuals were to be hindered teaching any other doctrine. Some few, hankering after the law, had already turned aside and gone into vain janglings. But, in the main, the Apostle could speak of the Church as being that which is always true as to the responsibility of the position it is in, without its suggesting a painful sense of the discordance between fact and responsibility; namely, that it was the pillar and ground of the truth. Individuals had fallen into gnostic judaism. The assembly was still practically, as it always is in responsible position, the pillar and ground of the truth. It had not falsified its character. The Church, and the Church alone, until

I have another remark to make here. The promise of life in Christ Jesus is the very starting point of the epistle. What is livingly personal, not ecclesiastical. So the fulness of grace, as we have noticed (i. 9); but, all through, personal responsibility is dwelt on; and, hence, we are placed, not in presence of privileged hopes, but of judgment, I mean even as Christians; for Onesiphorus mercy is desired in that day. Timothy is charged before God and the Lord Jesus, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom. So the crown is a crown of righteousness; men must strive lawfully, and, labouring first, partake of the fruits. The Lord, the righteous Judge, gives him the crown of righteousness; so, as to all others, it is laid up for those who love His appearing. But he had just spoken of His appearing, as the time of judging. And so it is, first the quick, and afterwards the dead. How love it? Now this supposes, first, the most complete association with Him, and acceptance, judgment being set aside for us. But more, loving His appearing supposes that its present realisation awakens no feeling of anything which would have to be judged, which would hinder our loving that which will set aside evil. It is the time of glory for us. When He shall appear, then shall we appear with Him in glory. But, then, it is the setting aside evil; so, that, if anything is allowed in us, anything not suited to His appearing, if we are not whole-hearted in the setting up of *His* glory, we cannot practically love His appearing. This gives, in the midst of general decline, a solemn but a very blessed character to the instruction of the epistle; indeed, it all supposes great personal nearness, proportioned to the general decline.

May we so judge ourselves, and so hold fast by that Blessed One!

N<sup>o</sup>. IV.

## JUDAH'S CAPTIVITY IN BABYLON.

THE Babylonish Captivity, considered as an era in the progress of divine dispensations, was most important and significant. We may well treat it as a very principal station in our journey along that path of light and wisdom which is cast up in Scripture for God's way-faring men to tread, and tarry there for a little, and look around us.

We may speak of it, generally, as the great conclusive judgment upon the people of Israel in Old Testament times; but it was preceded by a long series of other judgments of an inferior or less weighty character. And it is well to trace them shortly, that we may be moved and humbled by such a sight as they afford us of the incompetency and unfaithfulness of man under every condition of stewardship and responsibility.

These judgments began, I may say, by the retirement, for forty years, of Moses, in the land of Midian. Israel, then in Egypt, lost their deliverer, because they knew not that by his hand God would redeem them; as we read in Acts vii. 25.

After they left Egypt, and got into the wilderness on their way to Canaan, they are doomed, or judged, for another forty years, to wander there, because they did not receive the report of the Spies, but disesteemed the promised land.

When they have reached Canaan, and are settled as a nation there, they are judged again and again for renewed iniquity, by the hand of their neighbours; but at length are more signally judged, by being put under the tyranny of King Saul (see Hos. xiii. 11).

In process of time, they flourish into a kingdom: God gives them the choicest of His people; the man after His

*The returned Captives.*

day, may read the story of the returned captives, as very good for the use of edifying; and find plenty to instruct, to encourage, to warn, and to humble them.

“How precious is the book divine,  
By inspiration given :  
Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine,  
To guide us on to heaven.”

## REST IN JESUS.

Steadfast in thy work of love,  
Continue blest,  
And through the Spirit from above,  
In Jesus rest.

O ne'er retard thee in the race,  
The prize to win ;  
On, with firm step and steady pace,  
And rest in Him.

Forward, toward that bright abode,  
Where He is gone ;  
Onward, supported by thy God,  
To wear the crown.

Stand fast, and let the Spirit's sword  
Be ever drawn,  
Till for a palm, at Jesus' word,  
Thou lay'st it down.

Be patient in continuing  
The seed to sow,  
Have faith ! although the fruit it bring  
Thou may'st not know.

O leave the issue to *His* care  
Who knoweth best,  
And constant still, with watchful prayer,  
In Jesus rest.

And may the Spirit's threefold power  
On thee be shed ;  
May God His *richest* blessings shower  
Upon thy head.

May'st thou be blest abundantly,  
Above thy need,  
And in thy Jesus O may'st thou  
*Have rest indeed !*



## No. V.

## MEDITATIONS ON SUBJECTS OF INTEREST.

## 1.—THE AIM OF MINISTRY.

GOD'S object and end ought to be ours. The means ought never to supersede the end with us. What a strength and power in the words, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth!" Paul says, he labours to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. What an aim was this!

In my mind, responsibility to Church truth, so far from being lessened by the new, wonderful, and gracious evangelic work which has lately arisen, is the rather greatly increased. A man's aim gives a character to all his acts. A low aim can never carry a man high, but a high one has power to attract from a very low position; and when it is divine, it will be like the path of the just, becoming more positive and clear, the more it is pursued. No minister of the gospel ought to be satisfied with a condition for any believer inferior to what would satisfy the heart of Christ, not only with regard to the infancy of such a soul, but to its fruitful maturity. "Feed my sheep," is the claim of true affection for Christ; but if His present organization for the Church, and His future glory in her, be now disregarded, or untaught, are not the most precious secrets of His love suppressed or overlooked? One, who, in ministering to God's people, proposes to himself God's end and object for them, and nothing short of it, while feeling increasingly the responsibility of the trust, knows also that he need only deal out honestly and faithfully what has been committed to him, and abundantly will the need be supplied.

Truth is so fallen in the streets in these days, that the call to each is to be valued for the truth, and not merely to be convinced of the rightness of a position. Truth, being fully revealed by our Lord Jesus Christ, there will

be no further revelation of it. If any part of it be misrepresented, there will be an imperfect evangelization; for the Gospel is, that "grace and truth are come by Jesus Christ." Are we sufficiently alive to the responsibility of seeing that the truth of God so long undeclared, but now fully declared by our Lord Jesus Christ, should not suffer in our attempts to expound the fulness and greatness of it? What painful misrepresentations of our Lord's doings and intentions down here, do we find in the current religious publications of the day! Therefore, I am bold to say, that if a soul does not see how he is called to vindicate Christ in these days, I see little use in gaining his approval of my position. If we were called to vindicate God, we must at once retire from a work for which we are utterly incompetent; but the Lord Jesus has vindicated Him by declaring the truth; and it is only a veritable adherence to what He has done that we are called to. If the "Spirit of truth" be working in a soul, there will be exercise as to what is truth, and, in teaching souls, how necessary to be assured that they are learning the truth, that the Spirit is thereby guiding them into it.

Full truth alone can keep us from slipping off from our proper place; the more fully we know it the better we know our position; for truth is but the mind and judgment of Him, whom the better we know, the more are we bound to, for we thus find how absolutely He is for our blessing. The more one line of truth becomes diffused, the more does every other line require to be pressed, or there will be departure from the moral symmetry belonging to the Body of Christ on earth. The Lord keep us loving His truth—the unfolding of Himself! He is but a poor friend who would not like to know more, and all about me, or I must be very unworthy. How blessed to be allowed of God to set the seeds of His truth in the souls of His people; and how we ought to rejoice at every apprehension a soul gets of the truth of our God!

"This God is our God for ever and ever: He shall be our Guide even unto death."

## 2.—THE BLESSING OF WORSHIPPING THE TRUE GOD.

If the heart be in secret true to our God, it is marvellous how much of our own ways we are allowed to follow, in order to find out the folly of them, without losing our place of confidence in Him. David is the man after God's own heart, because God was always His God. He was a man of many errors and failures, but in his extremities God was always His resource. If I have a false God I have no real resource; therefore, as long as the soul is really zealous for the truth of God, and maintains it, though it may yield to many vacillations in practical life, yet it will ever revert to Him, as the needle to the pole: the nature of God is not misrepresented; and the heart turns thither from its own perversions.

Peter may fail, but his faith in God must not fail; and, by it, he is restored. If the soul has a true Christ, be the vacillations ever so many, still, *in the end, there* it must gravitate. And, therefore, it is so necessary for souls to get a right idea and apprehension of Christ. If we have not, we are like the disciples when on the sea, and Christ on the land. If we have, though, perhaps, equally unbelieving with them, we have, at any rate, the assurance that he is in the ship with us. It is while running the race, that we discover the many impediments which our nature obstructs to our progress; and, as we discover them, if really desirous that our pace be not abated, we deprecate and shake them off. But in order to *this* the eye must be on the goal. If it be, the swifter we run, the more we may have to discard; because the more sensible shall we be to the embarrassments occasioned by our natural activities; these always hamper the spirit. We know the fable of the sun and the wind. The blast may cause us to wrap up our coverings around us, but when the sun breaks forth we soon cast them aside. So with any moral encumbrance, or natural burden. The eye on Christ always affords evidence of our position, and is the only true means of deliverance from every false way.

The soul that is looking at its difficulties seldom overcomes them. It is in keeping the eye above, or, rather, the heart there, that we conquer; and it is amazing, how disproportioned the same class of difficulties will appear at one time, and another; simply, because the heart is either with the Lord (and when with Him the armour is always on), or, it is thinking of its trials. Our enemies are always morally diminished by our power to meet them. If we have power, and are sensible of it, we meet them calmly and confidently. As a babe, a bird might have terrified you; and, why not now? Because you feel you have power immensely above it. It is the sense of power that we want, and that is only obtained by keeping near the Lord. To keep near Him is the entire matter. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." "He that eateth me, even He shall live by me." Never despair! If you did not see where you fail, you would not know where to conquer. We fail in our weak point; but where the weakness is, *there* the strength of Christ is needed; consequently, our several trials are just suited to expose our weakness, in order that we may be supplied with His strength, so that even our failures work together for our good.

If we cannot conquer where we are, we could conquer *no where*.

There is no fear but we can overcome, unless we are in a false position; and *then*, overcoming would be to get out of it.

### 3.—OUR WORK PROVES US.

It must have been a very trying exercise to the Nazarite after he had defiled the hair of his Nazariteship, *to begin all over again*, No matter, how long or how beautiful the hair, *it must go*.

Thus is it with us. If we have done the Lord's work with mixture, all must come down; the Lord will rescue the true souls, but the ship must go to pieces.

I believe, that often where there has been much apparent blessing, there has been some covert evil influence at work, and Satan has deceived souls, and prevented them from seeing the defiling thing, by means of the

ostensible state, seemingly proclaiming progress and blessing. He sometimes refrains from a general opposition, in order that he may mature, under the cloak of spiritual advancement—a more deadly hindrance to the truth than would be effected by open hostility. When such is the case, the way to introduce real blessing, is to “begin anew.” Many a one will admit how wrong he is *himself*, who will not admit how his work must have been affected by his failure; and it is remarkable, that our failures are sure to transpire in our works; that is, that our works will affect or afflict us in that very point where we have failed to minister, in consequence of our imbecility to supply the line of truth which would have provided against the failure. Let a congregation of saints be only instructed in their sensibilities, or moral beauty, and, sooner or later, the teacher will surely suffer from them himself, that lack of conscience which he had overlooked. His weakness or wilfulness will betray itself in them. God does not hear the prayer, “O that Ishmael might live before thee!” Such a prayer was only an evidence of Abraham’s distance from God at the time. We must take care not to administer help before faith is at work in the soul; for if we do, we spoil the soul for faith.

“Patient continuance in well doing” is wonderfully effective; and faithfulness in a little is a guarantee to our being faithful in much. If equal to every occasion, whether small or great, we shall always glorify the Lord and His grace, and add to our own rest and joy in Him.

#### 4.—THE TRUE ACTION OF THE WORD.

We know that we can delight in hearing the words of the Lord as a lovely song, and yet be unwilling to follow them; for the heart goeth after its covetousness. In a measure, I suppose we all know what this is, and we must be careful that we adopt the truth we hear, as well as enjoy it; that is, we must be conscious that we are submitting to its demand upon us. This is properly receiving it in an “honest and true heart.” Truth,

understood and received, always affects us most where we most need it; as heat in a room will always address the dampest part; and, therefore, if I have received truth, I must feel it acting on my soul where my deficiency is the greatest, and where, naturally, I least like it to act. If I am allowing my weak part to be probed by the Word, then I am learning, though I may not be very happy while the process is going on; yet the happiness that follows is of a different and a higher order. We must take care not to be content with expositions of God's truth apart from their demand on *ourselves*; for it is very possible to see their beauty and admire them, while totally failing to appropriate them.

The Word of God is the "sword of the Spirit." Faith is the shield which protects you from your adversary; but protection from, is not subjugation. Faith may protect me from my foes, but it will not rid me of them.

Nothing but the Word of God will do that; and I must have the right word to hit in the right place. The Lord Jesus not only protected Himself (He was always protected by His faith); but He baffled and put to flight the wicked one by the Word of God.

Accustom yourself to prove all things by the Word of God, and to test every action and judgment, and you will find that many things are done for which there is no scriptural warrant; and, on the other hand, that much professedly for God, is unscripturally carried out. This is a day in which names of truths are retained, but their real definitions often marred or ignored. For instance, "What is a Christian?" Does the common definition of the word, in any way, approach to the scriptural one? The word is the test, as well as the sword; but if it probes and searches us, it also invigorates and strengthens.

##### 5.—ON THE LINE.

There is nothing so difficult for any soul as to keep on the line—yet if we at all get off the line, it happens to us as to a railway carriage—all is in danger and confusion. The line of one may not be that of another; the race set before each of us is one peculiar to one's own

*Subjects of Interest.*

individuality; what might be suitable for one would be unsuitable for another, but with the Word in our hand, if read by the Spirit of God, it is easy to tell when any one is off the line. I observe when it is so—the soul is often like Peter in John xxi. very hard at work “fishing,” and “naked” too! There is a rushing and perturbation of manner, and a constant desire to vindicate oneself—but when on the line, there is no effort, all goes on in calmness and tranquillity.

Nothing will keep us on the line, but the presence of a *risen Christ* walking with us in a world which rejected Him. I am afraid we know more of what it is to walk seeking to be useful, than in the consciousness of the influence which His presence superinduces. We may know the person who is under the rule of His presence, because such an one involuntarily manifests the interests which engage Him. If I am under the influence of one whom I revere, imperceptibly, and yet distinctly, I adopt and declare the great subject of his thoughts and ways. In fact, if I did not, it might be truly said that I did not revere him, and that his presence had no particular influence with me. The influence of personal presence is so peculiar that no art could conjure up any thing like it. If the person be absent, no memory or effort of mind can recall it, but the moment he reappears, all the influence returns. We may recall the words of an absent friend, but not the peculiar interest which his presence afforded. Now—like the disciples going to Emmaus—your heart may burn within you, while the Scriptures are being opened to you, but the *recognition* of Christ's presence will have an effect far beyond what the most wonderful opening of Scripture could produce. They returned the same hour of the night to their brethren at Jerusalem. This was the fruit of the energy which they derived from recognising the Lord's presence. I deplore it for myself, that the Lord's opening to me the Scripture is a more constant source of exhilaration to me than an actual recognition of Him, the risen Lord, with reference to all things here.

## 6.—CHRIST OR HIS GIFTS ?

The gourd draws out the affections of Jonah; but the removal of it discloses all the insubjection which the presence of the gourd had cloaked or suppressed for a moment. If our hearts are more taken up with God's gifts than with Himself, we shall find, sooner or later, that the gifts have concealed us from ourselves, and that we have not grown (growth is the development of the nature of Christ in detail) as we should have done if the Lord had been the resource of our hearts. Satan said of Job that he thought more of the gifts than of God, and though Job turned to God, yet he had to discover the nothingness of himself in God's presence; not to make him more miserable, but to establish his dependance on God more absolutely, and make him independent of himself and of everything but God. When the gifts go, you discover whether your heart is set on God or the gifts. The former cannot go; and if I know Him like Abraham or Mary, I can, though widowed indeed, trust in God to restore the Isaac, or raise the Lazarus.

I often see souls who have learned the grace of God, and are walking in full peace of acceptance, and even devotedly serving Him, who have their affections very little centred in Him. The best proof that I am loving Him,—that my heart is set on Him, is that I am loving *like* Him. The heart which has learned the grace of God in our Lord Jesus Christ, learns for the first time that to a veritable man it may and ought fully to confide itself, and, if it did, it would always be happy and never disappointed; but this it generally has to learn slowly, and by various ways. Nothing so thoroughly suits and satisfies the heart of man as this sympathy and friendship. He seldom attains it to any perfection among men. He can and ought with the Lord; but for this the heart requires to be taught, by one process or another, that it cannot find it fully any where else. Sometimes one is allowed to find a resemblance to it in humanity, if only used as an illustration of what the Lord is; *i. e.*, it sometimes learns by the human, which is so close to it, the variety and activities of His love. Human friend-



ship, used in this way, is to me what a go-cart is to a child learning to walk; but if, on the other hand, I so engross myself with the human, as to be in any degree independent of His sympathy and friendship, it is very evident that the very gourd He may have sent me, is a hindrance to my full blessing, and He must remove it; yet all the time (though I may have superseded the Lord's friendship by a lower one) I have become so accustomed to the delights of friendship even in the lower one, and that he knows, my heart must seek for the higher, even Himself—the “widow indeed” trusted in God. There is a blank which never can be repaired in humanity, there is a sorrow which neither time nor toil can assuage. The Lord knows well what human sorrow is; He never met with any thing but sorrow in the heart of man, for joy comes from God; and to break down our nature, in order to fill us with the fulness of God, is the purpose of His love which passeth knowledge. He will see to your sorrow; where did He express so much feeling as for Mary when He walked to the tomb of Lazarus? What ought to distress us is, the discovery of how dependent we are on other things beside Himself, and this is really the only barrier to our full relief.

#### 7.—THE EFFECT OF ASSOCIATION.

In every association, and the more so the closer it be, the tendency of human nature is to descend morally rather than to ascend; therefore the great wrong, and loss to one who allies himself with what is morally or spiritually beneath him. Such associations cannot long exist without affecting either the higher or the lower element; and the tendency of the higher sinking to the lower, is because there is in us a kindred evil to any that we are brought in contact with, and this contact must occur the moment the communications are on equal terms. By equal terms, I mean where I can freely blend, accommodating myself to a lower order of things than my light would approve of. When this inequality exists as to the things of God, it is, of all cases, the most to be deprecated, for, apart from the question of the sacrifice of

truth, the highest ideas and sensibilities on the most valued subject must remain unimparted; and the consequence invariably is, that either both parties gradually decline, or the one emerges, and every day feels the other more unsuitable and irresponsive to the better activities of the soul. We should bear this in mind, whether as to natural or spiritual associations, for to deprecate such inequalities is not high-mindedness; quite the contrary; the more I know of the Lord or His truth, the less I must think of myself; but the more zealous I must feel for His honour.

But though always to be deprecated, it is too true that these inequalities exist, and are constantly entered on; and still more,—I observe that the Lord often *permits* us to do things and enter into alliances, which indicate the true condition of the soul, or at least meet a line in us not yet subdued. One of fine spiritual sensibilities will not find much interest in one below them. If I do, however, I may think or imagine that I feel so, my company reveals my real likings, and because I don't judge myself on account of my real likings, the Lord allows me to bind myself to that which truly indicates my predilections, and thereby carries on the discipline needful for me. The Lord must have seen Peter carrying the sword, and yet he never rebuked him for it, until he had committed an overt act, and Peter might have alleged that He told him to take it: but it was needful for Peter that *his own act* should expose how little he was in sympathy with his Master's mind. It is humbling when the low state of our souls necessitates such a course of action on the Lord's part, but it may be the only way to convince us of the subtlety of our hearts.

When an unequal association is entered on irrevocably (for it is not always possible, or even allowed to us to retrace a false step), the position, even if not actually wrong, is *always perilous*, and the only way to avoid a fall, towards which there will constantly be a tendency, is to lean on the Lord, and seek His strength to maintain, unflinchingly, the measure of light which we have received. Light is most generous and expressive, and always communicative of its power to aid any one in

darkness. If I have light and am walking in the light, I shall know the gentle, insinuating, yet direct and effectual way in which light encounters darkness; but if I assume darkness in order to spare darkness, there is no doubt but that my light will be turned to grievous darkness. There is nothing more difficult than to maintain to a Christian below you in light and knowledge of the Lord's grace (though *possibly* above you in practice), that power of testimony to truth which would make his conscience feel that your presence was acting on him, and that you, on the other hand, are not surrendering the truth of God in order to be in fellowship with one below it. It is very searching (but let us not shrink from it) that light is often, as it were, absorbed by ourselves, and when it is so, there is no emanation, or testimony of its power. "If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give light." I understand by this passage that if I am myself under the influence of light perfectly, (*i.e.*, if light has taken possession of me) then others will see it, as the shining of a candle. That it is not so with us, may account for our constant failure in setting forth a power of light. Not being under the influence of it ourselves, it does not emanate from us as the clear light of a candle. In conclusion, I may add, that the lower element gives way to the higher one, if *the higher one abides in itself*, though this must necessarily be with more or less painful action on the one in darkness; but the lower corrupts the higher, the *moment* the latter stoops to fellowship with it. May we seek to walk with the Lord in His elevation, and not oblige Him to descend in His ordering for us to our own level.

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#### FRAGMENTS.

"Trying to right circumstances is waste of time. Christ did not seek it. Let faith be in exercise in the circumstances, and that will right yourself."

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"Try the rough water as well as the smooth. Rough water can teach lessons worth knowing."

N<sup>o</sup>. VI.

## OBSERVATIONS ON THE APOCALYPSE.

IN studying the book called "The Revelation,"—I would suggest that particular attention might well be paid to the various *positions* which in it the Lord Jesus Christ holds. The portion of the contents of the book which stands connected with any one of His positions,<sup>a</sup> may fairly be considered—a book, or chapter; with His position as its heading. And directly he takes (or is presented by the book in) another position, that new position may be looked upon as the heading of another book or chapter. This takes it for granted that He is presented in the book (not only in different offices and in different glories—both of which indeed, as presented in the book, are numerous,—but also) in positions which have a difference the one from the other. Such we shall see to be the case.

To explain what I mean. In chapter i. He is presented as in *the position of performing that which, in ecclesiastical language, would be called "making a visitation" to the churches or assemblies, in the province of Asia.*<sup>b</sup> This would be the heading, as I judge, to the

<sup>a</sup> By 'position' I mean, literally, the place in which He stands and where He shows Himself—without reference to the character under which he acts, or the title and office.

<sup>b</sup> I add here as a note, a portion borrowed from the Dean of Westminster's Commentary on the Epistles to the seven churches of Asia. *Introduction*, p. 3.

"It may be needful to say a few words concerning the 'Asia,' which is intended. We may trace two opposite movements going on in the names of countries, analogous to like movements which are continually finding place in other words. Sometimes they grow more and more inclusive, are applied in their later use to far wider tracts of the earth than they were in their earlier. It is thus with the name of 'Italy.' Designating at one time only the extreme southern point of the central peninsula of Europe, the name crept on and up, till in the time of Augustus it obtained the meaning which it has ever since retained, in-

*Observations on the Apocalypse.*

227

portion containing the detailed addresses to the seven assemblies on earth. The principles of which addresses apply to any upon earth who, at any time, may be partakers of the like faith with them.

1. Thus, my "*first Book*" would contain the first three (so called) chapters, and it might be broadly entitled, the Lord's examination of professors of the Christian faith. *The main mark of this "first book"* is the position in which the Lord Jesus Christ is shown in it.

2. The Lamb upon the throne of the Lord God Almighty would be the *second* position I should notice; and John, a Christian and a servant, able to be instructed in the opening of the book. Inseparably connected with this position, seems to be the portion which extends on to the close of the ninth chapter. Such is my "*second book.*"

3. In chapter ten, perhaps, a new position is taken by Him coming down, and that too as an all-glorious angel, to claim the earth, or land, and the sea or nations; and to interpose the name of Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created the heaven and the things in it, and the earth and all in it, and the sea and all in it, that there should be no longer delay.

This is preparatory to Jerusalem coming into view (chap. xi.); to the purging of the heavens (chap. xii.);

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cluding all within the Alps. 'Holland' is another example in the same kind. Some names, on the other hand, of the widest reach at the beginning, gradually contract their meaning, till in the end they designate no more than a minute fraction of that which they designated at the beginning. 'Asia' furnishes a good example of this. In the New Testament, as generally in the language of men when the Testament was written, Asia meant not what it now means for us, and had once meant for the Greeks, one namely of the three great continents of the old world. (*Æschylus, Prom. 412; Pindar, Olymp. vii. 18; Herodotus, iv. 38*), nor yet even that region which geographers about the fourth century of our era began to call "Asia-Minor;" but a strip of the western seaboard containing hardly a third portion of this (cf. 1 Pet. i. 1; Acts ii. 9; vi. 9). 'Asia vestra,' says Cicero (*Pro. Flacc. 27*), addressing some Asiatics, 'constat ex Phrygiâ, Mysiâ, Cariâ, Lydiâ;' its limits being nearly identical with those of the kingdom which Attalus the Third bequeathed to the Roman people. Take 'Asia' in this sense, and there will be little or no exaggeration in the words of the Ephesian silversmith, that 'almost throughout all Asia,' Paul had turned away much people from the service of idols (Acts xix. 26; cf. 10); words which must seem to exceed even the limits of an angry hyperbole to those not acquainted with this restricted use of the term."

and to the formal placing—of a people in Israel as holders of the testimony of Jesus,—and of the sifting of the nations by the power of darkness; this and the dealings of the Lamb (though still hiddenly from earth's gaze yet) on Mount Zion with the 144,000 (chap. xv.), and the overthrow of the Harlot and city Babylon, etc., closes with chap. xviii. This would form my "*third book.*" Its heading: the Lord acting for Israel, and showing himself to a remnant, but not openly displayed.

4. With chapter xix. all curtain is dropped. The Lord Jesus is not with John in Patmos talking about assemblies on earth.

He is not, as the Lamb on the throne of the Lord God Almighty, opening seals which show his revelation to his servant John of how he would act towards Israel and the nations.

He is not, either, showing himself secretly, but really, to a favoured one in heaven, or for a few as upon earth;—but heaven is opened, and He Himself is seen coming forth, as King of kings and Lord of lords, with the armies of Heaven,—this would seem to be His fourth position: His assuming to reign till he hath put down all things under His feet. This is the "*fourth book.*"

5. The final position is traced out (chap. xxi. 1—8), and gives the '*fifth book.*'

The person of the Lord is a worthy turning point in the revelation of the subject-matter of such a volume as this. God ever commences with the Son of His love. And each position in which He is shown is connected with a whole chapter, or book of details,—as is natural and to be expected.

The positions I have referred to are five. 1st, Revealing Himself in Patmos to John; 2nd, In the midst of the throne in Heaven; 3rd, Shewing Himself yet covertly as connected with things on the earth; 4th, Openly displayed as having taken power to put down evil; 5th, The eternal state.

The revelation of Himself *personally* in such positions is the first thing to be remarked. Closely connected herewith, though separable from it, are the titles, offices, and glories which may be connected with each such

position. For whether these titles, offices and glories are common to all these positions, or whether each position has a regulating power upon the manifestations in it, are questions for examination. And I may remark here, as I pass, that we may examine not only the one thread common to, and running through them all—the personal presence of the Lord as the leading person in the whole—nor again the peculiarities distinctive to each position; but also any correspondence, from whatever circumstances arising, between any two of the parts.<sup>c</sup>

I will give now a few passages from the text connected with the various parts of the subject which have themselves really originated the foregoing remarks:—

1st. The book<sup>d</sup> opens as “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.”<sup>e</sup> Now this term “Jesus Christ” contains the distinctive personal name by which John had known Him in the days of His humiliation; and it appears here again, the Lord being risen and ascended, and John, a servant and sufferer for His sake in Patmos. The revelation, as a whole, is: “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by his angel unto His servant John: who bare record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ” (ver. 1, 2).

Again, “Grace unto you, and peace, . . . . from Jesus Christ,” &c. (ver. 5).

Again John wrote as a companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ (v. 9) to his fellow sufferers, and was himself at that time in “Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (ver. 9).

One blessed effect of this meeting of John with his Lord, as “Jesus Christ,” is found in the burst of praise:

<sup>c</sup> In one respect I can thus compare chap. i. with chap. x.; chaps. ii. iii. with chaps. xiv. xv. and with profit.

<sup>d</sup> Though I follow *Theile* and *Stier* in their “*Novum Testamentum Tetraglotton*,” I would name here—as more accessible to many—the “*Apokalupsis Ioannou*. The Revelation of John, &c. By WILLIAM KELLY.” London: Williams and Norgate, 14, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden.

“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood. And hath made us a kingdom, priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (ver. 5 and 6).

Yet, remark, that while this is the distinctive personal title of the Lord *in the introduction*, it is under quite another aspect that his bearing towards the seven churches is given, viz.:

“One like unto the (or a) son of man” (ver. 13). And the effect on John here is not an impulsive burst of praise; but a deep sense of his own individual nothingness, “I fell at his feet as dead” (ver. 17); there is sympathy in Him, but responsibility in John, and deep sense of weakness.

“And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the (or a) son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and His countenance was as the sun shineth in His strength” (ver. 12).

“And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead” (ver. 17).

Remark, here, that—there is no reference to Him as “the Lamb.” Neither in the introduction to the Book, nor in the aspect in which he presents himself to the seven assemblies is he seen as the Lamb. In the former He is Jesus Christ (that is, “*Jehovah a-saving, anointed man*”); in the latter: like unto a son of man, with the insignia of the “Ancient of days.” In connection with the former there was forgiveness of sins and privilege conferred and praise returned (i. 5, 6). “The Lamb” is not seen until chap. v. on the throne in heaven. The name of Jesus Christ does not occur again in the Apocalypse; nor the name of Jesus until chap. xii. 17, “the dragon was wrath with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of



Jesus [Christ].” And the next mention of Him as “a son of man” is in chap. xiv. 14. “And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one set like unto the [or a] son of man.”<sup>d</sup>

I will now trace on the references which give the name of “Jesus,” “Lord Jesus Christ,” etc.

1. “Where also the Lord was crucified” (x. 8).
  2. “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (xiv. 12).
  3. “I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” (xvii. 6).
  4. “I am fellow-servant of thee, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus; worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (xix. 10).
  5. “Beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God” (xx. 4).
  6. “I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things” (xxii. 16).
- I add, that we have:
7. “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (xxii. 20).
- And the expressions—
8. “The grace of the [not our] Lord Jesus Christ, etc.” (ver. 21).

And further (to prevent misapprehension) I give the passages in which “the Christ” occurs, viz.:—

1. Chap. xi. 15. “The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.”
2. Chap. xii. 10. “Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of He is Christ.”
3. Chap. xx. 4. “They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”
4. Ver. 6. “Priests of God and of Christ.”

“Jesus” had a life of suffering, a testimony to give, a heart for those that would partake His cup of sorrow, and a mind and will to communicate to such all that He saw they needed to know.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. xii. 5, should be “She brought forth a male child.” It has nothing to do with “a son of man.”

The Messiah or Christ had a kingdom and priesthood pertaining to Him as such.

To man on earth, a son of man clothed with the very highest glory (chap. i. 13 & xiv. 14) is a wonder, and may be a terror. In heaven, and in those that have the mind of heaven, the wonder is, not that the Son should have exceeding and eternal divine glory,—but His beauty as being, and that He should be, *the Lamb*. Man may seek glory in circumstances; and be terrified at meeting, in his search, that which is altogether beyond him to measure, or to stand before. Not so God. His all and His own and His highest glory is presented in the Son of His love, but in Him as the one who, in humiliation, fathomed, and measured, and gave all the right expression—to God's glory;—and to Satan's malice, and to all that mankind had been, or might through grace become.

In tracing down the use of the name "the Lamb," in this book, there is blessedness and sweetness untellable, in finding how it is the very same view of Him which is God's and heaven's chief delight in Him, which is the saints, delight and peculiar treasure, viz., as He is the Lamb;<sup>b</sup> their centre and refuge, their glory.

The word rendered "Lamb," throughout the Apocalypse, is *ἀρνιον* which is a diminutive, *a little lamb—a lambkin*, from *ἄρνος*, which does not occur either in the septuagint Greek, or in the New Testament.

In the expression "Behold *the Lamb* of God!" (John i. 29—36), it is another word which is used (*ἄμνος*), the same as occurs "Like a *lamb* dumb before his shearer"

<sup>b</sup> Such is the glory of redeeming love.

Men, and Christians too, often speak of the Lord as the Lamb, just as, in the days of His humiliation upon earth, men spoke to, and of Him, as "Jesus." As though the term "the Lamb," were one prepared to move their sympathies as men, good men, to what is weak and helpless. As Jesus, he was, indeed, *thoroughly* the man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; yet, even in the midst of it all, was owned, by faith, as Lord and God. But when He is rightly known as the "Lamb," wonder, and adoration, and worship, must fill the soul, and the unhallowed thought of familiarity be put far away by the light of the knowledge of Him.

(Acts viii. 32). and in “the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish (1 Peter i. 19).

This word (*ἀμνος*) occurs four times, as noticed above, in the New Testament; and about ninety-seven times in the Septuagint, or Greek Old Testament; and as there is no other word used for “lamb,” it is the ordinary word used for the lamb when a sacrifice, as in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, &c. In the passage, “I send you forth as *lambs* among wolves” (Luke x. 3), the word is *ἀρνυ*.

The word *ἀρνιον* occurs in the Septuagint only four times.

Ps. cxiv. 4—6. Little hills like *young lambs* of sheep.

Jer. xi. 19.—I was like a *lamb*, or an ox.

Jer. l. 45.—*The least* of the sheep shall draw them out.

In none, certainly, of these four passages in the Old Testament, is the idea of sacrifice found. In the New Testament the word is used once (John xxi. 15). Feed my *lambs*; but this is the only occurrence besides those in the Apocalypse. And these “lambs” were not sacrifices, but the feeble young of the sheep that needed tender care.

In heaven above, when John was caught up into it, and the question was raised, “Who is worthy to open the Book (in the right hand of him that sat on the throne), or to loose the seals thereof?” none was found: nor in heaven, nor in earth, nor under the earth, able even to look thereon. Then it was announced that the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David was there to do it. Both these titles were wondrous for Him to wear who wore them, and wore them in heaven too: both told forth of condescending grace—but of grace victorious to make good a place and blessing on earth at the right moment. John saw Him then in a character that told of deeper condescension still. Rejected upon earth, He was there in the midst of the throne in heaven as “a lamb as it had been slain.” He had been obedient unto death—the death of the Cross; and *therefore* God had exalted Him—but exalted Him as Jesus to make every knee, of

things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, bow to that name, to the glory of God the Father.

But not only was the Father's delight in Him thus, but in this same act, and in the very form that recorded it, all the effulgence of divine glory beamed, in the Lamb as it had been slain.

Nor only so : for in that presence there was worship and adoration, and the power of these were found to be according to the inward connection of the various parties with that which He the Lamb is. " And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made them unto our God kings and priests, and they shall reign on the earth " (ver. 8—10). This *first* company could taste for themselves, and give forth a rationale of the worthiness peculiarly known unto them.

Then the angels innumerable take up the theme: they can own the worthiness of the Lamb, but they cannot tell forth the tale in the same full manner. All that they, with loud voice, can proclaim, is: " Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing " (ver. 12).

And yet wider still circles the sound of praise: For " every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying: Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever " (ver. 13).<sup>e</sup>

<sup>e</sup> Observe that the Lord God Almighty had given to the Lamb as it had been slain, His place on the throne, and set Him there as the object of worship ere ever this, or the succeeding choirs take up the song. The Lord God Almighty's estimate of the Redeemer, and of redemption, necessarily precedes, as it exceeds that of all others.

The key-note to the mind of heaven, wheresoever that mind be found, in any measure, more or less, is the worthiness of the Lamb<sup>f</sup> that was slain, yet varied is the power to sound forth its excellency.

To proceed: the Lamb is the leader of all in heaven; and all that flows down thence flows down from Him. Thus 'tis He (chap. vi. 1) that opens the seals, all of them. The wrath of the Lamb (ver. 16), as well as the face of Him that sits upon the throne, is the alarmed worldling's terror.

Then again (chap. vii. 9) the gathered remnant stand "before the throne, and before the Lamb." Their song, "Salvation to God, and to the Lamb" (ver. 10). Their robes they had washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb (14). 'Tis the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne that shall "feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters" (ver. 17).

So again the victors over the accuser overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony; and they love not their lives unto the death (xii. 11). And the preserved ones had their names written, from the foundation of the world, in the book of life of the Lamb slain (xiii. 8).

And 'tis as the Lamb we find Him in chap. xiv. Lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and, with Him, a hundred forty and four thousand, having His name, and the name of His Father written on their foreheads (ver. 1): they sung a new song, one peculiar to the 144,000 redeemed from the earth, and are constantly to be in the suite of the Lamb, go where He may; redeemed from among men; first fruits unto God and the Lamb (ver. 4.) Again, there is the song of Moses<sup>g</sup> the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb sung (xv. 3). So the kings (xvii. 14) shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for

<sup>f</sup> He is not praised as the Lion of Judah's tribe, nor as the Root of David, but as the Lamb; and seen first amid the throne the object of worship.

<sup>g</sup> If Exodus xv. gives us the song of Moses, that is a song about Almighty power acting upon earth, to give to God's adopted people upon earth a place; "the Lamb" is the heavenly title.

He is the Lord of lords and King of kings: and they that are with Him "are called, and chosen, and faithful."

Following the destruction of the whore and the city, we have heaven's swell of joy (xix. 1), "Alleluia: Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God," etc.; "the marriage of the Lamb is come (ver. 7); and his wife hath made herself ready," etc. And, then (ver. 9), the guests are noticed: "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."

How unutterably precious to have all one's connection with Him who is God's delight as the Lamb; and to be part of that which is the complement of His glory, the bride.

Chaps. xxi. and xxii. are, as all know, divided into three parts :—

Chap. xxi. 1—8., gives the post-millennial state.

Chap. xxii. 9 to xxii. 5, the millennial.

Chap. xxii. 6 to end. The solemn conclusion.

I would notice that, as a matter of fact, the Lamb's name is not mentioned in the post millennial state. God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—will then be all in all we know. The holy city, new Jerusalem, is seen coming down out of heaven from God. She is not called the Lamb's bride. The Lamb, as such, is not named, but the city is said to be "prepared as a bride for her husband" (ver. 2), and (ver. 7) *heirship* and *sonship* are noticed. "He that overcometh shall inherit THESE things; and I will be God to him, and he shall be son to me."

This is to be noticed.

On the other hand, she is spoken of as the Bride, the Lamb's wife (ver. 9); that is, in the millennial state. The twelve apostles of the Lamb have their names inscribed on the twelve foundations (ver. 14). The Lord God Almighty is the temple of it and the Lamb (ver. 22). The glory of God illumines it, and the Lamb is the candle of it (ver. 23).

The registry is the Lamb's book of life (ver. 27). The throne in it, whence the water of life flows, is the throne of God and the Lamb (xxii. 1). For the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it (ver. 3).

What a contrast, and how blessed a one, too, to the the scene in chap. v. *There* the lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, seen as a Lamb that had been slain in the midst of the throne, and of the elders; and John needing to be taught what the Lamb was, both to God and to himself, as also to others. *Here* the church millennial, shown as the vessel, in which, and by which, all the glory of God found in the Lamb, and all His delight, too, over that Lamb, are presented and made openly manifest and fully enjoyed in heaven above, and yet the light of the glory to illumine the earth.

And mark, here, the character of our portion and blessing in that day. It is not something given into our hands to possess and enjoy by ourselves, a merely human and earthly portion; but it is heavenly and divine in the highest sense. Heaven purged, the Lord God Almighty can be there: but, if there, He can have nothing there dissociated from the Lamb, nor from her who (the Spirit all permeating) is the Bride, the Lamb's wife.

The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are temple to that city, the new *Jerusalem* (*He shall provide peace*) which is the bride the Lamb's wife. Does God then find His delight in the Lamb? So do we. Is God interested in *all that* pertains to the Lamb? That cannot be without, in worship, through our wondrous connection with the Lamb, our being interested in all that pertains to the Lord God Almighty. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the light to that nightless habitation! Its every part is seen in light; reflects and gives out the light. And if God be delighted in the Lamb as the displayer of His own love, and life, and light, He must be delighted with that, on, and for, and through which, the light shines, our ourselves. And if, in that day, we are to be conscious of all this, as part of the glory of our connection with the Lamb, what our delight in the Lord God Almighty too!

So, too, the throne is the throne of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. Throne, not of power only, to repress evil and regulate good, but throne, whence a life-giving river is to flow; its stream, all streams of life.

But *we* shall serve Him and bear His name upon our foreheads. Love and loving and inseparable from love—divine and heavenly love.<sup>h</sup>

How feebly, at best, can we speak of these things; and yet they stand in their own eternal excellency to act upon, and fill our souls with, delight.

In conclusion, let no one mistake what I have said about “the Lamb,” as though I gave not the full tribute of praise to Him, and Him alone who shed His blood that all my sin might be forgiven; and who has, through faith given to me, enabled me to know myself already pardoned and accepted. But the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s dear Son, has a value besides that of pardon and acceptance to a sinner; it is to a saint separation, through faith, unto God; his freedom and liberty: it has, too, and that quite apart from atonement, a value in the mind of God (as marked in Phil. ii.). Where atonement is not named as the prominent object; obedient unto death, the death of the cross. Now it seems to me, that, in this sense, the account of the Lamb in the Revelation is a divine commentary upon Phil. ii. 6—8; a commentary far more full of blessed details than that found in Phil. ii. 9—11. If I owe pardon and acceptance as a sinner; liberty as a saint; and hope to God through Christ Jesus;—I would not forget that I have *therefore*, and on that very account, a debt to pay daily to God in the new nature, and that my only power to say “to me to live is Christ” is found in God’s revealed estimation of the value of the humiliation of His Son. His Son is my pattern and forerunner, and this I would never forget in such a body of sin and death, and surrounded by such a world

<sup>h</sup> The first and the last displays of any subject in Scripture are, often, in a certain sense, characteristic. It is, so I think, as to the Lamb, in the Revelation. The *first* SHOW of Him is as hidden in the throne of the Lord God Almighty; His *first* ACT is the taking of the book to open it. The *last* TIME He is shown is in the New Jerusalem—His position there in heaven, is ever to be the living link of association between the Lord God Almighty and the now saved and sinless people. In neither the first nor the last displays is He seen, save as between a God that has a saved people that serve Him, and themselves the already saved ones.



as I am. In His humiliation I get the path and standard of my life: it is fellowship with GOD.

And, moreover, it must never be forgotten that all our blessings have come from God—and that because He is God and not man, therefore there is mercy. The blood of Christ is forgiveness for sins, but that forgiveness is on God's side only part of the expression of His character as Redeemer. The whole of that character, as I judge, finds its expression in the history of the Lamb that was slain, as presented in Revelation, and in Phil. ii. Now I, for one, do not desire to confound forgiveness, which is a fruit of Divine love, an expression of the value, through faith, of the death of the Lord, with the root of all blessing, viz., the character of God, the only true God, as made manifest by Jesus Christ, whom He sent.

The revelation of the glory of God; the excellency of the Lord; the open door for the gift of the Holy Ghost; the utter condemnation of Satan; the salvation of God's people; the pattern of their walk to glory,—the mind that became them,—all, all were found in that wondrous obedience unto death, the death of the Cross—of Christ Jesus. Yet, when we read Phil. ii.,—it is the mind of Christ, and that mind, as displayed in His course alone, which is directly set before us; the leading feature and object in the picture. Just so, I judge, is it in Rev. v. as to the Lamb as it had been slain. The Lamb, then, as it had been slain, is **THE** specimen, the *only* perfect expression, of that in which the Lord God Almighty delights, and heaven too.

The Apocalypse has, as its running title: "Taking forth the precious from the vile." Only, instead of this being presented merely as an exhortation to a servant on earth (Jer. xv. 19, 20), with the promise so "thou shalt be as my mouth,"—it presents this principle, as carried out by God and the Lamb, in their dealings with what is on the earth. In this book He takes forth him that hath an ear to hear; He takes forth 144,000 of Israel, and some from among the nations; then again he takes out Israel from under the nations, and separates the four nations of Daniel from the mass of nations; and when

the blessing to the earth comes, it is a new thing; not an old one mended, but a clean thing altogether, brought forth, where nothing but uncleanness had been before it: a work of Divine power. And I may remark this as being a principle of immense, present, practical value to us in this present moment. God is not restoring churches now, but is calling forth *Him that has the ear to hear*. The practical difference between attempting to be a restorer of churches, on the one hand; and a cultivator of implicit individual obedience, myself, to the word, on the other, may be easily conceived. Come what may, I must obey God rather than man. This puts self down at zero: subject to the word, I must keep myself unspotted from the world; the perfect strength, of realized weakness and nothingness, follows. When I am weak then am I strong. On the other hand, the setter to rights of churches soon makes manifest how all his strength and power is *vanity*. I may be wrong, but it seems to me that "reformations" have always, thus, made shipwreck. The soul of a Luther, a Calvin, etc., was awakened and formed at first by the word bearing upon itself: when they began to act, not on souls, but on circumstances (in churches, kingdoms, etc.,) they failed. May we hold fast that which we have, and walk in the strength of the realized weakness of absolute dependence upon the living God and the word of His grace.

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EDITOR'S NOTE.—Though it does not affect the main point of the foregoing paper, I would remark (on the first new paragraph on page 233) that it overlooks the fact that the word ἀρνῦν occurs in the SEPTUAGINT about twenty-four times.

It is rendered "kid" in Ex. xxiii. 19; xxxiv. 26; and Deut. xiv. 21. "Lamb," in Lev. iii. 7; Deut. xxxii. 14; 1 Sam. vii. 9; 2 K. iii. 4; 1 Chr. xxix. 21.

Pro. xxvii. 26. Is. v. 17; xi. 6; xl. 11; lxxv. 25. Jer. li. 40. "Fatlings," 2 Sa. vi. 13. "Fat cattle," 1 K. i. 9; xix. 25. "Fed beasts," 1 Sa. i. 11. "Sheep," Gen. xxx. 32, 33, 35; Lev. i. 10. "Showers," Mic. v. 7.

## THE PSALMS.\*

## I.

1. Blessed [is] the man who has not walked in the counsel of [the] wicked,<sup>a</sup> and has not stood in the path of sinners, and has not sat in the seat of scorers. 2. But [has] his delight in the law of Jehovah, and meditates in His law day and night. 3. And he shall be as a tree planted by brooks of water, which gives its fruit in its season, and its leaf withers not, and all which he doeth prospers. 4. [It is] not so [with] the wicked: but they are as chaff, which the wind scatters. Wherefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of [the] righteous.<sup>b</sup> 6. For Jehovah knows<sup>c</sup> [the] way of [the] righteous; and [the] way of wicked [men] shall perish.

## II.

1. Why are the heathen in tumultuous agitation, and [why] do the tribes of men meditate vanity? 2. The kings of the earth stand up, and the chiefs plot together against Jehovah, and against His anointed. 3. Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us! 4. He that dwells in the heavens shall laugh: Adonai shall mock at them. 5. Then will He speak to them in His wrath, and in the heat of His anger will He confound them. 6. "And I have anointed my king upon Zion, the hill of my holiness." 7. I will tell of the decree: Jehovah has said unto me, "Thou [art] my son; *I* this day have begotten thee. 8. Ask of me, and I will give nations [for] thine inheritance, and [for] thy possession,

\* This new translation from the Hebrew of the first eight Psalms has been carefully compared with the New German Psalter. Elberfeld. 1859.

The rest of the Psalms will, it is hope, follow in due course.—Ed.

<sup>a</sup> It is not desirable to confound the plural and singular of wicked; when I use it alone, it is to be considered plural. When singular, I purpose saying wicked one, or man.

<sup>b</sup> So of righteous. Alone it is to be considered plural.

<sup>c</sup> Part.: characteristic or constant.

the ends of the earth. 9. Thou shalt crush<sup>d</sup> them with a sceptre of iron, as vessels of a potter shalt thou dash them in pieces." 10. And now kings, be ye wise: be admonished<sup>e</sup> ye judges of the earth! 11. Serve Jehovah with fear, and exult with trembling. 12. Kiss the son lest he be in wrath, and ye perish [in] the way, if His wrath burn but a little: blessed are all who have their trust in Him.

✎ Although the translator is in no way assured that the titles form an inspired part of the book, but the contrary, and the sense of many is quite uncertain (in the Septuagint Vulgate and Syriac, we have many others and different ones), yet as they are in the Hebrew, they are given. At the utmost, they give the occasion, not the divine purpose of the psalms.

### III.

\*[*A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.*]

1. Jehovah, how many are they that press upon me! Many rise up against me. 2. Many say of my soul, "[there is] no deliverance for him in God." Selah.<sup>f</sup> 3. But thou, O Jehovah, art my shield around me, my glory, and the lifter up of my head. 4. [With] my voice to Jehovah will I cry, and He will hear me from the mountain of His holiness. Selah. 5. I laid me down and slept; I awoke up, for Jehovah sustains me. 6. I will not fear for myriads of the people<sup>g</sup> which have set themselves against me round about. 7. Arise, Jehovah: save me, O my God. For thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek-bone; thou hast broken the teeth of wicked men. 8. With Jehovah is salvation, upon thy people is thy blessing. Selah.

<sup>d</sup> Some take it as from *רעה* to rule or shepherd.

<sup>e</sup> The root is chastening, *παιδευω*.

<sup>f</sup> Though the meaning of Selah, and even if the letters be not initials of words to guide the song, be uncertain, yet, as there is always a break in the sense, I insert it.

<sup>g</sup> This word must not be confounded in the singular and plural. I shall put it in the plural when it is so. It is then no longer Israel.

\* See Note p. 247. *Editor.*

## IV.

\*[*To the Chief Musician on Neginoth.—A Psalm of David.*]

1. When I call,<sup>h</sup> hear me, O God of my righteousness! In pressure thou hast enlarged me. Be favourable to me, and hear my prayer. 2. O ye sons of men, till when is my glory [to be put] to shame. [How long] will ye love vanity, will ye seek [a] lie. Selah. 3. Yet know, Jehovah has set apart the pious<sup>i</sup> [man] for Himself. Jehovah will hear<sup>k</sup> when I cry to Him. 4. Be ye moved<sup>l</sup> and sin not. Meditate in your hearts upon your beds and be still. Selah. 5. Sacrifice sacrifices of righteousness, and trust in Jehovah. 6. Many say, “Who shall cause us to see good:” lift up upon us the light of thy countenance, O Jehovah. 7. Thou hast put joy in my heart more than in the time their corn and must was in abundance. 8. In peace will I both lie down and sleep, for thou, Jehovah, alone makest me to dwell in <sup>m</sup>safety.

## V.

\*[*To the Chief Musician upon Nehiloth.—A Psalm of David.*]

1. Hear my words, O Jehovah; give heed<sup>n</sup> to my

<sup>h</sup> “In my calling,” which I notice, because time is not noticed, it is more abstract than “when.” It might be at the moment of speaking.

<sup>i</sup> *Chesèd* used of man and of God. Gracious, kind, hence of piety and recognition of God, on man’s part; and grace and loving-kindness, on God’s part.

<sup>k</sup> Abstract “hears.”

<sup>l</sup> Or “tremble, be agitated.” To be agitated by anger, grief, or fear.

<sup>m</sup> “Or security.” But it is the consciousness of safety as well as safety. *Sécurité*, not merely *sureté*. It is the same word, only as a noun, as “trust” in Jehovah alone. Have confidence. But “dwelling in safety” gives that idea in English. “Safety” hardly would, that is merely the fact.

<sup>n</sup> With the sense of entering into understanding what he cried for.

meditations. 2. Attend to the voice of my crying,<sup>o</sup> my king, and my God; for to thee will I pray. 3. O Jehovah, in the morning shalt thou hear my voice: in the morning will I address myself to thee, I will look up and wait.<sup>p</sup> 4. For thou art not a God<sup>q</sup> who hast pleasure in wickedness; the evil man shall not sojourn by thee. 5. The insolent fools shall not stand before thine eyes: thou hatest all the workers of vanity. 6. Thou wilt destroy those who speak lies; a man of blood and deceit Jehovah abhors. 7. But as for me in the greatness of thy goodness, I will draw near to thy house: I will bow down in thy holy temple in thy fear. 8. O Jehovah, lead me in thy righteousness, because of mine adversaries: make thy way plain before me. 9. For there is no truthfulness in his mouth, their inward parts are—calamity;<sup>r</sup> their throat is an open sepulchre; their tongues they make smooth. 10. Bring guilt upon them,<sup>s</sup> O God, let them fall through their counsels; drive them out in the multitude of their transgressions: for they have rebelled against thee. 11. And all that trust in thee shall rejoice; for ever shall they shout joyously; and Thou wilt protect them; and they that love Thy name shall exult in Thee. 12. For thou shalt bless the righteous [man] O Jehovah: thou surroundest<sup>t</sup> him [with] favour as [with] a shield.

## VI.

*\*[To the Chief Musician on Neginoth.—A Psalm of David.]*

1. O Jehovah, rebuke me not in Thy wrath, and chasten me not in Thine anger. 2. Be gracious to me,

<sup>o</sup> I say "crying," as giving more the idea of crying out for help as the word means.

<sup>p</sup> נָחַס is first to look out for anything—then to await—to look with expectation.

<sup>q</sup> El, When Elohim: I translate "God" without remark.

<sup>r</sup> In the seeking it as in its befalling one.

<sup>s</sup> Impute it to them in government, instead of passing by or pardoning.

<sup>t</sup> Some translate coverest or crownest.

O Jehovah, for as for me I droop.<sup>s</sup> Heal me, O Jehovah, for my bones<sup>t</sup> tremble: 3. And my soul trembles exceedingly: and Thou, O Jehovah, till how long. 4. Return, O Jehovah, free my soul: save me, for the sake of Thy goodness. 5. For there is no remembrance of Thee in death: in Sheol who shall celebrate Thy praises?<sup>u</sup> 6. I am wearied with my groaning, all the night make I my couch to swim: I dissolve my bed with my tears. 7. Mine eye has sunk through grief: grown old through all that press upon me. 8. Depart from me, all [ye] workers of iniquity: for Jehovah has heard the voice of my weeping. 9. Jehovah has heard my supplication:<sup>x</sup> Jehovah receives my prayer. 10. All mine enemies shall be ashamed and tremble exceedingly: they will turn, they will be ashamed suddenly.

## VII.

\*[*Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the Lord, concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite.*]

1. Jehovah, my God, in Thee have I trusted: save me from all my pursuers, and deliver me. 2. Lest he tear as a lion, my soul, crushing [it] while there is no deliverer. 3. Jehovah, my God, if I have done this: if there be evil in my hands. 4. If I have rendered wrong to him that was at peace with me: (yea I have freed him that pressed upon me without cause). 5. The enemy shall pursue after my soul, and catch [it] and tread my life down to the ground: and shall cause my glory to dwell in the dust. Selah. 6. Arise, Jehovah, in Thy wrath, lift thyself up because<sup>y</sup> of the unrestrained fury of those that press on me: and awake for me.<sup>z</sup>

<sup>s</sup> Or am withered. It seems an image drawn from the drooping of a plant (Is. xxiv.).

<sup>t</sup> It is, I apprehend, what was most strong and solid in him.

<sup>u</sup> ידה has the sense of confessing, celebrating the excellencies of.

<sup>x</sup> תחנה from חנן to be gracious. My appeal to grace, supplication for gracious dealing.

<sup>y</sup> Or against. I cannot doubt בעברות "because of the unrestrained fury" refers to the oppressors.

<sup>z</sup> Perhaps if עודה can have a transitive cause to awake for me

Thou hast commanded judgment. 7. And the assembly of the races shall surround thee; and for<sup>a</sup> its sake return on high. 8. Jehovah shall judge the peoples; execute judgment<sup>b</sup> for me, O Jehovah: according to my righteousness, and [let it happen] to me according to my perfectness. 9. Let the wrong of wicked men cease, and establish the righteous [man]: for indeed<sup>c</sup> thou art the righteous God who triest [the] hearts and [the] reins. 10. My shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart. 11. God is a righteous judge:<sup>d</sup> and El is angry every day.<sup>e</sup> 12. If [a man] turn not, he will sharpen his sword: he has bent his bow, and made it ready. 13. And against him has he made ready instruments of death: His arrows has he made<sup>f</sup> burning. 14. Behold, he is in travail with vanity:<sup>g</sup> and is big with mischief,<sup>h</sup> and has brought forth falsehood. 15. He has dug a pit and cleared it out; and is fallen into the hole which he had made. 16. His mischief shall return on his own head: and his violence shall come down on the crown of his own skull. 17. I will celebrate the praises of Jehovah according to His righteousness: and will sing the name of Jehovah [the] Most High.

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the judgment (which) Thou hast commanded! but I have a suspicion that the true rendering would be to the judgment which Thou hast commanded.

<sup>a</sup> Or "over it." *It* or *its* refers to the assembly.

<sup>b</sup> "Judge the peoples" is יָדַן. "Execute judgment" דָּשַׁן. The former, I apprehend, is the passing judgment as a judge, the latter more frequently used and more general in sense: rule and exercise of judicial authority as the judges in Israel. But there is another point. I have translated it "for me": because I believe the sense is "interpose thine authority in judgment for me."

<sup>c</sup> This is the force of י here, I apprehend, and would indeed almost have the same in English if one laid the emphasis on it.

<sup>d</sup> Or God executes judgment for the righteous. See <sup>b</sup> supra.

<sup>e</sup> "Or" all the day.

<sup>f</sup> Or as some think against the persecutors, *i. e.*, who hotly pursue.

<sup>g</sup> יָנָה used for vanity, wickedness, idolatry. God left for what is nothing.

<sup>h</sup> Labour, sorrow, brought by sin.



## VIII.

\*[*To the Chief Musician upon Gittith.—A Psalm of David.*]

1. Jehovah our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth: Thou who hast set<sup>i</sup> Thy Majesty above the heavens. 2. Out of the mouth of infants and sucklings Thou hast established praise, because of those that press upon thee: to still the enemy and the avenger. 3. When I see Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and stars which Thou hast established. 4. What is feeble man,<sup>k</sup> that Thou rememberest him: or Adam's son, that Thou visitest him? 5. For Thou madest him to be little less than the angels;<sup>l</sup> with glory and honour hast Thou crowned him. 6. Thou hast made him to rule over the works of Thy hands. All hast Thou put under his feet: 7. Sheep and oxen all of them: and also the beasts of the plain: 8. Birds of the heavens and fishes of the sea: what passes over the paths of the seas. 9. Jehovah our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth.

\* The above translation was sent without any of the headings or titles, the translator being in no way assured that they form an inspired part of the book.

I have inserted them, nevertheless, in brackets [ ], because the only authorities to which I can, on the moment refer, state, that in substance, *many* of them are not extant in the Hebrew MSS., though very many of them are canonical parts of the Psalms.

The Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac, would not have any weight with myself against the Hebrew manuscripts.—EDITOR.

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<sup>i</sup> A difficult word, but I suppose this is the true sense.

<sup>k</sup> Man looked at as a race in contrast with distinguished individuals.

<sup>l</sup> Elohim, God, but used for angels and judges.

## FRAGMENTS.

## I.

BUT those who fight the Lord's battles must be contented to be, in no respect, accounted of:—they must expect to be, in no wise, encouraged by the prospects of human praise. And, if you make an exception, “that the children of God will praise you, whatever the world will say,” beware of this, for you *may turn them into a world*, and find in them a world, and may sow to the flesh in sowing to their approbation; and you will neither be benefited by them, nor they by you, so long as respect for them is your motive;—so long as you are conscious as to how they will think of you. All such motives are a poison to you, and a taking away from you the strength in which you are to give glory to God—and because such a time may be needful for you, I beseech you, be prepared for a time when you shall be as persons unknown, even to those that know God. It is not the fact, that all that see the face of the Lord, do see each other—it is not the fact that the misapprehension of the world is the only misapprehension the Christian must be contented to labour under. He must expect even his brethren to see him through a mist, and to be disappointed of their sympathy, and their cheers of approbation. The man of God must walk *alone* with God, he must be contented that the Lord knoweth. And it is such a relief, yea, it is such a relief to the natural man within us, to fall back upon human countenances, and human sympathy, that we often deceive ourselves, and think it brotherly love, when we are just resting on the earthly sympathy of a brother worm. You are to be followers of Him who was left alone, and you are, like Him, to rejoice that you are not alone, *because the Father is with you*, that you may give true glory to

God. Oh, I cannot but speak of it. It is such a glory to God to see a soul that has been, through the flesh, accessible to the praise of man, surrounded by hundreds and thousands of his fellow-creatures, every one of whom he knows how to please, and yet that he should be contented, yea, peaceful and happy in doing, with a single reference to God, that which he knows they will all misunderstand and misconceive. Here was the victory of Jesus.

## II.

For myself,—I speak as a man,—I never found peace before God, or conscious rest with Him, until I was taught the force and meaning of that cry of Jesus of Nazareth: Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani. Never, until I understood that He, who knew no sin, had (then and there, on the Cross) been made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him—could I rest as a sinner in the presence of a holy God. And, as I suppose, it is owing to the distinctive peculiarity of that,—His sorrow under the wrath of God,—*not being understood*—that so many Christians have no settled peace at all.

The questions of sin and of guilt, have never been met in their consciences. The incarnation is amazing and beautiful. That the eternal Son of God, the only begotten Son of the Father, should have become a babe and been laid in a manger of an inn: the contrast between the glory He came out of and the place man assigned to Him *is* a contrast!—God and heaven could express their delight over Him, then and there, as well as feel it (Luke ii. 8—14). But the bearing of our sins in His own body was NOT in the cradle but on the Cross—and on the Cross alone.

The flight into Egypt; the return and settling at Nazareth of the child,—the youth in the temple and in returning from Jerusalem,—the hidden retirement of His early manhood,—is beautiful, each in its place: but none present us with Him as in the act of bearing our sins. Again, when we look at Him as (when He voluntarily

identified Himself with those that owned their need of repentance, confessing their sins) at His baptism, in His service and ministries, all, and each part of all, is beautiful and perfect; but, if heaven could approve Him in each step, Heaven, too, could give its avowals of approval to Him:—yet He stood not as sin-bearer under the judgment, at any of these periods.

Again, what a contrast, and who ever felt it, as He felt it, between Himself as the seed of the woman and the race of man to whom He had come! What a contrast between Himself personally and individually and the house of Israel, His own, among whom He had come. Himself, not only God manifest in the flesh, but that Holy thing that was born of the virgin; holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners—apart from sin: and yet voluntarily amid sinful men and with guilty Israel—the immaculate seed of the woman, the King of Israel in His holiness. This brought with it sorrows. So, when He had entered upon service, did the constant persecution for righteousness, which He endured—and the consciousness that there was none who could sympathize with Him, and that fallen men welcomed not the mercy of which He was the Messenger; sorrows He had to endure at the hand of the world and man, but even that was not forsaking of God. But in none of these parts, nor in the being straitened when His soul turned to His coming baptism; nor when, in the garden, His soul passed into the scenes which then lay immediately before Him was there (any more than any where else) that which there was when He cried out: Elci, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani. Here, too, He was perfect—forsaken of God, He would not, did not, forsake God—never did God or heaven see perfection shine out of Him as then and there, when His obedience was at the goal, “Obedient unto death, the death of the Cross.” But, if heaven found, in His submission under forsaking, for the sake of others, its delight—for it was the revelation of God as the Saviour-God,—there was, there *could be* (just because *it was forsaking* for sin, our sin, which He had to endure) no expression of approval—NOTHING BUT FORSAKING. Why hast Thou forsaken me?

I do not see how a sinner can find rest until he has learnt somewhat of that which is distinctly peculiar to Calvary: learnt that, then and there, there was a cup drunk by the Lord, in obedient submission to God,—cup of wrath due to us only undergone by Christ at Calvary. The only spot I turn to when in conscience the question is about sin, or guilt, or sins (of the human family, of myself as an individual, &c., &c.) is Calvary, and to the Lord there, crying out Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani.

He bore my judgment, in my stead, then and there, in His own body on the tree in the presence of God, and received the woe of wrath and forsaking at the hand of God. And there is my quittance, clear, and full, and complete, but there alone.

The experiences of His soul, when He said, “Why hast Thou forsaken me?”—were altogether peculiar, and distinct from that which he had to endure and experience at any other time whatsoever. In that suffering of His as forsaken—I get the measure and the judgment of my sin against God.

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### III.

#### REVELATIONS XXII. 16, 17, 20.

It is a great blessing when we have learnt to find the key to every difficulty in Christ. In Him alone is the answer to, and the explanation, and the means of taking us out of—all our difficulties.

The two verses, 16 and 17, show us glories in Christ, which may help to throw light the first upon our position; and the second upon what is our proper occupation.

16. If Christ is the root and offspring of David,—there is no one who has any blessing in them for the earth, on which our feet stand, but He. He only can take root downward, and bear fruit upward for the earth. But the Son of David was crucified outside of Jerusalem, and, if our feet stand where His did, He is gone away into heaven, and our portion on earth is what His was, that of pilgrims and strangers.

But then He is in Heaven as the bright and morning star. He is there: and He is so there as to be looked for, the live-long night, by a people who are waiting till the day dawn.

He is in Heaven; and I, while my feet tread the earth, look for Him, the bright morning star. All that belongs to heaven would not satisfy me. I want Him to whom heaven belongs. Thus these titles of Christ, explain to me my pilgrim character, and my character in hope.

Ver. 17 explains what our present occupation should be, and the strength of the heart in it. Though man has failed from Gen. iii. down to this hour, Christ has not failed, nor has the Spirit of God, sent down (that His people might know how He was honoured on high, and not be comfortless), He has not failed. Neither does He want to keep the Bride for Himself or for another than Christ. He and the Bride, in spite of all the past failure, say "Come." The work of the Spirit and the work of faith in the Bride both conspire to say "Come"; but then, too, the individual has to say "Come." Not only in my church-place, but as an individual believer, like John in Patmos, I am to say "Come." Such, too, are in the consciousness of the blessing which is theirs as having had a fountain of living water opened in their hearts to say to those around: "Come," and take of the water of life. It is not the value of immortal souls, as man speaks; but the consciousness of the desire in Christ's heart to give the blessing which He has given to me, to others, which makes me say to others "Come." Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did—told how Samaria's daughter was a channel of grace herself—and, as such, it was her right occupation to invite others.

In ver. 20, He replies—and lets out, as from Himself, the answer to designs which were in the Spirit, and which Himself had given to the Bride: a position and an occupation which accorded with His own, "Surely, I come quickly." To Him, at least, there is, as to His return, no uncertainty. He can say, "*surely*," man has failed; hope has dimmed in man's heart; has flickered,

*Fragments.*

253

and well nigh expired. In His heart, it is bright and sure, who Himself is the hope. And when He moves forward to "Come," "I come,"—then shall that which we hope for be realized and seen. And mark the word "*quickly*." To us time moves slowly on,—He *seems* as if He tarried. His heart, in other light than the dim twilight where we are, says "Quickly"! May our hearts live in the power of His purposes, thoughts and promise: and may we wait for the Son from heaven: be like unto those that wait for Him.

Simeon and Anna, and those that waited for Him had honourable occupation.—occupation much thought of in heaven at His first coming, and so now, if we really wait for Him—is it now—heaven delights in seeing us wait for Him.

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I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come, and let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.

Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

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THE Lord himself shall come  
And shout a quickening word;  
Thousands shall answer from the tomb:  
"*For ever with the Lord.*"

Then as we upward fly,  
That resurrection-word  
Shall be our shout of victory,  
"*For ever with the Lord.*"

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

"Knowing as I am known!"—  
How shall I love that word,  
How oft repeat before the throne,  
"*For ever with the Lord.*"

That resurrection-word,  
That shout of victory—  
Once more: "*For ever with the Lord!*"  
Amen, so let it be!

## THE VESSEL.

“ FILLED IN ALL THE FULNESS OF GOD.”—Eph. iii. 19.

*Eἰς πᾶν τὸ πληρῶμα τοῦ Θεοῦ,*

“ We learn in suffering what we teach in song.”

Oh! is it come — the sweet and blessed calm,  
 Foreseen and hoped for through those darksome years  
 Of anguish and of dread? Here, here at last,  
 I a deep vessel in the shoreless sea  
 Of thine own fulness, O eternal God!  
 Filled in that fulness, find my prayers, my hopes,  
 All, all fulfilled, and nothing more to crave.  
 The bright reality, the thing itself  
 Transcends all thought, eclipses every hope;  
 Dwelling in God, by God indwelt, I know  
 Love in its fulness, life to me is bliss,  
 All, all within, beneath, around, above,  
 Speak but of Thee, and tell me what I am,  
 The happiest of the happy! O thou peerless One!  
 Great God revealed in flesh, the living link  
 'Twixt Godhead and my soul! be thine the praise,  
 The loving worship of a loving heart  
 Rich in Thyself, for, oh, however filled,  
 Howe'er exalted, holy, undefiled,  
 Whatever wealth of blessedness is mine,  
 What am I, Lord! an emptiness, a nothing.  
 Thou art my boast, in whom all fulness dwells  
 Of the great Godhead, Thou whose name I bear,  
 Whose life is mine, whose glory and whose bliss,  
 All, all are mine. E. D.



## JESUS THE BEST FRIEND.

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THE best of friends is one above!  
 On earth indeed a friend is rare:  
 For in the bustle of this world  
 Each only for himself does care.  
 My thoughts then all do hither tend  
 " Jesus, the Lord, is the best friend."

All men do like a cradle move,  
 But, as the rock, He firm remains:  
 When trials bring me very low  
 He still for me His love retains:  
 When joys or griefs my path attend  
 Still is my Lord my steadfast Friend.

The worldling sets his love for sale  
 To those who know to pay the best,  
 But when misfortune shows itself  
 Such love can give but little rest.  
 Yet, come what will, I can commend  
 " Jesus, the Lord, as a true Friend."

He gave His life to ransom mine,  
 He shed for me His own life's blood,  
 He stands by me in every need,  
 And all my debts: He made them good:  
 On Him alone my hopes depend  
 " Jesus, the Lord's a faithful friend."

*Fragments.*

My friend that does His heart bestow,  
 I am my friend's, and He is mine:  
 My constant friend that constant loves,  
 Beyond the grave His virtues shine.  
 Surely I've right to recommend  
 Jesus, my Lord, as a true friend.

Retain thy friendship, heartless world!  
 To boast thy friendship I'll beware,  
 Had I ten thousand thousand foes,  
 I need not have one single care:  
 Unchangeable! my thoughts ascend  
 "To Thee, Lord Jesus, as my Friend."

[From the German.]

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"A few more breathings in this dull and oppressive element, then all will be health and buoyancy, strength and gladness, purity and peace."—G. V. W.

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"Our wishes are presentiments of the faculties which lie within us, and harbingers of that which we shall be in a condition to perform."

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"The mind, like water, passes through all states, till it shall be united to what it is ever seeking. The very loneliness of man here, is a great proof, to my mind, of a God."

N<sup>o</sup>. VIII.

## SONG OF SOLOMON.

IF we examine the Psalms, or even the Prophets, with a view to ascertain the character or circumstances of the residue of Israel in the latter days, we shall find, after their undergoing some deceptions through professed friendship, a distressed and oppressed people. The fowls summer upon them, and the beasts of the earth winter upon them (Isaiah: xviii. 6). That is the state of the nation when the Assyrian shall be pressing them from without, and the beast oppressing them within. At the centre of their nationality, and where their hearts have sought rest, will be trouble such as never was since there was a nation, and never will be again: the time when God is making short work upon the earth.

Though this will be in the nation at large, the effect on the wicked and on the saints will be very different. The nation at large will have joined with the beast and acquiesced in idolatry. Another, come in his own name, they will have received. The unclean Spirit of Idolatry, with seven others worse, will have entered into them. They have given up their God, rejected their Messiah, received the Anti-christ, and what have they when oppression comes? "They shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward. And they shall look unto the earth and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish, and they shall be driven to darkness."

But we have to do more particularly with the remnant attached to Israel, to Israel's hopes, and Israel's relationship with Jehovah, but awakened to the sense of the evil that is going on, and suffering on all hands from it where they have not fled. The Spirit and Word of God are working in their hearts. They remember the promise

does not take upon him to tell them to Him. There is progress also in the consciousness of the character of relationship. As has been noticed elsewhere, first "My beloved is mine, and I am His" (ver. 11, 16); this is the first consciousness relationship. "We have found Him." He owns, indeed, His beloved; were it not so, there would be no comfort; and he enjoys with delight her beauty, but the first thought is, "He is mine;" it is not till after many exercises, failure on her part, and assurance how precious she was to Him, that she says with calmer spirit, "I am my Beloved's," I belong to Him, though the other part remains true, with deeper feeling too, for His worth and title is more felt and better known, and in it all He is ours, whatever His title over us, and still His joy is in the beauty and graces of his people. But after this, we have not exercises, but the expression of the Bridegroom's thoughts; His dove, His undefiled, is but one, there may be nations, and many more or less connected with Him, His Beloved is one, Israel only on earth has this place. But, when he so looks at it, soon He is carried on their hearts. He goes down to see the fruits of the valley, whether His vineyard bore its fruits, at least whether it flourished, and that which represented true faithfulness, as He delighted in it (as the pomegranates on Aaron's robe) was budding forth. Israel shewing in its humiliation the breaking forth of the signs of living fruit. Or ever He was aware, His soul set Him on the chariots of His willing people, for such is the force of Aminadab. As in Ps. cx. so in Ps. xlvii. 9, translated princes (the *Nadibim*) of the people. Hence Israel becomes immediately as two armies, or as Mahanaim the hosts of God of old. When all this has taken place, and the Bridegroom has told her how He estimates her beauty, she says again in the due sense how all ought to be His, and what a blessing it was to be so in ones own right place "I am my Beloved's." He is that, her Beloved, but she is His, then all her heart could delight in: "His desire is towards me." Now this was the thought into which Israel had to grow up. Exercises of Israel, right ones, we have in the Psalms, but this thought of Messiah's delight in her is scarcely found there; but they ought to

*Song of Solomon.*

263

feel it. It opens out a new and most interesting element of their condition, of what grace furnishes them with, that all the feelings that grace can give may be then divinely given to them, and they drawn on into this blessed confidence, and knowledge of Messiah.

It seems to me that not merely particular images or expressions but that the whole structure of this, I admit, mysterious and remarkable poem, points to Israel, to the remnant of Jerusalem, as the centre of all this in the latter day, and as I have said gives a further apprehension of what is provided for, and in store for, the remnant, than any other portion of Scripture does, though we have seen it connect itself with many expressions in the Psalms, which confirm this interpretation of it. It has seemed to me that the passages I have referred to, with their combination, give a distinctive clue to the intention of the whole book.

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A FRAGMENT.

HARK! hark! those notes of praise above,  
 That swell the ransom'd throng;  
 The wondrous theme, redeeming love:  
 How joyful is the song!

But, hark! why mounts that well-known voice  
 So sweetly 'bove the rest?  
 What makes him louder to rejoice,  
 As if himself more blest?

Ah! 'tis Himself, Himself alone—  
 His work all praise above:  
 And there He stands, in glory shown,  
 Who died for us in love.

'Tis He who gave us power to praise,  
 With Him alone 'tis found:  
 The chief of sinners saved by grace,  
 We by His grace are crowned.

N<sup>o</sup>. IX.

## THE CAPTIVES RETURNED TO JERUSALEM.\*

Nehemiah i.—iv.

IT is after an interval of twelve years from the time of Ezra's action, that Nehemiah appears. He was a captive still in Babylon (or Persia, the same thing, in principle), while Ezra was doing good service to the Lord at Jerusalem. But, connected as he was with the palace of the Persian King, he may not have been free to take part with the movement or revival in Ezra's day—or, it may be, he was not then quickened by the Spirit, so as to do so.

He represents *a fresh revival*; and all is in increased weakness. He is not a prince of the house of David, like Zerubbabel, nor a priest of the family of Aaron, like Ezra. He is, as we speak, a layman; cup-bearer to the king.

There is something, however, in all this, that magnifies the grace that was in him. The burdens of his brethren have power to detach him from the Persian palace, as they had once separated Moses from the Egyptian. No miracle distinguishes these days of returned captives, but there are many witnesses of fine moral energy among them.

Eza had been a scribe, as well as a priest. He was a meditative, worshipping student of God's word; for he found the springs and the guide of his energy in that word. Nehemiah was not that. He was a practical man, a man in the business of every day life, amid the circumstances and relations which make up human history. But he was of an earnest spirit, like Ezra, and he took what he *heard*, as Ezra had taken what he *read*, and dealt with it in the presence of God.

He had heard of the *desolations* of Jerusalem, and he

\* See "Ezra," p. 197.

*The Captives returned to Jerusalem.* 265

weeps over them before God; as Ezra had seen the *sins* of Jerusalem, and wept over them before God. But here, we may ask, *how was it that these desolations had not moved Ezra?* He was all this time at Jerusalem, while Nehemiah was in the Persian palace, and could only hear of them by occasional reports. Was it that the energy had declined in Ezra? and that he himself now needed to be revived, though some years since he had been the instrument for reviving others? Such things are, and have been. Peter led his brethren on, in Acts i. 12; but he had need to be pulled up, corrected, and led on, himself, in Gal. ii. A younger Paul re-animates his elder brother Peter who had been serving the Lord, for years, while he was blaspheming him. And here, it would seem, a younger Nehemiah, a layman too, has to revive the venerable scribe who had crossed over to Jerusalem to serve God there, years and years before him.

If it were not this, it may shew us, that the Lord has one business for one servant, another for another; one purpose by this revival, another by that. Zerubabel had looked to the Temple, Ezra to the reformation of the religion; and Nehemiah is now raised up to look to the city-walls, and the civil condition of Jerusalem. It may have been thus, for such things, again I say, are and have been. Of old, there was the Gershonite, the Merarite, and the Kohathite service. And it has been surely thus, in a series of revivals, century after century, in the course of Christendom, since the Reformation, which was a kind of return from Babylon.

I say not, in which of these ways, we are to account for Ezra apparently remaining unmoved, though the ruined walls of the city were before his eyes day after day for years. He is, however, honourable, highly so, in the recollections of the people of God, as Nehemiah is.

Nehemiah was a simple man, of very earnest affections. His book gives us, I may say, the only piece of autobiography, which we get in Scripture. It is this dear man of God writing his own history, in the simple style that suits truth-telling. He lets us learn, how he turned

to one lesson is the sure and safe road to the discovery of another. "If any man will do his will, he shall know the doctrine." There is a temptation to hold back, lest the lessons we have yet to learn shall prove distasteful. "He that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow." There is, therefore, in some of us, a great disposedness or temptation to stop short. But this is disobedience, as well as the breaking of a word read and understood. To shut the book, through fear of what it might teach us, is plainly and surely, disobedience.

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HEB. XIII. 5, 6.

In ver. 4, our writer speaks of marriage; its honorableness; its duties and its uses; so guarding the Christian as to this great relationship, and teaching him how to guard himself in reference to it. In ver. 5, he begins by guarding us amid the cares of this life. Our walk is to be without trust in riches, content with such things as we have. *How* this can be—and the *why* of it—is that He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake." The Lord's presence with us down here may well suffice to make us "content" and "without trust in riches." Ver. vi. seems to allude to some such state of things as does James v. 1—5; a time of great difficulty when man's hand is against his fellow. But, what then? Surely the presence of the Lord with any one, in such days, has more in it to make free from care and content than have the trials of those days power to give anxiety.

It may be, to many a poor man, "hard to get any work; harder still to get a fair price for work; and hardest of all to get paid for work done"; *but* the Lord's presence is better than life; and the heart can be satisfied with it.

There is great force, too, in the way the statement is made.

"Himself has said, No; never will I leave thee; never, no, never will I forsake thee." Observe how emphatic it is! *Himself* has said, *thee* the individual, not you, merely, in a mass; and then the repetition of the negatives, "no; never"—"never; no, never." Clearly, he would have us to know that there is one thought which neither has, nor ever can have, any place in His mind: that of forgetting His people down here. And observe, it is Himself with His people down here. Not only has God given to us all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and assured us, too, of heavenly glory and blessing when the wilderness is passed; but, more than this, He is with us to conduct us Himself right through it. Israel's hard circumstances in the wilderness only gave to God the occasion of shewing Himself and His grace and power as being with them. There are two things to be noticed here—His presence and our faith in it. (See also Ex. xvii. 7; Hag. ii. 5). He is with us, always and unto the end. But, if we know not how to put our "Amen" to this, surely we shall not be established (Is. vii. 9).

Look upon trials in the darkness of your own shadow, and they will seem black. Look upon them in the light of the presence of the Lord *with you* and then they will shine. Truly, as we go along we find that the relative bearing of things to us is according as we regard them in faith or with the eye; in grace or in nature. It is God or my own poor, fallen self, that characterises my path to me as I go along.

"NO; NEVER will I leave thee; NEVER, NO, NEVER will I forsake thee," is the Lord's banner for His saint; banner that floats over every circumstance.



N<sup>o</sup>. X.

## OBSERVATIONS ON THE APOCALYPSE.

## Revelation xii.

IT is constantly God's way throughout Scripture, and especially in the Apocalypse, to unfold His ways to us under the form of visions. It is thus that some of the most important truths are revealed, and it is of all modes of representation the most powerful.

Truths, under symbolic forms and personifications, are presented to the eye of faith, and thereby are we taught not only the bearing and relation of those truths thus symbolized to all other things; but also, the exact proportion and relation which the parts and elements of the scene bear to one another, and that according to the estimate of God and not of man.

Who then can limit the importance of the divine mode of instruction?

It was thus that Ezekiel was shewn the judgment of God and His glory, in relation to Jerusalem, as well as the ultimate bringing in of millennial blessing. It was thus that Daniel was made to perceive and comprehend what was God's estimate of the kingdoms of the earth, Jew and Gentile, throughout thousands of years; it was thus that Peter, Paul, and John were instructed in many of the deepest counsels of God. Those revealed to the latter are largely developed in this book, under the form of visions, embodying a wide range of truth relative to Israel, the nations, and (at the conclusion) the Church, and what we find unfolded to us in the vision of Chap. xii. is one of the most prominent in that portion of the counsel of God which relates to the *earth*; that is to say, that which is connected with His earthly people; and with regard to which the earth is the scene of action; in fact, it is that from which all other such counsels emanate,

the centre round which they revolve, the pivot which sustains them: for what does this vision reveal to us? what is its aim and object? Is it not Christ the centre of God's earthly counsels on the one hand, and the object of Satan's rage and antagonism on the other?

It is not a heavenly Christ, in His relation to the Church, that we have here. That, or rather her association with Him in this central position, is given elsewhere; but in this vision He is seen in His character of Messiah, and in His relation to the Jewish people, from whom He springs as to His earthly association.

In fact, the whole scene is essentially Jewish, and does not extend to His connexion with man universally. He, the man-child, is born of, for, and in relation to the woman; and though the facts herein represented are a striking fulfilment of the sentence which God pronounced on the serpent with reference to the woman's seed, "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," it is more an accomplishment of it in connexion with Israel than with *man* in the broad sense of the family of Adam. With the *Jewish*, rather than with the *human*, seed.

The symbols under which this is represented are most powerful. Let us examine them.

The first object which John sees is a "great wonder," which appears "*in heaven*." The scene is an earthly one, yet it is mapped out to the eye of the prophet as in *heaven*, and why so? Because it is to be revealed to him as it stands in the mind and purpose of God; he must not see it as on earth, *i. e.*, in man's view and estimate, for in that case a very different aspect would have been presented,—the whole character of the scene would have been changed; but it is shewn to him in heaven, in God's holy perfect estimate and mind, and the colours of the picture are dark or bright in their *moral* bearing as *He* sees them, and not as a human unspiritualized eye would regard them.

The scene, then, is laid in *heaven*, but what does the prophet behold? "A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." This striking figure presents to us Judah,

the royal tribe, and is one in full keeping with the symbolism of scripture, for the nation of Israel in connexion with the Lord is continually represented to us thus, not (it is true) elsewhere in *this investiture*, but the simile of a *woman* is made use of to represent the earthly bride as well as the heavenly. Here, however, it is Christ's *humanity*, or rather His incarnate connexion with Israel that is to be developed; and, consequently, it is in a maternal and not in a bridal character that she appears. She is presented, not as that which He draws into relation with Himself, but as that from which *He springs*. And from whence did he spring? Was it not from Judah, the royal tribe, here typified by this glorious woman? That she represents Judah exclusively, and not the whole nation, we shall see proved as we proceed further in the detail of the chapter, where we shall find her in scenes in which no part of the nation except Judah will move in the last days.

But ere we proceed further, it will be interesting to note the figures of glory and dignity with which she is invested; symbols very frequently made use of in scripture in Jewish connexion, and which would seem to bear a double signification here.

In the first place, the sun, moon, and stars, as the three orders of the heavenly bodies, and comprising "the host of heaven" (Deut. iv. 19) are in their *individual attributes*, the expression of light and glory; and, in their *relation* to the system which they form, of the stability of God's will and counsel by which they are upheld. Conferring and reflecting light, they are a very fit symbolic investiture for that royal house which in God's mind is the centre of earthly glory and blessing, and which will confer on the earth that light which she reflects from her Lord and King. Thus, also, the sun which clothes her may, in another aspect, be regarded as Christ himself. He the "Sun of Righteousness" is indeed her true glory and covering, her "sun and shield," and in this aspect, the earthly glory which is but a reflection of Him, is "under her feet," while the stars form her crown. The *number* of these stars is significant, and would lead us to think that the symbol conveys more than (as has been stated

above) a part of the glory necessary to the woman's position. The number 12 is that of the tribes which actually form the crown of Judah, and in God's mind adorn it thus gloriously. The *crown* designates her as royal; that which *forms the crown* declares of what her royalty consists.

Many passages of scripture might be adduced to corroborate the signification here given to these symbols, which seem to be peculiarly linked with the throne of David. In Ps. lxxxix. 36, 37, they are used to designate the stability of that throne:—"His seed shall endure for ever, and His throne *as the sun* before me. It shall be established for ever *as the moon*, and as a faithful witness in Heaven." In Canticles, where Judah (there it is Bridal Judah) is spoken of, she appears in the king's eyes "Fair as the moon, clear as the sun."

In Gen. xxxvii., when Joseph dreams, and dreams in intelligent communion with the mind of God, the whole nation, of which Jacob's family was the nucleus, is pre-figured by these heavenly bodies; the sun, moon, and eleven stars typifying the nation in obeisance to him in his anticipative and Christ-like exaltation, consequent on his humiliation. So far, then, we can understand the bearing of these symbols, and also how truly the scene is in heaven, *i. e.*, in God's estimate. He always views this woman as thus mantled and clothed, although His *manifested* favour to her, her regal rights and her earthly glory, have waned since the days of Solomon, and totally disappeared to human sight; but to her shall it yet be said, "Arise, shine, for thy light has come, and the *glory of the Lord has risen upon thee.*" How truly do these words describe her as she here appears to John! What she once was, and still more *will yet be to man's* eye, and what she always is to the eye of *God*. But her intermediate history is also to be set forth for our instruction, so verse 2 continues, "And she, being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." In her is the seed, the hope of the nation, but not yet brought forth. This verse describes the condition of the godly part of the nation from the time of its earliest existence to the first coming of Christ—the Messiah. It

was in throes of travail, as it were, yearning for "that holy thing" which was to be born, on which all hopes centred. And beautiful is it to notice from the very commencement of Scripture history, this pulse of the elect nation (if we may so say) *ever beating*, as evidenced by the throbs of it, which we meet with here and there, from time to time, as we trace its history onward; one which gained strength from the moment when it was first quickened into life by God's pronouncing those significant words to Abraham, "*In Isaac shall thy seed be called.*" It beat in the heart of every godly mother in Israel, and produced that remarkable desire to be the channel of the fulfilment of the promise which was so strong in the Sarahs, the Rebekahs, the Rachels, the Hannahs, the Ruths, the Marys, the Elizabeths. Isaiah gave expression to this natural throb when, in anticipation, he bursts forth, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" (see Is. ix. 6). And as the time of the realization of these hopes drew nigh, it beat louder and more distinctly, though the circle in which it was found became more and more contracted; the greater part of the nation having, through ungodliness and unfaithfulness, fallen off from the line of God's promise, and its true hopes, so that at last it was concentrated in that little remnant which "waited for the consolation of Israel." Strong and clear did this pulse beat in the Simeons, the Annas, the Zachariahs, who, *indeed*, "travailed" in expectation of this desire of their hearts, which broke forth in accents of joy when the birth from the manger pointed on to the resurrection-birth from the tomb—communicating the glad tidings to all who looked for "redemption in Israel." As truly, if not so intelligently, did it linger in the hearts of the shepherds, who, on the announcement of the angelic host, gave vent to a gladness which evinced what had been the hope of their souls, a hope which, more or less intelligently, had buoyed up every godly Jewish heart, and which the very magi of the East felt the influence of, when, guided by the star, they came from distant lands in search of the new-born king, who personally was nothing to them.

But before the consummation arrived, during this

period of expectation and travail, *another* "wonder" is introduced on the scene; and in relation also to that object towards which all eyes were turned. "And there appeared another wonder in heaven, and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his head" (ver. 3). "In heaven" also in the mind of God is this "other wonder" seen of the Prophet. In that mind and estimate, however fair its form on the earth, it is a Dragon, "that old Serpent the Devil" here seen as embodying the perfection of Gentile power and evil. Seven heads and ten horns are seen on the Beast of chap. xiii. and xvii. the heads designating *seven* kings in its *successive*, and the horns *ten* kings in *contemporary* power; the former shewing the *course* and *progress* from beginning to end; the latter, the last form which it assumes (see chap. xvii. 10—13). Now these seven heads succeeding one another during the whole period of the Beast's existence, are evidently those who acted a prominent part with reference to the Holy Land, that land which is ever in God's mind the centre of earthly blessing, and in relation to which He judges all the kingdoms of the earth. By both scriptural and historical evidence we find that there were seven, and seven only, viz.: Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Alexander, Antiochus the Great, Antiochus Epiphanes, Cæsar, and lastly Antichrist, who is the "seventh and also the eighth." Thus we find that this Beast had its existence from the time that Gentile power was first vested in Nebuchadnezzar; and also, that it will revive, and, before this existence terminates, that it will wear the form of ten kingdoms, ruled by kings subordinate to itself. So much for the Beast of chap. xiii. and xvii; but why, it may be asked, are these heads and horns seen on the dragon? what connexion have they with *him*? The answer is solemn and teaches us that it is he (the dragon) who really wields Gentile power, the origin of which is here seen as diabolical; the human aspect of it being given elsewhere. Embodying the very essence and spirit of the Beast, we find in *figure* here, a fact which chap. xiii. 2. relates in language "and the dragon gave him his power and his seat, and great authority." The heads

*the Apocalypse.*

289

are crowned, because the whole period of their actual rule is contemplated; God's eye ranging over that mighty lapse of time in a moment, and gathering up (as it were) all the activities and exponents of its evil rule, in order to present to us under this powerful symbol of a *seven-headed-ten-horned dragon*, not only the power itself, but also its origin and animus.

Verse 4. The Dragon, seeing the royal woman in this state of expectancy travailing to bring forth that wondrous child and king who was to bruise his head and take away his dominion, stands "ready to devour it as soon as it is born," and in the strength of this malice with which he is animated, he assails the whole line from whence the expected one should spring. "His tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven and did cast them to the earth." The faithful are very frequently spoken of in Scripture under the similitude of stars, we read in Daniel viii. 10, of the little horn that it "cast down some of the host, and of the STARS [the faithful ones] to the ground" again, "they shall shine as the stars," etc. So, in this vision, Satan is presented as acting with his own evil power upon the stars, that faithful portion of the royal seed who kept up the hope and faith of the nation. This verse comprises in a few words the whole tale of his wiles, his rage, and his malice against the holy seed, the godly ones, which may be traced as a vein running throughout the Old Testament. Various were his ways and means; but if we examine the Lord's genealogy, we shall find that from Judah downwards there is some flaw or escape, as it were, in all the individuals through whom the royal seed was borne onwards, and this increasing as the time drew on. How far he succeeded in drawing so many of the stars to the earth, that is in alluring them morally from their high estate, the books of Kings and Chronicles fully unfold.

From David onwards most of the kings of Judah were servants of God, but all without exception fell in one manner or another under temptation.

*David* we know was not proof against it; *Solomon* turned to idols;

*Asa* made a league with Benhadad;

*Jehoshaphat* joined with Ahab and Ahaziah;

*Joash* at first faithful, became idolatrous;

Amaziah "did right in the sight of the Lord," but his heart was not perfect;

Uzziah also, but his heart was lifted up, and he offered incense in the temple;

Jotham walked with the Lord, but did not throw down the high places;

*Josiah* fell in battle for not heeding the word of the Lord through Pharaoh Necho. But above all did the dragon succeed with

*Hezekiah*; therefore to him is the sentence pronounced that the "crown was to be profaned and cast to the ground." Strikingly does that blotted page in Hezekiah's history illustrate the success of the dragon's allurements on these stars of heaven. He had walked before God in rectitude during all the previous part of his reign, but when the Babylonian ambassadors were sent to congratulate him on his recovery, his heart was lifted up and he made a display of those treasures, which were only given him for God's glory. Who impelled him to this but the Dragon, who doubtless knew well what would result from his falling from that high place of witness for God, to the vain glory and flattery of the world? "Therefore" (says Isaiah) "behold the days come that all that is in thine house, and that thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon, nothing shall be left, saith the Lord" (2 Kings xx.) and Hezekiah must admit that the "word of the Lord is good."

So far was the Dragon successful when these predictions took place, and the utterance of the royal woman at this epoch must have been that so finely expressed by David in Psalm lxxxix. 38, 39, 44. "But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wrath with thine anointed. Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant, thou hast profaned his *crown by casting it to the ground*. Thou hast made his glory to cease and cast his *throne down to the ground*."

But then the TRUE "anointed" had not yet come. She still travailed in expectancy of this long looked-for



child whom the Dragon now stands ready to devour. This attitude is one which Satan constantly bore towards Judah in her royal and holy character. He was the animus of Saul in his deadly and determined hostility against the life of David who was to found the kingdom, and the hair-breadth escapes which he experienced evince how inveterate was Satan's desire to destroy him. Another remarkable instance of this we find in 2 Chron. xxii. when Athaliah destroys all the seed royal; *all but one*, Joash, who was concealed in the house of God for six years. Who but the Dragon prompted her to this? and who but God could have thwarted the attempt thus? On that single life depended (speaking as to the necessity of God's counsels preserving their thread and consistency throughout) not only the preservation of David's throne, but the ultimate bruising of the serpent's head, and the salvation of the world, for from him the Messiah, the woman's seed, the bruiser of Satan was to spring. Again, we find the Dragon in this attitude towards the woman in the person of Herod, who on the report of the birth of the king of the Jews, sent forth in exceeding wrath to slay all the children of Bethlehem.

But however implacable the Dragon's enmity, he could not succeed, either by means of Saul, Athaliah or Herod; his last effort against Him was on the cross, but his apparent triumph there was the rather his most dire defeat, and in the due course of God's counsels, this wondrous child *is born from the tomb;—brought forth* in resurrection. "And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and the child was caught away to God and to his throne."

We cannot doubt, though the interpretation of this figure may *include* the actual birth of the Lord, that the truth primarily intended to be revealed here is His resurrection; for *then* was it that He having put away sin, was presented as the Messiah, and then did God say unto Him, "Thou art my Son—this day have I begotten thee." It is in resurrection that he is presented to the nation as "both Lord and Christ," the fruit of David's loins according to the flesh; raised up to sit on David's throne. How fitly is such an event represented in

vision by the resurrection-birth of the man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, but who is caught away to God and to His throne, the Heavens receiving Him till the restitution of all things. The life of Christ on earth, His rejection and death is not contemplated here, though silently implied by the intimation that the Dragon stood ready to devour Him, which of course includes the whole course of His enmity from first to last; but we have only a child born and caught away. No doubt it was His actual birth that the dragon watched in malice, as he had the royal line from the commencement, but it is from the tomb *more emphatically* than from the manger, that the royal woman brings Him forth and the heavens receiving Him, as well as His ultimate rule of all nations is consequent on this. This rule and exaltation is not entered on in the chapter before us, the catching away of the child being merely introduced to meet the enmity of the Dragon towards Him; but, in the clause which reveals His destiny, viz: as the ruler of all nations, we have a link to that which other scriptures [so fully develop. For instance, in Psalm ii. the sequel of this scene is finely set forth. The kings of the earth and the rulers, impelled by the Dragon, had set themselves against this "man-child" the Lord's anointed, but Jehovah had set Him on Zion—had declared the decree, and anticipatively given Him the heathen for an inheritance. The Apostle Paul, quoting this Psalm in Acts xiii., sets forth the doctrine of this 5th verse of our chapter in other words, for he declares the glad tidings "how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God has fulfilled the same unto us, their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is written, . . . Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee, and as concerning that he raised Him up from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise: I will give you the sure mercies of David." Here was the fulfilment of the promise for which the nation had yearned, the man-child brought forth; but, on account of the Dragon's rage, caught away.

This 5th verse concludes the first division of the

chapter, the first phase of the vision; and the succeeding one passes rapidly onward, and presents to us a scene *still future*; the whole of the present dispensation, that time which elapses between the heavens' reception of the woman's offspring, and her own re-appearance on the scene—during the last week of Jewish history coming between, and being silently passed over. The reason of this omission is evident; the vision relates solely to the woman and her child; therefore, that period during which *she* is lost sight of on earth, and He is hid in the heavens, has no reference to it, but relates to another branch of God's counsels, the church, the dispensation grace which is not treated of here. We must, therefore, pass on in spirit to that period which the Apocalypse specially unfolds, viz: the last week of Daniel, which is very fitly entered on in unbroken succession with the previous phase of the vision; for although ages elapse between the two, it succeeds in strict *moral order* and identity, and is consequent thereon.

Here then (verse 6) we find this same woman; she who had appeared in such glorious investiture, now is a fugitive (morally fugitive) character—fleeing into the wilderness for the significant period of 1260 days, “where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there”—*i. e.* during the first half of the week. That this event is moral separation and not actual flight from persecution is plain, because there is no active persecution or enmity during this period to flee from. The rage of the Dragon had been against the *child*; He being caught away, and the object of his malice removed, he is in no hostile attitude towards the woman *as yet*. We find also from other parts that these 1260 days—this first half of the week, will be days of deception and allurements, and not of violence or persecution. From the deceptive and ensnaring condition of things, the woman—the godly remnant of Judah which now comprises the royal tribe—withdraws herself morally; and is sustained by God in this honourable moral separation. She is in spirit in the wilderness even as the Lord declared when speaking of this day by the mouth of Hosea. “I will allure her and bring her into

the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her," etc. Dissociated from the guilty condition of things around her, even as the heavenly saints are now, or ought to be; she truly "revives there the days of her youth," and finds her vineyards from thence, and the "door of her hope," for in the power of that separation, she is borne through that terrible period when the waters of judgment deluge the earth, and is reserved for millennial blessing and rule, when she shall know her Lord as "Ishi," and be betrothed unto him in "righteousness, judgment, loving-kindness, and mercies."

But to return to verse 6, which only treats of the first half week of moral separation. This is her position on *earth*, and while such is the case with her, verse 7 goes on to tell us how it is with her old enemy the Dragon. . . . A wondrous scene is being enacted with regard to him. There is war in heaven. Michael (that great prince which standeth up for the children of the Jewish people) and his angels war with the Dragon and his angels, and the result is that the latter is cast out, and his place is found no more in heaven.

That great fact which the Lord Jesus saw in anticipation, when He says: "I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven" now takes place. He (the Prince of the power of the air) who hitherto has had access to the heavenly places, is *found there no more*, his power from henceforth is confined to the earth, and is all the more terrible therein from its concentration. He is the "star called wormwood," who in chap. viii. 11, falls on the rivers and fountains of waters, and who in chap. ix. opens the bottomless pit and lets forth its contents. We are not told at what precise period during the first half of the week this event takes place, but it must be during the first 1260 days, for it is the action of the star that *had previously* fallen, which in chap. ix. commences the last half, by opening the bottomless pit. And what is the mind and spirit of heaven with regard to this transition? ver. 10—13 tells us, "A loud voice," swelled no doubt by that of all the heavenly saints, falls on the Prophet's ears to let him know what is heaven's estimate of that terrible moment. "Now is come salvation and

strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accuseth them before our God day and night, and they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore, rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short time."

This utterance must not be regarded as one immediately consequent on the fall of the Dragon, or at least confined to that moment, for the victory of the martyrs who had not then laid down their lives is celebrated therein. It is more a continuous expression of the mind of heaven with reference to this event—extending throughout the remainder of the week; the heavenly saints give expression to their estimate of the joy of heaven and the woe for earth by the transition of the Dragon, and the honour and victory of their brethren who were to suffer thereby.

Suffer indeed they would, but the cry of "woe" is not for them, but for the inhabitants of the earth, "those whose rest and dwelling-place being there, are emphatically *dwellers*" therein. And well may the cry be "woe" for them who dwelt where all His power was now concentrated. This is the "woe," the *three-fold* "woe" which is consequent on the fall of the star Wormwood, in chap. viii. 13, which is the same event as the language of chap. xii., expresses as the Dragon cast out of heaven. These *three woes* are the contents of the *three last trumpets*—*four* having been sounded during the first half of the week, and the last three during the latter half, the fifth ushering in the devil's concentrated and exasperated power, and with the sixth and seventh heralding "Woe woe, woe." Ver. 13 verifies the prediction with regard to the woman which brought forth the man-child, for the great action of the Dragon on finding himself cast to the earth is to persecute her. The *child* is beyond his reach, but she, the godly portion of the tribe, is not; for her moral flight or separation

only exposed her the more to his malice; and mark! it is still as the *mother of the child* that his rage is exhibited against her. Here, however, God interposes and provides her with means (symbolically “the wings of a great eagle”), which expresses rapidity of flight, and she *actually*, not *morally* as before, but actually flies into the wilderness for time, times and half a time (three years and a-half) from the face of the serpent.” This is what we read of in Matt. xxiv. 16, where the Lord, addressing the disciples, as in moral identity with the holy remnant of the latter day, says—“Then let them which be in Judea flee unto the mountains,” etc. This was to be on the setting up of the abominations at the commencement of the last half week of Daniel, which was to be marked by “great tribulation such as had not been from the beginning of the world.” The woman, however, escapes, she is part of the company which we find sealed for preservation in chap. vii.; in fact the 12,000 from the tribe of Judah; and is borne away from the scene of the Dragon’s activity to be nourished for time, times and half a time.

This winds up the week *as to her*, but ver. 15 retrogrades a little, as to the narrative, and tells us the action of the serpent when the woman was out of his reach. This is his final effort against her—he casts “out of his mouth water as of a flood that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood”—doubtless raises up a people to pursue her, but again God interposes miraculously on her behalf, “and the earth helped the woman, and swallowed up the flood which the Dragon cast out of his mouth.” These pursuers are destroyed by earthquake, possibly that which we read of in Zech. xiv. 4, 5, at the Lord’s coming. “And his feet shall stand on that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof, toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley, and half the mountain shall remove toward the north and half toward the south. *And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal, yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled before the earthquake in the days of*

Uzziah, king of Judah; and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee."

In the above passage we learn, that on the eve of the Lord's coming there will be an earthquake, which will form a valley through which the believing remnant will flee from their foes. In Rev. xii. 16 we have seen an earthquake also, the effect of which is to swallow up the flood or pursuers which the Dragon had impelled after the remnant. Both occur at the very end of the week, and if the earthquake be identical, it may answer the double purpose of destroying the woman's enemies, and forming a passage for her escape. In Zechariah, the Lord appears on the scene just as the remnant are fleeing; appears for their deliverance. In Rev. xii. the vision does not *extend* to this last, so the precise time of the earthquake cannot be fixed, but they *appear* very similar. At any rate in both instances the earth helps the woman, or the remnant.

"And the Dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." This passage must not be regarded as continuous in occurrence to the previous verses, which relate the Dragon's final effort against the woman, and wind up the week; ver 17, recurring to that period, thus wound up, only designs to show us how he bore himself towards those *individuals* who were not in the place of preservation and concealment with the woman. She was in the wilderness, they, still exposed to the Dragon's fury, and with *them* he makes war. They were "the remnant of her seed," a second company of martyrs who suffered later in the last half of the week, even as the witnesses and the first company (the souls under the altar of chap. vi.) were martyred in the middle of it. "They are those who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Faithful to this testimony, they lay down their lives and enter into heavenly glory, while the woman is preserved for the earth and forms the *crowning* portion of that company, the 144,000, which is extracted, not only from Judah, but from *every* tribe, and enter into earthly

blessing and joy. She is the *royal* part of that company, and the whole nation *will be gathered unto her*: or at least the elect remnant in each tribe, the 12,000 sealed ones, will together form that redeemed people, that holy nation who will form the kingdom during the millennial age, Judah, this royal woman, no longer in a fugitive suffering character, but as she appears first to the eye of the prophet adorned with her crown of twelve stars, swaying the realm of earthly glory, and clothed with *Him* the "Sun of righteousness" from whom she derives all her glory and royalty, and (whom having long yearned in expectation for) she now owns His sway and finds herself lost in Him.

In recapitulation we may add that these last verses 14—17, disclose to us what takes place during the last half of the week. *Not in consecutive order by any means*, but merely in the light of cause and effect. The woman out of the Dragon's reach, he makes war with the remnant of her seed, and also makes a final effort against her. The *former*, God allows, and gives the honour of martyrdom to one portion of His own, designed for heavenly glory; the *latter*, He prevents by miraculous interposition, in order to rescue another portion for the earthly glory designed for *them*. Neither of these glories are entered on here, but the week is fully wound up, the period of the woman's concealed security in the wilderness having run out, but the Dragon is not yet destroyed, and the man-child is on the throne, *ready* to be revealed.

The object of the vision being attained, it closes. That object is, as we have seen, to show forth in strong colours, by means of these powerful symbols, not the *revelation* of Christ—the man-child—but His *origin, earthly relations*—destiny—and Satan's enmity to Him in His royal, Jewish, Messianic character. He and the Dragon are the two objective features in the vision, all the rest hang upon these, and serve to illustrate them. True, the woman appears to be the most prominent personage, but it is her maternal relation to this royal child that gives her the prominence. It is against *Him* that the Dragon's rage is excited; the "stars of heaven" are only objects of interest to this evil one, because of



their connexion with *Him*;—the woman, because she travailed to bring Him forth. He, who was to supplant the Dragon's rule and dominion—the child, being caught away, the serpent and the woman do not come in contact again until the former is cast out of heaven and finds his power confined to the earth, and that for a short time. *Then*, it is true, he assails her, and the remnant of her seed as the only remaining witness for the object of His hatred and fear.

This scene is one of most comprehensive range, embracing the whole period of the woman's existence from the time of her investiture by God with earthly glory, authority, and rule, until the *verge* of that moment when her root and offspring—this royal child, on which all her heart and hopes were centred, shall merge her in His own person, and actually take that rule which His birth from the tomb entitled Him to, as “both Lord and Christ.”

In conclusion, we may add, is it not plain that the woman must symbolize the royal tribe, and not the nation as a whole?

She retains her identity and personality throughout all the shifting scenes of this vision, and bears a prominent part in that closing week, which the nation, as a whole, will have nothing to do with. The house of Israel will still be lost to human sight and prophetic action, while the House of Judah—this woman, will be on the scene—separating herself morally, assailed by the Dragon, fleeing, escaping, and not till after the three years and a-half (during which she is nourished in concealment) have expired, will the rest of the nation, the ten tribes, be brought back. Before this last takes place, the man-child, the offspring of this royal woman, born in resurrection, received into the heavens for a season, will have come forth from the throne, for her deliverance, for the destruction of that power so inimical to her; and the resumption to Himself of those royal rights, which He had in grace *derived from*, though in divine right *conferred on*, the house of David.

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Ignorant as I am—“I know the mind of God better than I know my own mind.”

N<sup>o</sup>. XI.

## THE SPIRIT OF "THE CHRIST."

SAINTS lose much blessing by not seeing the different force of the expressions "the Spirit of God," and "the Spirit of the Anointed Man" (*i. e.* the Christ). It is not, of course, that there are two Holy Ghosts, but the one Holy Spirit (as man says the third person in the blessed Trinity) acts, at one time in connection with one part of truth, and at another time in connection with another part of truth; and He, as the animating power and principle of all truth, knows how to turn truth so that all its blessed phases and connections should appear, and should, by us, be the better apprehended and reflected.

It was the Spirit of God (Gen. i. 2) who moved upon the face of the waters in creation. It was the Spirit of God (Ex. xxxi. 2) which gave power and skill to those that prepared the tabernacle. So "GOD anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him" (Acts x. 38), etc.

In all these cases, the blessing comes forth direct from God and manifests His power, wisdom, and goodness. But the power, as flowing from the divine being, from God Himself, has not, when I think of it, the same perfect address to my renewed heart and mind, as has that which comes to me from the Anointed Man.

As rests for the heart and mind of a believer, the statement of Acts i. 8, differs much from that of Acts ii. 31—33. In the one, the sure promise "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you"; in the other, the declaration that the power (so referred to

*The Spirit of "the Christ."*

and now given) was a power which Jesus, the Nazarene, had (as the Anointed Man owned in heaven), in resurrection received of the Father, and Himself, therefore, shed forth that which they saw and heard. In the former passage, I get God, even the Father, sending down the Holy Ghost; in the latter, my heart and mind find much more; for the Nazarene, a man in heaven, passed through death, is the fountain, in the divine glory, whence it flows to me.

There should result much solemnity of spirit from the having directly to do with God, and God having to do directly with us at all times. It is a very solemnising truth. Without weakening its force, however, I may state, what I believe to be true, viz. that if the revelation to us had been only of a communication of the Spirit of God to us, and of our being under His hand, we must then, *necessarily*, have got into and been kept under the mazy state in which most Christians' minds actually are; and they are so, just because instead of their knowing the Spirit as He has been revealed to them as the Spirit of the Anointed Man, who is in divine glory, they only know him as the Spirit of God. God has been pleased to reveal Himself fully, and only fully, as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. If I know Him at all, it is in Jesus Christ, and the measure in which my knowledge of God is true, and correct, and full, is according to the measure in which my knowledge is of Him, Jesus Christ.

Now, when the Holy Ghost acts, in salvation, what does He but reveal the Anointed Man, Jesus the Lord, to the soul. And in teaching us, and instructing us, and in leading us on, it is just in the same way that He acts; He reveals "the truth" in the Anointed Man, Jesus the Lord, to us. If led by the Spirit of God, my heart, my mind, my whole being has to do with that which my renewed heart and mind can right well apprehend—the Anointed Man, Jesus the Lord, now upon the throne of God and the Father.

If, instead of being turned to Him, because I know it is the Spirit of Him (the anointed, though now divinely glorified Man) that is teaching me—teaching, moulding,

guiding, me, by means of what is shewn to me in Him (in which case I shall think and speak of Him as the Spirit of the Christ), I think and speak of Him only as the Spirit of God (which certainly He is, yea He is God the Spirit), I shall find the effect upon my own mind, and soul, and life, by a certain want of clearness in everything.

The subject is of all importance, for it is inseparable both from the way in which God has been pleased to reveal Himself, and from the way in which He has redeemed us to Himself.

Attention to this will open much blessed fulness of truth in chap. viii. of the Epistle to the Romans.

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FRAGMENT.

When conviction of sin is made little account of by the Evangelist, it is a bad sign for *him*; for it shews that he neither apprehends the message which he professes to carry, nor the ways of Him whose message it is. When God reveals His mercy and compassion to a soul by the revelation of Christ in it, there are certainly before the soul two things; first, God's object of delight (that is, His Christ); and secondly, the self to whom Christ is revealed—the soul, the very contrast of Him. Its state, when so found, is one which the God that delights in Christ must loathe and does loathe, though being compassionate and showing mercy to the individual soul, He then and there, by the revelation of Christ to it, pledges Himself to its deliverance.

I do not admit that a soul *must* be brought to despair before it can know peace, or that it *must* be brought to despair before it can know settled peace (both of which are taught by some); but that a soul knows mercy and compassion in God, or the meaning of the work of Christ who has never tasted self-loathing and self-abhorrence, I certainly do hold. Mercy has certainly to be measured, not only as having its heights in God, but also its depths in us that are saved. And most surely the contrast of what Christ is morally, and myself must produce self-loathing and abhorrence.

When I was in the flesh my conscience was hard, and I had no consciousness of sin present with me. I was under guilt. When grace revealed Christ to me, my conscience might, at once, become perfect, fit for God's presence in the holiest, through the blood; but then, guiltless, I became conscious of sin in every way.

The *ways* of the Lord in grace are not known to him that makes little account of conviction. For if the whole work, from first to last, of salvation is of the Lord, yet His way of applying it is such as to give to the saved one his full place individually: he is to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling, just because it is God that worketh in him both to will and to do of His own good pleasure. By making us know what we are and loathe it, He, in His ways of grace, permits us to identify ourselves with Him against ourselves, as also against the world and Satan.

The would-be Evangelist, who makes light of conviction of sin, may find himself a good maker of stony-ground hearers; but he will find that the fruit-bearer is the man that has had convictions, deep and many, and has them, still onward to the end.

N<sup>o</sup>. XII.

## MEDITATIONS ON SUBJECTS OF INTEREST.

I.—THE HIGHER SERVICE: WHAT IS NECESSARY  
FOR IT?

(Continued from page 225.)

I REMARK that some Christians, when they decline from any measure of light which they have received, become in proportion more formal and legal. Carnal activity is adopted to compensate for the spiritual consistency. Those who went to the battle gave one out of five hundred to the *priests*; and those who did not go (those may I not say, who have not been spiritually exercised) gave one out of fifty to the *Levites*. They gave more and received less. Spiritual exercise fits us for using the spoils won in conflict priest-wise unto God, and the same portion of spoil possessed by the one who has tarried at home (the unexercised soul) will never lead him beyond Levite service.

The highest order of service is comprised in those words, "Lovest thou me?—Feed my sheep." When we love a person, it is wonderful how quickly and accurately we find out what will please him, and how grateful it is to please him; but we only attain this by studying his mind and taste. We do not impose our own likings on the one whom we wish to gratify, or if we did, we should plainly declare that we were more occupied with our own tastes than with his; and we are found seeking (perhaps unintentionally, yet in very deed, for one's acts reveal one's heart) to make an impression, that is, to be acknowledged as doing and conferring favours rather than as really desiring to yield ourselves so as to render service, and afford gratification to the object who so interests us. Thus, if I do not know what is the Lord's desire, in fact, what is His mind, I can never

meet His mind so as to gratify Him; but the more I know Him, the more I shall study him, in order to do what love dictates.

If one is much in intercourse with the religions of this day, one will be conscious of the difficulty of simply referring service to this test: "Does it proceed from love to him, and does my love express itself in accordance with the tone of His mind at the present moment?" This test obliges me to take quite a different course and view from all the great popular labourers of the day. I shall find myself at one side and they at the other; but my comfort will be, that I am exercising my heart in its love to my Lord and Master.

Man's good and blessing is the avowed aim in the present day, and not that the Chief Shepherd of the sheep may have the testimony of love and obedience from the hearts of his servants. No doubt man's real blessing can never be brought about independently of Christ; and I might argue, if I seek this, I must prove my love to the Lord. In a sense this is true; but where I am at fault is in making a result my *aim*, instead of (the parent of every part of the result even) the heart of Christ.

Nothing can form the saint but Christ, and faith in Him as He is. Any one who does not make this primary must become latitudinarian, and will be found to be seeking mere men, and not Christ. One man faithful to, and valiant for, Christ, will do more real good than a million of latitudinarians—even devoted ones. It is one grand test for all questions, viz., "Does this accord with the mind of the *one I love*?" Any one else's mind I do not consult. If I can respond to *that*, I am happy, and I am useful.

Am I ever troubled at my little usefulness? To be sure I am. But, I ask, what is my path? Am I to seek to satisfy my own feelings in working; or to do exactly what He may define for me? Do I execute the little He places within my range efficiently, and as He would wish? If I must, with shame, answer "No," how can I expect Him to introduce me into a sphere where I might see myself more useful, but where *He* would not be the

end I sought. I believe that, according to the measure in which Christ is in us, we shall serve acceptably. I cannot tell where or how; but the widow who cast in two mites exceeded all the rest. It is the motive, not the act, that determines the condition. The Lord has, in one sense, no higher occupation for us here than serving Him. How great that honour! But in one sense He never wants a servant; that is, He can easily provide Himself with servants for general things; but He has very few confidential ones: these he seeks, and before they are such, they must be educated in His mind. This, I believe, is very often the higher occupation which our natures are prone to undervalue, as possibly Moses did in Midian, or Joshua in retirement, or Paul in Arabia. Work and service are great snares in the present day. The alabaster box is too often given to the people instead of to Christ.

What is a "Father?" (John ii. 13.) One who knows "Him that is from the beginning"—Christ. That is the highest, the grandest attainment. Let our aim be to learn Him, in order that He may use us *as He pleases*. Our service will then be of the true priestly character, and that most grateful and honouring to Him.

## 2.—TAKING A STAND, OR BEING ESTABLISHED.

The inquiry as to how a soul is established is an interesting one. I believe there is what I should call a general establishing and also a particular one. Rom. i. 11, plainly intimates that the Apostle expected by his ministry to have so helped the saints that they would be established. This I should call general; but I doubt not that there is a particular establishing with respect to almost every distinct truth received.

We may observe that many young believers pass through a period of vacillation, be it long or short, and that this indecision is not so much from unbelief of the truth, as from uncertainty as to how we should act when trial occurs; for it is temptations in the large sense which test the faith and the power of truth in our souls. If we withstand the assault as Samson withstood the young lion, we are so far established, and we take a stand; our

inability to do so is, I am sure, the secret reason why so few are really able to take a stand. Peter is directed to establish (translated strengthen) his brethren when he himself was converted. To take a stand would be what I should designate being established in a general way, and this is the meaning of 1 Peter, v., for there the subject is suffering for persecution, and out of it the soul was to emerge, not only established against the suffering, but also in a general and larger sense: "After you have suffered awhile, make you perfect (put you properly together), *stablish* you" (make a stand), and so on.

But it seems to me that the word "establish" is used more frequently with reference to some particular truth, practice, or trial, against which you must make a stand, and which when you are clear about in the power of the Spirit's intelligence, lends you a strength which enables you to stand. The question respecting it may have decomposed you; but now, being convinced, and, consequently, established, you derive strength from the truth or trial which, when an undetermined question, made you restless and uncertain. And not only so, but this establishing on a particular occasion necessarily imparts steadiness and fixedness to the *character*. Its effect is by no means confined to the truth or correctness of any question, or intention of any trial, which gave rise to it; but this confirmation respecting any particular point imparts to the whole character a decision which the word "establishing" peculiarly conveys.

You will see even old saints confused and uncertain because they are troubled by some question of doctrine or practice which has arisen, or by some trial; and until this is cleared up, their hearts are not "established."

There is, as I have said, an establishing in the truth as first received, which the Apostle speaks of in Rom. xvi. 25: "Now unto Him who is able to establish you according to my Gospel;" but in all the other passages, though the effect would be to produce the general establishing, yet the necessity for it arose from some particular cause. Peter was to establish his brethren evidently on the particular point in which he had failed himself. In 1 Peter v. 10, it was the suffering and



pressure of persecution which required establishing, and produced it. With the Thessalonian saints it was also in reference to distractions from persecution, and questions which had arisen about the day of the Lord.

The more blessed way of learning, is first to be established, if I may so say, in one's title, for till then no stand can be taken; and after that, always to encounter every question or disturbance with the determination to be established, with respect to it; for there can neither be strength, comfort, nor testimony until you are able to take a stand on the point of difficulty which occupies you for the time.

### 3—OCCUPATION WITH THE WORD, OR WITH EXPERIENCES.

We may observe that some souls are more occupied with the Word of God, and others with their experiences of Him and His presence.

Without in the least depreciating the latter, I should say that the former is safer and surer; because when the soul loses the sense of His presence, as it often does, it falls into darkness and depression; whereas when it is kept before the Lord by His Word, it is always conscious of the support of it.

“He has set His word above all his name.” The word, if truly engaging my soul, would always introduce me into the path of Christ's sympathies; and thus, *Himself* would be revealed to me. It conducts me to His side, and then I ascend from the wilderness, leaning on my beloved. I may have very true feelings, but feelings are not the material for conflict or growth, though they are the consequences of progress and victory. They are unreliable for a moment beyond the present, and a change in circumstances would soon affect my feelings.

*Faith*, even, is not a sword, though it is a shield, and therefore we shall find that faith without the word to sustain it will not be sufficient to support the soul on trial. My feelings may be quite genuine and honouring to the Lord, but they belong more to the banqueting-house than to the soldier, or to the one who needs to have his feet like hind's feet, that he may walk on high places. We sometimes seek the cheer of the

banqueting-house, without seeing that we are provided not only with entire title to enter, which the wedding garment expresses, but that we are invested with the panoply of God, so as neither to be prevented nor dislodged. I must see that I am suited to the host; I must wear costume which He has provided, viz., the enjoyable apprehension of how He accepts, "accepted in the beloved"; but if I am in an enemy's country (as we are while left below), I must also see that the host's enemy will be powerless in his attacks on me. Though in a hostile country, the army of occupation may be feasting with the general; that is no reason that the guard should not be mounted. On the contrary, the guard should be all the more careful and watchful at such a time, lest there should be any surprisal. In other words, though I may be prepared to enjoy my Lord in the condition worthy of Himself, I must also be provided and armed against all the attacks of Satan, who would try to disturb my happiness; and this can only be by the Word which, dwelling in us richly, will in the end make melody in our hearts.

The study of Scripture, which is really invigorating, is that which does not dwell with *abstractions*, but with a *person*. The enunciation of a precept or an idea by a *person*, Himself the witness of it, not only enforces conviction, but communicates power to retain it.

The soul feels the gradual adoption of the truth in power, not so much from the conclusiveness, or the authority with which it has been propounded, as from the imprinting on it by the personal application. You cannot abide (mentally and morally abide) with a greater without adopting his likeness.

A glass which has covered an engraving for a certain time, will often show the outlines of the picture for a day or two, after which it will fade away, the similitude only depending on the association with the original, which must ever be kept up. This is a faint illustration of what association with the Person in the study of the Word would produce on us.

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"Our failures are worked into the texture of the eternal plans which cannot fail, and never falter."

## No. XIII.

## THE HOPES OF THE COMING.

IT is remarkable, that Paul, in his epistles to the assemblies, only *twice* addresses any of them as "in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ." Both of these occasions were in his writing to the Thessalonians. He addresses them in the first epistle as "in God *the* Father," and in the second epistle as "in God *our* Father;"<sup>a</sup> but with the exception of this variation, the superscription is the same to the Thessalonians on both occasions, and is peculiar to the letters addressed to them.

The first of these epistles shows us many of the blessed bearings of the coming of our Lord Jesus; the second guards against the abuses of the doctrine. But in both letters the Hope of the Coming has a place preeminent. This is recognized by all; and is, indeed, evidently on the face of each of the chapters.

Among the first, if not itself the first, of Paul's epistles, this 1 Thessalonians is supposed to be. This, if so, gives a peculiar appropriateness to the superscription, even as the superscription certainly is peculiarly appropriate to the doctrine of the two epistles. For in Scripture there is moral connexion between the various parts of things treated of, and a responsiveness of one part to another constantly to be traced.

And, indeed, what could be more natural than that as the infant church became first manifest to the eye of the Apostle, his thought from the Spirit should be of it, as

<sup>a</sup> The expression "in God *the* Father," has higher, larger, and fuller scope and range in it than that of "in God *our* Father." The former suits well with the doctrine which he is unfolding; and the latter is quite in keeping with the guarding us from the misuse of it by others.

being in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Church was a divine thing, something for God, as much as of God and by God, and it had no human precedent as had the kingdom;<sup>b</sup> it was something, too, for heaven, and as to earth merely a pilgrim on it. With the Church in its early infancy, there seems to be as much consistency in the words, "in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ," rising to an inspired apostle's mind and dropping from his pen,—as there is harmony and consistency between the commencements and the salutations found in connexion or with the first appearing of her Lord in the gospels.<sup>c</sup>

The Lord Jesus Christ in God the Father (in heaven), and a Church sentient and conscious of such its place on high, and on earth of grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:—such is the blessed revelation to us, through the Apostle's pen. Well might he give thanks to God always for them; well might he remember such a people always in his prayers (ver. 2); and that not only because he knew the spring opened for them on high, where their fountain and spring was, and what the blessed streams were that flowed down from on high to them; but that he knew that (ver. 3) they also, even as he had been, were partakers of the faith, love, and hope of the gospel of a risen and ascended Lord. The God, whose love they now knew by faith, would realize to them, in due time, a glory and a portion worthy of Himself and of the Lord they served; and this, too, they knew.

God had been manifested in flesh and seen on earth; the Son of Man is now seen by faith in heaven, on the throne of the Father in the majesty of the highest, and seen there as our Life. "Ye are dead and your Life

<sup>b</sup> Eve in the garden of Eden, Joseph's wife, and Moses' and Solomon's were figures in a certain sense of it; but were not understood as such, until life and immortality were brought to light by the Gospel, and man had no plan to make good even in those shadows.

<sup>c</sup> See, for instance, Matthew i. 1, 18, 25; ii. ; iii. ; iv. ; Luke i. 28-37, 42-55, 68-79; ii. 8; iii. 15, 25-39; John i., etc.

*The Hopes of the Coming.*

is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3); "for the time spoken of by the Lord is come, in that day ye shall know that I am in the Father and ye in me and I in you." (John xiv. 19, 20.)

In connexion with such a blessing as Paul had tasted and knew to be a portion and blessing common to himself and the Church, or assembly, of God—there were three things—as he states them to the Corinthians in his first epistle and thirteenth chapter—faith, hope, and love; or, in the order in which he names them here, faith, love, and hope. These three were not found in connexion with Judaism, or with the law, or with the governmental ways of God in the same way as they are with Christianity. Paul knew very well that, while he was Saul, these three were not known, to him; that when he was converted, he learnt somewhat about faith, love, and hope—such as he never knew before, and that what he had learnt that he had to preach. For the governmental ways of God are not the same as the revelation of His heavenly grace.

Sight or sense, righteousness and possession—rather than faith, love and hope—had characterized him while he was Saul. And there were two reasons for this; one on God's side, the other on man's. Until Christ came, man was being tried, to see whether any thing could be made of him, in himself. This necessarily supposed that God, restricting His action to what man was, should deal upon the ground of what was in man, and upon the ground of righteousness, and of what was seen to be in man. On the other hand, man, being a sinner, while under the process was blinded; had a veil over his heart; was self-righteous; and really self-deceived. The law was the claim of the King of Israel, as creator too, over Israel for works; Sinai was a visible display; there was no aggressiveness of love in the law. It blessed a man if perfect,—cursed him utterly if short of perfection in one *single* thing. It restricted itself to Israel, and shut Israel up in itself,—upon the ground of righteousness too, and of blessings already received. The gospel was the opposite of all this. It was by the foolishness of preaching; faith not works,—faith built upon a report of

something in heaven, and not seen down here as yet; love too came out, for its proclamation was that God was seeking the lost, and this upon the ground that His Son had died for those who were His enemies, sinners without strength; and it taught strange and marvellous things to come. Judaism, the law, governmental ways had a being and something tangible to sense, apart from any thing to come and believed in. Christianity is a delusion—if there is not an unseen world of invisible realities, and if there is not a world to come. Faith, love, and hope, were new doctrines of Paul—they were not his while he was Saul.

The declaration—The seed of the woman shall bruise thy [the serpent's] head was the expression of God under the circumstances of the fall of man, and presented the truth in itself, that to man as ruined, an unseen God was the alone stay and deliverer. Surely His character shined out therein; and, where He is known, His character communicates itself to those that rest on and hope in Him. When "Hope shall change to glad fruition,—faith to sight and prayer to praise" then, still LOVE *will* abide. God will then be known as a present God, in whose blessed presence we shall be,—whose glory we shall then enjoy;—Himself, God, is love; ourselves filled into all the fulness,—for God shall then be all in all. Though man kept not his first estate in Eden's paradise, God will introduce the believer who hopes in Him into the paradise of God; the world, the flesh, and Satan, notwithstanding.

The faith, love and hope of the Thessalonians were theirs, and exercised by them "in the sight of God and our Father" (chap. i 3). His presence were the *springs* of these—faith, love, and hope; and faith, love, and hope—in them too, were in exercise (happily for them) in the presence of God and our Father. Yet, on the other hand, they were spoken of by the world, and by the men in it among whom their practical results were seen (ver. 7—10). It is only when He, who is in the presence of God, and is the object and subject of faith, love, and hope, is seen by us, as ourselves being in that presence, that there is vigour and power in us: but, when we live

*The Hopes of the Coming.*

313

in that presence, then both they that believe and the world have help and testimony from us; such, too, as forces itself home upon them.

And mark, here, that there was, in these Thessalonians, not only an ensample to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia (ver. 7); nor only an anticipating of the need of the Apostle's speaking anything among men where the report of their faith was spread abroad (8—9), but also, in the sight of God, there were practical proofs in them, that if their springs were in Him, He had also His testimony made good in them—*your work* of faith, *and labour* of love *and patience* of<sup>a</sup> the hope of our Lord Jesus Christ. The world knew that *the faith* was the plea of these Christians for the work of turning from dumb idols; that they professed to have so known the love of the living and true God as to have left all to serve him; and that they plainly declared that they waited for God's Son from heaven.

It is said of them of old, that they looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. But God's Son from heaven is that for which the believer now looks:—a person rather than the blessings which He will surely bring with Him. There may be light about the glory to come without the Person who is the introducer and centre of it all being looked for; but, if He be looked for, the glory is looked upon as His

<sup>a</sup> Patience of the hope of our Lord Jesus Christ seems a happier rendering than 'patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (Comp. ver. 3 and 10)—"to wait for His son from heaven." Of course, all the future, from the hour of His conversion to the glory, the Christian is found secured in Christ. But then the answers to his needs, while he is here in humiliation, are found in Christ while He is in that position in which He is now present to faith, *i.e.*, as Son of man in the majesty of the Highest, on the throne of God and of the Father. When He has come we shall have received the answer—all need done away, all glory present. And yet the hope is not first of all, of things which He will bring, but of His ownself. And, even now, saved by the faith of Him and of what He has done,—the heart gets into communion with Him as He is; and so gets the love of God shed abroad in it; but He will take another position than that which He holds now, though that be the fruit of what He has done. He is to come again—and we wait for Him, the Son, from heaven.

glory and the heart counts its treasures in His presence, and not by their suitability to us (contrasts to scenes now present), but by their connexion with Him. It is of importance to keep Himself before us, that Himself bear our sins in His own body on the tree; that Himself, a living anointed man, who is upon the throne of God in heaven, cares for us; that Himself will come again to receive us to Himself, that where He is there we may be also. For otherwise the Spirit will be hindered in the free communication to us of the place, portion and expectation which belong to those that have Christ Himself as our exceeding great reward. And, moreover, it is His person which shows the unity and the harmony of who He is, and of what He has done, is doing, and yet will do. Our faith, our love, our hope are all Himself, and from and in Himself.

There is a moral propriety, a graciousness and a divine power in the coming of the Son being our hope which ought not to be lightly passed over. If the Church be the Church of the living God, it was chosen in and formed for Christ. Who ought, or who could, God put forward as the opener of His glory, the introducer of her to Himself, save this Son of His love. And how gracious to us-ward the being turned from the lust of our own hearts *to wait for His son from heaven*. On the other hand, it is, according to the power of God,—the power of God, both according to His glory, in which we shall meet Him, and according to all the weakness and manifest infirmity found in us until then—that the hope is *to meet His son*. God has thus marked as the goal an event which brings with it all that God desires in us, and all that we can think to be necessary, in order for us to stand in perfect freedom in His presence.

When the Lord is come I shall be like Him, for I shall see Him as He is. This corruptible will then have put on incorruption, and this mortal have put on immortality; not one thing absent from me which the heart of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ can desire to see upon one who is predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son that He may be the first-born among many brethren;—not one thing absent, but everything



*The Hopes of the Coming.*

315

abounding to me which my own heart (then fully taught in all the Spirit's thoughts) could wish. The salvation of my soul, I have: for the salvation of my body, I have to wait. The body which I have now is sinful, all its circumstances too, here below, tell of sin and conflict; true, I can, by faith, look up to Him in heaven who is at once the answer of a good conscience to me,—and in whom I find God's faithful promise of my change of body, and transfer to other circumstances than these here below. But, so far as I am spiritual, I now groan from and by reason of the wilderness, and for or after the glory. The goal of the redemption is, as to myself, His coming. Then, all that God has to change will be changed for me,—for us; all that God desires, or intends to give to, to put into me,—to, into us, will be mine,—will be ours. That bourne reached, and then, farewell all humiliation to our human selves, welcome then all the divine portion. And heartily does the soul own that this climax is fitly connected with the Lord Jesus's taking possession of the place and the glory which His love will share with us; fitly is it made dependant upon the hour of His leaving, as Son of Man, the Father's throne, to take possession of the place which, in love, He will take and share with us. I shall see God then; and be with Him,—a son who will have nothing, as now, about him unfit for that presence (though the ready answer to that unfitness is now in Christ, whether that unfitness in us be of deficiency or of evil; or in us or around). The living God will then have glorified sons, and the glorified sons will have perfect rest before Him. His presence too our abode. Now this is an honour which God has reserved for His son at His coming. I am now in the wilderness in a body of sin and death; my soul has its perfect answer in Christ as to itself, as to the body, as to the circumstances around it. But I have to wait for Him, who will change the body as well as take me into His own circumstances then; circumstances glorious in heavenly places, and such as He can share with me, with us. If called to leave the body now, I leave it to His care who knows alone where the dust of a Paul, of a Peter, a Stephen or a John is; my soul goes

on high to Himself: but the position is an anomalous one for a man; for the soul to be in one place and the body in another was not part of the order of creation or of Eden. Divine power can do it in judgment. The wicked go to their own place, their bodies to the dust, just sentence upon sin until the general judgment. The justified by faith, judged according to their faith in Christ, lay their bodies down, bodies of sin and death still in a world of sin, but themselves go in soul and spirit on high, fruit of God's judgment of the worthiness of His Son; absent with the body, present with the Lord. '*With the Lord*' is enough to faith, enough for faith; 'this day thou shalt be *with Me* in paradise' was enough for the poor thief. About paradise he knew little, its peculiarities were not the matter of consolation to him, but '*with Me*' was enough for him to whose heart Christ was known. Absent from the body, at home *with the Lord*, is enough for us too.

If we examine the why and wherefore of the want of power by the saints (alas, of our own selves!), as to this hope, we may find profit.

Perhaps with most of us, that which gave power to the revelation to our souls of the coming of our Lord, was emphatically its blessedness as something to be brought to us, whether we might be alive in the body and remaining until the coming, or whether our bodies might then be in the grave. Fraught with blessings to our own selves, to our souls, and to our bodies, that coming most surely is; and it is sweet to think how grace divine has anticipated a portion for us, the hope of which forms our hearts after God's mind. Not only a portion which will meet every desire which we now can have in spirit, but a portion to the which we must be formed, and the forming of our thoughts to which is by the hope set before us. But God who has shown it, He will bring it. The bringing of it is not my work. I have to wait for it, and by having my heart and mind set upon it, to be formed for it. God is the counsellor, the planner, the introducer of it, the revealer of it to us; an exceeding and eternal weight of glory it is. But, then, I find that many a soul which was first caught with the grace of

*The Hopes of the Coming.*

317

God's being the propounder and setter forth of this hope, and which was bright in the joy of it at first, has so got occupied and absorbed in the suitability to itself of the blessings that it has lost sight of that fulness of weight found in it when it is looked at, not on the side on which it bears on us, but on that in which it reveals God Himself and His Christ.

True, nothing but seeing my Lord for myself ever can enable me to say "satisfied." And truly I am glad that my full satisfaction waits upon him, and is, by divine wisdom, made to hang upon the next great public act of that blessed One in obedience to His Father; He will bid him, in His own time, to rise up from the throne of the Father; to come forth from the majesty of the highest, and I shall see him and be satisfied. (1 Thess. i. 3, 10). *Then* too my, our, walk will issue in the kingdom and glory to which we are called; and worthily of which we have now to walk (chap. ii. 12, 19, 20). Truly, *then* all the conflict of the wilderness now, with its ever-varying face of woe, will then have its issue to me, to us, in a permanently established unblamableness in holiness before God, even Our Father (chap. iii. 13.) But, besides all this, as we see by the allusions of chap. iv. 13-18, God's counsel and plan is, that He who as Son of Man is at His own right hand now, hidden from man, and who is there the spectator of the working of Satan in the heavenlies and in the earthlies (space and place being to all appearance given up to the adversary), He will rise up and come forth. Oh, the delight of God in that blessed One! and may we not, with reverence, say it—Oh, the joy of God over Him when the hour comes for his manifestation; His own joy, too, in the revelation of that Father's faithfulness to Him, and to those He loves,—His joy in the consciousness that it is in and by Him, as Son of God and Son of Man, that, at that time, the full vindication of God and His people, and of the faithfulness of God, will be made. He will descend from the throne on high into the heavenlies,—they purged and all the enemies driven out,—He will search all the dark corners of the grave (prison-house of Satan), find all the dust of those whose faith was in Him, display His divine

almighty power in uniting the souls that were *with him* to bodies now glorified; change the living, and catch all up into the air.<sup>a</sup> The movement rolls through space from the throne of the Father, from the majesty in the highest, down to the prison-house of the grave and its keeper, and Himself, the leader and power of the movement, shows forth what God is to those that, in spite of all appearances, put their trust in Him. Oh, the blessedness of His taking thus the lead in action as Son of Man! and heaven above in the highest being witness that this Son of Man, whom it thus sends forth a second time, can tell forth, as man, in the heavenlies, in the earthlies, in the parts below the earth, of the faithfulness of God to his man-rejected Servant, and that the blessedness of all those who have put their trust in him is His joy and his reward.

Body, soul, and spirit now sanctified to him, and preserved blameless, shall, in that day, in fields of light, witness for Him (chap. v. 23.)

It must be so. God has not forgotten the son of His love that served Him. The counsel is firm. The plan is complete. If he tarries in the execution of it, it is not because He has two minds, but because he is still adding to the number of those who are to stand in the glory. But the glory of the Son of Man in heaven, and the glory of those that believe in Him, is a sure part of the divine work; work that divine glory makes needful and counts to be due to Christ.

It is this, the divine side of it, this the way in which the coming of the Lord (next grand expression of God's actings in redemption) presents that which God desires, and purposes for the manifestation of the Son of His love, which alone, I conceive, can keep the heart lively as to it, and occupied with it, under all circumstances.

<sup>a</sup> Another adds :—"Then shall He who was once brought amid the dust of death, make the very dust to praise the Lord; and with almighty power, according to the glory that is in Him, pour contempt upon him that had the power of death, rifling his prison cells, and turning the wickedness of Satan, and the weakness of man, to the glory of God and of heaven."

*The Hopes of the Coming.*

319

Such a view of it is as bright to a dying man, while a-dying, as to a man toiling through life.

The end of my life here below, the fruits of it, they are each and all to be found *in that day*; and how bright will they then be to the heart! and how important to keep that in contrast with things present within or without one ever before the soul! *But* there is also God's side of it—God's view and portion *in the coming*; and in that view we measure (not by contrast with things within and around *us* now, but measure) as those let into divine counsels, plans, and thoughts; measures according to God's honours put upon THE Man whom He delights to honour—Our Lord and adorable Saviour.

That the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things choke the word, is in the nature of things but too true; that nothing but purpose of heart and a walk in which, through grace, we firmly put self down and lay aside earth, seeking heaven and eternity, can enable the soul to be lively, is conceded as true also; but, over and above this, the soul needs to see the hope in its highest and brightest aspect, so as to have the full benefit of its power.

Set between the first coming of Christ and His second coming, we are; and, as such, what manner of persons ought we to be?

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THOU dost not ask for worthy saints,  
 Sinners Thou called'st solely,  
 Whose root lay deep in bitterness  
 In birth and life unholy.

I durst not cry—I've done my best,  
 And so prepare to meet Thee,  
 'T was Thou didst bare Thy loving breast  
 'T was then I flew to greet Thee.

Then Satan raged, and bade me own  
 Thy Word was all a fable;  
 From him I turned to Thee alone—  
 Thee who alone art able—

Doubt to dissolve, in blaze of day,  
 The seeds of life to nourish;  
 To scare the invader from his prey,  
 And bid the soul to flourish.

*Sunday, April 13th, 1862.*

## THE CHRISTMAS ROSE.

(By a pleasing coincidence, *Veratrum Album*, a plant yielding a most soothing medicine, is called the Christmas Rose.)

THERE is a flower all flowers above,  
 Unlike the flowers of earth,  
 It tells a mystery of love—  
 A flower of Heavenly birth.

It blows not when the summer sun  
 Has bathed the world in light,  
 But ever seeks its race to run  
 In winter and in night.

It blows when storms have swept the sky,  
 When streams forget to flow,  
 When fair broad fields all hidden lie  
 Beneath a robe of snow.

Fair flower, in thee my Lord I see,  
 In thee I love to trace  
 His undiminished love to me,  
 His beauty and His grace.

When sin its bloody ploughshare drove  
 Across my quivering breast,  
 Thy soft white leaves a covering wove,  
 And soothed my soul to rest.

When all around is dark and drear,  
 And Summer flowers depart,  
 Then is the time thou com'st to cheer  
 The Winter of my heart.

Whate'er bright summer tints are given  
 To garnish flower or tree;  
 While Jesus lives and loves in Heaven,  
 The Christmas Rose for me.

*April 23rd, 1862.*

B.

## FROM THE GERMAN OF "PAUL GERHARDT."

## "DU BIST EIN MENSCH."

Thou art a man! this known to thee,  
 Why strivest thou beyond thy strength?  
 What God designs alone shall be,  
 His work and word fulfilled at length.  
 Wisdom and wit thou dost combine  
 A thousand cares to claim as thine,  
 Thinking of what may happen thee,  
 Before thy course completed be.

It is in vain, thou can'st indeed,  
 Not by thy over-anxious thought,  
 Divert the purposes decreed;  
 Not one hair's-breadth can'st vary aught.  
 Thy sorrow serves, when once distressed,  
 Only to rob of proper rest,  
 Plunges thy soul, in woe and pain,  
 Short'ning the days which might remain.

Wilt thou perform what God delights,  
 And thus thy soul's true good increase?  
 Roll all thy care, as He invites,  
 On Him who only can give peace.  
 Place all thy need in God's own hands,  
 'Tis only He who understands  
 A happy issue how to send:  
 To Him thy life and ways commend.

Who looked on thee when close concealed  
 Thou wast within thy mother's womb?  
 Ere that thy soul, to life revealed,  
 Reposed as dormant in the tomb.  
 Who watched thee then with constant care  
 What could thy might accomplish there,  
 'Twas strength Divine, with blessings rife,  
 That fashioned thee and gave thee life.

*Poetry.*

Say whence thine eye and vision came,  
 Whose power defined thy bones within?  
 What artist's skill contrived thy frame,  
 And covered it with beauteous skin.  
 Who placed thy veins so neatly laid,  
 So orderly to each conveyed,  
 Thy limbs arrayed in comely grace,  
 Who gave to every part its place?

Where was thine heart, thy will, thy mind,  
 When heaven's curtain opened wide,  
 Who form'd the land? the sea defined?  
 And the remotest bound beside?  
 Who brought the sun and moon to view,  
 The herbage, tree, and creature too?  
 Bid them thy pleasure to fulfil,  
 Obey thy heart's desire and will!

Lift up thine head and look around,  
 Gaze well beneath, behold above!  
 See how God's hand is ever found,  
 And ever manifest His love!  
 Before thy being, God did care  
 Both food and clothing to prepare,  
 To meet thy need the milk should be,  
 Ere that thou cam'st, all there for thee.

The garments which should swathe thy form,  
 Thy cradle, chamber, and thy rest,  
 The roof to shelter thee from storm,  
 Ere folded on thy mother's breast,  
 Before thine eyes had seen the light,  
 Or gazed around with vision bright,  
 Or knew what in the world might be,  
 Were all things fore-prepared for thee.

And yet thou wilt be led by sight,  
 Guided by that which thou dost see,  
 And trust alone in the vain light,  
 Which manifests itself to thee.  
 What thou beginnest thou wilt own,  
 As clear and right, and that alone,  
 What fathomless to sense appears,  
 Occasions in thee endless fears.



*Poetry.*

Now mark it well, how all thy schemes,  
 And cherish'd longings came to naught,  
 Thy fondest wish and brightest dreams,  
 Were oft with disappointment fraught.  
 And then again events took place  
 Which human skill could never trace,  
 Or sense or reason ere devise,  
 To fill thy heart with such surprise.

How oft wast thou in deepest need,  
 Through thine own will and wish ensnared,  
 Thy blinded mind had death, indeed,  
 Instead of life for thee prepared;  
 It would have cost thee sad remorse,  
 Had but thy God allowed the course  
 In which thy purpose sought to run,  
 And left thee ruined and undone.

But He whose love no thought can bound,  
 Our sorrow into gladness turns,  
 Maketh that right which we confound,  
 Though all our folly He discerns.  
 His inward love constrains Him so  
 To us poor sinners here below,  
 That with a tender Father's care,  
 His children His compassion share.

And oh! how oft He holds His peace,  
 Yet doing all for our true gain,  
 Though the poor heart will never cease  
 To sit in grief and anxious pain.  
 Looks here and there, and nothing finds,  
 Will see, and yet the darkness blinds,  
 Would fain escape into the day,  
 Attempts, but cannot find the way.

But God pursues His counsels deep,  
 In His wise way His end performs,  
 Hushes the boisterous winds to sleep,  
 Guides to the port, away from storms.  
 And bye and bye, when all is done,  
 The battle over, victory won,  
 Then man beholds Who ruled throughout,  
 His purposes to bring about.

Therefore, dear heart, fresh courage take,  
 Nor fret thyself with anxious care,  
 God has a heart ever awake,  
 And will what's best for thee prepare.  
 He wont forget—believe, and learn,  
 His inward bowels to thee yearn,  
 He calls thee by endearing names,  
 Thy very need His love inflames.  
 He burns and glows with truth and grace,  
 And thou can'st therefore well suppose,  
 How strength with strength He can replace;  
 Though oft we mar our own repose,  
 Taking such weight of carking care  
 As well might drive us to despair,  
 As if it was, beyond debate,  
 He followed us with scorn and hate.  
 Put far from thee at once the thought,  
 Nor yield to grief, which robs thy peace,  
 Whate'er He does is what He ought,  
 Though it no present joys increase.  
 That which thy Father, God, doth see  
 For thee most good, alone shall be,  
 What does His mind and will content,  
 No human power may prevent.  
 Do as a child, and quiet be,  
 Within thy loving Father's arms,  
 Beseech His fostering care for thee,  
 His mercy which thy bosom warms.  
 So will He by His Spirit lead  
 In ways unknown to thee indeed,  
 But thy *well-ordered conflicts* o'er!  
 Bring thee where sorrows are no more.

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“*Our* business it is to treasure up the Word ; it is the Spirit's to bring it forth out of the store-house, and to apply it. Have you renewed your strength, to-day, out of God's word ? How know you what fiery darts Satan may aim at you ? Or what will be needed to quench them ? One little text, held *as God's own word*, is oft a panoply against infidelity in the day of battle.”

“What a difference it makes which side the Jordan one lives ! How different the climate, fruit, prospects, etc. When once the Jordan is crossed, then, too, 'tis the Lord's battles, and not one's own.”

## REVELATION V.

I SAW, in the right hand of Him  
 Who sat upon the throne in Heaven,  
 A volume writ without, within,  
 And closely seal'd—the seals were seven.

A mighty angel loudly cried,  
 “Who is of worth to take the book,  
 “Unloose the seals, unroll it wide,  
 “And on its hidden pages look?”

But there was none in heaven, or earth,  
 Or underneath to fix upon,  
 Who could be deem'd to be of worth  
 To take the book, or look thereon.

Then wept I much, in grief of soul,  
 To think there could be found no man  
 Of worth sufficient to unroll  
 The volume, or its writing scan.

“Weep not,” an Elder said, “nor wail;  
 “The Lion of Judah's royal house,  
 “The Root of David, shall prevail  
 “To ope the book, the seals unloose.”

Then I beheld, and saw appear,  
 Amidst the Throne, amidst the Four,  
 Amidst the Elders gather'd there,  
 A wondrous sight, unseen before.

As though it had been slain, there stood  
 A Lamb, seven-hornèd and seven-eyed;  
 Eyes, the seven spirits of our God,  
 Sent forth throughout earth's boundaries wide.

Then came the Lamb, and straightway took,  
 Of Him that sat upon the throne,  
 From His right hand the seven-seal'd book,  
 To make its hidden contents known.

And when the mystic book was ta'en,  
 Elders and living creatures all,  
 Before the Lamb that had been slain,  
 With one accord did prostrate fall.

Harp had they all of music rare,  
 And golden vials of perfume,  
 Whose odour was the earnest prayer  
 Of saints from out this world of gloom.

They sang a new and thrilling strain—  
 “Worthy art Thou the book to take,  
 “And loose the seals, for Thou wast slain  
 “A sacrifice for sinners' sake.

“And hast redeem'd us by Thy blood  
 “From every country, people, tongue,  
 “And made us kings and priests to God,  
 “And we shall reign on earth ere long.”

Then I beheld, and heard the sound  
 Of thousands upon thousands more;  
 Yea, countless angels gather'd round  
 The Throne, the Elders, and the Four.

Saying, as they the voice upheave,  
 “Worthy the Lamb that once was slain,  
 “Power, riches, wisdom, to receive,  
 “And honour, glory, blessing gain!”

And all the spacious heavens contain,  
 And all on earth, and all beneath,  
 And all within the vasty main,  
 Yea, every creature that hath breath,

Heard I with one accordant tone,  
 Say, “Blessing, honour, glory, power,  
 “To Him that sits upon the Throne,  
 “And to the Lamb for evermore!”

“Amen!” the living creatures say;  
 “Amen!” a confirmation gives;  
 And prostrate Elders worship pay  
 To Him who ever, ever lives.

N<sup>o</sup>. XIV.

## FALSE AIDS JUDGED.

WHEN the soul descends to an association below its profession, there is assuredly a secret predilection for the association, one which has been hitherto cloaked to oneself as well as to others, by the profession. Hence the necessity in God's ordering for the predilection to be exposed, and the profession weeded of an element, which like a worm in the bud, prevented efflorescence, and hindered the full expression of the light which has emboldened us to make the profession. A man would not willingly associate where he had no inclination; but it is only in his misery that his inclination is distinctly ascertained. In a Christian, the activities of his nature are more or less dormant at first, and while there is no pressure to draw them forth, he feels himself in a new scene, and the power which enabled him to enter it for a time sustains him; and his profession is truly in accordance thereto; but all the time there may be a worldly element which has not been crucified, and this element will expose itself, when the dreariness of the earth, or persecution for the word's sake arises; for though simple persecution from man only invigorates the soul when the truth dwells there in depth and reality, still as a rule, persecution or distress will necessarily invoke any element of nature that remains unmortified; and the strongest inclination breaks forth from its obscurity, and takes the lead.

When things are bright and easy around us, we may maintain our profession without much difficulty, but when there is famine in the land, as with Abraham, if we get occupied with it and not with God, we must consult our nature, and our nature by its counsel reveals to us its resources; which resources are nothing more nor less than its uncrucified predilections.

Abraham's nature counsels him to go down into Egypt for relief from the dearth; not, observe, into *Syria*, for *Syria* was the place from which he had departed at the positive call of the God of glory; and seldom will a true soul surrender what it has openly professed, or return to paths absolutely renounced; but there is an Egypt to every renewed soul, even after *Syria* is discarded; that is, though the world, or

rather the flesh, may be abandoned, there is an uncrucified nature in us, which our profession and standing as Christians have hitherto concealed, and which the pressure of circumstances exposes, when in dreariness and loneliness, we turn to Egypt (i.e., nature, not exactly the flesh) for help and for alleviation of our suffering. Thus was it with Abraham; when he went down into Egypt all evidence of his profession was lost; and his exit from it was covered with reproaches for his unfaithfulness.

But this was not all: however searching this open and public discipline was to him, a still greater and more personal suffering awaited him, and one by which his soul was taught more deeply to rise above those resources of nature which had led him into Egypt. Something, therefore, *acquired in Egypt* must be used as a means of crucifying that element in his nature which had led him down there. How this was effected is detailed in that remarkable page of Abram's history which treats of Ishmael, son of Hagar, the *Egyptian woman*; and do you not think that after all the sorrow he endured about him, when he had to cast him out, a thing "very grievous in Abram's sight because of his son" (and who can wonder that it was so?), that he did not, from his heart, repent having ever set his foot in Egypt? But still—so tender and blessed are the ways of our God—it was not till after the birth of Isaac that this painful demand was made on him, though long before necessary, in order that the element of opposition to faith in the soul might be silenced in crucifixion.

The Lord's way with us when we are learning, is to attach us to Himself *first*, and *then* detach us from nature. It was not until after the weaning of Isaac, and the feast consequent thereon, that Ishmael was cast out by the requirement of Sarah and the command of the Lord. How many years had elapsed since Abram had gone down into Egypt, seeking to mitigate the dreariness and famine which beset him in Canaan! yet only *now* comes the moment for the crucifixion of that which led him there, in the summary and relentless casting out of his son as a wanderer in this cold world! But Abram's soul, now full of the unfoldings of God's love to him in the gift of Isaac, is prepared, though sufferingly, to surrender the fruit of his own nature, which for five-and-twenty years has been allowed to remain only partially rebuked.

The Lord will teach us how tender and full is His love, and how absolute is His holiness in detaching us from every support which obstructs our enjoyment in Himself.

N<sup>o</sup>. XV.

## THE DISPERSED AMONG THE GENTILES.

## ESTHER.

IN the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, on which I have already meditated, we saw the captives brought back to Jerusalem, there to await the coming of the Messiah, that it might be known, whether Israel would accept the Messenger and Saviour whom God would send to them. In this book of Esther, we are in a very different scene. The Jews are among the Gentiles still.

We will look at it in its succession of ten chapters; and in the action recorded, we shall find—

The Lord God working wondrously, but secretly.

The Jews themselves.

The Gentile, or the Power.

The great Adversary.

i., ii.

The book opens by presenting to us a sight of the Gentile now in power. It is, however, the Persian and not the Chaldean; “the breast of silver,” not “the head of gold,” in the great Image which Nebuchadnezzar saw. We are here reading rather the 2nd than the 1st chapter in the history of the Gentile in supremacy in the earth. We see him in the progress rather than at the commencement of his career; but, morally, he is the same. Moab-like, his taste remains in him, his scent is not changed. All the haughtiness that declared itself in Nebuchadnezzar re-appears in Ahasuerus. No spirit or fruit of repentance—no learning of himself—or of what becomes him as a creature, is seen in this man of the earth. The lie of the serpent, which formed man at the beginning, is working as earnestly as ever.

VOL. XIV. PT. IV. 16

this present Gentile age, God is apart from Israel, like Joseph in Egypt, or Moses in Midian, apart from their brethren—as I have already noticed. Yea, and as many voices of the prophets have anticipated (see Ps. lxxiv.; Is. viii. 17, xlv. 15, xviii. 4; Hos. v. 15, etc.). And the Lord Jesus, speaking as the God of Israel, at the close of His ministry, says to them, “Behold your house is left unto you desolate; for I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!” (Mat. xxiii. 38, 39).

But he cares for them. Their names are in the palm of His hands. He revokes not the judgment; but He will, in due time, awake for their deliverance. It is Jesus asleep in the boat, winds and waves tossing it. But in the needed time He awoke, and rose for the quieting of all that, which, in its anguish swelling, was raging against them.

Hail to the Lord's anointed!  
Great David's greater Son!  
When to the time appointed  
The rolling years have run,  
He comes to break oppression,  
To set the Captive free,  
To take away transgression,  
And rule in equity.

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#### FRAGMENTS.

“The history of Rahab has sometimes encouraged me about unconverted relatives;—her bringing all her family under the shelter of the scarlet line.”

“Soon our pilgrim journey will be over, and then we shall be recounting, like Moses to his father-in-law, what befell us by the way, and how the Lord delivered us.”

“Ought I not to have learned, by this time, not to expect or desire rest here? And also, how to trust simply with child-like confidence, in his unceasing tender care.”



N<sup>o</sup>. XVI.

## ON THE REVELATION.

THE glory which shows itself to us at the opening of the Gospel by St. John, is both entitled and described there very simply. It is called "the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father," and borne by one who is described as "full of grace and truth."

And that Gospel is the journey of that glory in this evil world of ours, and a display of the work which it was always at, so to speak. Upon whatever scene the Son of the Father there enters, He is seen to shine in that glory which brought life and peace to sinners.

Accordingly, none but sinners discern it. It was a glory that could be seen only by the eye or heart of a convicted sinner. It was full of *grace*, and could not, therefore, suit itself to any other. But such ever found it to their joy and blessing. Andrew, who follows Jesus as the Lamb of God, gets entrance and dwells in the place of that glory, while even the mother, knowing the Lord not as a sinner, but as one who would have him honourable before men, is kept apart (i. 39; ii. 4). So the Rabbi who seeks him as a teacher, is kept back, while the woman and the Samaritans, who learn their sin, and that He was indeed the Saviour, get His company with them for two days (iii. iv.). And it is so afterwards with his kindred in the flesh, and with a convicted adulteress. They know him not, save as one whom they sought to exalt in the world; and he would have them remove from him—while she enjoys the unspeakable preciousness of finding herself alone in his company; and all between them is reconciliation and kindness (vii. viii.).

Other instances of this character show themselves in

the Lord's public ministry through that Gospel, down to the end of the twelfth chapter, where that ministry closes. And so, when we see him afterwards in secret with his own (xiii.—xvii.), it is still "the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father" that is shining before us; his discourse to them is full of the Father—how he had come from the Father to reveal Him to them—how the Comforter would soon come to make that revelation effectual to their souls—how he was going away to get mansions for them in the Father's house, and that he would return to take them there. So full is this glory still of its own proper light and power, and so diligent about its due and appointed work.

And at the very end we see it still. The glory is moving upwards, returning to the place from whence it had descended, and has sinners in its train, conducting them along with itself. Jesus rises; and Peter and John follow him. His path is theirs. They all leave this earth together. The Only Begotten of the Father is on his way home, taking the younger of the family with him, and we lose sight of them on the upward journey (xxi. 19—20).

Such, I judge, to be the glory that is seen in *the Gospel* by St. John—such its journey across this world, such the spoils it gathered, and such its end and home.

But, as soon as we open *the Apocalypse* by St. John, it is another glory we see. It is not a revelation of Jesus Christ which *the Father* gave him; so that he could again say, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father;" or, "whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father saith unto me, so I speak" (John xii. xiv.); but it is a revelation of Jesus Christ which *God* gave to him. It is the glory, not of the *bosom of the Father* (John i. 11), but of the *throne of God* (Rev. i. 14). It is the effulgence, not of Him who lay in the one place, but of Him who is to inherit the other. And just on this glory being introduced to us, the saints, in a little ascription of praise, tell us, as it were, that they had already learnt the lesson which the Gospel had been teaching them, the value of the ministry of the Son of *the Father*, and that they

stood now in the conscious washing of His blood, and in the dignity of kings and priests unto God and *his Father* (Rev. i. 5, 6).

And having thus learnt the lesson of the former glory, they were prepared for the lesson of this second glory. Such is the holy order of the soul in getting the knowledge of God and of His ways. Such divine knowledge is from glory to glory, from one revelation to another. And being instructed in the glory of "the only begotten of the Father," the saints may well stand before this glory of "the Prince of the kings of the earth," of Him who is coming forth as "the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the Almighty." If the *bosom* have comforted us, may I say, the *throne* may now elevate us—if we stand in *grace*, we may learn *judgment*.

Accordingly, this book gives us the actings of the throne of God. There are judgments—voices and thunders, seals, trumpets and vials—all ordered by the power of the throne which judges right, and which is preparing for the righteous kingdom, at the time of which, the heavenly seed of God, in embodied glory, descends as the golden city or the Lamb's wife.

Such is the path of the glory here. It is a descending path. And such are the links between the Gospel and the Apocalypse of the beloved Disciple. In the one, he leads us by the light of the glory of grace out of the world, first to the knowledge, and then to the house, of the Father—in the other, he leads us, already in heaven or in the Father's house, forth from that, first to the scene of judgment (chap. iv.), and then to the scene of our inheritance and dominion (chap. xxi.).

Christ will look at the Bride with delight, when thus manifested in glorious beauty as the Golden or Holy City. But still it is *herself* that will be His chiefest object. The heart well and always knows this, when there is true and pure affection. And we have the expression of this on the return of the Prodigal (Luke xv.). For the Father had fallen on *himself* in secret, and then brought him forth and presented him in the house, clothed in beauty and honour. But his heart had been the most deeply touched at the beginning.

For, as another has said, "glory is but the consequence of love, and the source is always the sweeter. The favour out of which a benefit flows is dearer than the benefit itself."

The opening of this wondrous Book gives us its title and character. "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him." For it will be found, I judge, to be a *revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ* in such characters of glory and power as He derives from *God*, or a revelation of Him in the exercise of *judicial* authority. And, as two exercises of judicial authority awaited Him after He had ascended to God, so, accordingly, this Book has two parts.

i.—iii. These chapters give us the first part. The Lord is here exercising judgment in the *church*, or among the lights of the sanctuary. This is called "the things which are."

iv.—xxii. These chapters give us the second part. The Lord is here exercising judgment in the earth (first by agencies, and then personally), and thus preparing it for His kingdom. This is called "the things which shall be hereafter."

This is the general order of the Book. It also contains both a preface and a conclusion.

In the preface, we first learn that this wondrous Book deals with "the word of God," and "the testimony of Jesus Christ;" that is, God's counsels made known by Jesus Christ. Then we are told the manner in which Jesus Christ ministers this testimony to the churches; and blessing is then pronounced on him who acts righteously by this Book, by either reading or hearing it, and by keeping the things which are written in it. After this, the Seven Churches in Asia are called to listen; and, after a benediction on them, the Lord Jesus Christ is announced as the One who is about to come "with clouds," or in the solemnities of judgment (Dan. vii. 13; Matt. xxiv. 30; xxvi. 64), a coming quite according to the judicial character of the Book, and which is to make the kindreds of the earth wail because of Him, and them which pierced Him, to see Him to their confusion.

But in the midst of such an announcement of the Lord as even this, the saints have two happy utterances put into their lips. On His being here revealed as "the faithful witness, the first-begotten from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth," they praise Him as the One who had loved them; and again, when His coming in the clouds, as for judgment, is announced, they invite His glory with full confidence still, and say, "Even so, come." For they have thoroughly learnt that they may have boldness even in a day of judgment (1 John, iv. 17).

Then, when these utterances of the saints pass by, the Lord reveals himself as the "First and the Last," a title which he frequently takes in this Book, the very title, too, that he so constantly assumes when *judging* the idols of Babylon in Isaiah (see Is. xl.—xlviii.); all this still assuring us, that He is now about to speak in *judgment* again.

In the mouth, indeed, of every witness here, we learn that this Book is a revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, which *God*, not the *Father*, gives him, or in *judgment*, not in *grace*. But this is only here at the close of the volume of the New Testament; for we may observe, that the Lord has ever sought, so to speak, to publish His name in *grace*, before He does so in *judgment*. In one way or other He will and must make Himself known, for that is His glory; but he seeks the rather to be known in goodness than in judgment, if men will hear.

We have this variously illustrated. To *Egypt*, for instance, the Lord made himself known in Joseph, the witness of His goodness; for by Joseph He filled Egypt's storehouses with all kinds of wealth. But Egypt forgot Joseph. A king arose there, who persecuted Joseph's people, and said of his God, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey Him?" Then the Lord had to publish His name in that land in judgment, saying to the king, "In this thou shalt know that I am the Lord, behold I will smite with the rod." He was now to be made known not in Joseph, but in plagues. So in *Israel* afterwards. The Lord Jesus was offered to them as "the chief corner stone," the "sure foundation," the One in whom they should find salvation and strength. But being rejected

as such, He was to be revealed to them as "the head stone of the corner," in the power and judgment of an exalted stone, which was to fall and grind to powder.

And so in *the world* now. This present dispensation is publishing God in grace. He is beseeching men to be reconciled. But they who will not thus know Him in the great salvation, must know Him by and bye in judgment (2 Thes. i. 8). If the *blood* of the Lamb be despised, the *wrath* of the Lamb must be met (Rev. vi. 16). The same "Lord," who is "full of grace and truth" now, will by and bye send the sword out of his mouth to execute righteousness (Rev. xix. 15).

And this is the difference between the Gospel and the Revelation by St. John. The Gospel publishes the name of the Lord in grace, the Revelation in judgment; the one flows from the Father, the other from God.

Now, according to all this, when we pass the preface, and get into the body of the Book, it is the Lord, the Son of Man, in the place of *judgment* that we see (see i. 9—20). For these verses introduce the first scene which the Book discloses. St. John sees the Lord, as Son of Man, prepared to judge the sanctuary. He does not show Himself to John as the Priest at the Golden Altar, with his censer and burning incense, but at the Candlestick with the Golden Snuffers; as though He were inquiring (and that for the last time), whether or not the Lamps of the Sanctuary would burn worthy of the place, or whether He should not be compelled soon to remove them. It is the Son of Man with garments down to the foot, and golden girdle about His loins, with head and hair white as wool, eyes of flame, feet of brass, and voice as of many waters; in His hand holding the seven stars, and in His mouth the two-edged sword, and walking in the brightness and power of the midday sun, among the Seven Candlesticks. All this was an expression of judgment, judgment of the House of God. John shall hear himself personally and individually addressed with the wonted words of God's sweet love to us, "Fear not;" but still

this is a vision that may well make the stoutest of the children of men to fall as dead.

It is to be observed, for the comfort of our souls, that, in restoring the heart of St. John to full ease in the presence of the glory, the Lord does not remind him of their intimacy in the days of his flesh; how he had lain in His bosom, how he had been with Him on the holy mount and in the garden, and how he had committed His mother to his special care—but He simply says, “I am He that liveth and was dead.” For our title to confidence before God, our ability to face the glory, and to stand before it at ease and in liberty, rests not at all on any special grace which may be in us, or on any personal privilege conferred, or any peculiar place or excellence, but only and altogether on the preciousness of the blood of the Lamb, or on the death and resurrection of Jesus, which is the common property (as through boundless grace we may call it) of all believers.

The place in which the Lord is thus seen by St. John, was not his *natural* place. He had been raised from the dead, and was now ascended into heaven, there to dwell for an age as Mediator between God and men, the Advocate with the Father, and the Lord too, the Son over his own house, the Head over all things to the Church. He had received gifts for men, and was dispensing apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers and evangelists from his glory, for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body here, as Lord to, and of, the Church. But his place and action here are not the necessary attributes even of this his lordship. As, though Moses was king in Jeshurun, it was not natural to him in that character to call on Levi to draw the sword and slay the thousands of the people. Jesus the Lord is here seen on the earth, and arrayed in judgment and vengeance. For he had been disturbed. It was like his action in the days of Babel or Sodom. He had either to go down and see if things were according to the cry that had gone up, or to go down to confound and to scatter (Gen. xi. xviii.). It was also like the God of Israel afterwards, who, while on the Mount with his servant Moses, giving him the shadows of Christ, “the

shadows of good things to come," occupied there as it were with that which *naturally* was his in the riches of his goodness, is disturbed by Israel's apostasy at the foot of the Mount, and has to tell Moses to go down, and visit the people who were corrupting themselves there (Ex. xxxii).<sup>c</sup> So here; the priest was to be in his temple in the heavens, waiting daily (as we may speak), in his natural grace, on the defiled feet of his saints, or giving the gifts still, that he might both feed and trim the candlesticks. The Lord was on high, Head over all things to the Church, ordering every thing for her blessing and profit. But, now, the corrupters again at the foot of the mount have disturbed Him, and He comes down again to see if indeed it be according to the cry of it, and if so, to confound and to scatter again.

Another character of judgment had gone on previously. I mean, the judgment of the churches *within their own borders*; the Lord, as the Priest, being then still in heaven. Thus, Corinth had been judged. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." This was the chastening of the Lord of the Church (1 Cor. xi. 32). But here, it is the Son of Man descended to the earth (the place for Jesus as Son of Man) with a threat to remove, and not with grace to correct and purify. The difference between these judgments appears to be the same as the judgments on Uzzah or Shelomith's son by the hand of the Lord and His congregation, and the judgment of Jerusalem by the hand of the Gentile. The first class of judgments was for correction and purity of the house of God, and for the keeping of the people still at home. The second was for their removal out of His sight. Delay there was, in thus bringing the Destroyer of the Gentiles on his way against God's city. Prophet after prophet had risen early and warned the people, and Jeremiah had wept and prayed and preached, even after Nebuchadnezzar had sat down at the gates. But when he entered, he entered with a new character of judgment. It was

<sup>c</sup> The glory in the cloud guided the Camp—but when the Camp sinned, the glory was disturbed, and looked forth to judge.



for the *removal* of Jerusalem; as here, the Son of Man has come (after the like delay and patience), but it is for the removal of the candlesticks if they repent not.

This I judge to be the place in the history of the Church which we reach here. This place and action of the Lord do not *naturally*, so to speak, suit him as the priest. But the Church's corrupt state puts him into it. Just as His coming in the latter day with vengeance on the world, and on His apostate Israel, is not His natural coming. At first He came offering peace and the kingdom. His heavenly heralds said, "Peace on earth!" But the unbelief of Israel, and the confederacy of Jews and Gentiles, which prevailed to cast Him out from the earth, has so changed His course, that He is now to return to the rebellious citizens in the power of "a day of vengeance." But that is His unnatural course, "His strange work," as Scripture calls it. Israel's and the earth's sin alone account for it. Just as here, the corruption of the Church changes the place and action of the Lord; and, instead of seeing Him with the towel and the water in the heavenly temple, or with His hands filled with gifts to give out from the glory on high, we see Him arrayed in judgment, taking to Him His righteous power to remove the candlestick if it repent not.

And the sight of Him in such a character overwhelms even St. John. It must—it could not but do so. For this is the Lord marking iniquities; and before Him, in such a place, who could stand? It is not the Lord talking with His own, as a travelling friend, or as a happy guest, or as a gracious Master, as once He did when He rose from the dead. But it is the Lord, awakened by sin at the foot of the hill, coming down to see, if all were even according to the cry that had gone up. And who could stand when He was thus angry?

Isaiah, in his day, saw Him in such a place. The doors and posts were shaken, and the house filled with smoke, for the Lord was about to put judgment on the house that was called by His name; and the prophet, seeing himself in that house, trembles and learns his uncleanness. And the Lord restores him, as here He restores John; though, like the Prophet of Israel, John

falls as dead. But the Lord, by the seraphim and the coal from the altar, taking away his iniquity, restores Isaiah; as here, the revelation of Him who was dead and is alive again, and alive too for evermore, restores John; for that carries the restoring virtue with it. The death and resurrection of Jesus gives the sinner his full confidence; taking the sentence of death from him, to lay it on One able to bear it. And so, from this time forth, let John (our brother) be called through this Book to what visions and judgments he may, he is not again disturbed. He is twice overwhelmed, it is true; but it is by the holy delights of visions of joy and glory, and not by the storms and lightning of judgment. And, according to such an introduction as this, we find our Lord in the following scene (ii. iii.). It is the Lord in "the house of God," challenging the Churches to answer for themselves. He had before set them in blessing, and now He looks for fruit. It is as though he had heard a report of their unfaithfulness, and was now saying to them, "How is this that I hear of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward." He had already communicated with them through the Apostles; but now He does through the Angels. St. Paul had addressed them as in the *pastoral grace* of Christ; St John now addresses them as from the *judicial authority* of Christ. The Apostle had fed them and disciplined them as in the place of *dependance*; but now these epistles challenge them as in the place of *responsibility*.

And one striking, though it may be minute, feature of this difference in the mind of the Lord, when addressing the Churches through the apostle and through the angel, the one being *gracious*, the other *judicial*, appears in this. In olden times, under the dispensation of the law, God was constantly regarded as *the Searcher of the heart*, the Trier of the reins of the children of men; and, then He did so, in order to reward according to every man's work (see 1 Chron. xxviii. 9; Ps. vii. 9; Jer. xvii. 10). But, by the apostle, God is revealed as the Searcher of the heart with another intent. "He that searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind of the spirit." That is,

*On the Revelation.*

365

He is not searching the heart, in order to reward the works, or even to refine as gold is refined; but, in His search of the heart, He finds out the exercises of the spirit. That is what He considers there; that is what detains and engages Him. It is not a search ending in the detection of *evil*, but *good*—of good to be owned according to himself, and not of evil to be judged and punished (Rom. viii. 27).

But in this Book, we have Him again as the Searcher of the reins and the hearts, for the ends and purposes that He was so under the law. “All the Churches shall know, that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works” (Rev. ii. 23).

These are the principal passages in the New Testament, presenting God in this character of the Searcher of the heart; and this comparison of them helps still to shew us the Lord in judgment in this Book of the Revelation, and that He has changed His aspect, now addressing the Churches through the angel, from what it was when addressing them through the apostles. He has returned now to take his place, such as it was when He was under the law, the Exacter of righteousness, the Assayer of the heart, that He might render according to every man’s work done there, and not to find out the breathings of His own Spirit there; to bless and comfort accordingly. And the moment they are thus addressed, they are found wanting. As candlesticks bound to shine to the praise of Him who had set them in His sanctuary, they are now visited; and the common result of all such visitations of God’s stewards may tell us the end of the candlesticks also. For the crisis or judgment has always found man unready. Whether planted in innocency, in a sphere of providence, or under a ministration of grace, man has been found unequal even to hold a blessing. “Adam, where art thou?” got this answer, “I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself.” The vineyard of Israel, afterwards should have yielded its fruit to Him who had planted and dressed it; but when He came, it was only the wild grape that he found—and so it is now with the

candlesticks in the house of God. They had been duly prepared by God's care. They were nothing less than *golden* candlesticks—Churches fed by the Spirit, blessed with blessing from “God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,” made fully furnished and well-ordered lights in the sanctuary. But now, that visitation is made in due season too, and the Son of Man finds something unsuited to the holy place. These seven Churches (the sevenfold or perfect expression of the Church), are challenged by the Son of Man with these words, “I know thy works”; but the sevenfold light is but dim and uncertain. This steward of God's glory is but unfaithful also: and so, by and bye, the same inquisition will be made of the “earthly gods”—the Gentile powers, to whom the Lord has committed the sword; and they will then, in like manner, as Adam, Israel, or the candlesticks, be found wanting; and they will have to fall as men, and die like one of the princes (Ps. lxxxii). All the stewards are thus found wanting, when weighed in the balance; and the Lord is justified in His sayings, and clear when He judges.<sup>a</sup>

These seven Churches are the places of this judgment. There were, it is true, other congregations of the Lord at the time; but the seven are enough to exhibit the judgment—for seven is completeness. So some of them may be found, by this judgment or visitation, in a better condition than others; but still, the Son of Man sees the whole thing different from what it ought to be: one was not judged in the other, but each was responsible for itself; and thus some maintained their purity longer than others. But still the whole tone of this visitation bears with it a notice of what the end speedily was to be, as in our day we see it; for Philadelphia and Smyrna are now as fully removed candlesticks as Sardis or Pergamos.

These challenges of the Churches by the Son of Man lead us to see that all was nearly over, that there was but a step between such rebukes and their removal. And surely we do not, in our day, need to be told of the disturbance which has taken place in the “House of God.”

<sup>a</sup> The “Son of Man” is the Lord's title here (i. 13), and that belongs to Him in judgment (John v. 27).

We learn that Adam lost Eden; and the present groans of creation tell us so. We learn, that Israel lost Canaan; and their present wanderings over the earth tell us so. And how do we see the sanctuary? Are we not witnesses to ourselves, that we have been no more able to hold the blessing which was ours, than Adam could hold Eden, or Israel, Canaan. The candlestick that was set for the rebuking of all else as darkness, and for being itself the embodied and well-ordered light of the world, is not now at Ephesus or Sardis, or any where else.

We may try our ways, most surely, by all that is here said to the Churches; but this does not amount to the Son of Man owning us as His only light in our place. And our first duty, therefore, both in grace and wisdom, is, to be humbled because of this; for, though we may have much, in fragments, that belongs to the candlestick, yet all that does not give us the standing and privilege of the candlestick, entitling us to set aside as darkness, and as not of the sanctuary, all that is not of ourselves.

When our fidelity to the Lord became the question, we were found wanting, as any other steward. This book will, at the end, shew us that the question of the Lord's fidelity to us will be answered in the other way. For as the *Lamb's wife*, the Church will then be found to survive all the judgments, though here, at the beginning, she could not, as the *candlestick*, stand the righteous challenge of the Lord. And this is man; and this is God always. Shame and ruin mark our end; honour and peace and everlasting truth and love, the end of the Lord.

And in this shame and ruin, I believe our three chapters end. The perfect order of the seven lights of the house of God is gone, and gone too, not to be restored; and, according to this, the prophet is at once called to see other things and other places, to witness other scenes (but still a scene of judgment, as we shall find), not that of the priestly Son of Man in his temple, but that of God and the Lamb in the earth. But this judgment is delayed till all the foreknown family have come in. For "God's long-suffering is salvation" (2 Pet. iii. 16). "The fulness of the Gentiles" must come in, and all be

brought to the knowledge of the Son of God (Rom. xi. 25); and, therefore, before we are led, in our prophet, to behold this second scene of judgment, or the judgment of the earth, we are given, I believe, *a sight of the Church (now gathering from all nations) in Heaven*, under the symbols of the living creatures and crowned elders round the throne; so that the ascension of the saints into the air had taken place at some untold moment, between the times of our 3rd and 4th chapters.

Our ascension into the air will lead us to the Lord, and then, with him, to the Father (John xiv. 1—4). But it is not these results we get here. It is not the saints either in the Lord's presence, or in the mansions of the Father's house, that we see here; but the Church before the throne of "God Almighty," of Him "who was, and is, and is to come," for whose pleasure all things were created. This scene we get here. It is not the children before the Father, but the Church in dignity before the throne. It may be a scene in the Father's house, in anticipation of the kingdom now about to be assumed; but it is not simply and merely a view of that house in its abstract form. But how perfect is the wisdom of God in appointing all the seasons for revealing His mind and purposes! A view of the Father's house in its simplest form, as the home of the children, would not have been in character here; for this is the Book, not of consolations for the children, but of judgments by which God and the Lamb are asserting their holy rights, vindicating their own praise, and delivering the long usurped and corrupted inheritance out of the hands of its destroyers. The Gospel by St. John conducts us to the Father's house; our path there ends, as the path of children, in that home of love. But this Apocalypse by St. John gives us the action that clears the earth for the kingdom and the glory, and gets the golden city ready; and our path here ends, as the path of *heirs*, in that place of glory. For both are ours—the joys of children and the dignity of heirs; the house of the Father, and the throne of the Son.\*

\* Something like the difference between Ps. xxiii., xxiv.

Here, then, when taken into vision of heavenly things, it is the throne of God, with its due attendants, and not the Father's house with the children, that we see. It is the throne of God Almighty, Creator, and Ruler of all things; around which is, therefore, thrown the holy pledge of the earth's covenanted security; and it is the place, too, from which the subsequent action of the Book, or the judgment of the earth, flows; and, therefore, lightnings, and thunders, and voices (the symbols of those judgments) issue from it.

The thrones, crowns, and white raiment, strongly intimate that these elders symbolize the redeemed. And the living creatures do the same, only in another aspect.<sup>f</sup> And the giving forth the same object, under different symbols and in different aspects, was common in the shadows of the law, to the style and language of which this Revelation by St. John so much conforms itself. For instance, the same person stands before us in the sanctuary of old, expressed under different aspects in the symbols of the Golden Altar, the Golden Table, and the Golden Candlestick.

But, as to this wondrous subject of the Living Creatures or the Cherubim, I would observe a little more particularly.

Wherever we see them throughout scripture, they are always *attendants on the throne of God*,—always reflecting, by their action or attitude, the mind and ways of Him who sits there.<sup>g</sup>

1. Thus: They were seen at the gate of Eden, with a flaming sword; because then the Lord was expressing His own unrepenting righteousness, driving the sinner out of His place.

2. Thus, also, they are seen over the mercy seat, in the Holiest, with fixed, delighted gaze, inquiring into the secrets of that throne of grace, because the Lord was there, expressing His work in Jesus, the fixedness of

<sup>f</sup> Some judge that the elders symbolise Old Testament saints. Be it so. I am not disposed to contend with such a thought.

<sup>g</sup> They were, therefore, I judge, made out of one piece of gold with the throne itself (see Ex. xxv. 19).

His purpose, and joy in the Gospel of His dear Son (Ex. xxv. 20; 1 Pet. i. 12.).

3. Thus, also, they are seen with unfolded wing under the God of Israel (Ezek. i.—x.); because then the Lord of Israel was about to leave His sanctuary, the apostasy of His people having disturbed His rest in Jerusalem. And they are there, also, seen reaching out their hands to take fire to cast over the city; for there the Lord had commanded the judgment for its sins.

4. Thus, also, as here, they are seen round the throne, still attending on it, to celebrate the praise of Him who sits there, and do His will and learn His mind; still, therefore, reflecting His mind and ways.

But, in this last place of the Cherubim, we observe a distinction of great importance. Hitherto, or in the first three instances, they were *angelic*, because the law had been ordained by *angels* (Gal. iii. 19); with delight *the angels* inquired into the mysteries of Christ (1 Pet. i. 12); and *the angels* waited on the Lord of Israel (Is. vi. 2). But the Cherubim, or attendants on the throne, have now become *human*; because “the world to come” is to be made subject to *man*, and not to *angels* (Heb. ii. 5), and this throne in Rev. iv., is the throne of judgment preparing the earth for the kingdom, and which is, by and bye (with new and changed attributes) to preside over “the world to come.”

But this is glorious and wonderful. Poor sinners redeemed by blood are destined, through grace, to take the cherubic dignity and joy, in which angels, unfallen angels, once stood—the angels themselves falling back, as it were, and opening their ranks to let redeemed sinners in, and then to take their own place around them, as well as around the throne itself (vii. 11). Angels are thus passed by; and the seed of Abraham are taken up; and it is blessed to know, that angels themselves take delight in this. They desire to look into this mystery. “God manifest in flesh” is seen of them (1 Tim. iii. 16). Their own joy is enhanced by all this; for by it they have learnt more of the shining and gracious ways of Him who created them, and on whom they, as we, depend. Beggars from the dung-hill are set, as



among princes, round the throne; and the living creatures and the crowned elders accordingly, never in the whole action of this wondrous Book, move out of heaven, but there abide, either in the intelligence of the mind of God, in authority under the throne, or in the holy office of leading the joy of creation (see v., vi., vii., xi., xv., xix.). They abide in their sphere on high, while the action proceeds on earth.<sup>h</sup>

And there is another distinction touching these Cherubim or living creatures, which I must notice. In Ezekiel, they are accompanied by wheels, but here with crowned and enthroned elders. In the Prophet, one spirit animates them and the wheels. As here, they sing in holy concert with the elders, and with them ever act as with one mind. But still, it is significant, that there, their companions are *wheels*; while here, they are *crowned and seated elders*. For, in those days of Ezekiel, the throne, whose purpose they express, was about to remove itself from the sanctuary, and wheels were suited to it; but in the day anticipated by this vision, the throne is at rest, with the Church, in her royal and priestly glories, around it, and crowned and seated elders are suited to it.

And, indeed, it is much to be observed, though it may draw us aside for a moment, that it is *the Father* who is now preparing a Sabbath for Himself, and not simply God the Creator. The Seventh Day was the Creator's Sabbath; the kingdom will be the Father's. The Creator had engaged His energy of old, and His works were the reflection of His eternal power and godhead. All was then good in His sight. In all He delighted, and by all He was glorified. But in the Sabbath of the kingdom, He will survey richer and deeper reflections of Him-

<sup>h</sup> There was something like this order of living creatures and crowned elders in Israel; I mean, in the way in which the ark was attended. The Priests and the Levites surrounded the ark in a nearer and smaller circle, and then the Twelve Tribes (on each side three) encompassed it in a larger and more distant circle or square. Thus the one had more intimacy with it than the other; as here, the order of living creatures, elders, and angelic hosts around the throne (see Numb. i.—iv.) is preserved and exhibited.

self. All His excellencies will be displayed; the work of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, of our God in His grace and salvation, will then be the fairer and fuller witness of Him, than the heavens and the earth of old. And if all things in the Creation of old were needed to give Him His full glory and satisfaction then; so, in the Father's kingdom, all of us, beloved, must yield our contribution. We may be little, a small unit, in the account of Redemption; but we contribute to the survey of the great Redeemer's work. Then let us not doubt our place in that system; but, by faith, take it as simply as any flower in Eden would have blossomed, to its great Creator's delight and praise. Grace is planting the second garden; and we are there not to our own glory, but to His, who works as much to His own praise and delight, and as much *alone*, in Redemption, as He did in Creation.

But, this only by the way.

Such as I have said, I judge to be the throne, with its attributes and attendants. It is the throne of the Creator and Upholder of all things, from which are to go forth the judgments which are to clear the earth of its corrupters and destroyers.

The earth has evidently now become the object of attention in heaven. The whole of this chapter, as well as the following one, indicates this; and very strikingly so, the feature of the rainbow round the throne—because the rainbow is the symbol of that covenant which God has made with *the earth*, the pledge to it that it shall abide before Him.

But this being so, the *earth* and its history and destinies now becoming the immediate object of thought and concern in heaven, it would seem, even from this alone, that the Church or heavenly people from among the Gentiles,<sup>1</sup> must previously have been gathered in and taken home, as I have already suggested. Because, until that is done, the earth is not the object of attention in heaven. The bringing in of the elect, who are to be

<sup>1</sup> Old Testament saints will ascend at the same time, for they are children of the resurrection.

conformed to the image of the Son, and to share his heavenly joy and throne, is the object that forms and orders the concern of heaven now. There is general providence here, no doubt—but earth is not the great animating object in heaven, but the gathering of sinners out of it, the washing of their feet daily when thus gathered, and the filling up of the number of those heirs of salvation. But now, when we have reached Rev. iv, and when we look in at the door opened in heaven, we find *the earth* directly and immediately awakening thought and action there, and (as we might from this expect), the Church already there. For when “the fulness of the Gentiles” shall come in, Israel will be thought of again; when the heavens are filled, the earth will be the scene of divine attention, and finally of divine husbandry and preparation again.

But the throne being thus seen, and God’s glory and pleasure, as Creator and Governor of all things, being thus celebrated, the question arises, “Who can He seat on this throne with Himself?” “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, or who shall stand in His holy place?”<sup>k</sup>

The earth and its fulness is the Lord’s by this title of creation here celebrated, and owned in that 24th Psalm. But it was His pleasure of old to set His image over those works of His hand. Adam was given dominion, but Adam lost his place and forfeited his kingdom. Who, then, shall reassume the dignity, and again ascend the hill of the Lord? Who is he whom the Lord God can reinstate in Adam’s forfeited lordship? That now becomes the question; and, accordingly, it is raised in the 5th chapter, immediately after the exhibition of the supreme throne in the 4th. And the answer to it from every region is this, “The Lamb that was slain, the Lion of the tribe of Judah.” He who sat on the throne gives that answer, by letting the book pass from his hand into the hand of the Lamb. The seven Spirits are seen as centred in the Lamb, intimating that the administration

<sup>k</sup> See Ps. xxiv. A hill is the symbol of government. See Ps. ii. 6; Is. ii. 2.

of the kingdom is now to be lodged in His hand. The living creatures and elders join in giving this glory to Him, by singing their song of gladness in the prospect of the earth being soon the scene of their glory. The hosts of angels join in giving it, by now willingly transferring all strength and glory and faculty for dominion, into the hand of the Lamb. The angels now empty themselves. In previous dispensations they had been the ministers of power; as one of them says, "I stand in the presence of God." The law was ordained by angels; they were all ministering spirits. The prophet's servant saw the mountain filled with chariots and horses. It was an angel that went through Egypt; and an angel that stood over Jerusalem with a drawn sword. Angels accompanied the Lord in his visit to Abraham, and revealed and executed God's purpose towards Lot in Sodom. The chariots of God were twenty thousand—even thousands of angels. But now they empty themselves and lay their honours at the feet of the Lamb, and ascribe all that was once theirs executively to the Lamb. But they might easily do this; for a greater than they, even the Lamb Himself, the Lord of angels, had shown them the way to this self-emptying. He had been in the form of God, thinking it not robbery to be equal with God, but He made Himself of no reputation; He emptied Himself; He laid aside His glory, and took on Him another form altogether. So that angels, His creatures, may well follow Him. And then, finally, every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and such as are in the sea, in their order and measure, join in giving it, by uniting the name of the Lamb with that of the Creator and Lord; and they all at once feel, as though their groans were already turned into praises; for, as soon as Adam fell, creation was sensitive of the curse, and became a prisoner of hope (Rom. viii. 22); but now that the Lamb takes the book, she becomes equally sensitive of deliverance, and glories in the liberty of the children of God—of course by anticipation, as the Church had just anticipated their reign. Thus is this question settled in heaven. The title of the Lamb to take dominion in the earth is owned and verified in the very place, where alone all power and

dominion or office could righteously be had, the presence of the throne in heaven, for "power belongeth to God." Messiah owns that in the 62nd Psalm; and here, He again owns it by taking the book out of His hand; for that is an action which confesses, on the part of the Lamb, that powers are ordained of God, that the Lord of heaven is the fountain of office.

Thus it is from heaven and from the Ancient of days, that the Son of Man takes dominion, or the nobleman receives his kingdom (Dan. vii., Luke xix). Jesus would not take power from the god of this world (Mat. iv. 9); nor would He take it from the heated desire of the people (John vi. 15). He waits to take it (for there alone it could be righteously received), from the hand of the God of heaven and earth, from whom Adam of old received it. And, as the Lamb here owned God on the throne to be the *source* of power, so God on the throne owns the Lamb to be His *ordinance* of power. This action of taking the book has this concord of sweet sounds in it; for the Lamb goes up to receive it, and the Lord allows it to pass from his hand. God's glory as supreme and only potentate is thus vindicated, and He commits power in the earth again to the hand of man, as fully sanctioning it there, and all the exercise of it, as of old He did in Adam, delighting again in this other image and likeness of Himself. And this governs all the subsequent action of this wondrous book; for the title of the kingdom being thus approved in the due place and form, it only remains to clothe that title with possession. The inheritance is the Lamb's by purchase of blood. That blood sealed Him as the *fully obedient* one, and, therefore, God could thus highly exalt Him (Phil. iii); and that blood has also reconciled all things in heaven and earth (Col. i.); and the inheritance being, therefore, thus *purchased*, He has now only to *redeem* it—as we read "the redemption of the purchased possession." His blood, as the Lamb slain, had given Him *title* to it, His strength as the Lion of Judah, must now give Him *possession* of it.

The extended virtue of this same precious blood of Jesus is here blessedly declared. It had already re-

deemed the saints out of all nations and kindreds, and seated them in heaven, as kings and priests unto God; but it is now also owned as giving the Lamb, who shed it, title to the inheritance, and, consequently, title to lead these His redeemed people into their reign over the earth. It had already redeemed them from the world, and now would soon seat them in dominion over the world.

For it is by His blood, the Lamb here prevails, to take the book, or the title to the inheritance. The "Lion of the tribe of Judah" is seen in the person of "the Lamb that was slain." His blood was His title. His blood made Him the *purchaser* of the inheritance; He is now its *redeemer*, as the prevailing Lion of Judah. And, consequently, as the Lamb, He is the spring and fountain of all the resulting glories of the kingdom. Extensive virtues of the blood of Jesus! It has been the object of faith—the ground of worship—the title of security—the bond of covenants—from the beginning. By it, Abel was an accepted worshipper, and even Adam himself a believing reconciled sinner. By it, Abraham had the covenant of promise made with him. By it, the people of the Lord dwelt safe while the sword of judgment passed over. By it, the veil of the temple was rent—all distance between God and sinners removed. By it, the trumpet of the jubilee might give forth its gladdening note; for on the day of atonement they were to sound it. But why say more about it, than, again, on this beautiful fifth chapter to observe, that, by it, the saints, already redeemed from earth and seated in heaven, now look to return as kings over the earth, in the train and honour of that slain Lamb whose blood, but whose blood only, has all this prevalency in it.

Thus, there is no blessing or dignity, nothing of either grace or glory, which this blood cannot command for us poor sinners; but there is no other price for anything, no other ground or title for blessing but itself. It does every thing and does it all alone. Adam lost both *himself* and his *estate*; he became a sinner in his own person, and also an exile from Eden. But the blood of Jesus, God's Lamb that was slain, restores all—"Thou hast redeemed us;" and again, "We shall *reign on the earth.*"

*On the Revelation.*

377

In Israel, there was the ordinance of redeeming the *inheritance*, as well as the *heir or person* (Lev. xxv). If either an Israelite or his possession had been sold, it was both his kinsman's duty and right to ransom *him* and *it*. Now Jesus has approved Himself our kinsman in both ways. The Son of God became the Son of Man, and thus showed his kinsman-*nature*. He died to purchase us and our inheritance by blood, and thus showed his kinsman-*love*. And in this Book of the Revelation we get him, I judge, perfecting his acts as such kinsman, and redeeming our inheritance out of the hands of its corruptors. The kinsman in Israel had a title to redeem the inheritance; but then he had to do it on condition of discharging the debt that was on it. Jesus has paid a full and more than adequate value, as is here owned; for the book or title to the redeemed possession passes into his hand. But the usurper of the inheritance is still to be removed; the enemies to be made the kinsman's footstool; and, whether the action be that of God or that of the Lamb Himself, the character of the action is equally clear and certain. The action is the redemption of the inheritance, flowing from the Lamb's acknowledged title. The book taken by the Lamb is His title-deed. He has already been the *Purchaser* of the inheritance, He is now to be the *Redeemer*. And that this is not a book of instructions to John as the Prophet of the Church, or any thing but this title-deed that concerns the Church's inheritance of the earth, appears to me from several considerations.

1. Because it lay in the hand of *God Almighty, the Creator of all things*, before the Lamb receives it.

2. Because it is taken by Him, as the Lamb slain, and as the Lion of Judah, characters of *purchase* and *strength*.

3. Because, on the taking of it, the Church sings in prospect of her dominion *over the earth*—the angels who had been previously ministers of power *in the earth*, then transfer all to the Lamb—and *creation* ends her groans in praises.

These witnesses establish, in my mind, the character of the Book which the Lamb takes. And the Book of the Revelation is in concord with this. It is the history

of the redemption of the inheritance. I mean, of course, the second part of it, after the third chapter. It occupies the same place in the history of the acts of the Lord in the New Testament, as the Book of Joshua does of the acts of the Lord in the Old. It records the manner of redeeming the inheritance, as that did. And without His acts, as recorded in Joshua, the Lord's ways, in old times, would have been imperfect. He had redeemed the heir out of Egypt by the hand of Moses; educated and trained him in the wilderness; and thus prepared him for rest in Canaan. But He had still to redeem Canaan out of the hand of the Amorite; and this act of His is recorded in Joshua. Then, but not till then, the Lord went through the whole course of His mercy and strength. And so without this Book of the Revelation, the record of the Lord's acts would, in like manner, have been incomplete. The Gospels and the Epistles tell us, like the books of Moses, of the redemption of the heir and of his education in the wilderness of this present evil world; but now it is this closing book of the Revelation that tells us of the redemption of the inheritance; and thus it properly closes and completes the perfect acts of the Lord in behalf of the Church of God.

And let me further observe upon the ordinance of the Jubilee under the law, that if no kinsman were found able or willing to redeem the inheritance, it returned to the heir in the Jubilee. The Lord of Israel thus kept in His own hand the means of restoring all things. He acted as Lord of the soil; and said, the land was His (see Lev. xxv. 23). He created, as it were, a tenancy for forty-nine years, and after the traffic of the occupiers had disturbed every thing, in the fiftieth year He returned to the land, and then settled it anew on His family, according to His own mind.

And so with the earth, of which the land of Israel was the sample. Man may take it into his own hand for a time, and by his selfishness and iniquities disturb God's order in it. But a day is coming, the promised and expected Jubilee, the time of "the restitution of all things;" and then, the earth shall be brought back to



God again, and He will re-settle it in His family according to His own holy and righteous principles.<sup>1</sup>

But "the day of vengeance" is united with "the year of the redeemed" (Is. lxiii. 4; xxxiv. 8; lxi. 2). And, accordingly, the redemption of the inheritance is conducted by judgments, or vengeance on the enemies of the heir of it, its usurpers, and corrupters; and, therefore, from henceforth, in this book, until the inheritance is redeemed, until the kingdom is brought in, it is judgment that is taking its course (vi.—xix.). It is Joshua's or David's sword again. It may be seals that are opened, trumpets blown, vials emptied; but all is judgment on the enemy, preparing the inheritance for the Lamb and the Church; all is action for the redeeming of it, and bringing it into the hand of Him into whose hand the title-deed of it, as we have seen it, has already passed.

Thus it is *henceforth* a Book of judgments, as it has been *hitherto*; only, judgments in another sphere and for another end; not of the candlesticks, but of the earth and its corrupters. Judgment had begun at the house of God, and now ends with those who would not obey the Gospel. One enemy may appear after another, the Beast and the False Prophet, the Dragon and the great Whore, or the kings of the earth, but it is only that each, in his season, may meet the judgment of the Lord. So there may be sorrow after sorrow. The woman may have to fly into the wilderness, the remnant of her seed to feel the rage of the Dragon, those who refuse to take the mark of the Beast to know and exercise the patience of the saints, and the two witnesses to lie slain in the street of the great city, but all this sorrow is only leading on to the rest of the kingdom, or to the descent of the golden city. The inheritance is thus redeemed by

<sup>1</sup> I might here observe, that sacrifices may be allowed among the Jews in the kingdom, to keep in memory the blood of the Lamb which was the price, or the purchase of the kingdom. For then, the system will be, glory enjoyed, and grace remembered; as now it is, grace enjoyed, and glory expected. The Jubilee Trumpet, sounded on the day of Atonement, witnessed that that happy season was debtor to the blood of Jesus, the great purchaser of every blessing.

judgment out of the hand of its usurpers, and then the righteous nation that have kept the truth enter, and the Lamb takes the throne.

But in all this action, I judge the Church has no place, but that the saints have been taken to meet their Lord in the air, as I have already suggested, before it begins. This scene is one of judgment, and they have been removed, like Enoch, to another altogether; and I would now suggest a few reasons on which I ground this conclusion, as I did before, for my conclusion on the character of the sealed Book.

1. The saints are seen round the throne in heaven, as I have already noticed, in the fourth chapter, and throughout the Book onward from that, they are never seen but there—and this leads me to judge that the Church has been removed from the earth at some untold moment between the times of the third and fourth chapters, as I have already said.

2. At the opening of this action (chap. vi.), the same signs are given, as had before been given by the Lord Himself to His Christian-*Jewish* Remnant (Matt. xxiv.), respecting the end of the world; and as in all that prophecy, the Church is not contemplated, so she is not contemplated here, but that it is the faithful Jewish election who are engaged in the action, as they only are considered in that prophecy of Matt. xxiv.

3. It is a scene of judgment, as I have already noticed, and the calling of the Church is that of Enoch to be taken *out* of it, and not like Noah, preserved *in* it (see 1 Thes. iv. v.: 2 Thes. ii.). The Church had her judgment previously in ii. iii.<sup>m</sup>

4. Besides—the saints are to judge the world, as well as to reign in the kingdom.

From such considerations, I do conclude, that the Church is not mixed up in the scene which now lies before us. They have been taken into their more immediate inheritance, which is in heaven (1 Pet. i. 4), before these judgments on the corrupters of the earth,

<sup>m</sup> Judgments on the enemy, and tribulations of the righteous, go on co-temporaneously in this Book.

the mystic Amorites of Canaan, begin. But I do not particularly notice these chapters. Indeed I do not believe that we are competent to speak of them with authority. We may draw much warning and exhortation from them which we should lay deeply to heart, in order that we may stand in any evil day that may arise (as arise it may) to try and sift us. But of the scenes themselves, I would not speak with authority. The Lord in them is clad with zeal as a cloak; but the end is "redemption." For, however gloomy the way may be, this is the end of it, the end that we reach in this Book. The action was the judgment of the corrupters of the earth; and the result is, the holy occupation of it by the Lord and His saints. The wars of our Joshua end in victory and the kingdom (xx. 1—6). "I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given unto them." Of course if I speak of the action of the Lord Jesus in this Book being like that of Joshua, I am quite aware that He Himself is not personally manifested in the exercise of judging the nations, till chap. xix. But from chap. vi. the *judicial* visitation of the earth had been going on, though till chap. xix., Jesus was hidden. It is this judicial character which leads me to liken the Book to Joshua—these judgments leading, like the wars of that Book, to the possession of the earth by the true Inheritor. And in Egypt, there were judgments first from a *hidden*, and then a *manifested*, God. All the plagues were poured out while as yet the Lord was hidden, using the hand of Aaron in the ashes of a furnace, or the rod of Moses. But at the destruction of the firstborn, He Himself went through the land; and, at the overthrow of the nation at the Red Sea, He looked through the cloud. And so in this Book. The Lamb is hidden first, and then manifested; but His hand and His power, whether hidden or manifested, are dealing out not grace and gifts, but chastenings and judgments.

But before I hasten to the result of all this action, I would further observe, that in the progress of the action itself, we see, I believe, the deliverance of Jewish remnants from amid the corruption and judgment. Some of them suffer for righteousness even unto death, and

then ascend to heaven to take their place before the throne; and some are hid in God's city of refuge through the judgment, sealed or measured for final security, and for a place on the earth or footstool. But in both ways, they are separated from the corruptions and the judgments around them, and, like Rahab, are safe in the Lord, whom they own in the midst of the apostate nation. And I also see, in the progress of this action, the occasional joy of the family in heaven (see v., vii., xi., xiv., xv., xix.). Heaven, surely, is a place of *continuous* joy. There the saints hunger no more, neither thirst any more; the Lamb feeds and refreshes them for ever. But still they may be sensible of seasons and occasions of rapture. And this appears to be intimated to us in these passages. The joy of the heavenly family and their songs are, every now and then, awakened afresh, when some new display of grace, or some new prospect of glory, opens before them. Just as with the heavenly hosts before—for, when the foundations of the earth were laid, they sang together anew, and, still louder than before, shouted for joy.

And again, in the epistle to the Ephesians, we learnt that the Church was teaching the heavenly powers a lesson of God's wisdom (Eph. iii. 10); but here, we see the angels practising, as it were, the lesson they had thus previously learnt. The Church leads the joy, and the angels take it up. They follow the living creatures and the crowned elders in their praise in chap. v.; and again, when the redeemed celebrate "salvation," they, as having learnt the lesson, say "Amen" (chap. vii.).

Thus much I will observe on the action of these chapters, but particularly of their contents I would not speak. We gather great moral principles and warnings from them, which we can abundantly use; but I doubt that details are intended to be spoken confidently of, till the time comes. Of them, therefore, I would not speak.

Passing, then, beyond chapter xviii., we first listen to a song over the fall and judgment of the Woman, and then praise is heard at the immediate prospect of the marriage of the Lord and of the kingdom. For the

Wife has now made herself ready (xix.), by which expression, I understand this,—that the saints, or redeemed, have till now been in heaven, as children of the Father's house; but that now, they are embodied to shine together in the glories of the golden city, which is the Lamb's wife (xxi. 9). He has now presented her to Himself a glorious Church (Eph. v.). The saints are now ready to be manifested in the Son's kingdom, as they had till now been hidden, as children, in the Father's house. The manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ then takes place after this marriage in heaven. And in this manifestation, we see Him putting on all the glories he had acquired previously (just to compare human things with divine), as on great public occasions we see persons of distinction arraying themselves with all their honours suitable to the moment.

These displayed glories of our blessed Lord are the names He bears; and they are various, being, as I have said, the glories He has already acquired, or such as now belong to Him. And they are, also, here brought forth in the order of time in which they had been earned.

1. "He was called faithful and true." This honour he acquired by his ministry while on earth, in all things then approving himself faithful to him who had appointed him, and thus earning this title of the Faithful and True.

2. "A name written, which no man knew but himself." This honour he entered into when, having ended his faithful and true service here, he ascended the heavens, and was both glorified with the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, and became the Head of the Church, the First-born of that family who have also names which none know but they who receive them.

3. "His name is called the Word of God." This title is his in judicial power, when, having left the heavens, he comes out with the sword of judgment to execute righteousness on the wicked confederacy, as the Word of God (see Heb. iv. 12).

4. "A name written King of kings, and Lord of lords." This is the last honour he bears. This he will

acquire and put on when, having finished the judgments as the Word of God, he will sit down in the peaceful and complete honours of his kingdom, all nations owning him Lord, all royal powers and thrones bowing to his supremacy.

Thus, his names or honours are here unrolled in due order before us. He appears with many crowns. It is a great occasion, the re-appearing of that Man whom the world had refused—His second advent: and how changed! At his first coming, he disrobed Himself; for He was coming in grace, coming for sin. But now he arrays himself as fully as he then emptied himself; for he is coming in glory. At his first appearing, he had no name, no reputation (see Phil. ii.); now he has every name, every expression of dignity and praise in heaven and earth. It was only “Jesus” then, the name both of *contempt* and *salvation*,—yea, of contempt because of salvation, for our salvation was purchased by his shame and death. But now it is a name above every name.

Such is the preparation for the taking of the kingdom or the inheritance. It is as the sword of David first, and then the throne of Solomon, as we read here: “They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (chap. xx. 4). The shout in heaven was now realized on earth: “The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!”

But there is progress in this work of judgment which thus attends the second advent.

The binding of Satan in the bottomless pit (connected with the overthrow of the Beast and the false Prophet) may be called the *morning judgment*, or the judgment of the *quick*, ushering in, as it were, the millennial day or the kingdom. Then, at the close of that day, Satan being let loose from the pit to raise the last mischief in the world, the Great White Throne is erected, before which proceeds the *evening judgment*, or the judgment of the *dead*, closing, as it will, the millennial day or the kingdom. And the day of the Lord being then over, the kingdom will be delivered up, and the new heavens and the new earth will appear, the saints exchanging the kingdom for “God all in all,” or their millennial for their eternal joy, and Satan the bottomless pit for the

*On the Revelation.*

385

lake of fire, or his millennial for his eternal doom (xx. 7, xxi.).<sup>n</sup>

Of all this our Prophet is given a passing sight, and then he is called up to another vision. He had before seen the Bride *prepared in heaven* (xix.); and now, he is called to see her *descend out of heaven* (xxi. 2); and by and bye, he will be called, in order to see *herself as descended* (xxi. 9). But now, while descending, and he is looking at her, a voice accompanies the descent, saying: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

This voice interprets the results of the descending city. This voice is as if a friend, in the secret of it, were to explain to us the meaning of a procession that might be passing before us. "Behold!" it says to John, calling his attention; and then it shows him the descending city as the witness that God was now restoring himself to man,—“The tabernacle of God is with men,” and thus, that all their sorrow should cease. But this result might not be in all its fulness at once, or during the thousand years; but the descent of the city, now at the opening of that kingdom, was the pledge of all this restoration of God to man, and of the consequent ceasing of sorrow, and death, and tears. And so, this friendly voice now interprets it. The former things were now passing away, that state of things in which God and man had been separated, and during which, accordingly, there had been lamentation, and weeping, and death.

The Lord from the throne then verifies all this voice from heaven, and adds His own word: "Behold I make all things new." And when he had thus spoken, he

<sup>n</sup> As another has observed, the inheritor and the inheritance will then both have risen in character. The second man, or the glorified body, will exceed the first man, or the earthly body; and so, the new heavens and the new earth will exceed in glory and joy the Paradise of Creation.

addresses John, giving him to know, that when this came to pass, all would be done; adding, moreover, such warnings and encouragements as may be listened to by all from that moment to the end, being delivered by the Lord in the consciousness of the solemn sanction which the *end* imparts to all things,—as it is written, “O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.”

Thus this vision of the descending city, and this audience from the voices from heaven and the throne pass by, and our seer is carried to a great and high mountain, that he might see this city herself, the Bride, the Lamb’s wife (xxi. 9; xxii. 6).<sup>o</sup>

One of these angels, who had carried the seven last Plagues, is John’s conductor now; and in his presence he *measures* the city; and that being the sign of security (xi. 1, 2), he thereby gives us a pledge, that there is no agency of destruction against it.

The Church, as the candlestick, may be shattered; but as the Lamb’s wife, she shall live; and this golden city is this Bride of the Lamb, the Church of God now manifested in her perfectness. She has length, and breadth, and height equal, with twelve foundations, and twelve gates, her wall great and high, and her street of pure gold. Various all this, but all shining and costly, expressing her to be the one that is perfect in holy beauty. And she is not only thus perfect in herself, but she has her dignities as well as her beauty. She is the habitation of the glory of God, the place of the throne, a sanctuary too, as well as a palace, having a presence within her, which makes the whole scene a temple. Thus is she the suited dwelling-place of *kings* and *priests*; and being thus in herself the beautiful one, and bearing with her this honour of the royal priesthood, all that goes forth from her, or enters into her, or dwells there, is according to these things. *Light* is shed from her, that the nations may walk therein; *water* from the river of life flows from her, bearing leaves with it, that the nations may be

<sup>o</sup> Into a wilderness he was taken to see the great whore, but now to a high mountain to see the Lamb’s wife (xvii. 1, xxi. 9).



*On the Revelation.*

387

healed thereby; and all that *goes in* is purity; and all who *dwell* within are in joy and dignity, having no need of candle or even light of the sun, being also in the conscious dignity of their everlasting kingdom; and nothing must *touch* such a habitation of holiness, and gladness, and glory, but the very honour of the kings of the earth. They may bring up their *glory* and *honour* unto it, but nothing less than that can approach it.

The features of this holy city, here delineated, become so many tests (as we may observe, for it is profitable for our souls) whereby to try the condition of our own hearts towards heaven, and to ask ourselves, is it the heaven of *God* that we indeed desire? Thus this place is *stable*,—it has foundations. Are we satisfied with it *for ever*, or would we fain, in the waywardness of the affections, still have change? This place is a *sanctuary*, or place of constant worship and communion. Is that according to the heaven which we desire? It is the region of *light from the Lamb*. Are our souls even now delighting and basking in that element, or do we love the light, and wisdom, and beauty of men? It is the place of *holy government*, where all is peace. Do we love purity now; and are the workings of unclean nature an offence and sorrow to us? And it is a bosom of *rich and generous benevolence*, for it is ever giving forth what it has, its light, its leaves, and its waters, for the refreshing and strengthening of others. Are our hearts cultivating like affections? Are we desiring and watching, that we live not for ourselves, but in the enlarged charities of the Gospel which thus will exercise themselves to perfection in that happy place?

The answer of our souls to these things will show the measure of our present sympathy, in spirit, with this heaven here revealed to us. And, thus, this divine description of the holy Jerusalem becomes not merely food for the hopes of the saint, but trial of the heart of the saint, that we may be guided both happily and safely onward. And we may surely say, this is indeed a heaven of holy happiness, a heaven worthy of God its builder.

All is thus pure and shining within and around her,

and she yields forth streams of light and life that all may be gladdened and blest by her. This is the *manifestation of the Church*. In this present dispensation, the Church is but forming, like Eve for Adam, but when the time of the kingdom comes, and Adam awakes, then will his Eve be presented to him, the associate of his joy and kingdom, the saints will be shown all fitly framed together, the Church presented to Himself, a glorious Church without spot, as here, in the place of blessing and government. Surely all this is beautiful, as is every thing of our God, in its season. The incarnation and ministry of the Lord had been the manifestation of the *Father and the Son*—the present age is the manifestation of the *Holy Ghost*—and the age that we look for, and into which this vision of the golden city introduces us, will be the manifestation of the *Church*. For all is perfection in the ways of God's wisdom, as in the ways of His love. He tells out to us one secret after another, bringing each in due season out of His treasures. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

But this only as we pass on.—I was tracing the character of that holy city which has now been disclosed to us, and observing that every thing in it told us that it was the symbol of the Church in her perfectness and manifestation in glory, or the saints in their dominion and honour. And I would again, as connected with this, recur to the difference between the gospel and the revelation by St. John. The gospel closes by taking the children to the Father's house, or hiding them in heaven (xxi. 22). The revelation, by leading them down from heaven into the place of dominion over the earth, or manifesting them as the golden city. It is not the mansions in the Father's house which, at the end of the revelation, we look into, but the place of the sanctuary, and the palace, the residence of the kings and priests unto God and his Christ. It is not the children in their home, but the saints in their glory whom we see. And all this is in full character. For the Gospel by St. John had been, throughout, training the children for the Father; but this revelation by him had been getting

*On the Revelation.*

389

the inheritance and glory ready for the saints. It is a further stage in the history of the heavenly family. It is not that they have left the joy of the mansions in the Father's house, which the Lord has now gone to prepare for them (John xiv. 2); but they are to receive the glory of the inheritance in addition; and that is what is here, in figure, presented to us.

And this day of the descent of the golden city is the promised day of power, the day for the shutting up of the influence of hell upon the earth, for the binding of Satan in the pit, and for the opening of the influence of heaven upon the earth by this descent of the city of God, and (as we may say in a larger sense) by the setting up of that mystic ladder on which the angels of God are to pass from heaven to earth, and back to heaven again. And the throne of God, seen in this city, has a new attribute. At the beginning, it was the throne of God; and the Lamb only came up to it, to take the Book from the hand of him who sat there. But now, the Lamb has ascended it. It is now "the throne of God and the Lamb." The Lamb has now got up to the hill of the Lord, and is now standing in the holy place.

The action of this Book was preparing the throne for the Lamb. It was not that of the Son on high preparing mansions in heaven for the children, but it was the Lord on high (or God in the supreme place, for him) coming forth in the power of one judgment after another, to make His enemies His footstool; and then to erect His kingdom, and lead His saints into it. And accordingly, the kingdom is here displayed, as I have observed, in all its holy order and righteous authority. It is the *Golden City* we get, the symbol of *righteousness* and *power* united in government—the Church with the enthroned Lamb descending out of heaven, to take association with the earth, ruling it and yet blessing it, presiding over it in righteousness, and yet dispensing to it the water of life and the light of the glory, of the very fountains of which she had now become the scene and the dwelling-place.

Such is the end of the second part of this Book of judgments. Through the terrible judgments of seals,

trumpets, and vials, we have been led to the blessing of the earth under the light and life that were in the golden city, the throne of God and the Lamb. And as we had a preface to the Book in its place, so now we have a conclusion (xxii. 6—21).

Here we first listen to the angel, who had attended St. John, attesting the full truth of all that has passed; and then, we listen to the Lord pledging His speedy coming, and a blessing (as in the preface) on those who should righteously use this Book. We then find that the hearing and seeing of these excellent things so wrought for a moment on the mind of St. John, that he falls down and worships the angel, as he had done before (xix. 10). But on both these occasions he had been receiving some overwhelming vision. In chap. xix., he had just seen the marriage of the Lamb in heaven, and now the golden city in her glory and beauty; and his engaged and overpowered affections, awakened by such visions, (as with the Queen of Sheba on seeing King Solomon), must account to us for these worshippings of the angel. But the angel rebukes him, as Peter did Cornelius in such a case; and then instructs him in one particular touching this Book, which is strikingly different from the instructions given to the Jewish prophet, on a like occasion (Dan. viii. 26; xii. 4—9). Daniel had seen and heard wonders, but was told to seal them, till the time of the end, because the vision was yet to be for many days; but here, our prophet is told to publish these things which he had seen and heard, because the time did not wait, but was at hand.<sup>p</sup> This marks the mind of the Spirit so differently in the Jewish prophet, and in St. John, who was standing in our dispensation addressing the saints. And, according to this, the Lord at once again breaks in with an announcement of His speedy coming, and that, too, with the rewards of righteousness, revealing Himself again, as He had done

<sup>p</sup> Isaiah is also told to bind up the testimony, because the Messiah was still waiting (viii. 16, 17). Such reason and such action are not found or given here to John.

at the beginning, in His supreme place, as “the Alpha and Omega.”

After this, the attending angel returns to His own proper theme, promising a blessing in righteousness on those who obey, and setting aside all the workers of evil. For this is the theme of the Book, a book which does not say, “Blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered,” but pronounces blessing on the *righteous*, and doom on all *evil-doers*. For it is not a Book of ministering grace, but of executing righteousness—it is not sympathies or consolations that we find in it, but judgments, as we have been seeing throughout. It is the place of Ezekiel which the Lord fills here, as it was that of Jeremiah which He had occupied in the gospel. In the gospel or in His ministry, through the cities and villages of the land, He was the sorrowing, sympathising prophet; so that some said, “It is Jeremias”; but here He stands, the Son of Man, like Ezekiel, in the place of judgment, in the Spirit, saying, “He that heareth, let him hear, and he that forbeareth let him forbear”—“he that is filthy let him be filthy still, and he that is holy let him be holy still.” There was no tear on the eye of Ezekiel, though rivers of waters ran down the cheeks of Jeremiah. All is so perfect in its time. The Lord knew the sympathies of the one, as He walked in the land and saw the moral ruins of Zion, and He can now know the righteousness of the other, as He stands above all that defiled ruin, and apart from it all in judgment.

After this, the Lord reveals Himself as “the Bright and Morning Star.” The Church then invites Him to come, and invites others, who would “hear,” to join her in this; and then those who were “athirst,” having some affections towards her Lord just stirred, to come up to the full measure of her desire; and lastly, through the largeness of her heart, “whosoever would,” in whatsoever mind or state they might be, to come and drink of the living waters with her.<sup>a</sup> Thus was her

<sup>a</sup> In the action of this wondrous Book, times had been measured out by months and years. And on this I would say, that

soul divinely moved upward and around her. But this was an interruption of the more orderly progress of the Book (like i. 6) on Jesus being revealed. But we should be prepared for such interruptions. We should not expect that the Lord could be revealed, without the Church being moved, as in these places. Praise must fill her, if His grace be revealed, as there (i. 6)—desire must move her, if His person or glory be revealed, as here. And we should all, beloved, be cultivating that longing of heart after Him, that will lead us to take a ready part in such raptures of the Spirit in the Bride, as these.

But still this was an interruption; and, therefore, when it passes, the Lord resumes the more proper theme of the Book, and threatens plagues to him who unrighteously adds to it, and loss of life and glory to him who unrighteously takes from it. This, however, must not be allowed to close all. "Surely I come quickly" is heard again—words which had now broken forth from the Lord three times during this conclusion. For His heart was fuller of that than of any thought, and He would fill ours with it also. All was either to yield to that, or issue in it. Judgment must be executed; but judgment is His strange work. Affliction of the righteous must be gone through, but He never willingly afflicts. All is imperfect till Jesus appear. His own heart is upon this, and this is the last thought that He would leave upon ours. And the saint responds, "Come, Lord Jesus"—that the Lord may know, that this is His people's desire and point of hope, as it is His.

Here, Jesus the Lord, and His ministering angel close their testimony. The apostle, then, in his turn, takes his leave of the saints, saying, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." In the love of the Spirit He commends them to that which is their only provision

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is a further proof of the Jewish or earthly character of the action—for Daniel and St. John are the only two prophets who thus compute time, and Daniel was clearly Jewish. St. Paul never talks of months and years; for the end of the Church's course on earth does not depend on them.

for the way, till the journey be ended. Till He come, come when He may, bringing His *glory* with Him, they must stand in His *grace*. For the Lord gives both, and grace leads to glory. The wilderness is now proving that he He has riches and stores of the one for us, and Canaan will, by and bye, prove that He has riches and stores of the other for all who love Him in this thankless and evil world.

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This article, "On the Revelation," has been inserted (with the kind consent and corrections of the author) by the special request of several who found profit in the perusal of it in manuscript.

To the *editor* it seems, at the present moment, to be most important that the various students of the Apocalypse should freely communicate that which each can say he has gleaned for himself in the study of the book.

That the Lord may, in these, apparently the closing days of the Church's sojourn upon earth, cause the light to shine out of this His Revelation, and by the Holy Ghost open the hearts of His Saints to see light as to their actual position, their path, and their hope,—is the prayer of his heart.

#### FRAGMENT.

"I am that I am," was the glorious name under which God introduced Himself to Israel. God over all—none by searching could find Him out: He would be God, and take His own way: and He would have mercy on whom He would have mercy, and would have compassion on whom He would have compassion. God is God.

"By the grace of God, I am what I am," was Paul's joy; it is mine: may it be thine, too. But, then, how different the force of the sentence when applied to Him and when applied to me. Compare word with word and you will see this only the more forcibly. And yet in both applications, the finger points out to *reality*, and what is—is owned, as being AS IT IS.

"God is God."

"And I am a poor sinner and nothing at all. But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

Never, until we get to reality—never, until we let things *be as they are*, can we possibly have rest.

And the beauty of the gospel is, that it puts God as God; and myself, just as I am, blessedly together, and appropriates all that He is to me, and identifies all that I am with Him, according to the worth of the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of God and of Christ.

## No. XVII.

## SOME CONSECUTIVE REMARKS ON THE CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

THE profound character of this epistle consists in its being, in the first chapter, a concentration of the epistles to the Thessalonians, Ephesians, and Philippians, presenting the person of Christ substantially, to faith, in relation to the subjects of all these three epistles. The second chapter is to teach us the exclusiveness of Christ. The third is the highest practice of the condition brought in by this. The fourth contains some practical exhortations. The current of it is full and highly practical.

It has been a question among critics, whether this epistle preceded or followed those to the Ephesians and Philippians. Those to the Thessalonians are acknowledged to be prior. This, and the two former, were written during St. Paul's first captivity. The difference would be, that, if written first, the former epistles (with the introduction of the subject of those to the Thessalonians) would be a development of these; or, if written after, a throwing of their subjects together, with Christ more distinctly introduced. But, whether written before or after, we see the goodness of God, showing us very emphatically, that holding the Head in all things, and for all ends, will ever be the sum of blessing to the Church.

Verses 1 and 2.—As there is something peculiar in the opening address of every epistle, so there is in this—an Apostle, by the sovereign will of God. Timothy is “the brother.” They might have stood together as “servants” (or slaves) of Jesus Christ, as in the epistle to the Philippians; but not as Apostles. But Timothy here is (implying special designation to the Colossians) “the brother.”

The diversity in the method of addressing them from that in the other Epistles is manifest, and in all,



with definite purpose, in the spirit. 'Αγιος, is most generally taken, in the writings of Paul, substantively, as *saints*.<sup>a</sup> It is used alone in the epistle to the Philippians, with Bishops and Deacons, manifesting the subjection to order, and consistency of the whole body as such.

In the Ephesians, it is to the saints at Ephesus, having the distinctive character of the word, and believers in general; but this is (i.e. the address to all believers) not as manifest as in Corinthians. We have, in the epistle before us, the Separation of Saints, and Separation Confessed; and also believing brethren, as in the epistle to the Ephesians. In the Philippians, the saints, and none other; and the subjection of the body and its order. We see this distinctly, from the first action of the Gospel, by the hands of the Apostles. After the death of Ananias and Sapphira, the people greatly magnified them, but no man durst join themselves to them; but, at the same time, multitudes, both of men and women, believed. They wondered at the power. They acknowledged the righteous exercise of discipline, and rejoiced in the grace proclaimed; but kept aloof in fear, and thus were not subject to the rule which God vouchsafed, nor to one another in the fear of God. Among those with the Apostles, there was fellowship under their teaching, prayer, breaking of bread, and confession of the Lord. The others are mentioned as believers, but aloof in some degree or measure, suffering assuredly loss, by missing all that the Lord intended in blessing, by their being together under Him; and peculiarly as the object of His care as representing His body, and in faith of the Spirit (not only as in individuals, but) as in the body of Christ. The table expressed all. The epistle to the Thessalonians is addressed to the Church, or assembly, in that fullest corporate character and confession. And in what blessing! "In God the Father," as said to none else—"Knowing, beloved of God, your election." The Apostle seems more warmed to them than to any other body (except though, in another way, the Colossians). He addresses

<sup>a</sup> 'Αγιος is an adjective translated—*holy*; but *holy*, when intending disposition and conduct, is ὁσιος.—Heb. viii. 26, and so adverbially (1 Thes. ii. 10.)

396 *Some Consecutive Remarks on the Contents*

them, joying in the manner of their reception of the word of God, sympathising with them in the righteous judgment that should place them both in the rest of glory. The salutation of the epistle we are considering is the usual one—"Grace and peace."

3—5. "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," is the Church-name of Christ. Subject as the obedient man to God. The Son of the Father. Bringing the children of the Father in Him into the obedience of God. All is fulness in this epistle.

Thanksgiving is offered by the Apostle (since he heard of the faith and love to saints, or the saints at Colosse) for the hope laid up for them in heaven.

We have again here the peculiar fulness of this epistle; the hope which they had heard in the *word* of the *truth* of the *Gospel* from Epaphras, who was a minister of this fulness, and though the gospel of grace was much; this was the "grace of God" in truth, embracing all that grace which was in Christ. And it is said, that they had acquaintance with it. No wonder that he to whom it was committed, to make the fulness known, should have his heart drawn out to the Colossian assembly, bearing as it did its excellent fruit, and increasing continually.

6—11. For this cause, and on this ground, he prayed and made petition to God, that, in order that they might walk worthy of the LORD, they might be filled with the knowledge of the will of God, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; bearing fruit, and increasing in acquaintance with God.

The result of what they should receive on his petition to God, was acquaintance with God. Experimental knowledge of God, through intelligent fulfilment of his mind under Christ. An habituation of walk and service in subjection to Christ and His word, was to work this. This order is deeply to be observed. In Ephesians, the knowledge of the Son of God comes through the unity of the faith wrought through a true course of Church action in the Spirit; and so in the Epistle of Peter, "growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." But this goes beyond them

all. IT IS ACQUAINTANCE WITH GOD: first came knowledge of God's will in spiritual understanding; then practice, and thereby true acquaintance.

What a solemn occupation for the soul! But in this walk, what practical proof and experience was required. The walk here contemplated is in face of the enemy; and the power of the glory to which suffering was attached was to sustain it in all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness. The confession of the Lord was the confession of the supremacy of God in the world, in the kingdom of the Son till He come, in all virtue and grace, according to the heavenly calling of the saints.

Thus far is the subject of the Thessalonians, where, as in this portion of this epistle, all are regarded as members of the rejected Kingdom.<sup>b</sup>

12—14. Our present ground of thanksgiving to the Father is, that He made us meet, or, is making us meet unto the share of the inheritance of the saints in light, who saved us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love<sup>c</sup>, in Whom we have redemption, even the remission of sins. The depth of this epistle cannot be plainer seen than in the following verses. Christ is presented in all His eminence. Let us collect a few of the expressions, and we shall see how our redemption, and the reconciliation of all things, is connected with this eminence. He, by whom is our redemption, even the forgiveness of sins, is the image of the invisible God, and the Head of all creation (what a new

<sup>b</sup> "When the Church also, in the thought of making themselves spiritual, take advantage of their glory and position, as priests and prophets (characters which do indeed belong to them), to disown the rights of Christ, the King in Jeshurun, having authority over the house of God, there is room for considering whether they are not guilty of the rebellion here spoken of. For my part, I believe they are."—P. T. vol. ii. p. 213.

<sup>c</sup> The words in the Greek which are rendered "hath made us meet" (ver. 12); "hath delivered" (ver. 13), and "hath translated" (ver. 13.), being all aorists. I have left out the word "hath," because though, feebly, it indicates the preterite. The aorist only gives the historical sense, and the participle less still. Observe, also, this remarkable sequel of obedience in this respect. He gave His spirit to them that obeyed Him; *πειθαρχειν* is used for *obey*; and so Titus, iii. 1.

398 *Some Consecutive Remarks on the Contents*

Adam is granted unto us) because He was Creator, and being before all, sustains all. Heaven and earth, and powers, are all of Him, and by Him.

18—22. We now come to the Church as offered to us in the Epistle to the Ephesians (in its part in this epistle) which He had purchased with His own blood. The charge of this epistle being here to declare Christ as the Head of it. What would be attached to the Church, as found in the Ephesians, is not mentioned till later (ii. 19), where that is reprov'd which rejects both the Head, the joints, and bands, by which the members of the body are kept united together. Christ had this headship, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that thus He might be the first in all things; because in Him, by divine counsels, all fulness should dwell, that having made peace by the blood of the cross, He might reconcile all things to Himself, and ourselves who were estranged by wicked works, **BY THE BODY OF HIS FLESH THROUGH DEATH** (oh, the wonder of the work of Him—the Word made flesh—to the sinner brought into the light of God!) that He might present us holy, unblamable, and without charge before Him.

Here are the two stages of His dealings,—our redemption, even the forgiveness of sins, and the work of presenting us holy, unblamable, and without charge before Him, as the wife in the epistle to the Ephesians, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Nothing may be less than fulness in the way of grace in the word of the truth of the good tidings laid before us in this epistle.

23. “If ye continue in the faith.” Faith is confidence and assurance in the word of God and in His faithfulness. This may apply to many things. It is not “abide in faith,” simply; but the expression is, “the faith,” and in the fulness of the things here presented, grounded and settled in them. We have a marked instance of this sense in Jude. The expression, “the faith once delivered to the saints,” in relation to the subject of that epistle, subjection to Christ as *Δεσποτης* (4); for He had purchased the slaves of Satan out of his hand, but who now walked after Cain, Korah, and Balaam. So, all of which Paul

*of the Epistle to the Colossians.*

399

was made a minister manifested in this epistle is "the faith," the circle of all the revelations from the first to last revealed to him, whether common to the other apostles or peculiar to himself. The faith of the kingdom, of the Church in heavenly places, and the union of Christ with His members, fulfilling (making up the fulness of) the Word of God; and, it is added, are not moved from the hope attached to the good tidings, which is, of being with Christ when He comes.

24—29. But we have not done yet. The Apostle rejoices in sufferings, and he fills up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh for His body, which is the Church.

How many think it a satisfaction to gather saints for some body to which they are attached; but if it be carried on in the Spirit, and according to the purpose and ways of God in Christ, and in confession of Him in the world; and this done with the strivings of the world and Satan directed against those who would then receive their bodies and souls out of their power, gathering and keeping them for God; this would bring in many afflictions here spoken of. This was the complement of the afflictions of Him who bought them; and this was the work of Paul, here mentioned as a commission from the Lord towards those for whom Christ had died, in order to separate them out of the evil age, according to the will of God and their Father. Paul was the minister of the body according to the dispensation which was given towards them, to fill up the measure of the revelation of God,—the mystery which had been hid for ages and generations, and was now made manifest among the saints, to whom God willed to make known what was the riches of the glory of it among the Gentiles. "Christ is thus the hope of glory."

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, it was given to him to make known the mystery of the *Church in Christ*. Here it is *Christ in them*. *There* they got spiritual blessings; *here*, the hope of glory.

In the Epistle to the Philippians, it was the inward life, and reaching to its fulness. In this epistle, it is characteristically Christ, the substance of that life by the

400 *Some Consecutive Remarks on the Contents*

spirit, whom (*i.e.* Christ) we preach (*καταγγελλω* not *ευαγγελλω*), warning *every* man and teaching *every* man, that I (says Paul) may present *every* man perfect in Christ Jesus,<sup>c</sup> he labouring in the power of God to this end which worked in him in divine energy.

ii. 1—7. The Apostle would not have the depths of the dispensations of the grace of God remain unknown to any, not even to those that had never seen him. He declares that he has earnestly pleaded with God that the blessings of that grace which he had committed to him to make known might be vouchsafed to them; that their hearts might be comforted (having been) knit together in love, and unto the full assurance of understanding unto acquaintance with the mystery of God, of the Father, and of Christ.<sup>d</sup> The saints, strangers in the world, bound together in the same hope, are comforted, having been knit together in love, and being knit in the Gospel, have reached an apprehension unto the full assurance of understanding, even unto the acquaintance with the nature of the mystery of God. It is to guard them from everything that would be presented to them in the place of Christ.

He rejoices at their firmness and order. As they had received Christ Jesus the Lord, so let them continue to walk, rooted and built up in Him, confirmed in the faith we have before heard of, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

8—10. To the believing soul, every word is, in these words, a volume. Christ in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily being He in whom the saints are completed,—faith in Him, in all we have in Him, faith in our place in him; faith working by love.

11, 12. From this verse onward, we find the moral and practical and formal application of the truth set out in this Epistle. Still, however, it is “in whom” all is found. To think to find it elsewhere is Anti-Christ. “In whom” ye are circumcised — the end of the flesh and its power on the eighth day (ever the token of

<sup>c</sup> This was the “*justification*” of Rom. iv. 25, and “*for Jesus’*” sake, 1 Cor. iv. 5.

<sup>d</sup> See Appendix.

resurrection), makes a dead body of it, by the Spirit — the good conscience by the resurrection of Jesus Christ raised by the glory of the Father, and dwelling in the newness of “this life.” By faith we see the old man, and everything that could apply to him, buried by baptism in the grave of Christ, “in whom” we are risen through faith of the operation of God that raised up Jesus. Our business is with life, — His life, and we ascend with Him.

13. To you hath He forgiven all trespasses who were dead in them, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, and quickened you in His risen life. What have ordinances to say to you? Ordinances which were ordained for the flesh and for trespasses and sins. Ordinances are the dead works under the law, from which your conscience is purged by the blood of Christ. They no longer serve any purpose. But we here come to a more obscure expression, evident, however, in considering the nature and order of the dispensation now laid aside. There are special warnings against two evils — re-introduction of ordinances as a principle of religion, and adopting the patronage of angels. Both of these had place from God in the dispensation that had vanished away.

The Jewish people received the law by the dispensation of Angels (Acts vii. 53). It had been committed to them in this prior order of things. The world to come, of which Israel will be the head, will not be subject to them but to the Son.

This inferior agency, and all that was subject to it by the will of God, had never any place to the Church, — save, as angels are to minister to the heirs of salvation, a place of service instead of superiority. Ordinances take altogether a secondary place to the Church, they being in the kingdom. They were once the connecting link with God. Christ is so now. When, therefore, God in His wisdom sent Christ the Son into the world, it was to take all things to Himself and bring the world back to God under Himself. He now sits at the right hand of power. All handwriting of ordinances, which was against us, was nailed to His cross, and all authority overthrown but His. These things were thrown out into

402 *Some Consecutive Remarks on the Contents*

the world—the place of the excommunicate. And they became rudiments of the world, beggarly elements. Satan has taken advantage of the honour in which they once stood by the divine appointment, and has corrupted the souls which he could not overthrow by violence, by the re-introduction of those things which render the faith of Christ of no effect. Angels, too, were applied to as mediators, all which things so easily in false humility lay hold of the fleshly mind, which looks into things it has not seen, and judges of God by it.

It is most needful to see, that God, in the spiritual institution of the Church, had provided helps and the joints and bands under the Head, thus showing the guard which the institution of the body of Christ in its character in the Church and administration was against this dangerous relapse; and in its positive force, when held to, in having nourishment ministered, and knit together, and increasing the increase of God (see Greek).

If ye are then dead in Christ to the elements of that which is of this world, why do ye found your ways upon ordinances? And what did the rules of the law do but prohibit things which God hath given to be received with thanksgiving for our needs, and which perish with the using, — distorting thus the gracious purposes of God.

All variety of argument is answered by the single word, “It is not the way of God in Christ.” He that is dead hath been justified from sin (Rom. vi.; see margin). Risen, ascended, glorified in Him. Presented thus in His life, ascension and glory. We ourselves are within reach of all things in Him.\*

iii. 1—11. The beginning of this chapter lays the foundation of heavenly and divine practice.

Every believer, by grace, risen in Christ and before God in Him—in the perfectness of His risen life and Christ in them, is called (faith working by love) to be exercised — to walk in the way of this divine life, to bring by Him all that was contrary to that life into

\* We are justified in the Spirit (Rom. ix. 24). There are two senses of justification in the word. The doctrine founded on Lutheran ideas.



death, to make a dead body of it, so that life should find place. "If (or since) ye are risen in Him, set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth."

It is said to believers (in chap. ii. 20), ye are dead from the rudiments of the world (whatever virtue these may pretend to), and are risen in Him, and, risen in Him, are now in the condition of receiving a real and effective grace. Few feel the enemy to God which the mere flesh (and its motions) is, — its contrariety to Him, its judgment, its doom. As the deeper evil of the sins of the flesh, with covetousness, which is the worship of another god, came first in the list of all that was in the body of sin on the cross (and for such the wrath of God cometh on the children of unbelief), but mortified in the risen life that is in God.

These also must follow their communications among the saints about these things, and the mischiefs of the Spirit of man, under the power of the flesh, and might even find occasion and do shew themselves in the human spirit about the things of God.

The fulness and closeness of the word in some places is so great that it is by nothing but dwelling long on it by the Spirit, and, believing the words as they stand, that will lead us to a just apprehension of the gracious purposes of God in them. And such a dwelling on them must be by the soul going back to those original deep actings of God, on which the call to holiness and the ways of life are founded.

To what power in the soul in the power of God would you say:—"Mortify therefore."

The conflict on the old ground is displaced. It is no double or separate power, it is the power of God in the soul in connection with Himself before Whom in Christ, in the fulness of Christ for us, we stand, being presented before God in Him risen, and not only risen but ascended, by which is access, and also for every occasion that the soul in faith can be exposed to, and therefore glorified.

This is the only moral standing of the Christian, or the way of it, "Mortify therefore."

We now advance to the relationship one with another, the fellowship being so put before us that the reality

404 *Some Consecutive Remarks on the Contents*

can only be in the fulness of that fellowship, can only be perfect in the fulness of condition in God (1 John, 1—7). “Lie not one to another, for ye are members one of another.” Put off the old man, put on the new man; and in the measure of acquaintance with it, after the image of Him that created him—Christ.

In this character of the new man, there can be none of the difference that exists from race and circumstances among men. Every member is a member of Christ Himself, and, in obligation of conformity to this character. There can be no distinction in this, Christ is the whole (*τα παντα*), and in all diversities in those that are His alike.

12, 13. We now get a further exhortation on the ground of this portion in Christ. Put, on as holy (*hagion*) and beloved, the bowels of the compassion of Christ, and lowliness, meekness, long-suffering. The ground of mutual forgiveness and forbearing one another is on the ground of the standing of the settled forgiveness of the believer, not as in the prayers given to the Apostles before the grace of the death of Christ was known to them; the motive proposed in the one being the previous forgiveness of trespasses by themselves, the other looked for on the ground of an acceptance by grace already existing.

14. We are now introduced to the highest step—*over all these superinduce CHARITY.*

Charity is the quality of God Himself, in divine grace (1 John iv.), or rather God Himself.

In the first measure of Charity, we love God, because He first loved us. Every motive as to another has self in it; but the full measure is love perfected *in* us (not to us, as the received translation). It would mean God's condition in the soul, the bond of perfectness to all and upon all occasions. And we are told, it is the capacity to testify that God so loved the world that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. The former measures the qualities of the new man in Christ, and the measure of Christ in Him. He that abideth in this, abideth in God, and God in him. Therefore said the Apostle,—“Superinduce Charity, which is the bond of perfectness.”

15. How well can the Apostle now exhort them with the words: "Let the peace of Christ (which is the better reading) rule in your hearts; for now it is in the perfectness of church-condition, for it is in this you are called in one body; and be ye thankful. This is a peace that may grow. I know that my Father loveth me, because I do those things that please Him. Let no man deceive you, he that worketh righteousness, is righteous, *as* (*καθως*, after the same manner) Christ is righteous.

The degree is the degree of being like Him. So will your fellowship too be perfected, which can alone be by a walk in the light, as God is in the light (1 John, ii. 5).

16, 17. We have, in these two verses, the blessed character of the intercourse for the growth of the saints, and the soul's worship with the perfectness of conscience in word and deed, giving thanks to God who is our Father by Christ. What are the *disjecta membra* by the side of this? Surely, it is a device of Satan that they melt away again and be lost in the world.

18.—iv. 1. At this place in the Epistle, we enter on the exercise of common life in the body; viz., among those who are the subjects of all this blessing. One has but to say: "Let men try." Let such as know the Lord put themselves under the word of the Lord, in obedience to the Lord. It is to walk by faith, for He is not here, but seen in faith over those that walk on earth and in the midst of earthly things and in the relationships of nature under Him. Those relationships are not left to the best care which men are used to give to them, for their own objects in some measure, sometimes of the fear of God, but in ignorance of the ways of God; but, there is a way under the Lord, with reward in the Kingdom in which these are, when it is manifested in power, as is expressly said at the end of this chapter, viz., that such as do these things to the Lord, shall of the Lord receive the reward of the inheritance. Likeness finds its place in heaven, and service its reward on earth in the day of the glory of the Kingdom.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>e</sup> On this expression—"Service [finds] its reward on earth in the day of the glory of the Kingdom," I would make a remark. I do not know what meaning the writer's mind attaches to these

406 *Some Consecutive Remarks on the Contents*

It is to the authority of the Lord they obey, and, therefore, to be done to Him as in the person of those to whom they obey in their respective duties. Masters are cautioned.

2. Nothing should be left behind us in the word; God is to be waited for, as well as to be waited on, for the teaching we are to receive.

We shall ever be vouchsafed more light and understanding of the things of the Lord by the Spirit in the measure in which we are in subjection to His authority. For it was always in the measure of this, that He revealed the hidden things of His teaching, and will still, by the Spirit, as He gave the Holy Ghost at first to them that obeyed Him.

It would seem very ample to say or to hear: "Continue (constant) in prayer, and watching in the same with thanksgiving." In hearing it, how often our souls would fail in the thought of what we should pray for in such a manner. It is not merely the praying of individuals, as necessity or difficulty arises to themselves. There must always be felt the need of getting something from God, on whom we are depending as the Giver, and that need, felt in the soul, making *all* our requests known to God in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, *i.e.* in blessing God for the way made for us to His presence, and the love that has embraced us. But as God acquaints us with His counsels for the Church, the need of the saints is

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words; but the expression, taken accurately, presents that which does not seem to me to be sustained by Scripture. I do not see what the words can mean, but that the reward of present service is, to be *on earth* in the day of the glory of the Kingdom. But this is not sustained by Scripture.

The place of the twelve Apostles in the New Jerusalem (Rev. xxi.) is not *on earth*; it is heavenly, and in the city *not* come down to earth. Paul may have a place in that city too, though not the place of a foundation. That there may be *also* an earthly side to the twelve Apostles' reward, and to Paul's too, I do not deny.

Certainly I do not read 1 Thes. ii. 19, 20; iii. 13; iv. 13, 14 and 15, 17; v. 23, as expressing Paul's hopes of reward *on earth*, but in heaven.

I might refer also to the promises to the Seven Churches, Rev. ii. and iii.—*Editor.*

*of the Epistle to the Colossians.*

the truth twice set before us in this Epistle; so also twice, in different degrees, in the Ephesians. Surely, the value of the prize, and the way to it, would, to the conscious soul, be ever suggestive of entreaty.

In the Corinthians it was on the subject of that Epistle.

In the Epistle to the Thessalonians it is that they may be found worthy, by the confession of their calling: individual prayer (*i.e.*, for ourselves). Besides, we may say the requests for all we are charged with, will be for ourselves in that dependance that brings forth God to help; and this will be greatly, in the knowledge of the grace of God in truth, *confession*, till we reach the needed revelation of recovery and power, and also for our usefulness in service.

Watching in prayer seems an extension of the thought of perseverance; watching unto it would be to turn every occasion into a position of dependance on God. The Apostle suggests a subject to their petition for himself in his service to the Lord.

In conclusion of the spiritual portion of the Epistle, the Apostle charges them to walk wisely to them that are without, commending Christ by their walk—they have to learn wisdom for the practice of their position as confessing the Lord in the world, which knows Him not. As to “redeeming the time” (Eph. v. 16), it is added:—“because the days are evil,” it would be saving the time to good ends, which in the world is used to evil. He closes with a charge that their words should not be idle, but in love and seasoned with that salt that must be in themselves.

Epaphras is again mentioned with the character we find given him by the Apostle in the former part of the Epistle, and we have what his prayer is for the Colossians, that they may stand of full age and fulfilled in all the will of God.

It is exceedingly to be remarked, that the Apostle is anxious to keep up fellowship in the confession of the **UNITY OF THE BODY**, by engaging the interest of the several assemblies, one in another, desiring that the Epistles to those two churches should be mutually communicated.

In the circumstance of his being a prisoner, and his work suspended, they had much to remember him about.

408 *Some Consecutive Remarks on the Contents*

He concludes with—"Grace (favour and the free mercies of God) be with you. Amen."

Δ.

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 APPENDIX.

Critics have generally left out the words, "of the Father and of Christ," which, with the addition of "and," are kept in the received text. There is a considerable variety of readings in this place, while there is very unimportant testimony for their being quite left out, perhaps none. As they stand above, they may be understood as belonging to the profound character of this epistle. But it is a matter of testimony; and this does not make it imperative to leave them out, as it is the variety of form and not the exclusion that the MSS. show.

To what would attach "in whom"? It is in strict standing with the character of this epistle, charged with setting forth Christ as the Head and fulness of all things; and, therefore, it is in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. "In which," as applied to the mystery of God (the words being left out) must embrace the same thought, for the mystery of God is the Church; and the Church stands in the relation of the Son to the Father; Christ being the name of the Lord, is rather used because it is His name specially in this epistle. And what have we in the sequel of this chapter? Every variety that could be offered in the place of Christ; in fact, Antichrist. Antichrist denies the Father and the Son. The Apostle feared their being beguiled with enticing words of philosophy and deceit from the faith of HIM. I cannot deny the Father and the Son more completely (for my interest in God) than in denying the relationship of the Church in the relationship of the Son to the Father; denying thus the Holy Ghost as given to dwell in the Church.

The mystery of God, therefore, is in this relationship. And these words may be taken as standing as an addition, being a form of language not unknown to the Greek of the New Testament, and the name of Christ thus brought in keeping with the depth and purpose in this epistle. Such, in either case, however, would be the force of the place. How deep a work of Satan it is, thus given to us to see, in having revealed his enmity against the truth of the ONE BODY to which the Holy Ghost here so distinctly leads the saints in this place, in leading them in the way to it as a solid refuge appointed of God in Christ. One body, one Spirit, confessing the Lord is that in which Satan, assailing the faith of the saints, would assail all their steadfastness in Christ.

The mystery of God, the mystery of the Father and of Christ in this respect, is that which the Holy Ghost brings forward to secure them from the wiles and corruptions developed in the sequel of the chapter. How can then we, with such truth here set before us, be satisfied with the thought that the disjecta

membra of Christ are scripturally the body of Christ, while the security of the faith is here shown to be in the apprehension of its being *knit together* under Christ its Head, lest the abuses of superstition should displace its true connexion ; or philosophy and vain deceit and other evils overthrow the mystery made known in this epistle of "Christ in you, the hope of glory," which is the sacred deposit to be maintained among them. It may be, that the ruin is such that, through the desire of some of keeping the saints scattered, that they may be as Diotrephes among them, or sects claiming the agency of the faith in the world, or the divine thought (lost in the condemned world), that there may be but here and there one and another conscientiously separating themselves from the evil, who find themselves together walking in the steps of the faith of Abraham in dependance upon God ; yet the blessings of the mystery of God may rest upon them by faith of the dispensation of God. "Have faith in God," says the Lord. But how close must their way be with Him ; how close to the sanctuary ; nothing else will prevent the simplicity of Christ proving light food, and they have the Word which, with the help of God, leads to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God.

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SUGGESTED BY 1 COR. XIII. 12, 13, AND PHIL. III. 20, 21.

Ah how can we the glory tell,  
 Or say how soon the Lord may come :  
 Enough for us to know full well  
 That soon Himself shall call us home.  
 There, to His glorious likeness wrought,  
 We shall partake His majesty.  
 If there be rapture in the *thought*  
 What will the glad fulfilment be ?  
 As through a glass, but faintly now  
 Our feeble faith discerns the sight ;  
 But when before the throne we bow  
 The dimness will be lost in light.  
 Then shall we know as we are known,  
 And see our Saviour face to face,  
 Amid the glories of the throne  
 That shine through all the heavenly space.  
 The sorrows of these days of ours,  
 And all the gloom that now bespreads,  
 Will but enhance the grace that pours  
 Such oil of gladness on our heads.  
 Faith then will see her trust fulfill'd,  
 And Hope's desires be far surpass'd,  
 But Love Divine shall ne'er be still'd  
 Long as eternity shall last.

## A WORD OF WORSHIP.

THOU art the Everlasting Word,  
 The Father's only Son,  
 God manifestly seen and heard,  
 And Heaven's belovèd One;  
 Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou  
 That ev'ry knee to Thee should bow.  
 In Thee most perfectly express'd,  
 The Father's glories shine,  
 Of the full Deity possess'd,  
 Eternally Divine!  
 Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou  
 That ev'ry knee to Thee should bow.  
 True image of the Infinite,  
 Whose essence is conceal'd  
 Brightness of uncreated light,  
 The heart of God reveal'd;  
 Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou  
 That ev'ry knee to Thee should bow.  
 But the high myst'ries of Thy Name,  
 An angel's grasp transcend,  
 The Father only—glorious claim!  
 The Son can comprehend:  
 Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou  
 That ev'ry knee to Thee should bow.  
 Yet loving Thee, on whom His love  
 Ineffable doth rest,  
 Thy members all, in Thee—above,  
 As one with Thee are blest!  
 Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou  
 That ev'ry knee to Thee should bow.  
 Throughout the universe of bliss,  
 The centre Thou, and Sun,  
 Th' eternal theme of praise is this,  
 To Heaven's belovèd One:  
 Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou  
 That ev'ry knee to Thee should bow.



## THE SONG OF FAITH.

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.”—Psalm lvi. 3

*God is for me*—I fear not, though all against me rise:  
When I call on Christ my Saviour, the host of evil flies;  
My friend, the Lord Almighty! and He who loves me,  
God!

What enemy shall harm me, though coming like a flood!  
I know it; I believe it; I say it fearlessly,  
That God, the highest, mightiest, for ever loveth me;  
At all times, in all places, He standeth at my side;  
He rules the battle's fury, the tempest, and the tide.

A Rock that stands for ever, is Christ my Righteousness!  
And there I stand unfearing, in everlasting bliss;  
No earthly thing is needful to this my life from heaven,  
And nought of love is worthy, save that which Christ has  
given.

Christ, all my praise and glory, my light most sweet and  
fair!—

The ship wherein He saileth is scatheless everywhere.  
In him I dare be joyful, as a hero in the war;  
The judgment of the sinner affrighteth me no more.

There is no condemnation, there is no hell for me;  
The torment and the fire my eyes shall never see.  
For me there is no sentence, for me death has no sting,  
Because the Lord who loves me, shall shield me with  
His wing.

Above my soul's dark waters His spirit hovers still;  
He guards me from all sorrows, from terror and from ill;  
In me He works; and blesses—the life-seed He has sown;  
From Him I learn the “Abba”—that prayer of faith alone!

*The Song of Faith.*

And if, in lonely places, a fearful child, I shrink,  
 He prays the prayers within me I cannot ask or think—  
 The deep unspoken language, known only to that love,  
 That fathoms the heart's mystery from the throne of  
 light above.

His Spirit to my spirit sweet words of comfort saith,  
 How God the weak one strengthens who leans on Him  
 in faith;

How He hath built a city of love and light and song,  
 Where the eye at last beholdeth what the heart hath  
 loved so long.

And there is mine inheritance, my kingly palace, home !  
 The leaf may fall and perish, not less the spring will  
 come;

Like wind and rain of winter, our earthly sighs and tears,  
 Till the golden summer dawneth of the endless year of  
 years.

The world may pass and perish; Thou, God, wilt not re-  
 move;

No hatred of all devils can part me from Thy love :  
 No hungering nor thirsting, no poverty nor care,  
 No wrath of mighty princes, can reach my shelter there.

No angel, and no heaven, no throne, nor power, nor  
 might,

No love, no tribulation, no danger, fear, nor fight,  
 No height, no depth, no creature that has been or can be,  
 Can drive me from Thy bosom—can sever me from Thee !  
 My heart in joy uleapeth, grief cannot linger there,  
 She singeth high in glory amidst the sunshine fair;  
 The sun that shines upon me is Jesus and His love;  
 The fountain of my singing is high in heaven above.

N<sup>o</sup>. XVIII.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

## CHAP. I.

WE must introduce our meditations on this epistle by recurring a little to the ways of God from the beginning; because there is a wonderful unity in His counsels, and the whole volume sets its seal to the divine thought, "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning." Therefore, when we come to a scripture like this, it is well to pause and look about us, and see its relation to previous scriptures. If I come to a merely moral scripture, such as "Let him that stole, steal no more," I may take it and use it at once, and alone,—but when it is a doctrinal or prophetic scripture, which opens the divine mind, I have to ask how it is introduced, and what is to come after it, because we are to be fraught with divine intelligence—"We have the mind of Christ."

The Epistle to the Hebrews unfolds the heavens, and speaks of heavenly calling, putting you in company with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but it does not open the mystery of the Church. The Epistle to the Ephesians opens the mystery of the Church, but does not keep you in company with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We are advancing, and we are called to distinguish between the *heavenly calling, and the calling of the Church*. So, there is a fitness in considering the Epistle to the Hebrews before the Epistle to the Ephesians.

Now, why do I say the Epistle to the Hebrews opens the heavenly calling? Because it associates you with Noah, Abraham, Moses, etc. The earth, at the beginning, was given to the children of men. What did they do with it? *They forfeited it*. Then, what did God do

any nation in it would; and, pray, what message did this ambassador bring? A message of boundless grace. And that is the way He has been treated. The law of nations would not allow it for an instant. Yet that is the way God for 1800 years, in the person of His servants and witnesses, has consented to be treated.

Then he tells them that he sends Tychicus, "That he may comfort your hearts." Oh, if we could be in that way!—in prison, yet able to comfort others. As dear Saunders, a clergyman in the Bishop of London's coal hole, sent to his wife, "Be merry, dear wife, be merry; we're all merry here. We weep with Him now, but we shall laugh with Him for ever." That is equal to Paul, sending from a prison in Rome a cheering word to his brethren at Ephesus. What cannot the Spirit of God work!

The Lord grant that we may be taught by the doctrine, instructed in morals, and put in something of strength for the battle by this closing scene.—AMEN.

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HYMN.

WE TALK OF THE LAND OF THE BLESS'D.

We talk of the land of the bless'd,  
That country so bright and so fair;  
And oft are its glories confess'd—  
But what must it be to be there!

We talk of its pathways of gold,  
Its walls deck'd with jewels so rare;  
Its wonders and pleasures untold—  
But what must it be to be there!

We talk of its peace and its love,  
The robes which the glorified wear;  
The songs of the blessed above—  
But what must it be to be there!

We talk of its freedom from sin,  
From sorrow, temptation, and care,  
From trials without and within—  
But what must it be to be there!

See the answer to the above at page 473.

N<sup>o</sup>. XIX.

## MEDITATIONS ON SUBJECTS OF INTEREST.

## 1.—DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH.

WHEN souls surrender dispensational truth, they have committed themselves to the ocean of feelings and demands without a compass. If dispensational truth be not God's present revelation — what is it? And if it be — can I expect to walk in the present scene according to His mind, without the light which He, in His grace, has supplied me? Man knows nothing of God, except through revelation; how inconsistent, then, for a child of God to admit that he cannot see the necessity of adhering to that which is the revelation for this present time; for, as a Christian, he must own that, if it were not for revelation, he must have sunk into eternal darkness; and he has no right to reject, or be indifferent to one part of the revelation, because it does not immediately bear on the question of his salvation.

God's revelation, in its full sense, and comprising all His arrangements on earth, is a structure of many stories, if I may say so. All the stories were not lighted up at once; but according to the need of those who would make use of the light. At one time it might have been sufficient to light up one story, but as the darkness increased (for in spite of what rationalists say, men are getting, in the spirit of their minds, every day further from God); there was of necessity a need for increase of light, which God, in His grace, vouchsafed for the use of those who would use it. Prophecy contained a suited and inexhaustible supply of the needed light; but this light could not act serviceably on any one who did not apprehend the order of God's counsels on earth. Such an one neither occupied the right story, nor did he (from not understanding his calling) seek or receive that knowledge from God, which would have

444      *Meditations on Subjects of Interest.*

made him, not only know his proper place before God, but would also have furnished him with grace and power to act therein according to God's pleasure. How can God give a soul light to see the future of His purposes, if he be ignorant of, or indifferent to, the present? He who knows dispensational truth imperfectly, can never know prophetic truth rightly. If I disregard the manner of God's arrangements—the position of His people now according to His mind—how can I expect Him to unfold to me more distant things? “To him that hath shall more be given.” It is no excuse to say that the Church is in ruins; for if I cared for God's counsel in the Church, the more inexpressive of that counsel I found the materials to be, the more should I seek to maintain it.

God will not swerve from His own counsel; and surely it is marvellous grace that He should allow us to learn it; and still more, that according as we know, and submit ourselves to it, He should entrust us with further purposes of His mind. The more difficult the times become, the more do I need dispensational truth. What other chart have I? How can I solve any of the incongruities that encompass me, or discover a clue to my right course in them, if I do not know the order and intention of God, and how that has been counteracted and disturbed by the wickedness of man. From the smallest remnant of the Church, I ought to be able to put together what the Church should be in God's counsels; and, therefore, to serve it according to His thoughts and love. In this relation to it, I should most truly estimate what damage it had suffered, and what had inflicted the damage.

## 2.—GUIDANCE.

One of the greatest evidences of how much Israel gained by leaving Egypt, was that God marked out their way for them, and always guided them. At His word (of which the cloud was the expression) they journeyed, and at his word they encamped. The two grand characteristics of the wilderness journey, were the

*Meditations on Subjects of Interest.* 445

guidance and the manna. Practically speaking, we are now in the wilderness; and if we are enjoying manna we may surely conclude that we are entitled to enjoy guidance. Few saints would deny their title to this great privilege; but many who would aver that they receive and feed on spiritual meat, would hesitate to say, with anything like confidence, that they are guided as distinctly and positively as were the Israelites in the wilderness.

Now, this should not be so; for *one* is on the same ground as the *other*; the cloud was attendant on the wilderness-march as much as was the manna. True, to Israel both were visible to the natural eye, and both are spiritual now; but they are not more difficult of realization to the spiritual man; and if I can asseverate with thankfulness that I am divinely fed day by day; and if I can only know this spiritually, ought I not, with equal certainty, to be conscious of my guidance in the spiritual mind? If I am entitled to one, I am equally so to the other; both are connected with the wilderness; blessed evidence of God's care of His people, thus cast on Himself.

Why, then, is one spiritual blessing admitted and owned, while the other, though valued, is little known, and, more or less doubtfully expected? The feeling of Israel in the wilderness was, that they did not know their way, they had no idea of it; and were so completely cast on God for guidance, because there was no one else there that could guide them; nor had He, blessed be His name! any other thought than to lead them Himself.

The first feeling in my soul, then, for guidance must be, that I am in a wide desert, and that I have to depend on God, and on Him alone, to direct me. But how? By circumstances? *Never*. He did not guide Israel by circumstances improvised for the occasion, but by a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. These were *His own appointed agencies*. Anything below this is not guidance, in its proper sense. It is true, our gracious God, who, in spite of ourselves, and our lack of dependence, will not allow us to lose our way, often uses cir-

cumstances to correct us and drive us back into the path of faith; and, when *in* the path, He may allow them, as helps to our weakness, but they do not mark the path, they are never intended to guide us; and I believe the watching of circumstances, as indications of the path, is a preventive to many true-hearted souls from enjoying this their real, and rightful privilege in the wilderness way.

Ps. xxxii. gives us the filling up of the Lord's grace to us as to this blessed privilege. "I will instruct thee in the way thou shalt go." "*I will guide thee with mine eye.*" This is His appointed agency for us, as distinctly as was the cloud and the pillar of fire for Israel. But how am I to discern His eye? *I must watch for it.* If I do, I shall surely see it; if I do not, I cannot be guided by it. Where His eye is looking, there I ought to look. Unless I am spiritual, unless my soul is near Him, this will not be; I shall not look where He looks, and if I am looking to anything else for guidance, I shall not see His eye; but never is that eye hidden from the soul that watches for it. The "bit and the bridle" are God's *alternatives* for the soul that will not depend on Him, and be led by His eye; but the eye is there, lighting up the wilderness track for any who will discern and make use of it.

The Spirit has now come down to guide us into all truth; the spiritual man discerneth all things. The soul should wait on God, unable to proceed without Him, reckoning on His instructing it, and depending on nothing else for instruction but the spiritual sense of the direction of his own eye.

If I do this, I shall, as I go here or there, be assured that the eye of my Lord is directed that way; that such is the peculiar spot searched out by Him for me in the wilderness. The Lord lead us to exercise our souls more in this blessed nearness and dependence.

### 3.—THE APPOINTED PATH.

The effect of the presence of the Lord on His disciples was always to constrain them into the mind of God, so that he could say, "While I was with them in the world



I kept them in Thy name.” Wonderful is the effect of a presence which commands our veneration, while controlling us into fellowship with itself. If we have no liking or drawing to it, we soon retire from it, for we cannot endure a restraint entirely foreign to our tastes. The taste may not be strong enough to sway us into the same line, which the presence of one supremely powerful will sway us into if there be any real taste for it.

In John xi. we find that Martha, when the conference with the Lord becomes close, escapes from it. Not so with Mary, the closer it becomes, the more swayed is she by His all-controlling presence, and she walks according to God, side by side with her Lord—fulfilling everything in her path. Her grief at the death of her brother was none the less, nor her joy at seeing him raised up, and yet all the time her soul was gathering up that ointment of spikenard which was to be expressed at the proper time. She was lovely in the common walks of life; and, learning the heart of her Lord there, and walking with Him there, she could say to Him, when He came into His own house, “While the King sitteth at table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.” She was beautiful and useful in every position; she abode in the Lord, and therefore brought forth much fruit.

It is a very harassing and profitless occupation to lose time asking oneself “What shall I do now”? If I were near the Lord I should see in a moment what He would not have neglected; and the next thing to be done, is always at the very doorway; for the smallest thing often leads, to the greatest results; and it is in neglecting these, that the greatest misadventures have occurred. Nothing is neglected by God.

If at any time I am at a loss to know my true path, I shall ascertain it better by drawing near to the Lord than by cogitating the various bearings of the circumstances. I may be very laboriously fishing all night and have taken nothing; but if the Lord is with me, I shall surely find the difficulties vanish.

While He was with the disciples they lacked nothing; He was both a purse and a sword to them; but when He was going to leave them, He says, “He that hath

448      *Meditations on Subjects of Interest.*

a purse let him take it; and he that hath no sword let him sell his garment and buy one." He was going to leave them there for that all-absorbing work of sin-bearing, and they could not reckon on His care for the time being. No greater picture could be given of their desolation.

The presence of the Lord gives a perception and power for doing things. Not only does it furnish me with power, but the possession of power provokes me to use it like vigour in a man of strength, I feel He is better to me than a purse or a sword, and He will always succour me if I am in my true path; for there alone are the proper difficulties to the faith which He gives me, or rather the proper exercises for that faith. If I turn aside from my path, I turn aside from the faith proper to it; and I must leave His presence, which could only attend me while walking according to God's will. Abraham sought to walk with God; and thus he entered into His joys and blessings. Lot sought to make a path for himself, and he was for ever going from one sorrow to another, seeking to escape evil, instead of walking with God above it. There is no use in trying to better an evil or mistake; we must only, like Peter, abandon the ship, and cast ourselves on the Lord; and then the path will be open to us again, and we shall have grace to follow Him.

## 4.—LIGHT IS AN ARMOUR.

The great power and characteristic of light is, that it refuses the entrance of darkness on every side of it. Be it ever so small a light, there is no access to it on any side. It is isolated to everything but itself, though with itself it will so unite that you could not distinguish in the unity between the light furnished by the largest lamp and the smallest rush-light.

It is exclusive, *i.e.* it will not admit of any admixture; but the more it is increased, the more it will assert its isolation; though, at the same time, with each increase will it offer and present a benefit to any one in need of it, so that when most distinct, it is morally best qualified to offer and bestow, in a delicate unobtrusive way, the

most valued services. In Rom. xiii. 12, we are told to "put on the armour of light," in the original, the "arms of light," i.e. the weapons—the powers of defence as well as attack. Light becomes not only a panoply; but a weapon; for "light is that which doth make manifest"; necessarily painful to that which is manifested and exposed, but preservative to that for which it acts.

Refusing all intermixture or association with anything but itself; it will, nevertheless, co-operate and coalesce with the smallest fraction of light which only renders it stronger in its own intrinsic qualities. If I walk in light, I am unconsciously helping the smallest ray of it in my associates. Whatever be the measure of it in me or in them, the two coming in contact must necessarily blend, and act in delicate and conjoint co-operation. So that there is a mutual benefit, often unknown or undefined, save in the sense of being preserved from the works of darkness. Nature is rebuked, but so rebuked on all sides, that it is more subdued, and less irritated, than if, as in a guerilla warfare, it were attacked, now in one place, and now in another. Often when we are trying to behave well in given circumstances, and are making arrangements how we shall act, we shall find how vain our plans have been. Nature, though irritated, is not subdued, by our forecasting, whereas if we walk in the least measure of light known to us, we shall most effectually preserve ourselves, as well as offer, and (if acceptable) bestow the best service to our surroundings. The higher we get, the more do we feel encompassed, and possessed of the "arms of light." And the more we know what light is, the more truly shall we estimate all that is opposed to it.

##### 5.—THE EFFECT OF WORLDLY SOCIETY.

Have you ever considered the effect of association? I believe we are affected or altered in some way by association with any of the human family. The Nazarite forfeited the hair of his separation by touching a dead body, even suddenly; and I doubt if he forfeited it in any

other way. I am convinced that we never come in contact with humanity without being either injured or served by it.

Now, that which cannot serve us must injure *if we blend with it*. I know it is possible to maintain an elevated region toward another; but then it is plain I am not blending. I am, on the contrary, in a sensibly distinct position, trying to myself, and I only submitting to it, for the sake of testimony, or the good of my inferior company. The moment I blend, the moment we are on equal terms in any line, my distinctness is gone, and my influence too. Could I ever help a person out of a slough by going into it myself? Is not my strength all the more applicable by my using every appliance in my power from the *terra firma* of a solid footing? By refusing intimacy I do not refuse help; for, in fact, I lose my power to afford moral help the moment I sink into intimacy; the very testimony to my own moral power being that I keep myself from the slough or its *neighbourhood*. If I meet on equal terms I fail to shew that I am endued with power to help, or that it is a case that needs help. If I touch the dead body, if I lose my hair, my moral power, of what use am I?

A soul in true moral vigour and spiritual perception must feel the company of an unbeliever, or of the world, in any sense most irksome, for it must be braced up to testimony all the time, and guarding itself against any relaxation, which would rob it of its high standing. If I am right with such an one, I must not mingle with him; if I fail to raise him to higher contemplation, I must not sink to his level; for if I do, I have lost my place of testimony towards him, and consequently forfeited my moral power; he has injured me, he has fed my *old* man, which I have suffered to rise up and act in denial of the *new*; and even though my intent to serve him may be honest, I defeat it.

Nothing so convinces another of power as seeing its action in oneself. When Isaac (in Gen. xxvi.) *completely* retired from the land of the Philistines; THEN the king owned his superiority. So is it always. If I see that you can surrender the world and its refinements, I must

be conscience-stricken that there is something mighty there.

Oh let us ponder this in the Lord's name! Let us preserve inviolably our love and allegiance to Him; and as our souls enjoy the holiness of His way, we shall see more clearly how such associations injure us, and how we neutralise our best intentions by *gratifying self*.

#### 6.—THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MEMBERSHIP.

If we say, we hold that the members of Christ's body are one with Christ, and that the Holy Ghost is down here forming one body in Christ; in short, if we hold the great truths which characterise the church of God, it is plain, that although my individual place with Christ remains the same to me if I am personally faithful (see John xiv. 21—24), yet my place in the body down here, in which I am held by the Holy Ghost, suffers or gains according to the faithfulness of all other members as well as my own.

My testimony, my service, my worship in communion with the saints, is affected by the action or inaction of my fellow-members; consequently, wherever they are, their conduct is of material interest to me, independently of the regard I may have for my Lord's interests in them. And to seek to improve them, or preserve them right, is the only method I have of freeing myself from the embarrassment which they cause me.

If my Lord's word or judgment excludes any of them because of radical failure from a sustained union, then I am relieved from this (may I say?) bodily encumbrance; *otherwise*, I have no remedy but the appliances of constitutional vigour to rally and reclaim them. If a gathering becomes dead and formal, and if, through mercy and discipline, my soul is kept lively and vigorous, I don't believe that I shall either help myself or them, or please the Spirit of God, by seeking another enclosure where I may congregate more kindred souls.

*As long* as I can recognize the assembly as meeting on divine principles, I am *bound* to maintain my membership unimpaired and utilised among them. If they fail

as members, *I am not*. My measure of power will be owned where there is life. As all measures of light blend and diffuse when brought together, so do all measures of spiritual life, through the power of the Holy Ghost, when acting according to His mind and course. Am I to tie up my arm because the greater part of my body is paralysed? Ought I not rather to promote vitality by the limb which remains in health?

I am persuaded that a faithful member, acting his part, and proving his vitality in the midst of an enfeebled constitution, would eventually rally and re-animate whatever is genuine. All Scripture history supports this belief. Impatience or hastiness of feeling is always an evidence of want of power. If I have power, I have only use for it where it is wanting, and it is not the amount of power that is valuable, but the faithful, energetic use of it. Phinehas-like, I do not desert the congregation of the Lord, if it be one; but the very fact that it needs so much, only makes the demand on me more imperative to maintain the truth in its midst, according to the power God may give me.

The simplest and fullest evidence of divine power is the ability to apply the very quality of good suited to the attenuated existence of a weakly body. It is not the whirlwind, it is not the fire; it is the gentle and insinuating word, that forms a place for itself in the soul, because the quickened soul feels that it is just what it wants. Christ presented, according to the nature of the need, was the nature of the ministry prescribed for the declining churches of Revelation. I believe that if we had grace, we should be like Elijah to the prophets of Baal, or any like them, we should let the latter have their full swing, and then, in the Lord's name, establish His grace to the souls that He loves.

#### 7.—PREPARATION FOR GLORY.

It is only as we enter into Christ's sufferings here that we can either desire, apprehend, or be prepared for His glory. Everything connected with the old man is contrary to Christ; for on account of it He died. If I

*Meditations on Subjects of Interest.* 453

would enter into Christ's glory I must necessarily die to everything here which is contrary to Him. His life leads me into His Glory; but if it does, it also puts me into the sense of moral death, with regard to everything against it. So that, in proportion as I am able to walk here, in the sufferings with which His life was oppressed, the more do I desire and apprehend His glory. If I find everything here as antagonistic to me as He felt it, the glory is my resource. So that I feel, as I am a co-sufferer with Him, I am also to be co-glorified with Him; and that this light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for me, in surpassing measure, an eternal weight of glory. The beauty and brightness of the glory itself does not move those who are not suffering with Christ here; and this explains why many who feel their need of Christ, and use Him to a great degree, have very feeble desires for, or apprehensions of, that glory. If I enjoy what Christ *can't* enjoy, how can I enjoy what He *does* enjoy? And, therefore, the school or university for the glory is suffering with Him. There I must learn, and there I must graduate. It is only as I take up my cross daily and follow Him, that I can either desire or be prepared to ascend with Him the Holy Mount. Death comes on us in many ways here; not two of us die morally in the same way. Following Him will always disclose the nature of the death we have to die. Death is surrender of that which I should like to live in, and in which I could live humanly; but as I follow Him, I find that I must surrender this; and then, as I die thereto, following, accompanying Him, so to speak, do I find my soul enlarged in desire, apprehension of, and preparation for, the glory. I feel that what I have to die to is against Him; but that the glory, where He is, is the joy and resource of my heart. When Moses felt the rebellion and hopelessness of Israel, his eye looked out for something beyond man; and his prayer was, "Show me Thy glory." When Stephen reached the confines of testimony to Israel as a nation, the glory was presented to him as his home. So with Paul in the prison at Rome. So with John in Patmos. As each was made partaker of the sufferings of Christ,

454      *Meditations on Subjects of Interest.*

He could rejoice that when His glory should be revealed, He should be glad with exceeding joy.

## 8.—THE USE AND ABUSE OF THE EYE.

The first great point to establish, in order to ascertain the error of anything, is to obtain a perfect knowledge of what is true and right. That which is right must be singular, while the counterfeits may be endless in number and variety. A banker once said, on being asked how he knew a bad note, "I never consider whether a note is a bad one; I ascertain whether it be a good one." If I know what is right, it is very easy and simple for me to reject that which does not answer thereto. Many weary themselves to no profit in examining the suspicious, to see whether the grounds for suspicion exist; whereas, if they had simply adhered to that which they knew was right, they could have discerned and rejected the pretender at once, even though they might not have been able to tell the exact grounds on which they rejected it. I may add, that when I have rejected any pretension as spurious, I may then, in order to convince others, examine the imperfections which prove its ungeniueness; but the first occupation of my eye, whether in choice or in discernment, should *not* be with the imperfection or evil.

How, then, ought the eye to be occupied? If I am not able to determine this, I shall not find it very easy to determine how it ought not; whereas, if I can decide the right occupation for my eye, I can easily perceive what is not so.

Here lies the cause of so much indecision and inconsistency. People have not defined to themselves what is right; and hence they make a trial of every offer on its own merits, instead of on the merits of an ascertained standard. Now, the right occupation of the eye must be determined by reference to the *power that has a right to control it*. If the Lord has this right, then its occupation must be in accordance with His mind, and appointments down here, while in the body. The engagement or occupation of any organ is characterised



*Meditations on Subjects of Interest.* 455

by the power which controls it. If the Lord controls my eye, it is occupied and engaged with what is interesting to Him. If my eye is controlled by my own will, it will be characterised by my carnal tastes and likings; and it is a very active agent in furnishing the natural mind with provision for its enmity against God. Eve saw that the forbidden fruit was pleasant to the *eye*; and this promoted in her heart an inclination to act in independence of God. It is wonderful how the verdict of the eye affects us about everything; and how much that judgment is the fruit of our own state of soul.

Two people may see the same thing with totally different impressions; but the impression imparted to each is in relation to his own peculiar state and condition, before his eye thus acted. One admires, while another turns away pained from beholding the very same scene. The body is the Lord's, and the eye is the Lord's; either the Spirit of God is using my eye to embrace and survey all that is important for me to see in my course, or the natural mind is using it to furnish materials for its own support; and, therefore, the "lust of the eye" is classed with the "lust of the flesh," though no *man* ever thinks that they could be placed together as morally equal. Both link us to the world which is not of the Father, and the "lust of the eye" is even the more dangerous of the two; because least feared or discountenanced, although Scripture abounds with warnings touching the dangers for the eye. Remember, the eye sends back a message to the soul corresponding to the power which used it. If the Lord uses it, then, an impression furnishing materials for His will is conveyed to the soul; if my own mind has used it, the impression will, on the contrary, furnish materials for its own promotion, which, to a Christian, is a double loss; for not only does it deprive him of what he might have gained for the Lord, but it acquires for him that which hinders and shuts out his sense of the Father's love. How little do our souls ponder these things, and take them to heart!

N<sup>o</sup>. XX.

## THE TYPICAL CHARACTER OF GEN. I—II. 3.

THE first chapter of Genesis, with the first three verses of the second, evidently forms a distinct section of the book. It represents creation as the work of God, and the rest consequent upon the work being finished. Nothing else is allowed to mix itself up with this. It is *God's* work and *God's* rest.

I believe it also to be a type of *new* creation: meaning, by that, God's work of recovery, when creation was fallen: recovery, whether of the individual fallen man, or in general of the world, from the time the first ray of light from the promise broke upon her darkness, until the glory of God lights up a "new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."

I find in it, accordingly, two distinct applications, yet interwoven one with another: one dispensational, the other moral, and relating to the individual.

Let us take first the dispensational view.

We have presented to us at the outset the necessity for God's working: "earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep." The language seems to suggest that this was not its primitive condition, but one into which it had lapsed after the hand of God had first created it. However this might be, it needed (that is certain) God's interference. There was no "womb of nature,"—as one speaks,—out of which the present fair order of earth and heaven (fair still, even while bearing the sad marks of defilement), could be produced. God must come in to produce it. How true of a ruined world!

The agents in new creation are the Word and the Spirit of God: the Spirit making the word effectual. And "the entrance of Thy word giveth *light*." So it is here: "God said, Let there be light, and there was light." And so we find it in chap. iii., "The seed of the woman

*The Typical Character of Gen. i.—ii. 3.* 457

shall bruise the serpent's head." There the light shone upon the darkness of the world; and Adam's heart receiving it with joy, "he called his wife's name (*her* name by whom death came) Eve: because she was the mother of all *living*."

Yet it was long before the sun came, He whose rays had begun to light the earth from the beginning. Long, men looked and waited. Day after day passed over, and then He came. It was after "the third day," — after resurrection, — the lights were placed (Christ and the Church) in heaven. His is a full-orbed, unchanging, undivided light: *her's* a reflected, inconstant one. Yet is it said, "the moon to govern the night," just as it is, "the sun to rule the day;"—"Ye are the light of the world," just as, "I am the light of the world." But Christ is absent, and it is now night; although, thank God, "the night is far spent, the day is at hand." How strange would a day be for the world—and yet many look for it,—*without the sun!*

On the fourth day, therefore, I find in type the present or church period come in. But on the sixth day, man is created in the image of God, and set over the lower creation, the woman being united with him in this glory; just as, in the coming kingdom, the Church reigns with Him who is the "image of the Invisible God," — the Second Adam. A beautiful little picture of millennial days is suggested by the limiting of the food of man and beast, which follows in the concluding verses of the chapter. A picture of that time when there shall be no more bloodshedding, but, under the reign of the true Solomon, "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more;" when "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid, and the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox."

The three verses of the second chapter, which belong rather to this, show absolute rest, a day without any following "evening," and in it only God. Work is at an end, for creation is finished: rest follows absolute and unbroken, but the creature is not seen in it; God only is

458 *The Typical Character of Gen. i.—ii. 3.*

there. So, past the millennial age, beyond the final outbreak of Satan's enmity, all trace of sin gone; death, the last enemy, destroyed; we look on to the perfect rest that remaineth, where no shadow lengthens, no voice of discord breaks the ineffable peace, to see redemption-work completely finished, and the full harvest of joy and gladness gathered in. "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son Himself also be subject unto Him that put all things under Him *that God may be all in all.*"

We go back now to consider the individual application. Man is a fallen being. *So* fallen that he needs, just as much as "earth without form and void" ever needed, the interference of the divine power. "We are His workmanship, *created* in Christ Jesus unto good works."

In this case, also, the entrance of the word giveth light, and the Spirit of God is the agent. We are "born of the word,"—"born of the Spirit." This is man's quickening,—*regeneration*. But here, too, although there be *light* from the first, a full-orbed Christ does not necessarily shine upon the soul at once. Resurrection-day must come to it before this can be. Often there is a long interval between. And when the light breaks in first, darkness is not banished by it: only limited, having still its times of return, and seasons of prevalence. And, moreover, the light brings out nothing lovely,—a waste of unquiet waters was all that met the sight during the first day; yet God blessed the light, and divided it from the darkness; "and the evening and the morning were the first day." With us, too, blessed be God! it is *first* evening, and *then* the morning. And when the morning shall be fully come, the shadows and the sorrows of night shall have fled for ever. It is said of new Jerusalem, "there is no night there."

The next day sees the heavens made, though not yet has the finger of God garnished them with splendour. So when light has broken in upon the soul, immediately we find that heaven and heavenly things begin to take their proper place in it. Faith, the "evidence of things unseen," has come; even, although yet all is as disquiet and seemingly as barren as ever.

*The Typical Character of Gen. i.—ii. 3.* 459

But now, the waters must give place, and the dry land appear. On the *third* day, resurrection-day, this is accomplished; for “the power of resurrection” known gives to the soul firmness and fertility. As it was with the darkness, so with the waters now; they are not wholly removed, but controlled and bounded. So we may say of all that causes the uncertainty, disquietude and barrenness of the soul; it is not removed; but God has given it its bounds, which it cannot pass, nor turn again to cover the earth,” and the time comes when it will be said, as “there is no night” more, so also, “there is no more *sea*.”

And earth becomes fertile, too. Fruit is brought forth, “whose seed is in itself.” True of all Christian fruit,—it is reproductive. If you “let your light shine before men, they shall glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

And, now, when resurrection-power is fully known, the third day ended, Christ is seen, full-orbed, in the heaven. And with the sun, the moon; with Christ the church. The relationship between the two is grace; on the one part, merely giving, on the other, merely receiving. “What hast thou that thou didst not receive?”

The soul established in grace, higher fruits of life appear. Earth, hitherto bringing forth the herb and tree, now brings forth the living creature. And even the waters,—in the love of Him who makes *all* things work together for our good,—become productive. Even the sadness of evil experienced innate in the soul, giving thoughts of the quiet and joy of *home*, — of its holiness, changeless, and eternal.

Accordingly, at the close of the sixth day, the joy and perfectness we long for is come, in the “kingdom which cannot be moved.” Man is in the image of God; the conflict is over for ever, and the victory is come: *he, too*, “shall not learn war any more.”

What remains but the joy of Him whose work we are — of Him who calls us children, and whom we call Father, and whose rest from His work finished, shall not again be disturbed,—no, not for ever!

N<sup>o</sup>. XXI.THE NEW BIRTH.<sup>a</sup>

I DESIRE to meditate a little on the 3rd chapter of the Gospel of John, and its connection with some other parts of Scripture; more particularly in reference to the new birth. I desire to do so, for the profitable understanding of what the new man is; and the place in which we are set as made partakers of it, as we now are, in Christ. I shall, necessarily, go over some ground with which Christians are familiar, in speaking of such a subject; but this is necessary, in order to connect with it the further developments and distinctions which lead me to treat of the subject.

Many believed in Christ when they saw the miracles which He did, but Jesus did not commit himself to them. . . . He knew what was in man (chap. ii. 23—25). Their conclusion about Him was a just one, but it was a conclusion drawn by what was in man. It was perfectly worthless; left man in his own nature, and under the motives, influences, and passions to which he was subject before; nor did it take him out of the domain of Satan, who had power over the flesh and the world. The conclusion was right; but it was only a conclusion: the man remained what he was—unchanged. Jesus, who knew what flesh was, had—could have—no confidence in it.

But Nicodemus (chap. iii.), under God's leading, for our instruction, goes a step further. The others believed it, and left it there. But where the Spirit of God is at work, it always produces wants in the soul, craving and desire after that which is of God and godly; and so, the

<sup>a</sup> Published during the absence in Canada of the writer. The responsibility of correcting the proofs rests with the *Editor*.

sense of defect in ourselves. There is at once, instinctively too, the consciousness that the world will be against us; consciousness, too, of its opposition and scorn. Nicodemus comes by night. There was a want of something better in his soul; but his being a ruler, and especially an ecclesiastical ruler, made it more difficult for him to go to Christ. The dignity of one set to teach is not a facility for going to learn. However, conscience urges him to go, and he goes: the fear of man makes him afraid, and he goes by night. How poor is that dignity which tends to hinder one learning of Christ. Nicodemus, though spiritual craving had led him to Christ, goes on the same ground in his inquiry as those who had no such want at all. "Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him" (ver. 2). It was a conclusion drawn from proofs, perfectly just; but that was all. Still he wanted something from Him who shewed them; but he took for granted that he was, as a Jew, the child of the Kingdom, and would have teaching. The Lord meets him (for he was sincere and known of Him) at once, by declaring that the whole ground he was on was wrong. *He* did not teach flesh, nor had *He* come to do so. God was setting up a kingdom of His own. To see that, a man must be born again, completely anew. The kingdom was not yet come visibly, not with observation; it was there among them,—but, to see it, a man must have a wholly *new* nature. Nicodemus, arrested by the language, does not understand how this could be, stops as a human reasoner, though sincere, at the present difficulty; and, in truth, does not see the kingdom.

But two great truths had been brought out here, already. First, God is not teaching and improving man—as he is. He sets up a kingdom, a sphere of power and blessing of His own; there He acts. And secondly, man must have a new nature or life. He must be born again, in order to have to say to God who so works. Flesh cannot even perceive the kingdom. Both facts are of supreme importance. A new divine system is set

ourselves; but, according to the blessed efficacy of His death, entirely forgiven all the sins and state of sin in which we were till thus raised, consequent on the efficacy of His death. This last point, the epistle to the Ephesians takes up fully and exclusively, and shews us quickened with Christ and raised out of the death of sin, by the same power which raised Christ Himself. It is not merely the divine nature become our life, but death to sin, life to God, raised up, forgiven, and accepted, as in the state in which He is as risen, yea sitting in heavenly places in Him. The nature is divine. That is, supremely excellent; but by death and resurrection having come in, and our being united to Christ—our whole relative condition is changed; we are not,—for God and for faith,—accounted as alive in the old man; we are not in it at all: have put it off. It is—(for the reckoning of faith, and that according the possession of and being alive in a new life)—dead and gone. We are in Christ, and Christ is our life; alive in Him and alive in what He is alive to,—to God. Our standing is not consequently in the first Adam at all. We have died as in the first Adam to all that he is; but alive in the last Adam, the Lord Jesus, according to all the acceptance in which he now lives before God.

Thus the third chapter of John's gospel teaches us the intrinsic excellency of the life we receive of God and shews it in direct connection with what is divine, Christ speaking what He knew and shewing that we must have a nature from God, and fit for God Himself. Christ speaking thus, that which He knew is of the deepest interest,—the direct communication of what is divine. This life is there shewn in its nature and origin as contrasted with flesh. Its proper character and excellency is more seen in John. The epistle to the Ephesians, however, confirms it in result: "That we should be holy and blameless before him in love" (chap. i. 4). But in its condition and state, the epistles are more full as to this life. There—inasmuch as Christ died—living in the life of Christ we are [looked at as] dead to sin,—the life, being a new thing, wholly distinct from the old man; and we alive in Christ. We are not



*The New Birth.*

473

in the flesh; we have died and are risen again. Being regenerated is being dead and risen again; for we receive Christ as life. It is having left Adam, his nature and fruits, condemnation, death and judgment behind; and being, as delivered from all these things in necessary and righteous acceptance, according to Christ's acceptance before God. The natures are distinct. I am not in the flesh; I have died: I am risen again. I am accepted in Christ risen. I am partaker of the divine nature and to enjoy its fulness in God.

J. N. D.

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 LINES IN ANSWER TO HYMN, PAGE 442.

"'Tis good to be here," was the word  
 Once heard from that country so fair,  
 In glory beholding the Lord—  
 This tells what it is to be there.<sup>1</sup>

The glories and joys of that land  
 The traveller could not declare—  
 His rapture, and silence alone,  
 Must tell what it is to be there.<sup>2</sup>

In sight of that city on high,  
 Its walls deck'd with jewels so rare,  
 He fell, overwhelm'd with the joy,  
 And tells what it is to be there.<sup>3</sup>

With Thee, Lord, for ever to be,  
 In the hope Thou hast left with us here—  
 'Tis enough, Lord—for ever with Thee!  
 It is this, it is this, to be there.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mat. xvii. 4.    <sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 4.    <sup>3</sup> Rev. xxii. 8.    <sup>4</sup> 1 Thes. v. 17.

“WHOM HAVE I IN HEAVEN BUT THEE? AND THERE IS NONE  
UPON EARTH I DESIRE BESIDE THEE.”—Psalm lxxiii. 25.

JESUS! 't is Thou Thyself I need,  
At every time, at every hour;  
Oh! wilt Thou guide my feet, and lead  
And keep me by Thy Spirit's power,  
That from Thee I may never stray,  
But still press on the narrow way.

Close to Thy side I fain would cling,  
And learn the mysteries of Thy love,  
Into Thy presence entering  
With boldness through the precious blood;  
Oh! Jesu's love is vaster far  
Than all our poor conceptions are.

It is this love my soul would know,  
Would learn it in its heights and depths,  
Would mark it in that hour of woe,  
When on the cross He tasted death—  
Would ponder all His wondrous ways,  
And never cease His name to praise.

That precious name, it cheers the heart  
When burdened, or with sin opprest,  
Then to that blessed one I turn,  
And always find a place of rest,  
There on His bosom calmly stay,  
And then—all else may pass away.

Yes—every thing may pass away;  
In Him my all in all I've found,  
And having Him, sure I can say  
Now I have all things and abound;  
My precious Lord—to Thee I bow,  
And own no other Lord but Thou.

It was the power of Jesu's cross,  
 That turn'd my darkness into light,  
 Now for His sake I'd count but loss,  
 All that might dim this precious sight;  
 Full well He knows the flesh how frail,  
 Yet in His strength I shall prevail.

Still 't is Thyself, O Lord, I need  
 A sense of Jesus always near;  
 His love, the joy on which I feed,  
 His presence, all I need to cheer,  
 With this I'll sweetly journey on,  
 And wait till He, my Lord, shall come.

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“ IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS : FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF  
 GOD IN CHRIST JESUS CONCERNING YOU.”—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.

*Poetry.*

But hush, beneath my eye,  
 I see in words of blood,  
 "Will He who gave His *Son* to die,  
 Refuse thee *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.*

J. G. B.

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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!

Revelation i. 5, 6.

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END OF VOL. XIII.