

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

לא בחיל ולא בכח כי אִם־בְּרוּחַי

Zechariah iv. 6.

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THE PRESENT TESTIMONY,

(ETC., ETC.)

N^o. I.

APPROACH TO, — AND DELIGHT IN — GOD.

SINS AND SIN.

I AM not sure that I have sufficiently distinguished in the following article between the atonement and the sprinkling on the altar of incense. The blood of the bullock was sprinkled on the mercy seat for Aaron and his sons—the heavenly saints. The blood of the goat also. This made an atonement for himself and for the holy place, and for the tabernacle of the congregation. He was alone within in doing it. The congregation of Israel being in view also, for God must have been glorified in order to bless them. Then he went out and sprinkled the altar of incense with the blood both of the bullock and of the goat. After all this was complete, he confessed the sins of Israel on the scape-goat, and it was sent away.

Controversy, where there is research after truth, has this advantage attending it, that it urges the spirit to more attention and diligent research, and where the subjects are scriptural, to search the Scriptures; and these ever afford to the humble and enquiring soul, fresh and blessed inlet into the mind of God. Two points have been before me in consequence of recent controversy on the law and the righteousness of God. I would now bring them before your readers; in part, as presenting questions tending to conduct to more light; in part, as acquired instruction. If we examine the order of the ceremonies of the great day of atonement, we shall find a more definite character in them than had yet drawn my attention. The blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat, and on the altar of

Sins and Sin.

the flesh. One thing we must remember: that even there, where we enter into the full blessedness of God's presence, the Lamb that was slain will be the object in whose perfection we have learnt that blessedness.

(*Slightly altered*).

Until the morning breaketh,
 Until the shadows flee,
 Until the earth awaketh
 Her absent King to see—
 I'll get me to my mountain,
 To commune with my Lord;
 I'll *drink* the living fountain,
 And *feed* upon His Word.
 I'll 'bide with Jesus yonder,
 Upon His Throne of Light,
 And on His grace I'll ponder,
 With rapturous delight.
 Then, from my starry Tower,
 I'll issue forth, to tell
 The HEAVENLY Grace and Power
 Of Christ, Emanuel.
 I'll bear to men the story
 Of pard'ning Love and Grace,
 And far proclaim the glory
 Which shines in Jesu's face.
 And thus—until the singing
 Of Heav'nly hosts on high
 Announce my Saviour bringing
 Eternal glory nigh,
 Telling of full Redemption,
 And every foe o'erthrown,
 And Satan's condemnation,
 And God supreme alone—
 I'll never cease to enter
 Within the courts above,
 And, from that mighty centre,
 Go forth to tell of Love—
 Of Love that never faileth—
 Of Grace that's always free—
 Of Might which now prevaieth—
 Of Jesu's Victory!
 Thus, in my Saviour's presence
 Abiding day by day,
 I'll labour in His absence
 Till shadows flee away!

Anonymous.

N^o. II.

QUOTATIONS.

“And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”— Luke xxiv. 27.

THE Lord’s wisdom in dealing with the Sadducees of His day, may well be our pattern in dealing with a like generation in this day. “Ye do err,” said He to them, “not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God” (Matt. xxii.). They presented a difficulty, as they judged it to be, an insurmountable difficulty; but it was no such thing to Him. Scripture He bowed to, and the power of God He asserted. Scripture was His rule of thought and judgment; and He could rest in the power of God as that which would make every jot and tittle of it good.

This was His answer to them at once, His immediate rebuke of them. And it was enough. His Spirit afterwards in the Apostle would commend the Saints to God, and to the word of His grace: so now, would He Himself lean on God and His word. It was enough for Him that God had spoken (see Acts xx. 32).

But after this, He shews these Sadducees, that the difficulty they suggested was simply an imagination of their own, and not a part of the Scripture, or the revelation of God. And then, in closing with them, He exposes their unbelief by the light of Scripture, rebuking their denial of resurrection by a passage taken from Ex. iii.—thus again honouring Scripture as the authoritative rule of all our thoughts.

But this only as I pass on to my present subject, the fact that quotations from the Old Testament are largely found in the New. These *quotations* from the Old Testament, cited, as they are, in all parts of the New,

with many and many a glance, or tacit unexpressed reference, link all the parts of the sacred volume together, giving it a character of unity and completeness. The *contents* of the volume do the same—they also give unity and completeness to it; for they constitute a history (with incidental matters by the way), a series of events which stretch from the beginning to the end, from the creation to the kingdom. And *prophecies* in the Old Testament of events in the New, act in the same way as quotations in the New of passages in the Old. And thus, as in the mouth of several witnesses of the highest dignity, we have the oneness and the consistency, the unity and completeness of the Book from first to last fully set forth and established.

But this simple fact tells us, further, that all the parts of this wondrous volume are the breathing of one and the same Spirit; and again, the contents themselves speak the same. The moral glories which so brightly, so abundantly and so variously shine in them witness that God is their source. This constitutes the “self-evidencing light and power of the Holy Scriptures,” as another has expressed it. And thus the divine *Original* of the book, as well as its divine *Unity* and *consistency* is established; and we hold to these truths in the face of all the insult that is put upon them by unreasonable and wicked men. Oppositions of criticism, falsely so called, only spend themselves in vain, like angry waves on the sea-shore. God Himself has set the bounds—and they only return upon themselves, foaming out their own shame.

In the progress of the New Testament Scriptures, the Lord and the Holy Ghost, each in his several way and season, use the Scriptures of the Old.

As to the Lord, we may find him doing this in several different ways.

1. He observes them obediently, ordering His life and behaviour, and forming his character (if I may so speak), by them, and according to them.

2. He uses them as his weapons of war or shield of defence, when assailed by the Tempter, or by the men of the world.

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3. He avers and avows their divine authority and original, and their indestructible character, and that too, in every jot and tittle of them.

4. He treats them as authoritative and commanding, when He teaches His disciples, or reasons with gain-sayers.

5. He fulfils them^a

In such ways as these, the Lord honours the Scriptures of the Old Testament. What a sight! What a precious fact! How blessed to see Him in such relationship to the Word of God; for that word is to ourselves the warrant and witness of all the confidence and liberty and peace we know before God!

We read the 119th Psalm with delight, there tracing *a Saint's* relation to Scripture; and we know it to be edifying to mark the breathings of the soul under the drawings and teachings and inspirings of the Holy Ghost. But it is a still more affecting, a more edifying thing, to trace and mark, through the four Evangelists, the relations to the same Scriptures into which the *Lord Jesus* puts Himself.

Then, when the ministry of the Lord is over, when the Son has returned to Heaven, and the Spirit comes down, He is seen (as in the Apostles whom he fills to write the Epistles) to do the same service for us; and in His way, to put Himself in connection with the Old Testament Scriptures, as the Lord had just been doing. For in all the Epistles, as I may say, we get quotations from them.

And here let me add, there is no limit to this. These quotations are found in every part of the New Testament, and are taken from every part of the Old. They are found in Matthew, and on to the Apocalypse, and are taken from Genesis to Malachi. And this is done very largely;

^a This, among other illustrations of it, is finely seen in John xix. 28—30, where the Lord seems as though He were calling Scripture to mind; and first recollecting that one very short passage of it had not yet been realized, He refuses to withdraw Himself from the scene of suffering till it was,—and then, all being fulfilled as was written, just said—“It is finished,” and gave up the ghost.

so that in the structure of the divine volume, we have nothing less than the closest, fullest, and most intricate interweaving of all parts of it together, the end, too, returning to the beginning, and the beginning anticipating the end. So that, in a sense, we are in all parts of it, when we are in any part of it, though the variety of its communications is infinite. It reminds me of the figure of the body and its members, used by the Apostle to set forth Christ (1 Cor. xii). There are many members, but one body. There are many books, but one Scripture, one volume. All are equally divine workmanship, though all may not be of equal value to the soul. The foot is not the hand, nor the ear the eye. But God has set them together in one body, — as in the Heavens, He has set stars and constellations together, though one may differ from another in glory.

But to pursue the same figure of the body and the members, we do boldly say, one part of the volume cannot be touched without all feeling it and resenting it. “Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it;” God has so tempered it altogether. If Moses be insulted, Paul feels it: if Daniel or Zechariah be questioned, John and Peter will resent it. Yea, and I may go further in the same analogy, and say, the uncomely parts have been given more abundant honour. The shortest piece in the whole volume is made to be heard in the conclusion of the finest, and most elaborate and most weighty argument we find in it. Psalm cxvii. is brought forth as a special witness in Romans xv. And the book of the Proverbs, dealing as it does with common, practical, every day life, is honoured by being made as rich and blessed a witness to the Christ of God in His mysterious glories, as we get in any part of the whole Scripture (Chap. viii.)

Yea and I will take on me to say this further. As all other parts of the volume, like the members of one body, will resent trespass and wrong done to any part, so will the Spirit say of God and of the Scriptures, as He says of God and of His people, “He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of His eye.” The Scripture is His handywork; and God will make the quarrel of Scripture

Quotations.

His own quarrel. If he will awake in due time, to the controversy of His temple or His covenant, or His Zion, so will he most assuredly to the controversy of His word. He has magnified His word above all His name. "He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words," says the Lord Jesus, "hath one that judgeth him."

And again let me speak, as I stand in presence of God and His oracles, Scripture links itself with Eternity in ways that are divine, like every thing else in it. If we have quotations in the New Testament of passages in the Old, so have we, in both Old and New, references to the Eternity that is *past*. And if we have foretellings in the Old Testament of events in the New, so have we, in both Old and New, the foretelling of the eternity that is *to come*. Scripture, as I may speak, retires behind the borders of time, and discloses the secrets and councils of the past Eternity, unsealing "the volume of the book," and disclosing predestinations formed and settled in Christ ere worlds began; and Scripture passes beyond the borders of time, and is in the scenes and glories of the Eternity that is *to come*, giving us to hear every tongue confessing "Jesus to be Lord to the Glory of God the Father," and many many kindred voices, and to see many many kindred glories. And happy for us, that it links itself with *time* as well as with *Eternity*. It goes before us to shew us the way all through the confusion and corruption that is abroad, to the last moments of the dispensation. All is anticipated; so that we need not be stumbled by anything, however saddened and ashamed we may be. "Great peace have all they that love thy law, and nothing shall *offend* them." We need not be afraid with any amazement since we have it. The confusion and corruption may be infinite, strange indeed in their changeful forms, and deep in their insolent wickedness; but Scripture has prepared us for all, superstitious vanities, and infidel insolence. The tare-field was spread out on the page of Scripture ere it stretched itself out in the defiled plains of Christendom. The unmerciful fellow-servant is seen in Matthew xviii., ere he is seen in the wars and controversies of Christendom.

God in His word has not forecast the shadow of *uncertain* evils.

It is indeed marvellous, and yet not marvellous because it is divine. The Spirit of Him who knows the end from the beginning can account for it, but nothing else can. The Book itself, as another has said, is a greater miracle than any which it records.

And I would now end with a word about quotations, as it was with them I began.

These citations out of His own writings by God Himself, first in the Person of the Son, and then in the person of the Holy Ghost, are beautiful in this character; God is *sealing* what once He *wrote*: at the beginning He sent forth those writings as from Himself, being the source of them; so now, after they have come forth, and been embodied in human forms as in all languages of the nations, and been seated in the midst of the human family, He comes forth to accredit them there Himself, as with His own sign manual. God has both written them and sealed them, and we receive them as from Him, and in our way of responsive faith and worship, "set to our seal that God is true." "Thy testimonies have I claimed for my heritage for ever; they are the rejoicing of my heart." Surely these things are so.

To notice, with some care, the quotations themselves, as they meet us while we pursue our way from Matthew to the Apocalypse, is an edifying exercise of the soul. It helps directly to let us into the fuller light of the Old Testament oracles, giving us nothing less than God's own key for unlocking the treasures that are there. And this exercise has also another direct effect—it binds all the parts, however distant, of the one volume together *under our eye*, and serves to present the whole as one complete and perfect piece of workmanship in full consistency with itself throughout. The light is one, though it may be that of the Patriarchal dawn, of the Levitical or Mosaic morning, of the prophetic fore-noon, of the Gospel Meridian or noon-tide, and then of the Apocalyptic evening hour with its shadows, just before the solemn night of judgment which is to precede the

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second morning, the morning of millennial Glory. But this indeed it is. In Scripture, from beginning to end, we are in the light of God, from the first morning of creation to the second morning of the kingdom; having passed our own noon and evening hours, and also the season of the world's midnight.

PARADOX.

The Church *was, is, and is not, and yet shall be.*

The Church *was* in God's counsels before the world was; it *was*, too, as set up by God on earth, as at Pentecost, entrusted (in its principles and the revelation of the truth of the Lordship of Christ in heaven, and of the Spirit sent down here as His Vicar during His absence) to man at Pentecost, and visibly existed upon earth. It *was* (fruit), for it is *now* a ruin among men.

The Church *is*, in the Divine Mind, as that which God is forming now amid the confusion of man's wickedness here below; it *is* the delight of God, the glory of Christ, the work of the Spirit, the joy of Heaven, for eternity.

The Church *is not*. Man cannot show now, what he could shew at Pentecost, and at Ephesus; and the church, which faith realizes as existing in the Divine Mind and as being the subject of the present actions and operations and care of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (to sense and sight) *is not*, though, where faith and the Spirit are in practical action, he that has them can identify that which is known and owned of God with something which he sees down here. The Church *shall be* the New Jerusalem—the Bride, the Lamb's wife in glory.

We have a good deal of need of wisdom and holy fear to hold James chap. i. verses 3 and 13, as a balance by which to measure all ways of trial. God leads his people through *deep* waters, often brings them where they have no standing for their feet, but they are always cleansing waters. His people may themselves go to polluted waters which can neither cleanse nor be cleansed, *even God's* raging waves and billows: even these become, at His bidding, "waters of cleansing." His living ones *rest* beside still waters; this can never be with the foul waters of the flesh. The desire of man's heart ends only in death.

How cheering to know God as a Father in the midst of all the confusion around.

The Apostle's sorrows and trials, besides being his present honour as conformity to the sufferings of his Master as a servant now, were also the school of his own soul for eternity.

N^o. III.

TRUTH FOR THIS DAY.

WE are forewarned, that in "these last days perilous times shall come," in order that we may be prepared to meet them when they do come; nay, more — that we may be on the watch, as being fully alive to the Spirit and character of them. If we do not apprehend the nature of the times, how can we be ready to meet them? And if we are not spiritually sensitive to observe, how can we apprehend? May it not be said of us as of the Jewish teachers (and this was the knell of their incompetency and approaching doom)— "How is it that ye cannot discern these times?" The boast of the scoffer is, that all things remain as they were. There is not spiritual sense to feel the deep and wide-spread devastation of all Christian organization; and consequently, there is among Christians at large, a feebleness in proportion to their ignorance, as to what truth is specially needed for this day; and what is worse, an indifference in seeking to know it. The exigency not being felt, there are but few men that "have understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do." My Brethren! these things ought not so to be!

The question, "What is the truth for this day?" was lately put to me by a true-hearted, earnest servant of Christ; and the more I have thought of the subject, the more deeply important it has appeared to me; and therefore, through the Lord's help, I shall endeavour to trace through Scripture how times and difficulty resembling the present, have been encountered by the true servants of God in their day, and whose example affords us precept and principle, as well as authority from the Divine instruction imparted to them at the time.

Truth for this Day.

First—I must ask my reader to consider the influences now at work, attempting to dissolve and emasculate every principle of Christianity. I reduce them into two. The *one* is the exaltation of the mind of man, as assuming to contain in itself (*per se*) the light of revelation, and as able by skilful attention to advance so high as to derive from revelation only a secondary or probable benefit;—the *other* (which at first appears unaccountable, if we had not the stubborn evidence of facts to assure our wavering judgment) is, that the greater the mental development and progress, the greater the passion for a formal religiousness—one which exacts both a bodily and a sentimental devoteeism. Thus, like two confluent streams, increasing as they go onward, is the progress of mind dispensing with revelation, and extreme religious devoteeism flattering and falsifying the conscience. The mind being made its own oracle, and the conscience its own altar; “both mind and conscience are defiled” and Godless!

The question then arises, How are we, as witnesses for God, to seek to counteract and neutralize the evil thus at work? For whatever meets the existing evil would be the “truth for the day.” We are expressly told in 2 Tim. iii., where the last and perilous times are especially dwelt on; that the “Holy Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation.” Now, “Salvation” I consider to mean deliverance from everything that can damage or hurt me; and to be by no means confined to the deliverance of my soul from judgment. The very fact of the Spirit casting the soul on the help of the Scriptures at such a juncture, of itself shews that He knew that when their authority and doctrine would be most assailed, then the true heart would find them in a remarkable way a protection and a guide to safety. Having assumed thus, that in the Holy Scriptures is to be found all that can deliver us morally from the evil and difficulty with which we are surrounded, let us carefully travel through them and note how the servants of God were led and taught to check and frustrate every artifice of the enemy; for he is the same from the beginning, and we have the advantage of studying the way and manner

by which he was rebutted in all the great conflicts before our times; and this knowledge will, through grace, contribute to our efficiency in repelling him in this, our own day.

In the very first temptation, when Satan beguiled Eve through his subtlety, we get the main traits which mark every one of his great assaults on man. Here Satan came in the form of "the subtlest beast of the field which the Lord God had made"—in the form of a serpent. Now the verb, "to use enchantments," is a cognate of the word for serpent, both being spelt alike, without points, (נחש) to which I may allude presently. I only adduce it now to shew that Satan assumed the serpent form with the same intent that he would use enchantments—in order to deceive—and hence the Apostle comments on this deed, as "the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety," and Eve says herself, "the Serpent beguiled me." We need no more than this, to establish that the first great aim of Satan is, to conceal from man the power which is exerting its influence over his mind and conscience. And this is a most important discovery for me to make. Evil likes to accomplish its malicious designs without its origin being discovered; whereas good, like every thing divine, is always more confirmed by being traced to its origin. We may conclude, then, that Satan will always deceive man when he seeks to make his prey of him; and, therefore, if I cannot see distinctly the origin of the influence brought to bear on me, *i.e.*, from whom it proceeds, I have need to beware and tread cautiously, lest I fall into the snare of the devil. Let us note this well. Satan's first appearance in an assault is with deception and subtlety; the next (and from this, if I have spiritual sense I may discover my danger) is, that he always proposes to me something which will magnify myself; it matters not whether it be so morally or naturally, he seeks, in either case, to make self my object, and will use God's name to lend a weight to his lie. In the case of Eve; he sought to make her disobey God by first asserting a lie, and then presenting the gain that would arise to her from acceding to his counsel; which is backed up by reference to God. Even

though it be an evil insinuation, yet the appeal to God, in its very hardihood, often reaches the simple and inexperienced with the force of truth. Who, it might be said, would assert so openly, in the face of heaven, if he had not truth on his side? But this dogmatic effrontery is, in reality, diabolical profanity. Now, if I am spiritual, I immediately suspect any specious counsel addressed to me exclusively or primarily with reference to my own progress or advantage. The gospel, I may be told, presents to me pre-eminently my own advantage. True, —but does it not connect me with God? And is it not in the setting forth therein of His grace and His glory that I find a place of everlasting *nearness* to Him? “Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord”—a message from the glory of God! Satan would occupy me about my own advantage, and my own ability too, to secure it. Having first deceived me as to the real source of the influence which addresses me, and having obtained a hearing, he presents to me how I may advance myself, and that in a line known to God; all scruple as to Divine restrictions being overborne in the God-known assurances of positive gain, and man’s own ability to attain and acquire it. When man yields thus to Satan, the same thoughts in principle pass through his mind as through Eve’s; there is a scrutiny and a conclusion, that great personal and self-elevating advantages will arise from the Tempter’s propositions. And then the fatal course is entered on. Adam and Eve are naked! They see too much! So much for the advancement they had derived from listening to Satan! They now see what they cannot remedy. God’s grace is always to keep before the soul of His people the remedy equal to the need. Adam, in having recourse to fig-leaves, makes a miserable effort, considering his extensive natural information to remedy his need; and in skulking behind the trees of the garden presents a still more melancholy exhibition of resourcelessness and inadequacy to meet his case when he had to do with God.

But now God comes on the scene; and it is well and blessed for us to note how He acts and counteracts the

malice of Satan. He does *four* things. He first demands from Adam—Had he disregarded His word? for that was Satan's great object, and is therefore the first point to be investigated; and on this demand Adam is convicted. 2ndly, God pronounces the sentence on man because of his sin; appointing him to toil and sorrow in an earth accursed of God. 3rdly, He feeds and buoys up the soul of man by His prophetic word and promise, which engages his soul with the true remedy for his misery; and, lastly, He clothes him with His own hand in a style which, by its contrast with man's previous and incompetent attempt, must have humbled and astonished him.

Now I think we have, in these four displays of the Divine mind, the qualities of power in the Holy Ghost, by which He delivers His people from the wiles of Satan. 1st, I am measured by the word and convicted. 2ndly, My position as a judicially suffering sinner on an accursed earth is impressed on me. 3rdly, My soul is engaged with the one who should bruise the serpent's head, Jesus Christ come in the flesh, and His perfect work, with which the prophetic word connects me; and, lastly, I find myself clothed through His grace; *i.e.*, my position relieved of its shame by the very hand of God.

I trust, ere I conclude this paper, to be able to shew how, in the fall of man, was displayed, not only the varied lines of Satan's power brought to bear on man in that fatal hour, but also the distinctive and blessed lines of God's grace in effectually restoring man out of the force and current of Satan's influence; but I now pass on to other Scriptures which present to us the power of Satan in collision with the power of God. Let us turn to Gen. xli., where Joseph is seen as for God, in contrast to the magicians of Egypt. Joseph is called from prison to interpret Pharaoh's dream after the failure and proved inability of all the wise men of Egypt. God, through Joseph, testifies to the world that man is wholly dependent on Him for light; all human skill and resources having proved inadequate and incompetent. Now Joseph was a servant who had learned to trust God and His word. Prophecies respecting himself had been imparted

to him through dreams, which possibly he did not understand, until they were fulfilled; but who can doubt that his soul clung to these communications of God, when every circumstance and ordering of Providence seemed entirely to ignore and deprecate his faith therein. Thus is it ever God's way to attach the souls of His people to Himself by the communication of purposes, of which they often know no more than that they have not as yet occurred; but if they believe in Him, His communication remains as the refuge of faith. And here is the marked distinction between the man of God and the man of nature in times of difficulty. When the difficulty supervenes, the servant waits on God's revelation, watching the unfoldings of His counsels; while man, depending on his own resources, summons to his succour every aid natural and supernatural; and this necessarily affords Satan the desired opportunity, and makes man the ready prey of his machinations.

I now pass on to the conflict between Moses and the magicians, recorded in Exodus vii., and as this is specially referred to by St. Paul (1 Tim. iii. 8), as characteristic of the "last and perilous times," we may expect to find in it instruction peculiarly suited to ourselves. The purpose of God, namely, to deliver His people out of the land of Egypt, had been communicated to Moses. Armed with the divine revelation, with faith in God and dependence on His Word, he must boldly meet all assaults. As he proceeds, he finds that he defeats them; and this is the greatest discovery, as well as the greatest cheer and sustainment in the walk of faith. It is only as I walk in faith that I find that I can conquer; and thus I am encouraged to advance in the path on which I have entered. As long as I am outside the path of faith, I shall be looking for encouragement to enter it; and while I am thus occupied, I am not only outside, but without the encouragement; but when inside, I have the encouragement, not to induce me to *enter* it, but because I am there, to stimulate me to advance onward. How important all this for our souls in this day of difficulty! The mind of God—His Word—has been communicated to me; and to this I adhere by faith. Nay,

the more it is assailed and depreciated, as either insufficient or secondary (as it is in this day—how widely!), the more faith cleaves to it as the only guide; for the darker the passage, the more will the prudent attend to his lamp; and, as I do, I shall prove its sufficiency. One who asks me to depend entirely on him in my extremity, and offers to bear the whole responsibility of myself and my position, must know that he is able to bear it, for, if not, he would not only deceive me, but expose his own impotence, if I accepted his offer. Moses knew that God was such an one to him, and he confronts Pharaoh and the magicians, depending solely on the strength of His Word. Mark! it was not any success of his own before them that gave him confidence and boldness, for he had no success until *after* he had confronted them; he challenges them, in the intrepidity of faith, relying on God's Word, and his success over the serpent or dragon is *then* manifested (chap. vii. 12). The object of the magicians (Jannes and Jambres, the sorcerers of the New Testament) was to neutralize and invalidate the power under which Moses acted. It was purely Satanic; but not more so than those in the last days, to whom the Apostle compares them; "those who resist the truth; men of corrupt minds," etc., etc. How fearful the conflict, if we reflect on it for a moment, that Satan should use man in battle array against God! It is when man finds that natural agency is insufficient for a difficulty, that he has recourse to supernatural; and, God's Word and counsel being set aside, nothing remains for him but to invoke and accept the aid of Satan. The Jannes and Jambres of that day would resist and refute the testimony of God, as maintained by His servant, Moses, and their mode of resistance was the effort to show, that their power, though avowedly derived from another source, was as great, and that they were able to contravene the power of God. What sustains the servant of God at such a juncture? Not his successes, surely; but, knowing in himself that he has learned the mind of God, he is assured that his safety and victory lie in persisting in the path of faith; in "continuing in the things that he had learned and been assured of; knowing of whom he had learned them." After this

manner did Moses baffle the enemy; and this is the only simple and blessed rule for the servant of God, unto the end of time. The magicians, who had imitated him up to a certain point, are proved to be totally powerless as to *creating life*. They cannot produce a living thing from the dust of the earth; and this being done by Moses and Aaron, who were thus the channels of the power of God (chap. viii. 17, 18), the question between God and Satan was determined; the latter can no longer attempt rivalry. And this great victory was all through the Lord upholding His *own Word* in the mouth of His servant.

I now proceed to 1 Sam. xxviii., as I think we may glean some valuable instruction on our subject, in that solemn and notable account of Saul having recourse to Satanic power when he had lost the sense of the power of God. I call attention to the passage, chiefly in order to note Saul's state of mind when he thus applied to supernatural power for aid. At one time, in his zeal (pharisaic zeal, no doubt), he had "suffered not a witch to live." When he assumed to be God's king, and ruling under divine power, he righteously and vigorously refused the instruments of another power any quarter. Such a being was strictly prohibited by the law (Lev. xx. 6); and Saul, before he had lost all conscience, was known as the relentless exterminator of them; but when God had deserted him, and would make no communication to him, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophet, then he has recourse to what he formerly denounced and withstood; and we learn from his fall how a man who had once thought and acted so differently, may act when under the pressure of difficulty, and seeing no other way of escape. It is to me one of the most solemn and admonitory examples of how a soul, having departed from God, instead of seeking restoration through repentance and confession, flings himself, a suppliant for aid, at the feet of God's enemy, reckless where he goes, so that he can procure any light through the deep gloom and pressure by which he is overwhelmed. And is there not the same spirit in man now? Supposing one brought up in the doctrines of Christianity, and for a time follow-

ing them, believing that a present advantage was secured from them; but, if such a one resisted the claim of truth on his conscience, after having for a time admitted its cogency, what would be more natural, when he found himself in growing inextricable darkness and difficulty, than that he should throw himself into the arms of any who would shed light on his path and future? I doubt not that there are many who have turned to Satan after this manner; and I believe that, as God, in His inscrutable wisdom, allowed Samuel to appear, in order that Saul from his mouth should hear his doom, so that many an apostate may hear his condemnation from some once honoured, but now forgotten, servant of God.

As I desire to point out the analogy between the power and animus of Satan in those times and these, always the same, though less tangible and distinguishable now, we may examine, for a moment, what was the object and occupation of what were called "familiar spirits." The word in the Hebrew gives us no clue to its origin, but that in the Septuagint is well translated by our English word, "ventriloquist." How they acted or gave forth their counsel we know not, but we have the same word in Job xxxii. 19, translated "like bottles," "ready to burst like new bottles." Now, the bottles of those days being made of leather, were necessarily greatly distended by new wine before they burst, and this incidentally lets us see that these persons described by the same Hebrew word, presented an imposing air, and were those from whom we should expect "great swelling words of vanity." Moreover, their vocation was to lead away souls under their influence; and, in order to effect this, they worked on the credulity of man by some sign or wonder, interpreting dreams, foretelling events, etc. The fact of men being susceptible to such influence, plainly proves that there is in him a felt need of a supernatural subsidy; that is, that he is not, and cannot be, a totally independent individual, and if he be not supported by the power of God, he must necessarily, from inherent feebleness, cast himself into that current which seduces him by its pretensions; a current now flowing in increased and terrible force. A very awful conclusion to

arrive at; but one which the whole history of Scripture, and especially those parts which we have been considering, proves to be just. And how was it, let us ask ourselves, that man was then seduced? Was it not then as now, through the *mind*? These false prophets addressed the senses, and thus reached men's minds, and having swayed them, led their votaries captive. See how Ahab was deceived by them. And the plot is only disclosed by the prophet of God. Well may it be said of man, who has yielded his mind and will to such an influence, "He feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" But the interesting and important question for us to consider is, How are we to be preserved from this seducing element and influence? Now, it is to be noted with fervent thankfulness that whenever the Spirit of God exposes an evil, He directs the people of God to that line of conduct and engagement of mind which would preserve them from its influence. We find this specially as to the evil we are considering, for in Deut. xiii., where Israel is expressly warned of the purpose of these spirits being to "turn them away from the Lord their God," the true preservative course is also set forth: "Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice, and ye shall serve Him, and cleave unto Him." In what strict harmony is such a passage as this with the words of the Lord Himself: "If any man shall do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." Such a soul shall be confirmed in the truth, and know the power of God, as it walks according to it. It will be both established in mind and preserved in practice. In like manner, we find in Is. viii., where the rejection of Christ is foretold, and the distress on earth consequent thereon, when the adversary would suggest to his disciples to "seek unto them that have familiar spirits"; the Spirit of God retorts, "Should not a people seek unto their God?" The distress may be paramount; but that ought only to incite us to seek the Lord, and the Lord only, with greater earnestness, and to wait on Him. The practice, or even the inclination, to seek aid from *any quarter*, except

God, must necessarily expose the soul to the deadly machinations of Satan, which are always presented in whatever form they are likely to be most successful, whether to Israel as "familiar spirits," or in all the subtle forms which he takes in Christendom, and hence the bare *inclination* should be feared and earnestly deprecated, for where such inclination is yielded to, in the smallest point, there is always a liability to be led away by the deceivableness of unrighteousness.

And now, ere we pass from the Old Testament record, let us turn to Dan. ii. There we find one who had been invested with supreme power over men, troubled in spirit, because of a dream from God, which he cannot recall; nor can all the astrologers and wise men of Babylon give him the required aid. What a picture! Here was a man to whom the God of Heaven had given a kingdom, power, strength, and glory, and "wherever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of Heaven hath He given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all," not only troubled, but resourceless, at his wit's end; and, finding all the supernatural aid to which he had resorted incompetent, he being very furious, commanded all the wise men to be destroyed, as they were unable to supply him with what he demanded, his troubled soul tramples all their pretensions under foot. What a warning to us of the insufficiency, nay of the mocking fruitlessness of man's power, and of all other resources within the reach of man, when the question is to know or learn the purposes of God! One can hardly conceive anything more humiliating than the state of Nebuchadnezzar at this moment. What is the use of extensive power and resources, if they will not reach to the very point where I want them most? What a commentary on the poverty of all power, immense and unlimited as his was; or of all means of acquiring knowledge within the reach of man! Can any man expect to have more at his command than had Nebuchadnezzar; and now see to what a state he is reduced, when that which he requires and seeks is even the least part of the mind of God. God sent the dream, and withheld from the king the remembrance of it, or

purpose to testify to this great universal autocrat, that all his power, and all the wisdom at his command, was less than nothing, in regard to aught that had to do with God, and that a eunuch in his palace who knew God's mind was greater than he. How blessed to see how such a knowledge sets the possessor of it in easy superiority to every human eminence, ability, or resource. *This* was the testimony here. *This* was the great truth needed for the day of Nebuchadnezzar, and of Daniel; and if, in the time of the noviciate of Gentile power, the head of gold passed through this deep humiliating conviction of resourcelessness, and found no refuge or relief, but in the counsel of God, from the lips of God's servant, how much more (now that the image is well nigh completed, and preparing for its doom) does it become us, who are in the fourth empire (the feet of iron and clay where the assumption of man has increased a hundred-fold), to estimate and proclaim all human power, ability, resource or learning, as not to be accounted of, yea as dust in the balance, in comparison to the word of God now fully revealed. The Supremacy and Omnipotency of God's word is *our* testimony even as it was Daniel's; and the more dark and trying the moment becomes, the more may the practical distress of Nebuchadnezzar and his only quarter for relief, warn and indicate to us, *where* our succour and safety can alone be found.

We now pass on to Matthew ii., where we shall find in type another instance of the insufficiency and incompetency of human wisdom or scientific discovery, however well directed, for the interpretation of any of God's ways. The Magi, having seen the Star in the East, conclude that the king of the Jews is born, and come up to Jerusalem to worship Him. Now this star I regard as the creational testimony, valuable as far as it went; and it is well and happy for the wise men to have noticed and attended to it. But beyond a certain point it could not conduct them. Arrived at Jerusalem, they are entirely at sea, as to where to turn for the object of their search; nor could they have proceeded further, had they not learned from the Divine Record, where the

new-born King was to be found. True, human wisdom might have led them to notice the star, which, as the testimony for God in creation, might have raised their expectations as to a glorious one of whom creation itself stood in need; but neither would have led them to Bethlehem, which then contained, in the person of the lowly Babe, all that God was for man, and all that man needed in his relation to God, unless they had heeded the *word*, from which was announced to them the birth-place of the expected King. The very best motives of mere human wisdom, the most attentive observance of the signs of nature will, when man reaches that point, where God's counsel can alone direct him, confuse rather than guide; for all its information ends in nothing as to the real point which he wants to know. The Magi might have been wandering for ever through Palestine, had not the actual place been communicated to them from Scripture; and, what is more, they, with all their wisdom would have been taken in Herod's trap, for he intended to make use of their information, in order to kill Christ, but for the intervention of God; all this remarkably confirming what I have advanced, that man's wisdom, however true or well disposed, is ever inadequate for any difficulty which has relation to God, and that the creational testimony, however it may set its seal to the word, for *after* the Magi had accepted the word as their "guide, the Star, we read, came and stood over where the young child was," it is, nevertheless, apart from the Divine word, of no practical use to man.

I now pass rapidly on through several passages in the Acts, which serve the subject of our inquiry, and shew how the power of Satan in its different forms was met and repelled by the Apostles in the power of the Holy Ghost. In Acts viii., Simon is an example of the natural character and ambition of men who seek to be reputed for their wisdom and acquirements, full of their own glory and distinction. Peter meets his advances with the sternest opposition, and pronounces the conclusion which we may reiterate on all such—"thy heart is not right in the sight of God."

Again in chap. xiii. 6, we have Elymas the sorcerer

who withstood Paul and Barnabas, seeking to turn the Roman deputy from the faith. This man, a Jewish sorcerer, I consider as a type of the evil to which the Gentile is exposed; and Saul, here named Paul as indicating his Gentile connexion (for Paul is Latin and Saul Hebrew), encounters this form of Satanic evil, by denouncing its exponent as "full of all subtlety and mischief, child of the devil, enemy of all righteousness, ceasing not to pervert the right ways of the Lord," and passing the sentence of blindness on him. Again in chap. xvi. 16, &c., we find a spirit of divination actually bearing testimony to the truth in proclaiming Paul and Silas "servants of the Most High God, which shew unto us the way of salvation." Now this case, and the way it is met by the Apostle, shews us that, in order to judge people as God judges them, we must see them as He sees them. If Paul had looked at this damsel with the spirit of divination, with a natural mind, how justly he might have argued, that she would be of great use to the truth, and would serve his purpose. What could there be found objectionable in her words? But no! He looked on her with the eye of God, and discerned that the enemy was there; and therefore he exorcised the unclean spirit, though this exposed himself and his work, to all the rage and violence of him whose malice we must endure, if we refuse to accept his countenance. All the rancour and violence, however, only brought him in contact with the soul that he was sent to Philippi to bless. And how triumphantly does the end justify him in refusing the testimony of another spirit, however commendable its terms; he that refuses Satan's aid will expose himself to Satan's enmity; but "he that is for us, is greater than he that is against us." And, in the long run, we shall be more than conquerors, as Paul was in the self-same Philippi.

We now pass to the Epistle to Timothy, which is the real pivot of our subject, and that on which I desire that all that I have sought to glean from other Scripture may be brought to bear; for there, the "latter days" and "the last days" are described; and we shall find that, though Satan may have changed his garb, he has not changed his character; and, moreover, that the weapons of our

warfare are those which the true servant has ever used in the day of difficulty. In the 1st Epistle, chap. iv., the servant of God is informed, that in the "latter times," or times preceding those which we shall consider in the 2nd Epistle, there would be some who would apostatize from the faith, "giving their mind to deceiving spirits and teachings of demons" (see New Translation). From this intimation we learn, that it is professing Christians who yield themselves to these strange and evil influences; so that we are to look for the verification of this prophecy among those who seek to be leaders and appointed teachers of Christianity. Thus, previous to the "last days" of 2 Tim. iii., the door of the MIND of the teachers and leaders has been opened to "deceiving spirits and teachings of demons." And all this with a great ostentation of devotionism which wins the reverence and admiration of the mass — the consummation desired. We sometimes may not be able to detect a man's aim, when he is only working it out; but when he has attained it, we may review and mark the many unsuspected modes and means by which he has effected it. So, now, we see to very little purpose, if we have not recognized in many glaring examples the fulfilment of this prophecy.

And now, let us gather up all we have learnt from these Scriptures on 2 Tim. iii., and see there what will be the most evil or final state of corruption among the teachers in the House of God; and also, how the servant of God can be guarded from it, and be a witness against it. I think we are given *three* great characteristics of the corrupt teachers in the "last days"; and I don't suppose that one of these marks without the other two, would correctly define or describe the evil. One is Selfishness—uncontrolled Self. Disobedience to parents only betrays that all the fences of restraint and subjection are broken down, as far as individual personal rule goes; for there is nothing here said of political rule or patriotic loyalty. It is simply the rein given to man's own mind and will in his private individual capacity as a man. He assumes to be personally independent. The next characteristic is, having the form of piety; that is, that

while they free themselves from every restraint, they assume the appearance of being devotional to God as pietists. The next characteristic is that they use every effort and art to obtain followers, and, like Jannes and Jambres who withstood Moses, they withstand the truth, using all the occult supplies of magician's skill and Satanic aid;—with what object? To stifle and check the testimony and establishment of the Truth. And mark! these persons are not Infidels;—not even open opposers. No! but *leaders* in the House of God!—very awful and alarming is this. How then is the servant of God preserved from, and constituted a witness against, these? On this point we have ample instruction. First, he is supposed to have “fully known Paul's doctrine”—conduct, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions and afflictions;—in a word;—*on that line*—the line of the apostle Paul, he is supposed to be. But how he is to be maintained on that line is the great question. The answer, is that the “sacred writings are able to make wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” Now, in this sentence; there are two subjects presented and connected; namely—the sacred writings and the person of Jesus Christ; and we may rest assured, that these two cannot be separated: if we would be preserved from the deadly influences now rife in the world and the Church. The sacred writings which we have just examined, establish our souls in the succour and safety which will ever be accorded to one dependent on the word of God, of which we have the brightest example in our Lord Jesus Christ, who met the Tempter and Seducer with the words—“Man must not live by bread alone; but by every word that cometh out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.” That which Israel was learning for forty years is the opening expression of the life and conduct of the last Adam—the Lord from heaven our life. What do we know,—what could we know without the word of God? Let us remember how evil spirits, serpents, magicians, wise men, kings, peoples, have been baffled and non-plussed, while a Daniel has stood alone, unperturbed before a terror-stricken monarch, in his fury and perplexity condemning to death all the wise men of his kingdom! Oh! how the soul learns

the strength and safety that there is in the word of God in the hour of difficulty. The more the worth of God's mind is known, the less will man value or depend on any human wisdom. The one who knows the light of the sun, must always prefer it to any artificial light; and, this is but a faint simile of the great moral truth that the greater and the divine not only eclipses, but actually causes the weaker and the human to decline while it takes its place. If the word of God, the better it be known, preserves me from the snare of intellectual progress; so, on the other hand, does the person of Jesus Christ held by faith in my soul, preserve me from the formal pietism so attractive to souls, who, like the Athenians, are informed enough to feel that they don't know God, and therefore, they necessarily, on account of their enlarged human information, become superstitious; for superstition is nothing more than a striving, because of a dim intelligence, to propitiate God without knowing how. The person of Jesus Christ raised from the dead, after bearing the judgment of my sins, and now in heaven on the right hand of God—my life; and loving me with the love of God, in which He has declared the Father, must be a rest, an ark, a sanctuary for my soul, satisfying it by all the endearing testimonies of His ever faithful and watchful love, enabling it, though with but a "little strength," to keep His word, and not to deny His name, as the "hour of temptation" approaches, and even now surrounds us with its dire influences. Such I believe to be the "truth for this day."

I may remark, in closing, that these two subjects, the Word and the Person, are pressed on us in 1 John iv., but in a more positive line. If the testimony of any Spirit now is not Jesus Christ come in the flesh, it is not of God. What a simple rule! And yet how few teachers could say that this is the simple and singular subject of their testimony. In the same chapter we also find, that not only is this line of testimony disregarded, but the Apostles, who were the organs of the Word of God, and therefore essentially stood for it, are refused to be heard.

Truth for this Day.

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Such is man, whose doom is now hastening! And such is God, who has forborne with him through all the ages that we have been briefly tracing.

Let our souls praise and bless our God, that He would have us day by day to abide more strictly by His word. May we do so more and more, and rejoice in Christ Jesus *worshippingly*. Christ dwelling in our hearts *by faith*.

NOTES OF CONVERSATIONS.

Consecration of the Sons of Aaron.

Lev. viii. ix. 6, 22—24.

A. Is this the character of Priesthood which belongs to us now, before the glory of God appears?

B. You have, here, Aaron anointed apart—before his sons; just as you get Christ distinct. Moses put the coat on him (v. 7); anointed the tabernacle (v. 10); and then brought Aaron's sons and put coats on them.

A. How is it the tabernacle is anointed without blood?

B. I suppose as looked at as connected with Christ instead of connected with us.

A. Showing His Priesthood to be taken on other ground than ours.

B. Surely; because it was all Himself—He was the altar, &c., &c.

A. On the ground of what He was personally?

B. Yes.—The moment the sons are brought in, you get the blood put on the Altar. They are anointed with blood; Aaron without any blood at all,—because Christ, of course, has no need of it.

A. Then there were three separate offerings of the sons of Aaron?

B. Yes, the burnt offering,—the sin-offering, and the ram of consecration; because all that is connected with consecration. You get the ram always as the offering of entire sacrifice, and the offering which is official consecration to God.

A. The latter had a little the character of the peace-offering?

B. Yes, it had. You get the three—sin-offering, burnt-offering, peace-offering. There were three for the people on the 8th day, these are three of another kind.—(Continued on p. 67).

N^o. IV.

CLOSING CHAPTERS OF JOHN'S GOSPEL.

I SEND you a brief recapitulation of the purport of the latter chapters of John's Gospel, specially with a view to the entire transfer of life and blessing to the heavenly state and new creation. We are associated with the heavenly man in God's presence, not of this earth at all. Lost and rejected of God in it, as those departed from God, and who, when His Son in grace came into the world, as so departed from God, rejected Him, He has given us a portion with Himself in heaven, according to the power of that eternal life which was given us in Him before the foundation of the world. Born, as we know we were, in a world of guilty sinners departed from God,—the blessed Lord has not only met our responsibility by bearing our sins on the cross, but has glorified His Father perfectly, and so obtained a place, as man, in a new and glorious place in the glory of God; but a place which He had with Him before the world. To this we are called in virtue of the redemption which He has accomplished, and in the power of the life which is in Him,—that eternal life which was with the Father and has been manifested unto us, is now become our life. Thus, we are not of the world, as He is not of the world. The transition, after He had been fully manifested on earth, and His rejection complete, from His earthly place to a wholly heavenly one, is what I would now trace in John's Gospel. Two collateral subjects complete this, the gift of the Holy Ghost while He is on high and we on earth; and a glimpse at the future dispensation, when the effect of His exaltation is manifested on earth.

In the eighth chapter, His word had been rejected. There He was light,—I AM. In the ninth, His works, giving sight to the blind; but then, He being owned as

Closing Chapters of John's Gospel.

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the Sent One, His sheep are brought out of the fold by following Him, and the Gentiles brought into one flock with them. Here it is the revelation of the Father and the Son, always the names of grace in John. He is now, thus rejected of men, owned of God on earth; as Son of God by resurrection in chapter xi., and as Son of David and Son of Man in the 12th chapter. The two first were earthly titles, though the first connected with His person, according to Psalm ii., where He is rejected as such, only God will make good the title; but the last brings us to the point which I am anxious to develop. The Greeks^a come up and desire to see Jesus. The Lord says "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified," but adds, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone; but if it die it brings forth much fruit;" and then He explains to His disciples, that they must follow in this path. But then they would be where He would be; and the Father would honour them. This, then, was the distinct transfer of Himself and His disciples, through death, to a heavenly dwelling, where the Father would honour those who had served the rejected Jesus. To this is then added the distinct definite rejection of the Jews. "Who hath believed our report?" Their eyes were blinded. He had come to save; but His rejected words would judge in the last day; received, they had the words of the Father and of eternal life. In chap. xiii. the transition to the heavenly state is formally brought forward. Jesus was departing out of this world to the Father. He had come from God, was not of this world, and went to God, and all things were delivered into His hand of the Father. The whole heavenly state connected with His person and perfectness. But they were in the world, treading its defilements, though washed (save Judas), by the Word. He so deals, keeping, notwithstanding all His glory, His place of servant, as to fit them for being *with Him*, instead of what could no longer be, nor ever be, as *full* blessing, His being *with them*. This is the glorious truth here brought out; a part with Him, where

* Real Greeks, not Hellenists, Grecian Jews.

He was taking this blessed and heavenly place, being exalted as man, where He was with the Father before the world was. At present, indeed, they could not follow Him. Treachery, or weakness, was man's part in presence of His passage through death into the heavenly country. But a perfect foundation was laid for our being there, not simply in the removal of the guilt lying upon us in respect of the condition out of which we are called, as sinners born in and of this world; but in perfectly *glorifying God* in that in which He did this, so as to enter, as man, into the Glory with God, and that by this work which He did for us, not waiting for the kingdom, but straightway glorified. In chap. xiv., He fully explains His going there to prepare a place for them, and how they would have the knowledge of their portion in it while down here. This brings in the sending of the Comforter. They were to believe in Him (Jesus), not see Him; so it was they knew God. He went to prepare a place for them in His Father's house. Now the Father had been fully revealed in His person; hence they knew where He was going, for He was going to the Father. That gave its true character to the heavenly house—their home. They knew the way, for in coming to Him they had come to the Father. He was the way. The life too in which they could enjoy it. They came to the Father by Him. That was where He was going and the way. This hung on his person, because He was in the Father and the Father in Him,—was to be revealed in Him. Love to one another and obedience to Him, let us add, were to characterize them instead of His presence. His person had revealed where He was going and the way. But, if He went away, the Father would send the Comforter in His name; and thus they would have the present consciousness of their heavenly portion in Him. They would know that He was in the Father,—His divine person in union with the Father; but, besides that, they were in Him and He in them. Thus they had already, when the Comforter came, a part in the heavenly place of the Son, and knew it. They were by the Spirit in a place analogous to that which He held as man on earth, when He could say, "The Son of Man, who is

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in heaven." They sit in heavenly places in Him. He shows how they would enjoy it on earth by His coming and revealing Himself to the obedient; and His Father and He coming and making their abode in such a one. He left them this, His own peace. Having thus distinctly laid out before them the Christian's place and home in heaven, through what had been revealed in His person on earth, He breaks up from earthly society and connection, and says to the twelve, "Arise; let us go hence." But there was more than the condemned world, in taking this heavenly place. There was the vine God had brought out of Egypt. But nothing was to be owned on the earth. As He had been in the world, and the world knew Him not, and He left it, rejected and condemned, to take a new place as man,—His own before the world was,—so He came to His own and His own received Him not. Israel, after the flesh, special and important as had been its place as regarded human responsibility in the world (for it had the measure of it in the law), yet was not the true vine. Man was simply responsible, and had failed. The second Adam was man in God's purpose of grace. Israel was called as a vine brought out of Egypt; but, after all, though it had a special place, because called,—it was not in flesh the true vine, with Messiah as its principal branch. Christ Himself was the true Vine, those who followed Him the branches. If Isaiah xlix. be referred to, an analogous substitution will be found. Israel is the servant in whom Jehovah is to be glorified,—whom He had formed from the womb to be His servant. If so Christ had laboured in vain, then He becomes the servant, and preserving the remnant of Jacob is God's salvation to the ends of the earth. Christ Himself, then, is the true Vine, the disciples were the branches,—and at this moment (for Judas was gone out), all clean. Professing Christians have an analogous place to this. Literally, it refers to what there was in Israel. It will be remarked, that there are two distinct teachings here, the general statement in verses 1, 2; then 3—5 apply to the disciples; Judas being gone, verse 6 is a general statement by itself; verse 7 begins again with the disciples.

The first thing was abiding in Christ. In verse 7 is added, "and my words abide in you." In verse 9, it is abiding in His love which is spoken of. The world will hate them, for the old vine is wholly left aside here; they have now no cloak for their sin; they have seen and hated both Him and His Father. Thus Israel is disposed of, and Christ is the true Vine. Note that this has nothing to do with union with Christ as the Church. That is a heavenly union. We are perfect in Him. There is no pruning there, no more than cutting off; no fruit-bearing looked for. Vines are planted on earth, not in heaven. Christ on earth is the true Vine of God, not Israel. "Now ye are clean" should be, "*already* ye are clean." When the Comforter was come (this introduces the heavenly part, even as xv. 1—25 was the earthly). He would testify of Christ as gone to the Father; while the disciples (as aided and made capable by Him according to chap. xiv., 26), would bear testimony to the earthly part of Christ's history. But the Comforter, though on earth, would bear witness of a Christ rejected here and gone to the Father, and a convicted and judged world. This chap. xvi. fully details. On earth, the disciples were to be rejected and persecuted, for Christ was going away to Him that sent Him. But it was expedient for them He should go away, for the Comforter would come if He did. The world, as such, the whole world, without respect to particular details of sin, which yet remained true for the day of judgment, would be convicted of sin as not believing in Christ. The presence of the Holy Ghost would demonstrate their sin, because they had not believed in Him; demonstrate righteousness, not in any human ground of man's fulfilling his duty, but in this: that the Father took Christ to His right hand and the world, who had rejected Him, saw him no more. Thus the world, as growing up since Adam's fall, was finally rejected, and righteousness known only in heaven. Righteousness, as recognizing what was good, was only in the Father setting Christ at His right hand, in judgment, in that the world, which had rejected Him, saw Him no more. The judgment of the world was not arrived, but the proof of it was given in the judgment of

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its prince; for it was demonstrated that he who led it all was the adversary of the Lord. This world had Satan for its prince. Its prince was the Lord's adversary, and led it to reject and put Him to death. The presence and power of the Spirit made manifest this, though judgment was not executed on the world. On the other hand, the same Spirit would guide them into truth and glorify Christ, into whose hands, all that the Father had was now put. The world would rejoice for a little season at getting rid of Him, but the disciples would see him again in the new resurrection-state, and their sorrow be turned into joy. The Father Himself loved them, and they were to ask the Father in His name. They would have tribulation in the world, but He had overcome it. Even they, as of the world, would desert him; but the Father, now seen to be the opposite of the world, was with Him. Chapter xvii. then brings out the whole condition and state of the disciples, through this glorifying of Christ, as regards the Father, and as regards the world. The Son was to be glorified, to glorify the Father thence. The knowledge of the Father and Jesus Christ, as sent of the Father, was eternal life. Most High 'was supremacy,' *not* eternal life: Almighty—securing power, *not* life; Jehovah—faithful promises made good by Him, who is, and was, and is to come, but *not* eternal life; but the Father sending the Son—was grace giving eternal life. That name only bore it in it. The others dealt with the world in divine title and goodness. This revealed and brought eternal life as before, and not of the world, though sent into it in grace, and now was glorified out of it; Christ giving eternal life to those the Father had given him. The work His Father had given him to do was finished, He had glorified the Father on the earth, and now was to be glorified with the glory which he had with the Father before the earth was. His Sonship glory. He had manifested His Father's name to the men whom the Father had given to Him. They had kept the Father's word, held to Christ, not gone with the world; and Christ had put them in full relation with the Father as He was as a man down here. Now He came to the

Father leaving them in the world to be kept by the name in which He knew the Father, and in which He had kept them. They were not of the world as He was not; and He had set Himself apart as the glorified man on high that they might be formed into His heavenly image by the testimony of the truth revealing it. For this and He Himself were the truth. But this went further, for Christ (according to the title which He had as having glorified the Father) wills to have them with Him where He is, and see His glory—loved as He was before the foundation of the world. As a present thing, both then and now, He had declared, and does declare the Father's name, that the love wherewith the Father had loved them might be in us, and He in us that we might enjoy it. Thus the person of the Son, His work to bring us into His own place of glory, the love the Father had to Him before even the world existed; His going out of the world up to the Father—all are brought in, to give us a place with Him before the Father in glory, according to the love He was loved with before the world even existed. As to the world itself, now it did exist; having rejected Him, it would hate them as having His testimony, the Father's word; and as being not of it as Christ was not. Thus, the whole condition of Christians, as associated with Christ gone to the Father, and not of the world as He was not, is set forth. Christ appealing to the righteousness of the Father in that the world had not known Him; He had, and the disciples had known Himself, as sent of the Father. This closed the unfolding of the transfer of Christ, and the recognition of Christ from earth to heaven. The history of His sufferings follows. I have only to notice, as to this, two points: one, that He is in the excellency of His person as Son, not in His weakness as man; and the other, that the Jews stand in relief as evil; judged and put aside in every way. There is no agony in Gethsemane, but they go backward and fall to the ground when He freely puts Himself forward, and that to save His disciples. There is no "My God, my God! why hast Thou forsaken me?" but He delivers up His own Spirit to His Father. His answers are full of dignity

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and conscious title to command, though perfectly submissive. In His death He is with the rich. In the twentieth chapter we have the whole present dealings of God up to, and inclusive of, the calling of the remnant of the Jews to own Him on seeing Him in the last day. First, the remnant attached to Himself, delivered from the whole power of Satan; and, by that attachment, caring for nothing in the world but Him. The world was an empty sepulchre, and no more, without Him, but ignorant of the new state of resurrection and relationship with the Father, and God glorified by redemption. The return to take corporal possession of the kingdom is set aside, and Mary, knowing Him as risen, was to tell the disciples that He ascended to His Father and their Father, His God and their God. They were placed by redemption in that same relationship with Him as Himself was in—His brethren. This gathered them, and Jesus is in their midst speaking peace—for He had made it. Then, according to peace, He sends them to carry remission of sins, giving them competency in life by the power of the Holy Ghost, connecting them with Himself in resurrection. This is the present mission as received by the Apostles. Thomas believes on seeing, representing the Jews in the last day, and does not, in that character, receive the mission: but peace made is the starting point here also; for God cannot have to say to any now at all accepted, but on this ground; and Thomas owns Christ as His Lord and God, as the remnant then will. After this, the great millennial indraught takes place; and Christ again takes a place at table with His disciples, but mysteriously “new with them.” The net does not now break; there is no separating good fishes. Christ has already, with Himself on shore, not thus brought in; in the bringing of which, the millennial testimony of revealed glory will have no part. The Lord then restores Peter, and confides to him his Jewish sheep, but shews him he will be rejected and cut off in the end. He will have the glory he once pretended to take by his own will and strength. John's ministry would reach over the falling Church, on to Christ's return. In all this it is looked at as on earth, the

heavenly thing; believing, without seeing, we had had before. The actual counsels and ways of God as to that, we may seek in Paul, who knew Christ only in heaven. But Paul adds another truth specially trusted to Him, the union of the saints with Christ in one body. For him it is not transitions; it is a new creation, a mystery now first revealed. The person of the Son and eternal life were revealed when Christ was on earth. And, though it was not the Son's relationship with the Father, with Him in heaven, a glorified man there, and in such a way that others could be with Him in it,—yet, in the essence of it, the Father's name had been revealed, and if they were not yet in Him before His Father, the Father was revealed to them in Him. Paul looks at the saint as crucified with Christ. It is a new creation, a mystery never revealed at all. Still, we get the same truth, the Church is wholly heavenly, we are not alive in the world, but crucified to the world, and the world to us. The promise of eternal life was given us in Christ Jesus before the world was. Such is *Christianity*. Christians now would make it the modification of this world from which Christ came to deliver us. Our part is to give, and to give it practically too, testimony that the Church, and the Christian, is wholly heavenly; that we are not of the world which rejected Christ, of which Satan is the prince, no more than Christ was of it. This is our capital testimony as Christians now. Let it be manifested in not meddling in it, in non-conformity to it; and, through grace, a distinct apprehension of our heavenly calling, and of the Church's place. I recapitulate briefly the chapters in John.

Chap. XIII. He gives them a place with Him (He dying to take the glory as Son of man).

Chap. XIV. He had manifested the Father on earth; now by the Comforter they would be in Him in heaven, and He and the Father reveal themselves to them on earth. He breaks up from association even with the remnant on earth.

Chap. XV., XVI. He is the true Vine; not Israel, even then on earth; his disciples the branches, now, to bring forth fruit. The Spirit sent by Him from on high would

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reveal heavenly things and shew the condemnation of the world as having rejected Him.

Chap. xvii. The disciples are put in His place before the Father and before the world, and in the same place with Him on high.

Chaps. xviii., xix. He freely gives Himself as Son of God.

Chap. xx. The present course of blessing on the earth.

Chap. xxi. A glimpse into the Millennium.

FRAGMENTS.

It is strange how man, in his inconsiderateness and narrow-mindedness, manages to ignore the Babel which Christendom now presents. Yet surely the Roman and Greek churches present no visible unity. Nor are the Protestant churches (so called) one with either of the above, or one among themselves. I remember a Hebrew being converted to Christianity, and being bewildered by all these differences when he had to choose a church for himself. How much more so would he have been if he had seen the Heavenly character and Divine presence of the Holy Ghost with the Pentecostal church, and the worldly character and worldly powers ruling in man's churches.

And so must Christendom continue, until the Lord sets it aside: having first taken out of it all those who were really in Spirit and by faith associated with Him. Till then, may *they* be true to Him in practical life here below; and they will find in Him, that the Unity and the Catholicity of the body of spiritual members exists, though the display of it as at first is impossible—yet may these things be recognized and acted upon by faith.

The visibility of a company gathered together *in the Lord's name* ("where two or three are met together in My name, there am I in the midst of them") in no wise interferes with the Unity and Catholicity of the body. The Unity and the Catholicity were *in the Spirit*. If the two or three walk, as under the Lord and with the Spirit present,—the Spirit of the Unity and the Catholicity *of the body* will be in and on them.

But there is also a Unity and a Catholicity in error,—springing from the observances of form and from living as men, and from earthly-mindedness and conformity to this world—from which such a little company will be free—for they will be heavenly-minded.

N^o. V.

THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH.

THE history of man upon earth, as given to us by God, in the Bible, is the history of man's entire failure. I might say more; for the Book tells us that, looked at merely as a creature set in responsibility, man has done nothing but fail. "There is none righteous; no, not one."

The admission of this by a soul is one of the first results of its reception of the revelation to it by God of that great salvation which, in His mercy and compassion towards us, He has provided in Christ Jesus. The grace, mercy, and peace of God, which are by Christ Jesus, are felt and confessed by the believer to suit *himself entirely*; and he rejoices to find, that that which suits God, in all the height of His Holiness, suits himself, a lost, undone sinner—even free grace and mercy; forgiveness of sins and acceptance; all freely provided by God in Christ—all made ours through faith, and by the alone power of God the Holy Ghost. This draws the heart, too, as with the cords of love, into the path of implicit subjection and surrender of self. But I do not think that present obedience in us will be intelligent, or the power of the soul that which it should be, unless the recognition of the failure goes beyond that which was true of us, *individually*, when grace found us. We ought to know the points from which God set out, and the points to which He is conducting things, as to man; first, as a creature; second, as connected with Providence and government; and, thirdly, as to the entirely new position in which the household of faith was placed, at Pentecost, as the Church. If, indeed, we are to be intelligent, and to be able to count upon God for the power

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and help of which we stand in need in our present path of obedience, we must know His grace as superabounding over all man's failure in these three positions.

The garden of Eden on the one hand, behind us—and the great white throne, on the other hand, before us—are the termini of man's course as *a creature*. If a man will know himself as a creature, let him study these bournes, and where is he?

The rainbow, and the covenant with Noah, after he came out of the Ark, in favour of rebel man, was the starting-point of God's dealings with man, in Providence, under the present heavens, and on the present earth. The millennial earth, under Christ, with its awful winding-up, will be at the close.

Providence and government both find their full expression therein.

As set in grace, and a part of the Church which is for heaven, I look back to the day of Pentecost as the commencement of the revelation of that grace wherein I stand; and I look forward to the city on high—the Bride, the Lamb's Wife—as that which is at the close. But how awfully do the many Antichrists of John, and Babylon as a city, and the whore,^a find their places centrally, between these boundaries or termini. It is not merely that these termini (as I have called them) mark the limits of the topic under consideration, and so give the full scope of each position; there are other things also connected with them; they give, first of all, the scope of the actions of the living God; and, further, it will be found that, whereas everything which God has entrusted to man, man has failed in, these trusts to man will in the end be made good, in and by Christ Jesus, to the glory of God by us; and where sin has abounded, there grace will superabound, through the Son.

An innocent creation will be superseded by a new creation, wherein dwelleth righteousness, the patient goodness of God in providence and government, be superseded by the reign of Christ, and the trust of the

^a Compare, also, Rom. xi. ; Acts xx. 28—32 ; 1 Tim. iv. 1—5 ; 2 Tim. iii. ; 2 Pet. ii.

truth formative (through the Spirit present) of a house of God on earth, and the assembly of the living God (in which man has failed so signally since Pentecost) be superseded by the New Jerusalem: by the Bride—the Lamb's Wife.^b How many the deposits which God has, at sundry times, entrusted to man. But man has in every case, without any one single exception, failed. Yet, if these deposits pointed on to things in and for Christ, in Him they will not fail, but all, all shall stand. Adam and Eve turned out of Eden, when they had lost their innocency, and the paradise of God given to the overcomer in Him—God caring for Noah through the deluge, and giving the rainbow, and becoming King of Israel—and the Son of Man, Jehovah, caring for Israel and ruling over the earth—Pentecost and the Church at Ephesus behind, and the Golden City, which is the Bride, before us; these couplets must be known and acknowledged, if the creature, who is on his way from failure and ruin to redemption and glory, under the care of a sure and living Guardian, is to know aright whereabouts He is, and what resources are his, and for what ends he is to live, here below. And it is just this blending of the knowledge of entire failure in man with certain and complete victory by God in Christ, which alone gives to us the *obedience of faith*. Man, as a fallen, sinful creature, has no desire to render to God the tribute of His being; when converted, he finds he cannot live as an unfallen creature in Paradise should have lived; yet he seeks to render present obedience, and by faith he finds *the how*; with Israel in its worst state, scattered and peeled over the whole earth (Lev. xxvi. 40—45; Deut. xxx), it will be the same faith, when they have it, which will lead them to, and show them *the how* of, an obedience which their circumstances will seem to make impossible; just so for us, however deep the failure may have been of man in his betrayal of the truth and his practical denial of the Spirit, and of the unity, holiness, heavenly character, etc., of that house and body, which the Holy Ghost came

^b I intentionally now pass by the final state, when God shall be all in all.

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down to form and dwell in at Pentecost, Faith will give the desire to obey; and faith shews a path too—a path that the vulture's eye could not have traced. God is faithful to Himself, and has made provision for His people's walk under all circumstances; and in each circumstance it will be found that a soul which has failed and owned it, can yet walk upon the principles primitively given, if there be but obedience and faith—the obedience of faith.

In the spheres of creation, Providence, and government, God looks upon me—and I, as a Christian, look upon myself as one under failure; failure in my own self. In the sphere of redemption, He looks at me, and I look at myself—as a new creature in Christ Jesus, and there all is a success. It is entirely divine: *from God, in Christ Jesus, and through the Spirit; all to the glory of God.* There is no failure there. It is, too, *in and for* heaven, not earth; eternal, and not temporal. How to walk *down here*, according to it, *now*, is the question, if we would have our lives blameless, and not forget our own mercies. For the salvation which is in Christ Jesus is not only past deliverance from under the curse which sin brought in, it is *now* a present life to God, through the whole of our course here below (in spite of Satan, the world, and the flesh), even as it has also a full manifestation, hereafter, in glory. Ruin around him, behind, and within, man cannot prevent the living God in grace from carrying on souls to the glory which He has set before Himself for them in Christ, nor prevent the present effect of His carrying them on being, at this present time, a testimony to all around of what He the unchangeable God is. Man held his place in Eden by subjection to a word spoken of God, and lost it when He ceased to be subject thereto (Gen. ii. 7, etc.). Cast out of Eden, his innocence lost for ever, he had a word spoken of God (chap. iii. 15), which he carried with him; which if he held to and became subject to by faith, would give a present blessing. God could still be honoured, His word still be owned and bowed to, though innocence was lost for ever, and a world of woe was his sphere, instead of the Garden of Eden; but an endless life which lay beyond the power

of Satan, the hope of which led to conflict with him and victory, was better than innocency. Man's place had been the first; in Eden he was *the* great person. Would he hold his own? He yielded to Satan the first place, has now to own that the question is God's conflict, through the seed of the woman, with Satan, and, as to *his own*: is he, amid the ruin, on God's side or on Satan's? For the principle of the new creation was introduced, at once, upon the fall, and is based upon God's supremacy, and the unfailing power of the Word of God.

The words of Genesis viii. 21, 22, shew us, that mercy to sinners lay at the root of the rainbow covenant; and the question of the kingdom for Israel supposed no new nature, earthly blessings in the world are to be the portion of Israel (Deut. xxviii.) if they would be subject to God as the fulfiller of promises, made to Abraham (Gen. xv.). This was in man's day, and for man still, in a mortal body, and as to the earth which now is. It was government in the repression of evil. If Israel feared the Lord, put away the evil, and clave to Him, the judgment fell on their adversaries; they were as the head. If they despised the Lord, they became the tail, and the nations as the head; and the judgment fell on them until they were humbled. Then the Lord and Abraham again became their portion; as to the church we shall speak presently. I have been led to these remarks by the difficulties which I find exist in many minds concerning the individual believer's present relationship to the church as set up at Pentecost. "*What as to the House of God which is the assembly of the living God?*" are words which would embody the exercises of many godly souls, would give form to the yearning enquiries of many hearts, and also to the timid doubtings of many minds. For that the church was first brought out to light and called into existence at Pentecost is seen by many; and not a few have gone *further* and seen that that which now is and which now bears, even in protestant countries, the name of the *church*, differs in each case, even in its very essential elements and distinctive peculiarity from the Church at Pentecost, and so "*What as to the House of God which is the assembly of the living*

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God?" is a very present and practical question to their minds. Protestantism, the wide world over, wherever it has existed,—admitted that that which man had called "the church," was not worthy of the name, had no claim to that reverence which is due to the church of God; and it sought relief in attempts at reformation. Dissent and nonconformity since thought the same thing in almost every protestant country, as to that which protestantism had set up; and they too have sought relief in attempts at reformation. I think I could explain both the *way* of the failures of each and all of them; but that is not my present object.

It seems almost needless to remark, that neither the discovery of failure, nor humiliation on account thereof, can undo the failure, or separate us from the responsibilities of being under it; nor does the discovery of what the church at Pentecost was (from the standing and principles of which there has been universal departure among professors on earth) give power to act upon its *standing or principles*.

WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO? is the only proper question to ask, when the standing and principles of that from which we are fallen are recognised. The Lord may, in such case, give increased saliency to some truth in the conscience of the inquirer as an individual, which will give him power to go ahead through every difficulty—if needful, all alone with God; and yet keep before his soul the original standing and principles of the Church, and show him how to act upon them, amid the ruin and failure in which he is. Such, I judge, was the case with Paul, when he wrote his second epistle to Timothy. And it was grace divine, which both allowed the first waves of the rising evil to break over the soul of the Apostle of the uncircumcision, and which led him to pen that epistle, as showing to us all the effect the evil had on him, and the path in which he walked. He clearly did not need to raise the question: What is the Church, what its standing and principles? He knew all that right well, while suffering under the pressure of the declension which had already set in, and was, he knew well, to perfect itself. He had a part to act still, a part

that demanded energy and boldness. The promise of that *life which is in Christ Jesus*" (i. 2) became his banner: an individual portion truly. But, as we see throughout the epistle, it girded him up to break right through all that might oppose. He saw no possibility of getting rid of the failure which had set in, and of the deepening of which he had to write; he would keep himself clean from it, cost what the effort to do so might. His heart yearned, too, after companions—a Timothy, or even a Mark, how he longed to have them. He speaks not of replanting churches, but of being alone when none would stand by him, and witnessing for the Lord as to the evil all round about him; and the Lord, who had delivered him, would deliver—this was his joy.

Who now is practically as he was as to life, wholly devoted to Christ in Heaven? Who among us knows what the standing and principles of the Church of God were, from having spent a life in maintaining and teaching them? I may fairly say this, as now putting forth a few thoughts to those who *inquire "What as to the house of God, the assembly of the living God?"* Surely this consideration is an important one at such a moment: Is mine eye single; is there entire devotedness to Christ in Heaven, through the Spirit and the truth; is there full purpose of heart individually to cleave to the Lord? For of what value is knowledge, when the heart is not ready to obey? If needful, yet is it a humbling thing for nominal Christians to have to inquire in eighteen hundred and sixty-three: What as to the Church and our connection with it?

But, to proceed: When I look back to the day of Pentecost, I do see a deposit of truth and power committed to man's faith, which formed on earth an entirely new habitation for God through the Spirit, and an assembly, the members of which were in blessed possession of life. Between that and the so-called reformation, what a change had taken place on earth! What entire failure on man's part to hold the truth, to be faithful to the deposit, to walk in the Spirit, to live for Heaven only. All the leading thoughts of the Church at Pentecost had been taken up by Satan, in order corruptly to form a

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house and an assembly for himself on the earth. Satan and the world, and the flesh, developed in worldliness on earth, and Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for eternity and Heaven, clean lost sight of as to any practical manifestation among men, and thus among professing Christians. Man's failure in responsibility was patent; and it has not been judged by God yet—nay, it has not its fullest form of evil yet. I confess the evil, own my being in the place where it has been done, and so I bear the responsibility and the shame; but I have no thought of displaying *myself and my* energy in attempting the setting up either of a house,^c or of an assembly afresh. God formed that which was at Pentecost. Man, as a creature and as in responsibility, has utterly failed in this trust again; and, if I see many houses and many assemblies, each differing from the other in its principles, I see no where *that* of which I can say, *this* is that which was the house and the assembly at Pentecost. But, if that which was a type of something better *to come* is now a failure, through man's sins, there is still the living God; and He has not failed, nor has He who said on another occasion, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." Oh that our hearts were Christful and heavenly enough to take in and act upon these solemn realities! This brings me to my real position and the duties of it, duties according to the new nature.

As to my real position, and the duties connected with it: I judge that the second Epistle of Paul to Timothy is our letter of instructions. If they have been hitherto

^c It may seem singular, but it is true, the attempt to set up anew a house for God, and an assembly (and it has often been done among protestants), on the one hand, ignores man's sin in the failure of the house; and, on the other, ignores God's grace in still owning his assembly of two or three met in His Son's name. If I possess Christ, I cannot cease *to profess* Him, because of the house of false profession, nor can I separate from it. Man's failure does not prevent God meeting with his twos and threes; or using His servants as a witness for Himself in testimony. If *I* set up any thing, the shame of it when it falls, as all the rest has done, will be a shame peculiarly *my own*. Not only amid the common failure, but with a portion of it peculiarly *my own*. So as to every plan, as to all contrivance and human management.

as a sealed letter to us, may we open and study them now. They do not enjoin us to bring a clean thing out of an unclean; nor do they give us hope of the current of evil being stopped here on earth ere the Lord come: they give no hint of our being called to set up a new house or to gather a new assembly; but they do call for us to do three things: In well-girdedness of loin and fulness of courage, first, to purge ourselves individually from all the evil that is round about; secondly to witness a good confession for the Lord; and, thirdly, in yearning Christ-like affection, to have an open bosom and a ready welcome for all that purify themselves. Oh for more purpose of heart for Christ and Heaven, that we might be Nazarites indeed! As to the principles of our standing and association with any such two or three who meet in the Lord's name, there is nothing new in them from what was true at Pentecost, at Ephesus. Failure in man has not changed God's faithfulness to the Son of His love. God has still the thought before Him, according to His own purpose and counsel, of a habitation for Himself,—of associates with Him in glory,—the new Jerusalem, the Bride the Lamb's wife is for the Son's glory; it cannot fail, come what may. Creation, providence, government have failed in man's day; so has man failed as to the Pentecostal deposit of truth and the Spirit;—but God still will have a habitation and associates in glory.

I have to act, as best I can (God being my light and my guide) upon all the standing and all the principles of the Church of God as revealed at Pentecost. If there be evil in the place of profession, or in any who are associated with it, I must keep myself clean, purge myself from it; and, if worldliness, fleshliness and present plans for self or human energy, mark the day we live in—such things stand in *contrast* with the heavenliness, the spirituality, the love of Christ, which, through faith and the Holy Ghost, marked the early Christian. The *best* way of being clean of the evil is, and surely for us would be,—to be full of God and Christ and Heaven and the Holy Ghost, as were the early Christians; and, by the light, to put the darkness to shame. Where this cannot be, I must still keep myself clean, confess and protest.

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And, under all circumstances, seek to witness for the Lord—in patience and hope.

In a house that is defiled by leprosy, I may find living inmates who have the faith and spirit of Jesus Christ.— I must own all such, and each of such as part of that which God called His house—His assembly; and, *as individuals*, they will each and all form part of the new Jerusalem. But, are they individually walking as men, or are they walking as the Son of God walked: is earth or is heaven the present dwelling-place of their souls? Paul longed for any that would *run the gauntlet*, as he felt he had to do. I do not find that the churches, so called, have their communion and association in the commemoration of the broken body and shed blood of the Lord of glory, with the truth before them, that assimilation to His dying is all they have from here below, until He come. It is not enough to be part of God's house and assembly, so set forth at Pentecost, or to know that we shall individually form part of the new Jerusalem. At Pentecost it was no scattered flock. If we come together, and we are bound to do so, is it *in the name* of Him who was a pilgrim and a stranger here below—a servant because a Son: is it as those who have avowed, plainly, that we are not of the world, but seek a city yet to come. Is it as those who know what God is now doing, and who openly and practically avow what we know, and act upon it. So shall two or three who meet together in His name be able to say, that they are and that they know they are, *in His mind*, "of" His house, and "of" His assembly, and the world and the professing world all around them will know it too. The presence of God is a very real thing, even with two or three who are in the power of His name; and they get tokens of His presence. Such never could say, "We are His house, and His assembly" without arrogance and pride. If we assume it, we are in Babel in spirit and mind. We are laying claim to the judgment due to the house and assembly as failed in man's hand. We are walking upon earth and minding things of our own; yet, on the other hand, two or three so met together in His name, could not (without ignorance of the Lord's grace and of their own

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responsibility under its blessing) deny they are “*of*” that which he counts and acts towards, in a peculiar sense, as His own; prospectively as His house, His assembly. If *the form* of two or three meeting occupy the mind, self and worldliness will be found in a new form and that is all. But, if the purged people get together in the fear of the Lord, they will find the power of the Spirit, heaven and joy unspeakable.

“*What as to the House of God which is the assembly of the living God?*” Study the word, and see what it was at Pentecost with the Divine presence in it, and the full savour of heaven and eternity in and upon it. The faith and the Spirit of Christ go together. See what man has done since, and see, too, most especially, the every contrast or want of agreement between *your own* character and that of Christ Jesus; or, that of a Peter, a Stephen, or a Paul, and be ashamed before the Lord at the worldliness and carnality, the self-sufficiency and ignorance, and careless self-complacency which have marked you. See the down-hill road of every thing in man’s hand, to infidelity and superstition; but, mark too, above it all, the faithfulness of God, and His purpose of carrying into the new Jerusalem His own. If you find you are now, while it is called to-day, one with Him in that purpose, stand forth for Him a vessel purged from evil in every way. They that walk by sense and live on earth will find that their connexion with the church is connexion with a ruined house and a corrupt assembly, about, when the evil is fully ripe, to be judged; but, they who walk by faith and in the Holy Ghost, and live in heaven, will find that their connexion with the church, is connexion with the living God and the word of His grace in His own eternity—and the counsel of the Lord as to the new Jerusalem—the Bride—it shall stand.

God give us more simplicity and purpose of heart to carry out, at all cost, His principles—first as individuals, and that will secure to the twos and threes their full blessing.

If, as I believe, the whole blessing of the soul and of each of us, and of us all who are believers, purged believers, turns upon the reality of our having to do,

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consciously and intelligently, according to the faith and by the Spirit, with the *living* God who has taken us up, while it is called to-day, in His grace,—let us beware, then, as to our thoughts and conduct in relation to the query—“What as to the House of God, which is the assembly of the living God?”

“Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them”—was the Lord’s first declaration and promise,—and that before the Day of Pentecost; it was His new principle of association for His disciples. The temple in the land had been the rallying point of the people of Israel. His own person, though in heaven, seen by faith, would be the attracting centre of union to the disciples of Him who died that He might gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. On the Day of Pentecost this was acted upon, and by the Holy Ghost, an associate company and habitation formed on earth—to which the responsibility was committed of the heavenly-mindedness, the grace, the holiness, and the unity of God’s house and assembly. It was a real thing, and the living God and His power were there. But man failed; and where now, on earth, is there that which we can turn to and say: “See the house of God, the assembly of the living God” as they could have done at Jerusalem, without fear of contradiction, or shame. It was a manifest reality. It bore the stamp upon it of God and of heaven; of His character and ways. But it is not a manifest reality now, that which is *in man’s hands*. And, because men feel the want of the reality, they that think they can still say “Come and see *in us* the house and the assembly”—are obliged to falsify the truth of God. They are obliged either to change the elements of what was the house and assembly, as Rome has done, from heavenly to worldly, from spiritual to sensual; or they are obliged to make what was visible and tangible to sense invisible and spiritual; but an invisible light and an invisible house for men in bodies upon earth is literally nonsense. When Christ was upon earth, as God’s witness there, *he* was not invisible, but visible, as 1 John i. 1, says, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen, etc;” and when He went into heaven and

had sent the Holy Ghost down from heaven, the Church was not invisible, but visible enough, whether at Jerusalem or at Ephesus, and it made its light and power known, for the Holy Ghost was there, and an absent Lord was loved and served. One house and one assembly of God upon earth; one truth and one Spirit; one set of principles; one origin; one power; one end and one portion marked it every where the house and assembly visible upon earth—witness for an absent and, to the world invisible, Lord and Saviour. To change either the principles of the Church, or its visible manifestation, is the work of the Adversary—who thus seeks to destroy the responsibility of the saved people. Rome did the former; Protestantism does the latter. Surely there is neither reality nor the presence of the living God, therefore, with either the one or the other.

But the principles acted upon at Pentecost by God and Christ, and the Holy Ghost, might have been owned fully at the reformation. They were not; nor was man's failure ever seen clearly. If it had, we should not have had on earth that which we had at Pentecost exactly, any more than the temple, when once destroyed, could ever be the same when rebuilt. The Urim and the Thummim, and the Shechinah, were never restored to the temple when rebuilt; moreover, the ten and the two tribes were ever distinct from the days of the kingdom being rent in twain. Still there was, from the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, Haggai and Zechariah, that upon earth in Israel, which God could own, and did own as His temple and His people,—bear as they did the awful traces of man's past failure. Was there such an apprehension of what the Church had been, and of the impossibility of man to restore it at the time of the Reformation? I trow, not any where. Nay, for the most part, instead of the Pentecostal Church for model, the temple and kingdom of Israel was taken for model, and Protestant non-conformity, with all its piety and good works, never appears to me to have got hold even of the principles of the Church at Pentecost clearly. Therefore one spirit and one faith, and a fellowship based upon the holiness, and truth, and grace of Pentecost, were not

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even sought after. Had they been sought after, God might, and doubtless would, have marked both man's failure and His own grace in that which He would have allowed to be set up, though that which corresponded to the Urim and Thummim, and Shechinah might not have been given, nor would the rent of Greek and Roman churches ever have been mended. But, in truth, there was *nowhere* the children of God who had been scattered abroad, gathered, *as such*, together, according to the promise: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." It was not sought, and it was not found. I need not here say what the Protestant churches, as such, appear to me to have been,—still I may say that their basis was the seat of government in this world,—so far as I know, in every case. And, if non-conformity went a step further, it never, that I know, apprehended the original unity and visibility of the one habitation of God through the Spirit, of the one assembly of the living God.

When the days came that the return of the Lord was to be brought forth and preached again, the Lord did throw much light upon the minds of the people, that received it; and both the original unity of the Church, and the personal presence of the Holy Ghost with it, as under the Lordship of Christ, at first, and remaining as He did, to witness, for the Lord Jesus Christ, became a commonly known and commonly owned truth. The presence of the Spirit had been seen by a Huss, and by, perhaps, Luther, as also other truths, but were not acted upon by them; and though found in their writings, in such expressions as the Holy Ghost, and not the Pope, Christ's Vicar upon earth, did not long survive, as truth known to the mass. But now, many in England, and on the continent, saw clearly, in the light of the doctrine of the Lord's return, the Holy Ghost as the Comforter; who, however dishonoured by man, had remained to witness for the Lord, and to shew of His Father's blessedness in heaven to them that believe.

Many, too, then pinched and conscience-vexed by man's world-churches, and by the inadequacies of Non-conformity, did find a haven of rest to their troubled

consciences in the promise and the meeting upon it, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." They may have attained, too, to taste of the communion of saints *as such*—may have met upon a basis large enough for all the children of God that were scattered abroad, and yet practically vital enough to give no attraction to those who obviously sought not the Lord out of a pure heart. It may be, too, that their position was such (however despicable in itself, like the Cave of Adullam, which housed God's king and God's priest) as to be owned of the Lord with an, "I am with them to bless them," and, again (Hag. i. 13), "I am with you, saith the Lord," and that He may have said of them, as thus together, "Of my habitation, of my assembly," pointing them onward and upward to the glory. Before man they never could pretend to be the house or to be the assembly—much less could they pretend to do that which even the primitive church did not pretend to; viz., to gather to themselves, and not to Jesus. Still there was reality in the movement, and God was with it then and there. If any, now, in the present day, wanted me to go back to those days, I should see no reality in so doing, nor do I think God would be with me in the attempt. That movement was not the model, nor the starting point of action by which to judge ourselves; but Pentecost was both model and starting point. Those times are bygone. The state of things is changed now, and the time; but the living God of *then* is the living God of *now*, and knows how to apply the promise to our need to-day as much as to our need yesterday.^c

^c The mass who are awake now pass not through the same trouble of conscience to-day as some did forty years ago. But the promise that met us then, meets us now, and the living God is still with us. As God still remembers He is Creator and Provider, and Governor, though man has forgotten it, and denied his allegiance to God, so does the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ remember his title and place as to the Church. He has acted, and is acting upon his own right to give the blessings of these titles to a failed people. Babylon itself cannot hinder His free grace to the people who have failed. If humbled under His hand, they will get it.

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I doubt much whether we can *safely* speak of them as a remnant, it would lead the mind too much back to Old Testament times, and to things of earth, and place them on the earth; yet they certainly may say, "Of His own will begat He us, with the word of truth," which cannot be said of the mass professing; and they may be, as to position also, able to say (which the children of God, who are scattered abroad, can hardly do), *of* that "kind of first fruits of His creatures."

"Are they a testimony, and if so of what?" Such is a question which has been put, and often. Was the pristine Church, as such, a testimony, and will the New Jerusalem Bride of the Lamb be a testimony?

Is there not a fallacy in both these questions? I think there is; and that the not perceiving this has led to sorrow. The word *testimony* may be used either in a passive or in an active sense. In the former sense, the church at Pentecost, house and assembly, certainly was a testimony or proof of the unsearchable grace and wisdom of God in Christ (Eph. ii & iii.) and so, greater proof of divine grace and wisdom than the new Jerusalem, I know not—'tis the *chef d'œuvre* of God—something made for Christ. But to whom will the new Jerusalem be a testimony in the active sense?—such a city, such a bride corporate cannot speak (see also Psalm xix.). And was the church at Jerusalem either a preacher or a teacher? *i. e.* a testimony in *the active* sense? I think *not*. It was formed by the Word, and dwelt in by the Spirit—but the gospel existed before the church; and, it had individual men in it who were teachers of it, and there were evangelists who went forth to gather out through the gospel, like Paul, without any man's leave. To receive, to be formed by, to hold the truth and to display the power of it in our ways and habits—are very different things from preaching or teaching the truth, whether to saint or sinner. If men have found grace to be of the two or three who are purging themselves, and do not count that their being there, is of the election of grace, in their own cases and in the cases of all who have found a lair there, where two or three are gathered together, I pity them from the bottom of my heart.

What a sweetness they have lost, in not being to say—“*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, for His name's sake.*” The existence of any such spots are, in their very existence, a proof of unchanging grace in God; and, I trust also, they are proofs that the night is far spent, and that the day is at hand. Nothing will make the ruin and failure of the church in man's hand, so tangibly apparent to men, I think, as such gatherings. Nothing will make so apparent to men, that the children of God have had no communion as such in Romanism, etc., as a few meeting in brokenness amid the ruin; yet, amid it all, having, through God's grace, His presence manifested among them, and therefore, communion as children of God. Be they two or three; or twenty or thirty; or two or three thousand, who thus meet together—there is no fear of their not having God with them; they are walking in the faith of Christ, and by the Spirit they have been blessed of God; and, if God gives Teachers and Pastors, these would not be the assembly, nor could they trace their credentials otherwise than as having addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints; evangelists too, He might give; but they are, though of the church, outside as to their range of work, which is to the world as such.

There is another remark I would make, as to what is called *Testimony* in the active sense. If I were an evangelist or a teacher, I should be called to give testimony; it would be part of my obedience, and the way I should seek to be able to do it, is marked in the scriptures.

This would be *active* testimony. I pray God to give us much more of it, and to make more effectual the little which there is. But I am not called, it is not part of my *obedience* as a Christian, to have my soul occupied with men, good or bad men's thoughts about the effects of my communion with God. If I walk in the flesh or worldliness, that will be patent to all, and is to be guarded against surely; but if I walk with God and Christ in Heaven, through faith and the Holy Ghost, my soul is occupied with the objects there, and it is just this absorbedness with Heaven and eternity, which gives

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that unselfishness, and that care for God and for Christ, which is the *passive testimony*. If I seek it, self comes in, and man's thoughts in time, which is worldliness. If I am occupied with that which is in Heaven and eternity, the savour of it will appear; a servant of God because a Son.

If any deny that God has persons now-a-days who are responsible to Him, some to preach the word to the world, and others to explain it to the saints; I leave them to settle that with Him. The assembly of God in no sense ever pretended to be a pastor or a teacher, but to be, what is much higher, the habitation of God, and the assembly in association with God, a proof in its original formation, and in its very existence wherever found, of His love, and wisdom, and power; and, since man betrayed the trust, of how the counsel of the Lord stands firm, and of how the Father works, and the Son, to form the new Jerusalem—Satan, world, and flesh, notwithstanding. Man's past failure is not to be our excuse for worldliness, or indifferentism in heart or conduct to the person and path of Christ, or for withdrawing of ourselves into corners, each one apart. Nor are we to use it as a place for seeking a quiet and comfortable nest for ourselves, or a place in which any shortcoming of devotedness and holiness will not be noticed; the common failure being the cover for present individual failure. Amid all the fretting of evil unbelieving hearts, let us in patience possess our souls. He gives more grace. May we be the free channels of it to others, in all their trouble. "We are what we are, and God is what He is; and they that walk with Him, the living God, will soon find that they and He are well met together;" but then, let us keep to reality, to a walk with the living God while it is called to day, and leave it to Him to settle with those that lag behind, or that run before, or that ignorantly wander at the side. In this day, it is a great matter to let God break us down into our own places, by what means He is pleased; and sure I am, that there is no danger of His breaking any of us down into a place that is too small for us. Let Him work, and follow thou Him; and the place of work now and of glory hereafter,

will tell of His greatness, little as we may be in it. The stone that slew Goliath was a little stone, and David's exertion small. It did a great work nevertheless, and won a great prize, for God was owned and thought of, and Goliath and the Philistines were not thought much about by David.

I would that my brethren—instead of being occupied with questions about what is the Church now on earth in time, and what are we as to it, which only prove, in those that so speak, that they have not done with man as a failed thing, have not ceased from man—were occupied with what the Church is in God's mind in heaven and for eternity. Let them see the failure in man's hand; let them see their own connection with it, and let them loathe themselves, and all that man has done and been, in the presence of the love that knows no let, but still goes on with its own purposes and plans; but let them look to it, that they individually are purged vessels fit for the master's use; not of the world, in thought, affection, conduct, even as they are not of the world in the Spirit of Christ, which has made them partakers of the blessing. But doing and suffering God's will, are great things in this day.

Walk by sense and sight as to the Church, and you are in Babylon; walk by faith and the Spirit, and you are with God on the road to glory and Heaven. The sum and substance of all I have to say is that the Church, as the habitation of God, the assembly of the living God, seems to me to be presented in two ways in Scripture. It is part of the eternal counsel and plan of God the Father, for the Son of His love, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the eternity that lies before us. As such, 'tis the workmanship of God the Spirit, through faith in us; and can never fail. But this formed the basis of a responsibility among men on earth, in time, inasmuch as the knowledge of *the truth* which lay at the basis of it and of the power so brought in (*viz.*: the Messiah, earth rejected, displayed in Heaven as the second Adam, life-giving Spirit) was set forth at Pentecost, and entrusted to man.

Man has failed in this as in *everything else*; hopelessly,

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and irremediably failed, and judgment is at the door. On the other hand, God has not failed in any wise; and he knows how to turn even this failure also to His own glory, and to the furtherance of the blessing of any who own it, and walk with Him amid the failure. Such become manifest as persons who purge themselves from all evil; who purify themselves even as He is pure; who walk with Him upon the principles upon which He is acting, in and for His own eternity in Heaven.

(Continued from page 37.)

A. Are the three offerings of the people, on the eighth day, the bringing in of the children of Israel before the glory appears?

B. You get another element in the consecration of Aaron's sons, they are all connected with himself, "with Him" (30). This is not the case in chap. ix; no such connection is marked. When you get Aaron alone, as High Priest, there is no blood; he is anointed *with oil*, as Christ was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power.

A. But still they are connected with him; and it is not so with the people?

B. No. We only are made kings and priests; and, for us to be brought in, we must have blood put on us and the anointing oil, which was never put on the people, but when Christ went in, it was with *His own perfection*.

A. Is there not anointing connected with abiding in Christ in the epistle of John?

B. Yes. Only it does not refer to Priesthood there. It is the same thought. It is life. In John, you always get life connected with the Spirit.

A. And with God and with Christ?

B. Then it is not merely life given us of His Spirit? Though it is life, it is also spirit for union with Himself as Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; John gives us his person not priesthood. The ground was laid in His person. It is life, there; besides that it is the Holy Ghost. In Eph. always the Holy Ghost. In Col., always life. The same thing, but presented according to their condition. As life, it is as your own [new] nature coming from God. As the Holy Ghost, it is in power. Whatever He (Christ) is you get into; Sonship, priesthood, royalty. It is a great thing to have it as life. If it were only the Holy Ghost, I would not say, "I;" if it were without the Holy Ghost, there would be no power. (*To be continued.*)

FRAGMENTARY REMARKS.*

I.

I BELIEVE that the Churches have been merged in the mass of ecclesiastical popular hierarchism and lost; but I believe also that the visible Church, as it is called, has been merged there too.

Still there is a difference, because churches were the administrative form, while the Church, as a body on the earth, was the vital unity.

What I felt from the beginning, and began with, was this: the Holy Ghost remains, and, therefore, the essential principle of unity with this presence; for (the fact is all we are now concerned in) *wherever* two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

When this is really sought, there will certainly be blessing by His presence; we have found it so, most sweetly and graciously, who have met separately.

When there is an attempt at displaying the position and the unity, there will always be a mess and a failure: God will not take such a place with us.

We must get into the place of His mind, to get His strength. That is now the failure of the Church. But there He will be with us.

I have always said this. I know it has troubled some, even those I specially love; but I am sure it is the Lord's mind. I have said: We are the witnesses of the weakness and low estate of the Church.

We are not stronger nor better than others (Dissenters, etc.), but we only own our bad and lost state, and *therefore*, can find blessing. I do not limit what the blessed Spirit can do for us in this low estate, but I take the place *where* he can do it.

Hence, government of bodies, in an authorized way,

* Having met with the following Fragmentary Remains, the Editor deems them worthy of a place in the PRESENT TESTIMONY.

Fragmentary Remarks.

I believe there is none; where this is assumed, there will be confusion. It was here [Plymouth], and it was constantly and openly said, that this was to be a model, so that all in distant places might refer to it. My thorough conviction is, that conscience was utterly gone, save in those who were utterly miserable.

I only, therefore, so far seek the original standing of the Church, as to believe, that wherever two or three are gathered in His name, Christ will be, and that the Spirit of God is necessarily the only source of power, and that which He does will be blessing through the Lordship of Christ. These [the Spirit present and the Lordship of Christ] provide for all times. If more be attempted now, it will be only confusion.

The original condition is owned as a sinner, or as mutilated man owns integrity and a whole body. But there a most important point comes in. I cannot supply the lack by human arrangement or wisdom. I must be dependent.

I should disown whatever was not of the Spirit, and, in this sense, disown whatever was—not short of the original standing; for that, in the complete sense, I am—but what man has done to fill it up; because this does not own the coming short, nor the Spirit of God. I would always own what is of God's Spirit in any. The *rule* seems to me here very simple.

I do not doubt that dispensed power is disorganised; but the Holy Ghost is always competent to act in the circumstances God's people are in. The secret is, not to pretend to get beyond it. Life and divine power is always there; and I use the members I have, with full confession that I am in an imperfect state.

We must remember that the body must exist, though not in a united state; and so, even locally. I can then, therefore, own their gifts and the like, and get my warrant in two or three united for the blessing promised to that.

Then, if gifts exist, they cannot be exercised but as members of the body, because they are such, not by outward union, but by the vital power of the head, through the Holy Ghost.

“Visible body,” I suspect, misleads us a little. Clearly the corporate operation is in the actual living body, down here on earth, but there it is the members must act, so that I do not think it makes a difficulty.

I believe, if we were to act on Cor. xii. 14 further than power exists to verify it, we should make a mess.

But then the existence of the body, whatever its scattered condition, necessarily continues, because it depends on the existence of the Head, and its union with it. In this the Holy Ghost is necessarily supreme.

The body exists in virtue of there being one Holy Ghost. There is one body and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling; indeed this is the very point which is denied here.

Then Christ necessarily nourishes and cherishes us as his own flesh, as members of his body; and thus goes on ‘till we all come,’ etc. (Eph. iv.) Hence, I apprehend we cannot deny the body and its unity (whatever its unfaithfulness and condition), and (so far as the Holy Ghost is owned) His operation in it, without denying the divine title of the Holy Ghost, and the care and headship of Christ over the Church.

Here I get, not a question of the Church’s conduct, but of Christ’s; and the truth of the Holy Ghost being on earth, and his title when there; and yet the owning of Christ’s lordship. And this is how far I own others.

If a minister has gifts in the Establishment, I own it as through the Spirit, Christ begetting the members of, or nourishing, his body. But I cannot go along with what it is mixed up with, because it is not of the body, nor of the Spirit. I cannot touch the unclean, I am to separate the precious from the vile.

But I cannot give up Eph. iv., while I own the faithfulness of Christ. Now if we meet, yea, and when we do meet, all I look for is that this principle should be owned, because it is, owning the Holy Ghost himself, and that to me is everything.

We meet and worship; and, at this time, we who have separated meet in different rooms, that we may in the truest and simplest way, in our weakness, *worship*. Then whatever the Holy Ghost may give to any one, he is

supreme to feed us with, perhaps nothing in the way of speaking; and it must be in the unity of body.

If you were here, you could be in the unity of the body, as one of ourselves. This Satan cannot destroy, because it is connected with Christ's title and power.

If men set up to imitate the administration of the body, it will be popery or dissent at once.

And this is what I see of the visibility of the body; it connects itself with this infinitely important principle, the presence and action of the Holy Ghost on earth.

It is not merely a saved thing in the counsels of God, but a living thing animated down here by its union with the Head, and the presence of the Holy Ghost in it. It is a real actual thing, the Holy Ghost acting down here. If two are faithful in this they will be blessed in it.

If they said "We are the body," not owning all the members, in whatever condition, they would morally cease to be of it. I own them, but in nothing their condition. The principle is all important.

Christ has attached, therefore, its practical operation to two or three; and owns them by his presence. He has provided for its maintenance. Thus, in all states of ruin, it cannot cease till he ceases to be Head, and the Holy Spirit to be as the Guide and the Comforter sent down.

God sanctioned the setting up of Saul; he never did, the departure from the Holy Ghost. The "two or three" take definitely the place of the temple, which was the locality of God's presence, as a principle of union. That is what makes all the difference. Hence, in the division of Israel, the righteous sought the temple as a point of unity, and David is to us here Christ by the Holy Ghost.

On the other hand, church government, save as the Spirit is always power, cannot be acted on.

II.

I suspect many brethren have had expectations, which never led me out, and which perplexed their minds when they were not met in practice. I never felt my testimony, for example, to be the ability of the Holy Ghost to rule a visible body. That I do not doubt; but I doubt its

proper application now as a matter of testimony. It does not become us.

My confidence is in the certainty of God's blessing, and maintaining us, if we take the place we are really in. That place is one of the general ruin of the dispensation. Still, I believe God has provided for the maintenance of its general principle (save persecution), that is, the gathering of a remnant into the comfort of united love by the power and presence of the Holy Ghost, so that Christ could sing praises there.

All the rest is a ministry to form, sustain, etc. Amongst other things, government may have its place; but it is well to remember, that, in general, government regards evil, and therefore is outside the positive blessing, and has the lowest object in the Church.

Moreover, though there be a gift of government, in general, government is of a different order from gift. Gift serves ministers; hardly, government. These may be united as in Apostolic energy; elders were rather the government, but they were not gifts.

It is especially the order of the governmental part which I believe has failed, and that we are to get on without, at least in a formal way. But I do not believe that God has therefore not provided for such a state of things.

I do believe brethren a good deal got practically out of their place, and the consciousness of it, and found their weakness: and the Lord is now teaching them. For my part, when I found all in ruin around me, my comfort was, that where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, there He would be. It was not government or any thing else I sought. Now I do believe that God is faithful, and able to maintain the blessing.

I believe the great buildings and great bodies have been mistake: indeed, I always did. Further, I believe now (although it were always true in practice), the needed dealing with evil must be by the conscience in grace. So St. Paul ever dealt, though he had the resource of a positive commission. And, I believe that two or three together, or a larger number, with some

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having the gift of wisdom in grace, can, in finding the mind of the Lord, act in discipline; and this, with pastoral care, is the main-spring of holding the saints together, in Matt. xviii. This agreeing together is referred to as the sign of the Spirit's power.

I do not doubt that some may be capable of informing the consciences of others. But the conscience of the body is that which is ever to be acted upon and set right. This is the character of all healthful action of this kind, though there may be a resource in present Apostolic power, which, where evil has entered, may be wanting; but it cannot annul "where two or three agree it shall be done."

So that I see not the smallest need of submission to Popery; *i.e.*, carnal unity by authority in the flesh, nor of standing alone, because God has provided for a gathering of saints together, founded on grace, and held by the operation of the Spirit, which no doubt may fail for want of grace, but which, in every remaining gift, has its scope; in which Christ's presence and the operation of the Spirit is manifested, but must be maintained, on the ground of the condition the Church really is in, or it would issue in a sect arranged by man, with a few new ideas.

Where God is trusted in the place, and for the place we are in, and we are content to find Him infallibly present with us, there I am sure He is sufficient and faithful to meet our wants.

If there be one needed wiser than any of the gathered ones in a place, they will humbly feel their need, and God will send some one as needed, if He sees it the fit means.

There is no remedy for want of grace, but the Sovereign goodness that leads to confession. If we set up our altar, it will serve for walls (Ezra iii. 3). The visibility God will take care of, as He always did; the faith of the body will be spoken of, and the unity in love manifest the power of the Holy Ghost in the body.

I have no doubt of God's raising up for need, all that need requires in the place where He has set us in understanding. If we think to set up the Church again, I

would say, God forbid. I had rather be near the end, to live and to die for it in service where it is as dear to God; that is my desire and life.

N^o. VII.

THE GRACE OF THE GLORY OF GOD.

WE find that the great aim, all through Scripture, is to connect the soul with God personally. After the fall, it was the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden that accosted Adam; and it was from the presence of the Lord God that Adam hid himself—and so on;—the personal connection of the soul with God is given in how many instances I need not say, until we reach the culminating point of it in the gospel of glory committed to Paul; “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Here alone the soul is in true worship. There are other truths and other parts of the testimony for God; dispensational truth; principles, etc., all most important in their place, and valuable as far as they go; but this alone goes the whole way, as it were, and reaches the goal.

I may illustrate what I mean, as to these two lines of truth and testimony, by the prodigal in the Father's house. In order that he might not feel his unsuited condition to the house, the father summoned the servants and directed them to invest him with habiliments indicative and assuring of his high position. Very happy and interesting work for the servants this, and of an order which engages many amongst us now; but, however interesting, it *does* not reach the *end* of the father's purpose. If the prodigal were only dressed and decorated, and not then conducted into the house of the father, both son and father would have been deprived of the great end and fruition of their reconciliation.

In like manner, in Joshua v., I have all the prepara-

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tion for possessing the land; and a skilful servant might educate me earnestly and deeply in one and all of the details, from the circumcision to the corn of the land; but I should lose the real power and conscious title of *entrée*, if I had not seen the Captain of the Lord's Host, and, as an unshod worshipper, known that it is *with Him* that I take possession. In 2 Cor. iv. 6, the Apostle has been shewing how the reception of the Gospel connects us with Christ in glory, as it had thus connected himself at first, when he was taught this Gospel, and was enjoined to be a minister and a witness of *the things that he had seen*. Now it was a glorified Christ that he had seen; therefore, if any one sees not this light which is the ministration of righteousness, it is not salvation merely that he is rejecting,—but the “light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face [or person] of Jesus Christ.”

I have often felt, that, in preaching or teaching, the person and presence of the Lord was not the *summum bonum* set before the soul. By some (the evangelicals) the gospel is preached by calling on sinners to present Christ to God as an all-sufficient atonement for their sins; others, more enlightened, proclaim the love of God declared in His Son giving eternal life to every believer. But both these fall short of the presentation of God establishing righteousness in His own Son, and through Him, and in His life; leading the believing prodigal to His own house, and nearness to Himself for ever, in full and unbroken joy to *both*. In the two former, though the gain of the sinner be largely insisted on, *God's* satisfaction—*His* gain, we may say in His joy—is not entered on at all. We little comprehend the gospel of the glory of Christ disclosed to Saul of Tarsus, who from *thence* became the witness of *the things that he had seen*. The glory of God became the starting point of the sinner; as it was also the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Under the law, there were sacrifices, which, however, never saved the transgressors of the law from legal penalties. The gospel preached, even now-a-days, is more the presentation of the sacrifice, proclaimed, I admit, as all-sufficient and satisfactory, and

the call on sinners is to approach it; but this is not presenting to faith God's salvation, because *to Him* the sacrifice is full and endlessly satisfactory; *His* satisfaction being the great subject-matter presented to faith. The reception of the Prodigal, great as was his rescue, does not derive its chief excellence from the completeness of his safety and the greatness of his deliverance, but from his happy and welcomed nearness to the Father.

We want a gospel which connects us with the presence of God in His joy; and we want an education in His word, which would connect us with our Lord personally as the living transcript of the mind of God.

FRAGMENT.

The primary leading thought of the habitation, or the house of God—is the presence of the Holy Ghost, on earth, with a people; in witness of the Lordship of Christ in Heaven.

He came down, thus, at Pentecost, and abides still,—however much the possession of the truth may have changed its character and appearance. We share that place with the churches of Rome, Greece, Prussia, England, etc. Dissent and Nonconformity are not outside of it. God alone can take us out of it—up to Heaven.

The primary idea of the assembly, is that of the association of the sons of God with Him, and so with one another, in the truth and by the Spirit. I desire—and I judge it is a lawful desire—to be manifestly associated with God and with Christ in Heaven and on earth with all those who are in Spirit and in truth associated with Him; and not only so, but with that work, whatever it may be, in which He is working at this time, to prepare a House and Bride for His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

“The Spirit and the Bride say—come.”

“Surely I come quickly.”

“Even so: Come, Lord Jesus.”

N^o. VIII.

THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE.

THE REVELATION.

AS regards Peter and Paul, we have scriptural authority for regarding them as the apostles respectively of the circumcision and of the uncircumcision. Peter and the twelve remain at Jerusalem when the disciples are scattered, and continue (though God was careful to maintain unity) the work of Christ in the remnant of Israel, gather into an assembly on earth the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Paul, as a wise master-builder, lays the foundation, having received the ministry of the Church, as of the Gospel to every creature under heaven (Col. i). Peter sets us off as pilgrims on our journey to follow Christ risen towards the inheritance above. Paul, in the full development of his doctrine, though owning this, as in Phil. iii., shows us, "sitting in heavenly places in Christ, heirs of all which He is heir of. All this was dispensational, and it is full of instruction. But John holds a different place. He does not enter on dispensation, nor, though once or twice stating the fact (as xiv. 1, xvii. 24, xx. 17, xiii. 1), does he take the saint up to heaven, nor does he the Lord Himself. Jesus, for him, is a divine person, the Word made flesh manifesting God and His Father—eternal life come down to earth. The epistle of John treats the question of our partaking of this life, and its characters. But, at the close of the Gospel, after stating the sending of the Comforter on His going away, Christ opens to the disciples, though in a mysterious way, the continuations of God's dealing with the earth, of which John, ministerially, is the representative, linking the manifestation of Christ on earth at His first coming,

whole position of the Church, thus distinguishing clearly the saints under the gospel, from those whose circumstances are prophetically made known to them in this book. "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us kings and priests to God and His Father." As soon as Christ is named, and it is so in both cases, it awakens in the saints the consciousness of Christ's love, and their own place in relationship with Him. They are already washed from their sins in His own blood, and made kings and priests to God and His Father—have their place and state fixed, before any of the prophetic part is developed, and in the coming kingdom will enjoy that place; not of being blessed under Christ, but of being associated with Him. Here they have their place, simply in the kingdom and priesthood—it is individual title, resulting from his first coming. They are loved, washed in His own blood, and associated with Him in the kingdom. At the end of the book, Christ is revealed as the Morning Star, a place forming no part of the prophecy, but that in which the Church, who has waited for Him, is associated with Him for herself, not the kingdom (compare the promise to the overcomers in Thyatira). This draws out in active love (not as before, simply being loved and what we are made)—love first directed towards Christ Himself in the Church's known relation to Himself, then to the saints who hear, then to the thirsty, then to all the world. The desire of the Church, as the Bride with whom the Spirit is, is directed to Christ's second coming, to the possessing the Morning Star; then the Spirit turns to the saints, calling on them to say, Come to Jesus, to join in this desire. But we have the Spirit, though not the Bridegroom; hence, whoever is athirst, is called on to come and drink, and thus the gospel proclaimed abroad: "Whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely." It is love acting in the saint all round, from Christ to sinners in the world.

N^o. IX.

THE PALINGENESIA.

THE Palingenesia, or Regeneration, of Mat. xix. 28, is a state or condition already reached. The washing of Palingenesia, or Regeneration, of Tit. iii. 5, intimates the act or process by which a new state or condition is reached; that spiritual operation which renews, or recreates, or regenerates a sinner.

These are the only two places in Scripture where the word is found. In Mat. xix. 28, it is the title of that condition in which all things, or the creation itself, will be displayed, when the Son of Man sits in His kingdom, on the throne of His glory. And this kingdom is called by various other names, or receives different descriptions in Scripture. It is called "the world to come." It is described as "the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord;" or, "the times of restitution of all things." It is again called simply, "the kingdom," and the "kingdom of the God of heaven;" and "the kingdom of your Father." It is the Creation in subjection to the Son of Man. We shortly and familiarly term it "the millenium." The Lord's title for it in the above passage, is "the Palingenesia, or the Regeneration"—a word which intimates that it will be another or a second Genesis—a creation again—creation in a new condition.

And thus, the wisdom of God in Scripture accomplishes a circle, which is said to be the most perfect of all figures; for it returns to the beginning when it reaches the end, losing nothing on the journey it has taken, but rather, by the wondrous and magnificent process, finding all, and re-gathering all, at the close, in richer and advanced conditions. The old Creation had no glory, by reason of the glory of the new that excelleth. If that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. The story of the old is lost in the more wondrous story of the new. The old Creation had

its foundation in the power of God; the new has its foundation in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God.^a And this mystery, that the Lamb of God is the new Creator, the Framer or Builder of the new Creation, as well as its Head, is taught us in 2 Cor. v., where the apostle says, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," thereby telling us, that our new creation is the same as, or depends upon, our being "in Christ." And he then goes on with the same thought, saying, "old things are passed away, behold all things are become new, and all things are of God, *who hath reconciled us to Himself.*"

This is clear and decisive. The new Creation is that great system which stands in and under God as a Redeemer or Reconciler. This is its standing, its character. It has no being, no existence, but in the reconciliation which the blood of the Lamb of God has accomplished. It is a purchased and redeemed, and not simply a created, possession.

So, also, Heb. ii. teaches us the same. "The world to come," of which it speaks, is revealed as a scene, where all the works of God's hand are to be found in subjection to the Son of Man. But it teaches us likewise, in connection with this, that this Son of Man, this Lord of the world to come, had before been made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, for the tasting of death for sinners, that He might, as a suffering Captain of salvation, lead sons to glory, or sinners with Himself into "the world to come."

This is not only great in its bearing and character, but something altogether new and peculiar. Did ever the Blessed One, in any region of His boundless creation, acquire sovereignty by such a title, or reach His dominions by such a path? It may well be called "the world to come," or a Palingenesia; for not only is it still

^a When redemption was about to display itself among the children of Israel, the beginning of the year was changed—this letting them know, that they were now beginning a new kind of life altogether; entering on a scene of new creation, because they had now come into connection with redemption, with the salvation of God, through the blood which was sprinkled on their door-posts, ransoming them from death and judgment (Ex. xii. 2).

future, but when it is revealed, it will have to be said, there never was the like of it before. It is founded in atonement. It is laid in the sorrows and sufferings of its divine Lord, the Son of Man. Bright and happy as it will be for eternal ages, it comes forth into being from the work of reconciliation accomplished by the Cross, and sealed by the crowning of Him who died there, with glory and honour in heaven. It is the fruit of death and resurrection.

How great, indeed, is this way of the grace, the wisdom, and the power of God! The work of His hands destroyed itself, in the person of Adam, its steward and representative; and now, in the person of the Lord Jesus, God Himself has entered the ruins, the scene of the mighty catastrophe, and there, in a way which infinitely glorifies Him, has wrought deliverance from the bondage of corruption, and transplanted His creation into the liberty of glory.

And so, likewise, other Scriptures, in their way and measure, come to tell us the same wondrous tale. The words "until the redemption of the purchased possession," which we read in Eph. i., are full of this deep and precious secret. There are three thoughts suggested there. 1. The *purchase* of the possession. 2. The *redemption* of it. 3. An *interval* between this purchase and this redemption. These things are surely suggested in this Scripture.

The Lord Jesus, the Son and Christ of God, is both the Purchaser and the Redeemer, and the earth is the possession or inheritance here spoken of.

The purchase and the redemption may be otherwise called redemption in two different ways; that is, by *blood* and by *power*.

The Lord is a Redeemer by *blood*, ransoming us and our inheritance, paying the full redemption-price, so as to satisfy all the righteous demands of the throne of God. He is a Redeemer by *power*, rescuing us and our inheritance from the hand of the enemy and usurper, destroying him who had the power of death, and casting out the prince of this world. So that in the world to come, in the Palingenesia, where the redemption of the pur-

chased possession is to be displayed, the ransomed of the Lord will *thankfully* look at God, whose grace is the fountain of this glory and blessedness, and know Him in His righteousness, to be satisfied by our Redeemer; and also *boldly* look at the great enemy, and see him conquered, and cast out from his usurpation, by our Redeemer.

This will be a high condition indeed. Man, in the old creation never attained it, and never could. He was, and the whole scene around him, in a doubtful conditional state. All was exposed to forfeiture and ruin there, in the stead of being set in victory and redemption. The old creation, and man at the head of it, could never have looked on either God or the serpent, as the new creation and the saints will be entitled to do. "Purchased" and "redeemed" express the condition of "the world to come;" or, "the possession" or inheritance in the Palingenesia. But, the like of that there never has been in any other part of the creation of God. Angels in their dignities, and Adam in his innocency, did not illustrate it — as, indeed, I need not say.

So, the Epistle to the Colossians, in one verse, gives us a sight of redemption by *blood* or purchase; the Epistle to the Philippians, in one verse, gives us a sight of redemption by *power* (Col. i. 20, Phil. iii. 21). This one verse which I have been considering, in the Epistle to the Ephesians (i. 14), combines the two, giving us a sight of the mystery in its perfection, or the *redemption* of the *purchased* possession.

But, further, in the progress of Scripture, we have *types*, *prophecies*, and *rehearsals* of this great mystery, or of the creation of God in a purchased and redeemed condition, as well as these Scriptures which *teach* it. The world under Noah after the flood,—the land of Egypt as settled by, and under Joseph,—the Jubilee, or the fiftieth year in Israel,—the days of Solomon in 2 Chronicles—these were *types* or samples of it. The 8th Psalm, Isaiah xi., and xxxv., Ezek. xxxvi., with a number of like Scriptures, are *prophecies* of it. The scene in Rev. v., where every creature in heaven, in the

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seas, on the earth, and under the earth, are heard in their varied but harmonious joy, may be read as a *rehearsal* of it.

And, I may add, there was a great exhibition of this mystery, a purchased and a redeemed possession, in the story of Israel. In the land of Egypt, the people themselves were ransomed, or purchased, or at a full price redeemed from the claims of Divine righteousness by *blood*. God Himself, for none other could, satisfied His own demand; for he appointed the blood, which turned His sword of judgment aside. And, then, in due time, this same people, God's Israel, were redeemed by *power*, as from the hand of Pharaoh, by the arm and strength of Jehovah, at the Red Sea (Ex. xii. and xv.).

And as the people themselves, so their inheritance. The land promised to their fathers, the land already theirs by Divine gift (upon the forfeiture of it by its natural possessors, who had filled up the measure of their sins), is redeemed by strength of arm out of the hand of the Canaanites, in the day of Joshua. And this was upon the ground and warranty of a previous purchase, or redemption by blood (see Ex. xv. 15, 16).^b

From all this, as from many and many another illustration of the same, I might take occasion to say, How finely does Scripture maintain its unity.—Prophets and Apostles, Psalms, Epistles, Evangelists, and the Apocalypse, Patriarchal and Mosaic words, telling out the same mysteries of God, in harmonies that are beautiful as well as sacred.

And now let me add, that nothing in the coming kingdom, nothing in this Palingenesia, or world to come, of which we are speaking, will be lost; all that was once seen in the old creation and in the present world will re-appear.

The creation itself, the work of God's hand, will be still spread abroad, in all its order and departments, as of old; its heaven and its earth in their varied provision and

^b Just as in Rev. v.—for there we find “the Lamb that was slain,” to be one with “the Lion of the Tribe of Judah,” when the inheritance is about to be redeemed by *power*—thus recognizing the truth, that redemption by *blood* had preceded.

furniture—but all will be secured and not exposed; redeemed, reconciled and glorified. Instead of being subject to vanity, it will be “delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” It will stand in the strength, and shine in the beauty, of the risen Lord.

The vegetable world shall then rejoice. The ground itself shall be delivered from the curse. Instead of the thorn, shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier the myrtle tree. The wilderness shall blossom as the rose. The field shall be joyful and all that is therein, and the trees of the wood together. And with these, the sea in its fulness, the floods and the hills. So sing the Psalmist and the Prophets.

The cattle on the mountains, and the beasts of the forests, shall be among the subjects of this universal dominion, this wide-spread sovereignty of the Son of Man. The lion shall eat straw like the ox; the wolf and the lamb shall feed together; the leopard shall lie down with the kid—the calf, the young lion, and the fatling shall be together, and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’s den.

The heavens of that world shall be there also, in their forms of beauty, and in their service of fertilising and enriching the earth. As we read of the Lord of those days, how He will make the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice; how He will visit the earth, and water it as with the river of God, blessing the spring and the harvest, crowning the year with His goodness, till the pastures clothed with flocks, and the valleys covered with corn, shout for joy and sing together (Psalm lxxv.). Nothing shall then hurt or destroy in that holy mountain of the Lord; and He will hear the heavens, and the heavens shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and the corn, and the wine, and the oil shall hear Jezreel (Hos. ii.).

What sights in the visions of the Prophets are these!

And yet still, and still further. We learn that not only will all the materials of the whole creation thus re-appear, but the systems of the old world will be

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reproduced also. Of course, in purified and perfected conditions of wonder, joy, and honour; but still the systems of the old world, as well as the materials of the old creation, will be reproduced.

The nations, all the earth over, shall be settled in their several homes and inheritances again. And they shall do service to the King in Zion, all people calling Him blessed; the knowledge of His glory covering the earth as the waters do the sea. The daughter of Tyre shall be known there, and so the kings of Tarshish and the isles, the kings of Sheba and Seba—and some shall come from far, and some from the north, and from the west, and some from the land of Sinim.

The people of Israel shall be set again in their own land, and again distinguished among the nations as of old, the head and not the tail, of whose skirts, men of all languages of the nations shall take hold, while they say, "We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

Jerusalem shall shine again, as in the presence of the Lord in the day of her glory. It shall be the throne and the sanctuary of the God and King of that world to come, the witness of a world's worship, the home of the children of the kingdom, the seat of righteous, peaceful government, and the happy, honoured centre of the earth, in the days of the Palingenesia.

Surely it is a great and wondrous sight to see to, a great theme to meditate and to talk of. Our thoughts might well be rapt into wonder and thankfulness while we ponder it. But I ask, Is there not *moral admonition* for us in it also? Surely there is. If the atonement of the cross of Christ be the sure foundation of this "world to come," and our only title to it, how should we now triumph in that atonement, and in that only! And if this same cross of Christ tell us of the character of this "present evil world," reminding us of its rejection of that blessed Lord, on whom all our hopes rest, how should we be dead to it, and take our place in moral separation from it! Surely this is so. But the heart knows its own humiliations—how coldly it exults in the one, how feebly it gains its victories over the other.

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And I would not close this meditation without observing one other truth. The old creation was not allowed to pass away, till man, God's original workmanship in beauty and perfection, was vindicated to the full glory of God's blessed and holy name. This was done, in the person, character, and life of the Lord Jesus. He stood in the midst of the old creation, a stainless sample of humanity, adorned with all moral glory in and for the eye and delight of God—the only such, but the surely such—the perfect immaculate Image of man according to God. But having been this, having thus stood in the midst of the ruin, in which all beside had involved themselves, He died under the judgment of that corrupted thing—meeting its doom, and *righteously* answering for it, by reason of His personal dignity, being God and man in one Christ, and in one sacrifice. And having done this, as risen from the dead, the triumphant Christ, He laid the foundation of that new creation of which we speak. He has stood where Adam fell; He has conquered where Adam was overthrown. He has broken the gates of hell; and in Himself and in his victory, has founded a kingdom that never can be moved—a new, a redeemed creation. This is the secret. The Lord God is the Foundation, as well as the Builder of this mighty, unimpregnable system. In the stead of a world committed to the issue of a trial of man's allegiance, it is a world sustained in unassailable strength, and in unfading glory, by the accomplished and celebrated victory of the Lord of life and salvation.

“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.

Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

No. X.

THE BRUISED REED AND THE SMOKING
FLAX.

MATTHEW xii. 20, 21.

“A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory. And in His name shall the Gentiles trust.”

I CALL attention to the above passage, believing that, however well the commonly received interpretation of it may comport with the true idea of the grace of the Lord, it is a false interpretation, both as to the persons it refers to, and also to their condition.

The popular thought is, that the bruised reed is a figure of a person broken and contrite in heart, and that the smoking flax is a soul in which the fire of divine life is newly kindled, or, at least, in which grace is operating, though as yet but feebly and dimly; and that the Lord will not break the one, nor quench the other. This fails as an interpretation, because the Lord is to do both when the proper time arrives;—the words are “*till he send forth judgment unto victory.*” But will he *ever* break the broken heart? He was sent to bind it up (Is. lxi. 1). Will He ever quench the operations of His own grace? We need not answer the question.

The reed is used in Scripture as an emblem of weakness, and in several places for a nation, as in 1 Kings xiv. 15—“The Lord shall smite Israel as a reed is shaken in the water,” etc.; and 2 Kings xviii. 21, where Egypt is called “the staff of a bruised reed;” also Ezekiel xxix. 6. A reed was, moreover, put into the right hand of the Blessed One, in derision of His claim to sway the sceptre of the kingdom.

But neither of the figures in the passage do I look upon as expressing a good or desirable condition which the Lord was to cherish; but a bad condition which He must certainly judge, though not until a certain time.

1st. The bruised reed expresses, I believe, the *external*

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condition of the Jewish nation, as under the Gentile yoke; but not yet given up to the unrestrained will of their enemies under the full weight of the judgment of God. This condition they were in when the Lord was upon earth, had they but felt and owned it.

2ndly. The smoking flax is an emblem of the internal or *moral* condition of the Jews, full of that envy and hatred to the Lord which betrayed itself so early and so constantly, which led to His crucifixion, and which is still leading onward to the reception of the Antichrist; under whose hand as the instrument of God, the bruised reed will be emphatically broken, and the smoking flax quenched (*i.e.*), the Lord shall visit His judgment upon the full-blown enmity of His people; but, in the midst of judgment remembering mercy, He shall save them from utter destruction, making them willing in the day of His power, and leading them to say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!" so that the judgment shall end in *victory*, "and in His name shall the Gentiles trust." In Is. vii. 4, Rezin and the son of Remaliah are called, because of their "*fierce anger*," "*smoking fire-brands*." And ver. 8, in three score and five years Ephraim was to be "*broken, that it be not a people*;" passages almost suggestive of the view here taken. In Luke xii. 49, 50, the Lord said, "I am come to send *fire* on the earth; and what will I, if it be *already kindled*? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." There were many tokens of this kindling, and Matthew quotes the passage from Is. xlii., as illustrative of the Lord's charging them not to make Him known; but in connection with the fact that He withdrew Himself from thence, etc., upon learning that the Pharisees had gone out and held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him." Here was a tuft of the smoking flax; but the time of its judgment and quenching had not yet come. It must smoulder and increase, till it should compass His death—that baptism by which the flood-gates of divine love should be opened, and He, who was the expression of that love being glorified, should be the unfettered Dispenser of eternal life to as many as the Father hath given to Him.

N^o. XI.

THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF THE GLORY.

WHAT is the practical effect of "looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face" (2 Cor. iii. 18). Paul is here contrasting the ministration of death with the ministration of righteousness. Though the glory in the former consumed, because it only appeared with a claim on man who was unable to meet it (for Righteousness was not fully established); yet, Moses bore in his face marks of its transforming power. Because of man's condition, it was fearful in its bearing on him; yet, as we see in Moses, no one could be in it without partaking of its excellency; Moses' face therefore bore distinct traces of it. Israel refused even to gaze on the effects of it on Moses' face. Man, when seeking to maintain his own righteousness before God shrinks from admiration of the transforming power of God; Israel, therefore, in asking Moses to place a veil on his face, only declared the moral distance of their *own* hearts from God. Hence the veil is transferred to their hearts.

But now, says Paul, there is a wonderful contrast. It is now the ministration of righteousness, and that from the same glory. So was it announced (in Luke ii.) when the glory of the Lord shone round about the shepherds. The Son of God was come to establish righteousness from the same glory from which had come the claim of righteousness. And, therefore, if the glory had the power to produce such effects on the face of Moses, when man in his then condition could not look at it, how much more now, when it is a ministration of righteousness! Hence the "apostle declares that we use much boldness, and, looking on the Lord with unveiled face," are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory. It effects a moral transformation into its own likeness. Humbling though it be to admit it, any association with that which is morally superior to us must have this effect on us. If we decline to inferior associations, we deprave our better tendencies; but if we are occupied with moral superiority, we always *adopt* rather than *improve*. We adopt a new habit

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of action instead of only improving any existing one, and as the glory of God is unique and morally supreme, if we are conversant with it, we naturally and almost unconsciously adopt its characteristics and qualities, so that we are really in the process of transformation, and not merely of improvement.

I turn now to *the traces* of these effects, and how we may notice them. It is remarkable how differently we view the same things at different times. This may be even when we feel them most, but then we are in the spirit of our mind most above them. The same painful question occupied the mind of the Psalmist when outside the sanctuary and when inside; but it is evident, that he was a totally different man as to feeling, when in one and when in the other. The light of the glory had so transformed Stephen, that he was practically superior to the violence levelled against him, but he was all the more affected for those who perpetrated it; so that I should say, that the chief traces of the moral effect of the glory are a greater sensitiveness to the evil afflicting me, but a marked and sensible elevation above it.

Again, how can I distinguish "looking on the glory of the Lord" from any other spiritual exercise? If this be difficult, it is so, simply because the soul is so slow to enter into the counsel of God in His Grace to us, or to realise that counsel as a manifestation of His own heart, in the person of His only begotten Son, from the very centre of the glory. The Grace which has reached us, has its origin in the glory; it belongs to it, so to speak; and it is not answered, according to its native interest, until it connects us with the glory. If I understand the origin of this Grace and how I am bound up with it, I must understand its associations. Its origin is the *centre* of the glory; its association is the *Person* of the glory; and when I find myself in this association, through the Grace of God manifested to me, I am "looking on the glory of the Lord." If the light made Paul blind (as a man^a), he never lost the remembrance of it in his soul; therefore, he called it "the mark."

^a Sir Isaac Newton was so affected by looking at the sun with only one eye, that for three weeks, in a darkened chamber, he was haunted by a circular glare and image of it. May we be by faith so full of the glory of the Lord, that it may be ever before us, making us practically like Him, supplying us with power for our difficulties, and with abounding praise to Him who has blessed us with such a rich salvation.

N^o. XII.REMARKS ON MODERN RATIONALIST
VIEWS.

I SEND you a few remarks on modern rationalist views and their bearing on Christianity (just as I penned them down for myself), that Christians may not lightly suffer the taint of such views to approach them; whatever may be their patience with those who may be deceived.

“Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” (John v. 45—47).

Here we have more than one point. First — Moses’ writings are attributed to him; next — it is declared that he wrote of Christ, of Jesus; thirdly — his writings are spoken of, and because they are *writings* as of authority superior, as far as form goes, to Christ’s *words*. If, therefore, we do not receive his *writings*, — Christ’s *words* have no authority; — Christ made a mistake as to his writing of Him; — His whole interpretation of Scripture is unfounded; — His estimate of Himself is false as the object of this testimony. Who can guarantee its being well-founded on any other ground? He supposed God’s mind was in the written word; the modern doctrine makes this a mistake: — He was not the object of Moses’ writings, — nor did Moses write them!

Who can tell, then, that there was a Christ to come, or if Jesus was not the subject of this testimony, He was, if there was any such testimony, deceived as to Himself. The whole authority of Christ and His words is gone — as to God’s mind and as to Himself. Christianity and Christ Himself are without foundation. For if Christ’s

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Christianity is then for them to act on, because also it is contained in the Scripture, "Behold I lay in Zion," etc. Again, the prophecies of Isaiah are interwoven with his own statements. What Isaiah was prophesying, he was preaching: both stand or fall together (1 Peter i. 23; ii. 8). So as to Exodus and Hosea (chap. ii. 9, 10, 23); Genesis, the Psalms (in iii.), and Isaiah. It is a complete working up of the Old Testament Scriptures. In his second epistle, we have the glory of Christ as seen on the mount of transfiguration; a confirmation of the Old Testament prophecies, which were a candle, till the full light of the dawn of Christ's coming on earth should arise in their hearts. But Scripture was no isolated individual announcement; every prophecy of *Scripture* was divine. Holy men,—not patriotic bards, or concocters of pious frauds to act on the mind of a young king—had spoken. Prophecy did not come in old time by the will of man, exactly what is alleged as to it; but "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." He also calls the writings of Paul Scriptures; putting them on a level with the rest. John is very bold and says, that listening to the Apostles is a test whether a man is of God or not." "*Hereby know we the Spirit of truth and the Spirit of error.*" He that knoweth God hears them, he tells us. How am I to listen to him now? He and Jude both refer to the Pentateuch as of unquestioned and unquestionable authority. We know what the Revelation threatens to them who mutilate or add to it. Such are the witnesses which the Lord and His Apostles give to the authority, authenticity, and inspiration of Scripture.

What is the Christian to do? Am I to believe, or throw up the authority of Christ and His Apostles? What is the authority of Christianity itself if I do? Am I the disciple of imposters or deceived men, or of the blessed Son of God; and receiving Divine truth from His inspired servants?

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. (Acts xx. 32.)

N^o. XIII.

DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH.

IN the course of God's dealing with men, we may observe that He is again and again *testing* them; and yet always providing for the failure in which He knew this testing would end.

He began thus with Adam in the Garden. He put him to proof, setting him as under law. But in the mystery of the sleeping man, and the woman taken out of him, He would have us learn, that from the very beginning He knew where this would end, and provided another and a better thing.

So with Israel afterwards. He tested them by the law; but He revealed to them "the shadows of good things to come," the pledges of grace and salvation; knowing that man would again destroy himself, and be ruined under the Law of Mount Sinai, as he had already been under the law or command delivered to him in the Garden of Eden.

Then, by the ministry of the prophets, the Lord was leading the people back to obedience, if so be they would be led that way. But by the same prophets, He was anticipating the grace in which a self-ruined, helpless, and incorrigible people must finally stand, if blest at all.

John the Baptist then came, according to the prophecies which went before upon him, as the Voice, the Messenger, the Elijah, of Messiah. But he was also, in another aspect of his ministry, the *Witness of the Lamb of God*, and the *Harbinger of the Light of the World*; characters in which the prophecies had not foreshewn him, but which put him in company with the Messiah, or the Christ, as dispensing grace and salvation to Israel and to man, on the clear assumption that all would fail under the ministry that was then about to test them.

By the Lord's own personal ministry in the cities and villages of Israel, the same process is conducted. He is

testing His people by a proposal of Himself to them again and again; but He is likewise witnessing sovereign grace and redemption, knowing, as He did, that they would but again destroy themselves under the trial that was then being made of them. By His commission to the Twelve and to the Seventy, He was doing the same—for such ministries were but a reflection of His.

And it is thus to the end. The Apostleship at Jerusalem under the Holy Ghost upon the ascension of Christ was still testing the Jew; and the Jew failed under it again. But “times of restitution” and of “refreshing” were looked at in the distance. And then, in the last commission instituted by Him, that is, in the Apostleship of St. Paul, the good news of God’s salvation was sent to the ends of the earth, to gather the elect that they might act and shine as the Body of Christ; but in that same Apostleship He anticipates what the end of that ministry would be, and makes provision accordingly. This is seen in the second Epistle to Timothy; confirmed as that is by the challenge of the candlesticks in Rev. i.—iii.; and further, by the judgment of Christendom in Rev. iv.—xix.^a These thoughts may naturally introduce me to my subject—“Dispensational Truth.”

It has been said lately, “that the study of it has a withering effect upon the soul.” Let us try this by the light of the wisdom of God, as we get that light (where alone we can get it) in the word of God.

In the Epistle to the Romans, the saints of God are largely instructed in this character of truth. Chapters ix.—xi. is a very full writing on divine dispensations. But I grant that this is *after* they have been settled and established in *personal* truth—truth, I mean, that concerns themselves in their relation to God, as chapter i.—viii. shews us.

Now this would let us know, that there is a condition of soul, in which it would be unhealthy or unseasonable for it to make the ways or dispensations of God its study. And, therefore, if the person who has thus

^a I shall have to look at these Scriptures more particularly by and bye.

spoken be intellectually enquiring into such matters, Divine and precious as they are, before the question of his own relation to God is settled, I can suppose that he has found this study to be a withering of the soul.

And again, in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, I see the Apostle refusing to feed those saints of God with such knowledge as we are now speaking of. In the stores given him of the Spirit, he had "hidden wisdom," or "the wisdom of God in a mystery," and he would bring it out to the "perfect." But the Corinthians were in a bad moral condition; and he would, therefore, attend to them personally, rather than feed or entertain them with knowledge of God and His ways. And very much in this same way, I may say, the Lord Himself had already dealt with Nicodemus, the Rabbi, as we see in John iii.

So that again, I grant, there is a condition of soul, in which it would be unhealthy for it, nay, unwarranted of the Spirit of God, to make dispensational truth its study. And, therefore, if the person who has thus spoken be walking carelessly, I do not wonder at the soul withering if it be thus occupied.

But further, not only is the condition of the soul to be thus considered, as we make these things our study, there it also a *mode* of studying them which the word of God suggests, and which is to be considered also. I would instance what I mean. The Apostle, in tracing the dispensations of God, as I have already observed he does in Rom. ix.—xi., interrupts his progress through that great subject, and takes up for a time something that is strongly *personal* in its character, or in its bearing upon us individually. I mean in chapter x. of that wonderful Scripture. For there we listen, each one for himself, sinners as we are, to the voice of law and to the voice of faith, with suited admonitions, and encouragements, and teachings.

Just, I may say, as in 1 Cor. xii—xiv., where the same Apostle is unfolding *ecclesiastical* truth, as he is here unfolding *dispensational* truth; for there in like manner he interrupts himself by something deeply and solemnly

personal and practical, as we see in chapter xiii. of that Scripture.

So that I fully grant that the condition of the soul, and the mode of pursuing this study, have to be considered, while we are engaged in it. But, with these and kindred admonitions and jealousies, I find the wisdom of God does set us down carefully and continually to the meditations of His counsels and ways in His different dispensations; and that He has been doing so from the beginning.

Have we not proof of this? Surely the very earliest divine records, the patriarchal stories of the book of Genesis, teem with notices of God's counselled ways. In them He is issuing and telling out the end at the beginning. They are all of them true narrations—surely they are—and we are to acquaint ourselves with them as such. But is that all? Is it merely to tell me what happened so many thousand years ago, that they are written for me? Or, do I expect to find in them, disclosures of divine secrets, good for the use of edifying one in the knowledge of God and His ways? I have no doubt how I am to answer this. Sarah and Hagar are not merely a domestic tale, but an allegory. And I am full sure, the same book of Genesis, where I read that allegory, teems with kindred ones—some more, some less, rich and profound in communications of the Divine Mind in eternal counsels.

And then, Mosaic ordinances take up the same wondrous tale. The Jewish year, as xxiii. of Leviticus would tell us, measures, as in a miniature and in a mystery, the way of God from the day of the Exodus out of Egypt, to the day of entering and dwelling in the kingdom, the millennial glory of Christ and the creation.

Afterwards, the Prophets were instructed in those ways of God, and ordained to be the witnesses of them to all generations. I admit, there was another purpose of God in calling them out; and that was, to bring back Israel to their allegiance to Jehovah, if so be they would turn and repent. But the grander, and still more characteristic purpose of their ministry was this—to

declare the ways of God, according to His counselled wisdom in dealing with this world of ours.

And when we come to the New Testament writings, we find the same. Not only do certain parts of those writings make such truth their subject (such as Rom. ix.—xi., as we have already said), but such truth will be seen through parts and passages, which are more immediately dealing with other things. Dispensational truth is there called, by the high titles of “wisdom” and “mystery”; and well it surely may bear such dignities. And the Apostle prays that we may have spiritual understandings, to entertain and reach such themes. He tells us, that he speaks of such among the “perfect;” and he intimates that it was the shame and loss of the Corinthians, that they were not prepared for truth of that high quality. And in all this, great honour is surely put on such truth itself, and encouragement of a peculiar kind given to the study of it. And if we are in company with that Spirit, who wrote the whole volume, we cannot but be acquainting ourselves with it, as we go from Genesis to Revelations, throughout scripture from first to last.

But further.

Godliness is the religion of *the truth* (1 Tim. iii. 15, 16). Our character is to be formed by it, and our service defined and directed by it. The truth is the instrument and the standard. It is that by which the Spirit works in us and with us; and it is that by which we try everything. It is an *instrument* in the Spirit’s hand, and a *standard* in ours—and the truth that is this, is connected with the dispensations of God.

This is seen at once. Morals and the duties which attach to human relationships get a peculiar character from their connection with such truth—as, among other scriptures, Eph. iv. v. vi. would, in many particulars, illustrate for us. We are now in this dispensation to learn “Christ,” and be taught “as the truth is in Jesus.” What was holiness and service under one dispensation, ceases to be so under another. Actions change their character with the changing time. In order to *do* right, or to *be* right, according to God, we must “know the

time," as the Apostle speaks. The day was, when it was holy to call down fire from heaven to consume adversaries. But the day came, when the offer to do such a thing had to suffer rebuke—and that too, under the same supreme divine authority which had warranted, nay, inspired it, before. "Every thing is beautiful in its season"—and dispensational truth is the great arbiter of seasons, telling us the times and what the Israel of God and the Church of God ought severally to do.

At one time, the Lord put the sword into the hand of His servant; at another, He took it out of such a hand. Joshua and Peter tell me this. "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's," was a divine decree in the day of the Evangelists—but, in earlier days, every trace of Gentile rule in the land of the fathers was required to be clean blotted out by the zeal and strength of the children. It was not to be "God" and "Cæsar" then, but Jehovah's name was to be written on the land of the Twelve Tribes, and every stick and stone on it be claimed in the name of Jehovah of Israel, without a rival.

Places and ordinances, in like manner, change their character with dispensations. But this is more easily admitted or apprehended than the other. Mount Sinai where God came down, and which awful, consecrated spot, none were to touch but Himself, is now simply "Sinai in Arabia"—and institutions, which were once divine, and the dishonouring of which was death, are now but "beggarly elements," "rudiments of the world." Nay, more—they are even put in company with idols. (Gal. iv.). Thus, what was sacred at one time, becomes common at another; while, what was unclean once, is afterwards given for the communion of the saints. The serpent of brass becomes Nehushtan—a company of those who had been repudiated as "uncircumcised," becomes "a habitation of God through the Spirit."

Thus it is indeed so, that the character, the value with God, of actions, places, ordinances and the like, will change with changing dispensations. We are to decide on their godliness, their sacredness, their holiness, by

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“the truth.” And not only is it thus with changing dispensations, but with the changing phases and conditions of the same dispensation.

The harps of Israel, for instance, were struck in the days of Solomon, and songs were sung when Heman Asaph, and Jeduthun were in the land. But in the days of Babylon, the harps were to be hung on the willows, and the songs of Zion to be silent.

So, David, according to the mind of God, when his hunger and wanderings bespoke a ruined condition of kings among the people, would ask for the shew bread of the Temple for himself and his followers, though in the day of the integrity of Israel and their dispensation, it was lawful only for the priests to eat of it.

So again, this same David could not go on with a purpose that was right in his heart, as the Lord Himself said of it, because it was not right, or in season, *dispensationally considered* (2 Chron. vi. 8, 9.).

And thus we see, from a few samples out of many, that different stages or eras, or conditions of things, in one and the same dispensation, have their several and peculiar truth on which to ground their own peculiar claims, just as surely and simply as if they were different dispensations. The children of Israel under Joshua, and under the Judges, the Jews at home, the Jews in Babylon, the Jews returned, though all of them alike under the same covenant had very differently the claims and service of Jehovah to answer and do. “Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the Bridegroom is with them,” I may call to mind, in connection with this. When He is taken away, then indeed they may fast (Luke v.), and ought to fast.

Surely, I may say, every thing helps to shew us, that dispensational truth is the great, I say not the only, rule and manner of holiness according to God. We must “know the time,” for nothing is right out of season. “The children of Issachar were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.” (1 Chron. xii. 32). Scripture is full of instruction upon this principle, and leaves us at no liberty to judge the holy and the unholy, independently of “the truth.” Our

godliness, our piety, in order to have a divine character, depends on our knowledge of the truth, of times and seasons as they are with God, or according to his mind in His perfect and beautiful, though changing dispensations.

Here, however, let me say, lest I should be misunderstood, that I surely know there are rules of right and wrong, which are essentially so, by moral necessity so; and we are not to question their authority. Conscience is ever to be respected, though it must consent to be instructed. Nature itself has a voice at times, which we are to listen to. Surely I grant all this, though I speak of dispensational truth, as I do. For I again say, it is not the *only* rule and measure of holiness. And I will say more. I grant that all dispensations have certain *common* qualities, certain features which mark each and all of them. Let me dwell on this for a little.

In this world, which has departed from God through pride, and desire of self-exaltation, where a man would have been as God, if God appear and act at all, surely He will come in a way to stain the pride of all flesh, and bring back His revolted creature to glory only in Him.

And we see, accordingly, that it is thus, or on such a principle as this, that He has *always* acted in the midst of us, ever choosing the weak thing to confound the strong, that no flesh might glory in His presence, but that he who gloried, might glory only in Him. Let dispensations change as they may, or the scene shift as it may, this is always seen.

The Patriarchs were few, very few, in the land, and strangers there. They had not so much as to set their foot on, going from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another people; yet did He suffer no man to do them wrong, reproofing even kings for their sakes, and saying, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm."

When His elect became a nation, they were the fewest of all people, not worthy of a memorial or place in the records of the world; but they multiplied in spite of Egyptian task-masters, and then flourished into

a kingdom, and became the centre of the earth and its nations, in spite of all the enmity that surrounded them. Their victories were gained by instruments of the most perfect weakness; lamps and pitchers, ox-goads, jaw bones, and slings, doing the work of the army and the war-horse, the sword and the shield; while two would put ten thousand to flight, and trumpets of rams' horns pull down the walls of hostile cities.

And so, when times change altogether, when the nation is broken up because of its sin, and a ministry of grace and salvation goes forth, it is fishermen of Galilee, with their divine Lord, the son of a carpenter, at their head, that bear it abroad to the cities and villages of the land.

And so again, when the Apostle of the Gentiles comes to speak of ministry in his day, he tells us of the weakness and foolishness of God proving stronger and wiser than man, and points to the Church at Corinth as the witness of this same principle which we have traced from the beginning; that God was humbling the flesh or man, and making Himself our glory and boast (1 Cor. iii.) And he then lets us know, that he was acting on this same principle himself, as in company with God — for that he was among the Corinthians in weakness and in fear, as a minister of Christ, not using excellency of speech or of wisdom; but that, in the midst of this his weakness, he carried a secret with him, a glorious, wondrous secret, beyond the reach of the eye or the ear or the heart of the princes of this world. Gideon and Samson and David knew the victory that was before them in their day, though they went forth to the battle with lamps and pitchers, with the jaw-bone of an ass, or with a sling and a stone; and such an one was Paul with his treasures of light in the Spirit, though he was in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.

But this, rather by the way, I will now come again nearer to ourselves and to my subject.

In the New Testament, we have the present dispensation presented to us in three successive conditions. *First* — the Churches, as such, are seen under the pastoral care of the Spirit in St. Paul — as is witnessed by his

epistles to them. *Secondly* — they are challenged as candlesticks, or as churches under responsibility; and they are called to give an account of themselves, by the Son of man who appears before them in bright, burning, judicial glory — as we see in Rev. i.—iii. *Thirdly* — they are, as it were, lost in Christendom, no longer nourished and disciplined as churches, or challenged as candlesticks, but meeting as Christendom (the corrupted worldly thing in the earth which calls itself by the name of Christ), the judgment of the Lord — as we see in Rev. iv.—xix.

These are three eras in the story or progress of the dispensation, three phases which it bears successively.

I ask—Do not many things connected with Christian place and service and duty change with these changing aspects of our age, as they did in like changing eras in the story of Israel? From the simplest analogy, yea, from moral necessity, I might answer, surely. But a meditation on the two epistles to Timothy will determine this for us, and give us to know, that this is the divine good-pleasure concerning us.

The first of these two epistles contemplates the churches in the *first* of the conditions I have noticed above; that is, as under the pastoral care of the Spirit through the Apostle. The second of them contemplates, I believe, the saints in the interval between the *second* and *third* of these conditions; that is, between the challenge of the candlesticks and the judgment of Christendom — this assuming that the challenge has ended in conviction and dismissal or removal.

It may, however, be asked, is such an assumption warranted? Yes, I say, fully — because the challenge of His steward by the Lord, in each and every dispensation, at all times, and under all circumstances, has ever so ended; that is, in conviction and dismissal. Man in a responsible relation to God has never had an answer for his Lord. None, entrusted of Him with any deposit, have ever been found faithful, but He of whom it is written, “all the promises of God in Him are yea and in Him amen.” “Give an account of thy stewardship” has always ended in the stewardship being taken away

(Luke xvi.). If "God stand in the congregation of the mighty," if "He judge among the gods," the conviction will surely be pronounced, "they know not, neither will they understand, they walk on in darkness, all the foundations of the earth are out of course"; and the sentence will be delivered, "ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes" (Ps. lxxxii.).

So that the challenge of the Candlesticks in Rev. i.—iii. must be assumed to have ended in conviction and dismissal. And to establish this as a fact, I may refer to John himself in those chapters. He is a kind of Representative of the churches or candlesticks, and he is set before the Lord Jesus, the Son of Man, as one that was walking among them as a Judge, shining before John in bright, burning judicial glory. Had He appeared to John as Judge of *the world* John would have stood; for he had already learnt and taught that "we have boldness in the day of judgment." But He was standing among *the candlesticks*, and before John as representing them; and this was overwhelming. As one dead, he falls at the feet of such a Judge, such a glory. He came short of it—he had no answer for it—the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, would do for him as a sinner, but not as a steward—he is overwhelmed and falls at his feet as one dead. Just like Isaiah in like conditions; for when the Throne of Jehovah set itself before him in judicial glory for the challenge of Israel, the Prophet cries out: "Woe is me, for I am undone!"

All join in telling us what the end of this challenge must be. The steward is called to give an account of his stewardship, and it comes to pass again, as it had ever done before, that he is no longer steward. The stewardship is taken away—the dispensation is in ruins—and upon this, the long and dreary age of Christendom, of a corrupt and ruined dispensation, begins to take its course, as it is still doing in this our day, and, as it will do, in growing corruption of every form, and multiplied confusion in every place, till it end in the judgment of Christendom as the specially guilty thing on the earth, under the eye of God.

Now, the second epistle to Timothy anticipates, as I believe, and as I have already said, this interval—the

era between the challenge of the candlesticks (and their consequent removal) and the judgment of Christendom.^b

And let me here turn aside for a moment just to say, that we ought to acquaint ourselves with the mysteries of this dispensation, as the Lord Jesus told His disciples in His day, that they ought to know "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" (Mat. xiii. 11.). We ought to know the course, and the changes, and the successive phases through which it was to pass, for otherwise we cannot be duly instructed scribes to bring out of our treasures the old things and the new things of God, according to "His manifold wisdom."

To return, however, to the two epistles to Timothy, of which I was speaking, and to give them a little closer inspection, we may observe, that the first of them contemplates a *disciplined* house, outside of which the unclean were to be put; the second contemplates a *repudiated* house, outside of which (*in a sense*) the saints were to retire.^c

We know not what time intervened between the writing of these two epistles. It is likely that it was some considerable time; for Paul was at large, abroad in active ministry, when he wrote the first of them, but he was a prisoner at Rome, having already appeared before Cæsar, to answer for himself, when he wrote the second. And Timothy was at Ephesus, left there for the care and ordering of the house of God, when the first of these was addressed and sent to him; but we cannot say, with any certainty, where he was when he received the second.

But then, when we further look at the two, and com-

^b From the epistle of James to that of Jude (and this includes all which are not Paul's), the churches have receded from the eye of the Spirit; inasmuch as it is not churches, but saints personally or individually considered, that He is then and there addressing. It was otherwise in Paul's epistles. And this further prepares us for the challenge of the characters in Rev. i.—iii., and their consequent disappearing.

^c This is kindred, I may say, with the different state of things in Israel, as in the days of the Judges and at the Captivity. It was discipline of Israel under the Judges—it was repudiation of Israel when Babylon made them captive.

pare them still for a little longer, we find in the first of them that the house, under the care of Timothy, is called "the house of God, the church of the living God," and it is dignified, or had in honour, as "the pillar and ground of the truth" — while, in the second of them, the house contemplated (though not under the care of Timothy, not provided for by the Holy Ghost) is called "the great house," and, in its uncleanness and corruption, it is presented to us as having been formed by a lie, namely this, "that the resurrection is passed already."

These are strong contrasts.

Then again, in the time of the first of them, Paul is an authoritative Apostle; in the second, he is a deserted prisoner, in bonds to the Romans, and neglected by the saints; one who has to weep over the failure within, as well as to suffer the persecution from without.

And again — and this is an affecting fact — in the second epistle, Paul talks of *personal, family* associations, dwelling in the remembrance of them with evident relief and comfort of heart; as in chap. i. 1—5. But this, in a way full of interest and tenderness, lets us know that *church* associations were now disappointing him. For it was not after this manner he wrote in his earlier epistles to the churches. He had then his *kindred in Christ* to remember, and was not put back to *his associations and recollections in nature*.

And further still, in the progress of this same epistle, he speaks of Jannes and Jambres, likening the day which that epistle contemplates to the day of those adversaries. For Satan was then, in Christendom, purposing to neutralize the truth, by putting it into strange company or with evil admixtures, as he was doing with those magicians in the day of Moses, and thus blinding the conscience whether of the King of Egypt, or of the world.

What a premonition of that which has come to pass! What is Christendom but the scene of such admixtures as have neutralized the power of the truth! These and kindred marks shew us, that the dispensation was contemplated as under different conditions, as the Apostle was writing these two epistles. In the first of them the

Light in the Candlestick is fed and trimmed — in the second, the Candlestick has been removed.

But is this to be a surprise to us? Are we to think that the steward of God in this age would have proved faithful, since every other steward of His, from the beginning hitherto, as we have already seen, had been judged and set aside? The Church was to have been under her Lord, and in the Spirit, the light of the world, the pillar and ground of the truth. But she has become worse than darkness — a false beacon on the hill that has betrayed the traveller. But Adam, the steward of Eden, at the beginning, then Noah, lord of the world that now is, and then Israel, the husbandman of the vineyard in Judea, had already been found wanting. The King had failed ere this, the Priest, the Prophet — and now the Candlestick. It is a tale told again and again, the unfaithfulness of man as responsible to God, the Steward called to give in his account, and that ending in the stewardship being taken away from him. The house of prayer, so to speak, has always become a den of thieves.

But further, as to the course of dispensations. In each of them, while each was still subsisting, there has been separation after separation. See this in Israel, — Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah, were, each of them, returned captives, a separated remnant who, with their companions left Babylon. But the day came, the day of the prophet Malachi, when “they that feared the Lord” had to separate from the returned captives, and “speak often one to another,” as though they had been *another* Remnant (Mal. iii.).

So in Christendom. The Reformation, for instance, was a time of separation. But from the persistive, growing, and accredited corruption which still or again prevailed, further withdrawing or separation has again and again had to take place. The return from Babylon did not secure purity in Israel — the Reformation has not recovered it and kept it in Christendom. The emptied, swept and garnished house has not done for the Lord Jesus. He has found no habitation for His glory there. The unclean spirit, the spirit of idolatry, may have gone out from Israel, for there were no idols or high places in

the land after the return from Babylon; but Israel was not healed; for infidel insolence, the challenges of the proud and scornful, were heard there fearfully. And what else, I ask, if not this again, in the Reformation-times of Christendom? Read the prophet Malachi, and look around at the moral condition of things under the eye, and mark the wondrous analogies that there are in the stories of corruption and confusion in man's world, whether here or there, whether now or then, whether in Israel or in Christendom, whether in our day, or 2000 years ago. Is it not so?

When we come into the book of the Apocalypse, after contemplating the different aspects of the dispensation in the two epistles to Timothy, we find, as I have anticipated already, the Lord *challenging* and *judging*, challenging the candlesticks and judging the world—in other words, judging the candlesticks by setting them aside, judging the world by the avenging destructions of His own day.

In the first three chapters, we get the first of these actions. The churches, as candlesticks, or as in their responsible place and character, are summoned to give an account of themselves. The Son of Man walks among them in judicial glory. They had been previously fed and disciplined by the Spirit in St. Paul, as churches of saints, elect bodies, samples of the Bride of the Lamb; but here they are, as candlesticks, such as were responsible to shine as lights in the world, being set of God for that end, challenged and arraigned—according to which, the Son of Man begins His address to each of them with these words, “I know thy works.” And as we have already seen, that no steward has ever had an answer for God, when challenged to give an account of his stewardship, this challenge of the candlesticks must be assumed to have ended in conviction and dismissal.

But, at the close of such a meditation as this, what does my soul suggest to my conscience? O for that faith that converts statements into facts, and ideas into realities! Not that I question what I have written, but am so sure of its small influence and authority over me. I am conscious that it is one thing to have communion with

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truth, and another thing to have it with the Lord Himself. And I join in judgment with one who has lately written thus: "The *dispensational* aspect of truth must be secondary to that which is *eternal*. The exclusive or disproportionate study of dispensational truth has frequently engendered that knowledge which puffeth up to the weakening of the love which buildeth up. Often may be heard students on this lower form speak slightly of others much more deeply rooted in Christ than themselves, by reason of their non-acquaintance with theories which were often mere human speculations grafted on the truth of God." And he adds: "there is a possibility of being dazzled in the stead of being illuminated by light."

For myself, I desire thankfully to listen to these words, and to take the admonition and warning they convey to myself. They are seasonable and healthful.

 FROM THE GERMAN.

Observe, my soul, thy blessèd Lord :
 Whither He beckons—Go.
 Does He lead on ? Then hasten forth :
 Does He hold back ? Stand thou.
 When He commends thee, stoop thou low ;
 While absent, in Him rest ;
 When He chastises, then say thou—
 "I need it, Lord, 'tis best."
 When He, His truth, in blessèd grace,
 Now here, now there displays,
 Rejoice in this, that others learn
 His mercy and His ways.
 If He thy services demands,
 Spring up with glad delight ;
 Or, if He give thee not a word,
 Be still as in His sight.
 In short, O Lord, with my whole heart,
 From this day to the end,
 In scorn, or want, or sorrow deep,
 On thee I would attend !

Free Translation.

No. XIV.

THE TRUE DAY OF ATONEMENT.

ZECH. XII. 9—14, XIII. 1—9.

IN this brief passage, the Spirit of God has portrayed a scene of surpassing beauty and depth, comprising in a few words what the human pen (could it ever have handled it) would have taken pages to give expression to, and evidencing by every touch that the sketch is wholly divine. It is a scene of no human action or exploit; or even such as we find in other parts of Scripture where man is made an instrument in God's hand for His work.

What we have here presented to us, is a still deeper thing—that of souls already renewed, wrought on by God.

Thus, its interest is wholly moral and spiritual; it is the exercise of hearts acted on by the Spirit of God; a picture such as Scripture delights to delineate for us; and to represent the effect produced by such action in all its variety; be it that of joy, gladness, conviction, sorrow, or exercise as the case may be.

Here it is that of mourning and affliction, but affliction of a high order, because not produced by any fear of judgment or retribution; not impaired in its character by any personal anxiety; but in all the depth of that "godly sorrow which worketh repentance,"—that which the Holy Ghost produces, when it ploughs up the heart and conscience to an estimate of sin, in the light not only of holiness, but of love; when personal conviction produces sorrow of that truth and character, which though aware that all judgment is borne, melts the heart in the sense of what it has been toward love, goodness, perfection, which adores that love, that perfection, as in exercise towards itself, and while relieving it from all sense of condemnation, probes it in its deepest affections, and awakens its fullest adoration.

We know, or should know what this is in individual experience. We know that it is the Lord's way to deal with our hearts about their sin and failure, in the most searching manner, *after* we are at home with Him, and all sense of judgment or retribution is removed. We know that the purification of the affections is not only a subsequent, but in one sense a deeper and more painful process than that of the conscience. More painful to the heart that loves; though less anxious and personal, because it grieves, not in fear of loss or forfeiture, but in the presence of Love, which "heaps coals of fire on its head."

In order to bear this process, the affections must be prepared by the conscience being previously set at rest; but when all is passed through, *then* comes the power, the joy, the communion; the renewed bindings, and consecration of the heart to Christ, under a sense of what He is in His intrinsic worth, and what He is and has been to us amid all our sin.

All God's ways preserve such perfect harmony and consistency, that His education of the individual soul is but a miniature of His large dispensational plans. While the variety of His dealings with His people is boundless, the variety is only in means and adaptation; the aim, purpose, bearing and moral order is ever the same; so that be the circle large or small; be it an individual or a class, a company or a nation, the same lines can be traced throughout: the human heart is the same, and God's purpose to bring it near to Himself, never changing.

Here then is a scene of this character. We find a whole nation put into that crucible which God so constantly employs for individuals. It is not a work of conversion; *that* had all been gone through before. It is the probing and deepening of affections already renewed; the judging of sin in the light of a presence not unknown, but brought into closer proximity.

In view of such a scene, we naturally ask *when* and *where* does it take place? What is the subject of it—Who are the actors therein?—and the answer to each of these queries, greatly increases the interest of the whole.

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As to the first enquiry, we learn by ver. 9, that it will take place when "all nations which come up against Jerusalem shall be destroyed, which event we know will be the winding up of the last week of judgment, when Christ shall come forth for the deliverance of His suffering people, according to the details of Isaiah lxiii. and Rev. xix; so that this passage (ver. 9) at once carries us on beyond that era.

As to the second, we also learn that it takes place in *Jerusalem*, that centre of Jewish association and blessing.

Thirdly—What gives rise to the mourning, is the sight of *one* who "was wounded in the house of His friends" (~~Rev.~~ xiii. 6).

Fourth—The mourners consist of a body of people—a nation; every part, class, and moral element of which is expressed by four individuals, the history and calling of whom represent the different parts of the whole, as well as the implication of each in the perpetration of some great deed of blood, the remembrance of which awakens the feelings and emotions here described.

And what is the character of these feelings? It is "bitterness," such as is felt for an "only one," a "first born," a fit expression for Him, who was at once the *first, last, and centre* of the hearts of these convicted and sorrowing ones! . . . In a word, we have here, *the whole Jewish nation*, already quickened and delivered, but acted on thus by the personal presence, and a nearer view of Christ, their once rejected Messiah, and thus brought to estimate in their hearts and affections, what was the depth of their sin in rejecting and crucifying Him.

It is generally thought, that the action here described, is one of conversion;—that of a heretofore unbelieving people, renewed on the personal appearance of Christ, as their Messiah. But that *cannot be*. For what is "the nation"—the earthly people, at least what is owned as such by God—but the "remnant," the "residue,"—"the third part brought through the fire"—the "shaking of the olive tree," "the new wine in the cluster?" And this remnant we find in the Revelation, sealed for preservation *before* the week opens; *converted during* the week, delivered at the *close* of it, so that what is here

described, must be subsequent to the above events, and an additional outpouring of the " Spirit of grace and supplication, on the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem." And still *more*, we find here the whole nation, not only Judah; but Israel also, uniting in the mourning. Now we know that Israel, the ten tribes will not have returned to the land, as described in Isaiah xi. 11—16, until after the Lord has appeared for the deliverance of Judah, until the 1290 days, which we read of in Dan. xii. 11, have expired. The *whole* nation is here *most completely* represented by the four individual houses and their families, which are seen mourning apart. "The family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei (or Simeon) apart, and their wives apart. All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart." Here is an epitome of the nation in its moral standing—the king and the prophet, the priest and the people, all mourning individually, each of whom represents an element of the nation, and, taken together, comprise it in its civil, political, and ecclesiastical aspect. What other element could be found in the Jewish nation, besides the king and the people; the prophet and the priest? Each of these a representative of a component part of the whole, and each and all are brought before us here, "mourning apart" as God's way of teaching us that the whole redeemed nation, *without any exception*, will in that day be brought under this searching process.

But, still more—why, we may ask, are these four particular houses chosen as representatives of their class? Why is David chosen out of the kings, and Nathan out of the prophets, Simeon and Levi out of the tribes? Because the relation of the mourners here to the sin mourned for is not only national, but also *personal*. It is a case of *personal* conviction, and, therefore, it not only overrides in its individuality natural relationships (for their families are mourning apart, and their wives apart); but four individuals are introduced as repre-

sentatives, who had direct connection with deeds of blood, which were typical of that great iniquity, the remembrance of which had called this scene into existence, even the murder of Christ.

David had steeped his hands in blood-guiltiness by the murder of Uriah. Nathan the prophet had been sent of God to convict him of his sin. Simeon and Levi were guilty of the treacherous massacre of the Shechemites, for which Jacob had pronounced sentence and judgment on them on his death-bed. Both these acts pointed to that great deed of blood which Israel, as a nation, perpetrated; and in which every class—every individual shared in the sight of God. Mark! all these were not actually equal in guilt. Nathan's connection with David's sin was honourable; but he is here seen on a level with the rest to shew, that in the antitype all are on a par. The shaft of conviction has entered into every heart, and made the sin its own. The prophet is as guilty as the king—the reprover as the reprovèd—the priest as the people.

Simeon we may regard as representative of the latter, and so chosen on account of his guilty league with Levi. Truly were the priest and the people in league and co-operation in the murder of the Blessed One, and here Levi has a double connection with the moral, both on account of his history and his calling; the former being stained with blood, and the latter representing the priesthood; and both taken together, indicating that the Levitical priesthood is wholly defiled.

Caiaphas had unconsciously expressed the same fact when he rent his garments (a thing strictly forbidden for the high priest to do) at the moment that he accused the Holy One of blasphemy. And here Levi, the root and stem of the priesthood,—and Levi, the murderer, the son of Jacob, is brought before us as expressing, through Divine grace, the defilement of himself personally, and of his order in the presence of Him who had purged it away.

Thus, every element of the nation is brought under this searching process; the families apart, and their wives apart. All—all must pass through individual sifting

while they behold in Him their Messiah, a living witness of their sin, as well as of that sin being borne by Him.

What a day of atonement will this be!—that day which the tenth day of Tizri every year prefigured! On that day, year by year, from the time Israel was first established in the land, was every soul to be afflicted under the penalty of being “cut off from his people.” In the victims offered up on these occasions, the true Israelite saw the type of the one great sacrifice, and it was a season both of rest and of affliction; a sabbath, and a day of mourning. But here in the antitype, the restored Israelite sees not ceremonially, but in *reality*, his Saviour and Messiah. And not only so, but Him whom his own hands have pierced; and while it is a Sabbath too in the knowledge that those wounds had atoned for his guilt; it is also a day of great mourning and bitterness as applied by Him who had covered it all.

Here then do we find Israel assembled to this solemn fast, as we read in Zeph. iii. 19—“I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly.”

The feast of trumpets had ushered in the month; and now on this tenth day, the day of atonement, the nation is brought to humiliation in the presence of Christ, ere the full joy of the kingdom is established.

The mourning is said to be like that of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo. Now, the only place in which we find this valley of Megiddo spoken of elsewhere in Scripture, is in 2 Chron. xxxv., as the spot in which Josiah the anointed of the Lord was slain, and from whence arose a great mourning; “for all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah, and Jeremiah lamented for Josiah; and all the singing men and singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel; and behold they are written in the Lamentations.” It can hardly be doubted, that it is to this scene that the mourning which we have been considering in Zechariah is compared, and the fact of analogy being drawn between the two occasions, and their being linked together by the mention of the Valley of Megiddo, is additional

proof (were that needed), that the exercise of heart here described is that of the remnant of a future day, whom Jeremiah and his mourning company foreshadowed when they lamented their slain king in the same spot—even Jerusalem.

But deeper still was the probe to penetrate; and that, guided by a hand unerring as none other but Christ's could be! He is with these convicted ones in their exercise; and He draws out their hearts to a deeper and fuller view of His sufferings. To the remnant of an earlier day He had, after His resurrection, and in order to make His death and resurrection, hitherto unapprehended fully—a reality to them, shewn them His hands and His side, and said, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I *myself*." And again, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side." Here He is found in nearly similar circumstances, and with wholly similar purposes with regard to another remnant, (later, but in strict moral identity with the earlier one); and His own grace acting in their hearts causes them to enquire, "What are these wounds in thine hands?" And He replies with touching grace—"Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." This was as though He said, "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." Though at the same time, while wishing them to estimate all His sufferings fully in the light of a revealed presence; not to distance them from Himself, but to bring them *all the nearer*. Like Joseph, who, after saying to his brethren, "Come near unto me, I pray you," says, "I am Joseph whom *ye sold into Egypt*." But "be not grieved and angry with yourselves." So here, in a deeper and far more perfect measure, the gracious Saviour seeks not to distress or cast them from Him, while He shows Himself as wounded for their transgressions, and *that by themselves* "in the house of His friends;" but to bring them into a place of nearness, by giving them to know in their measure the fellowship of His sufferings and the power of His resurrection.

This sixth verse of chap. xiii. is in connexion with the

previous chapter, verses 1—5 being a digression consequent on the former, but still an interruption of the action of the scene, while ver. 7 goes on to shew how all this came about (as it were). “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow.” Here another aspect of Christ’s death is set forth. Not only is He “wounded in the house of His friends,” but He is smitten of *God*, and the testimony of being God’s fellow is given to Him in answer to His deep humiliation. Moreover these mourners are the “third part brought through the fire” (ver. 9) of whom God shall say “It is my people,” and they shall say “The Lord is my God.”

And now let us return to the digression, ver. 1—5, closely connected as it is with the above scene and consequent on it. “In that day, there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.”

Here we have *practical* cleansing, for those whose faith in God has been already established. The day of atonement was one of cleansing of the people—the holy sanctuary—the tabernacle—the altar—priesthood—and all; as we read (Lev. xvi. 30) “to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord.” In former times this had been type and ceremony; now, “in *this day*,” it is *actually fulfilled*. This is the “cleansing of the sanctuary” which the angel spake of to Daniel, chap. viii. 14. “How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice and the transgression of desolation?” etc. “And he said unto me — Unto 2,300 days *then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.*” Thus the whole Jewish people are established in the right relation with God. The effect of this humiliation and this opened fountain is detailed in verses 2—5. All evil is put away; idolatry and false prophecy is not tolerated, even in the closest natural relationship; the very mother shall thrust through the son whom she has borne rather than allow God to be dishonoured. Sin judged in the heart before God is easily dealt with in the walk.

Nothing now remained but the renewal of blessing and joy. This is expressed by the feast of tabernacles which immediately followed, and which figuratively

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extends throughout the whole of the millennium; the *seven days* and the *eighth*, expressing the perfection (comparative perfection) of that blessed period. It is not entered on in the Scripture before us, except implied in the established and enjoyed relationship of the people with God (ver. 9), and we only mention it in its moral connexion with the day of atonement, which is the grand subject this Scripture treats of, and that, not in the aspect of its place in the *order of events*, but the state of the nation's heart, and its exercises at this significant time. It is in God's hand and under His dealing, preparatory to the full establishment of the glory in their midst. In a word, it is not *position* we have here, but *condition*, and the consequences flowing therefrom. Israel is *assumed* to be a gathered assembly before God, and as such undergoes this process. The *Judah* part of it had gone through deep and varied exercises before, throughout the week. She had morally separated herself from the condition of things around her, — had been assailed by persecution, had fled and been sheltered from it, and in the end delivered by the coming of her Lord. The Israel portion, the 120,000 lost ones, who were also sealed (Rev. vii), had been restored to the land after the deliverance of Judah, and had taken their place, and *kept the passover* as God's people; and here they are all together—the 144,000—the nucleus of the earthly people. But more than this was needed for the exercise of their souls. They must learn more deeply the reality of the death of Christ. They had not passed through the furnace of martyrdom as had the other portion of the remnant now in heavenly glory, they must feel their sin in its reality; and, even as an earthly people be put into the crucible. Their experience was very much like that of the two disciples whom we read of in Luke xxiv., who “trusted in the one who should redeem Israel;” and still more, *who had known Him as deliverer and redeemer*, but had not by any means entered into the *depth* of His death and resurrection.

THEREFORE—this process! All Israel, without any distinction of large or small measure, is brought to a level of humiliation before God on this day of atonement; —

a day dispensationally necessary in the ordinances of God, and morally necessary as to His ways and purpose with the hearts of His people. Truly we may say that this brief portion contains a "body of divinity," and is a blessed picture of His unchanging dealings with *all* His own! The moral order is identical; quickening, deliverance, humiliation, practical cleansing, communion, and joy; and happy is the soul whether it be that of an individual or a nation who *experimentally* passes from the day of atonement to the feast of tabernacles.

Christ . . . hath once suffered for sins, the just [one] for the unjust,—that He might bring us to God (1 Pet. iii. 18).

The vicarious sufferings of Christ, even those which He endured as our substitute, are here referred to. The just One bore the wrath due to the many unjust. For God made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

These sufferings were concentrated and confined to the Cross. And yet it was not that which He endured as being nailed to the tree (by His own people's request, as well as by the wicked consent of the heathen ruler), nor the legal curse connected with the Cross (as it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree), which give that which was distinctively **THE** suffering which was exclusively His. The wrath of God, when God hid His face from Him, had a depth and a bitterness in it, which none but Himself could have borne up under.

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—"be not thou far from me, O Lord: O my strength, haste thee to help me" (Ps. xxii. 1—19).

"Innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities [those of others which He had made His own, and the wrath due to which He was then bearing] have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart faileth me" (Ps. xl. 12).

These, and such like portions, give us the just and divinely-perfect expression of what that anguish was which He found in the cup of wrath, when the wrath due to us was borne by Him.

It is well to remember, how all the life we have as Christians came to us from the rock smitten once, and but once. He gave His life a ransom for us.

He who was separate from sin was made the bearer of the wrath due to us sinners, that we might be graced in Him according to the righteousness of God.

N^o. XV.

EITHER IN ADAM OR IN CHRIST ?

I HAVE thought, on weighing the request of some as to a paper on the great principles of our being dead and risen with Christ, that a review of the progressive character of the blessing connected, in scripture, with it might be profitable for all. I have not the expectation of satisfying myself in what I shall present; but, as my purpose is to follow scripture, I may be able, perhaps, in the Lord's goodness, to help others.

There are *three* great points to consider as regards sin, (and I speak and purpose speaking entirely in a practical way)—sins actually committed—involving us in guilt as regards deeds done in the body; the principle of sin as a law in our members, sin in the flesh; and separation from God. But in this last respect there are two aspects, separation of heart, and judicial separation. Both must be remedied. The root of all sin is not in the lusts in which it is so hatefully shewn, but in having a will of our own, the departure of the will from God, the will to be independent, free to do our own will,—“who is Lord over us?” When we do thus separate from God—we must have something, we cannot suffice to ourselves, and we sink into lusts, lusts in which our will works. There is indeed another element which seems to me to have preceded both lust and will in man's fall, namely, distrust of God, which left him to the working of both. Happy, and confiding in God, he had no need to seek happiness in any other way; but Satan suggested to him that God had kept the forbidden fruit back from him, because if he ate it he would be as Elohim. By this, lust got entrance. All this has to be remedied, and remedied according to the glory of God. Is that remedy a return to the old estate of man, a restoration or re-establishment of his original paradisaical state; or is it that which is

the atonement in all its truth to know it thoroughly. No compassionate remembrance of weakness was there, no patience with poor dust and ashes as we are. God had no need, it was not the time to consider weakness as if the spirits should fail before Him, and the souls which He had made. One was there who could drink the cup, made sin before Him; and all the outgoings of the divine nature against sin were let loose against sin, as such, on one able to sustain it, that sin might be put away out of God's sight, according to that nature, that eternal blessing might be in righteousness before Him. Our special place must then be sought in His purpose. The foundation in righteousness is according to His nature. Not merely the putting away the old thing, needed for God's glory as it was, rebellion, and disobedience, and sin; but Christ by glorifying God entering as man into, yea beginning, the new thing the fulness of which will be in eternity, and in that the First-begotten from the dead, the Head of the body, the Church, and withal the First-born among many brethren conformed to the image of God's Son in Glory.

The Lord make us to know how truly it is all new. If permitted, I may enter more specifically into the prayer of the third of Ephesians, and compare it with that of the first. For the present I confine myself to a skeleton of the whole subject. The reader will find the question of righteousness, and the essential character of the new thing through death and resurrection, treated of in the Epistle to the Romans; the purpose of God, our place in His presence in Christ, and His dwelling in us to fill us with blessing, in Ephesians. Hence, as to doctrine, Romans does not go beyond resurrection; Ephesians, to ascension and union.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Col. iii. 1—3).

N^o. XVI.

WHO IS A WITNESS?

EVERY conscientious Christian desires to be a witness for his Lord; but no one can be a true witness, unless he understand the nature of the Divine interests in which he is placed;— what they are intrinsically in the mind of God;— and how they are compromised and misrepresented among men. I must know, so to speak, not only the Divine idea of the Church, and the constitution of it; but I must also mark how and where it has fallen; or I cannot be an intelligent witness, apprehending the instruction given in Scripture to guide and sustain me at such a time. How can I appreciate instruction offered to me when the Church is in a low state, if I understand not its low state? and how can I discern its low state, unless I know what it should be if it had continued faithful to the mind of God? I must, therefore, first understand what the Church was when in order; and then, observing the present contrast, study and acquire the principles and conduct which becomes me as Christ's witness in such circumstances.

The Church in order was composed:—First, of members gathered out of the world unto the rejected Lord, on whom they believed unto salvation. “The Lord added unto the Church such as should be saved” (Acts ii. 47).

Secondly, they neither had nor sought any rule of government but the Spirit's, owning Christ their Lord (See Acts xiii. 2).

Thirdly, they excommunicated from among themselves every one “called a brother” whose evil was open and *wilful* (1 Cor. v.).

Fourthly, they sought and received edification through the gifts of the Spirit, conferred individually (1 Cor. xii. and xiv.).

Fifthly, they assembled around the Lord's table expressing their link in spirit with Him through His death, and presenting their true place and character in the world (Acts ii. 42, 1 Cor. xi. 26).

Sixthly, they were awaiting the return of their Lord from Heaven (1 Thes. i.); they by faith sitting there together with Him (Eph. ii.)

Now, the Church's decline on the other hand is marked by several traits. First of all, it has lost the true idea of being the habitation of God *through the Spirit*. The presence and direct rule of the Lord is unthought of, and there is no apprehension that a Saint's *place* now is sitting together with Christ in Heaven. Its true position *with* the Lord and *for* God is either unknown or ignored. Then the want of care for one another which crept in—the purity of the assembly—began to be disregarded, and each to consider only for himself; and from this the responsibility of one to another as members of the same body, became practically forgotten (1 Cor. xi. 19—22.).

Another trait of decline is their turning aside from grace unto law (Gal. iii.).

Another, losing sight of the Lord's return, leaving their first love (Rev. ii. 4.)

Another, the admittance of many to communion without any careful scrutiny as to the ground of their adhesion, and thus the assembly, ere long became "a great house," because wood, hay and stubble were introduced into the building (2 Pet. ii. 4, 2 Tim. ii. 20).

And lastly, they abandoned spiritual ground and assumed natural ground in principle, as Core. They assumed to order themselves without the intervention of the Spirit of God (Jude, 3 John). Can any honest soul survey the present state of the Church, and not admit how these germs of evil, noticeable in the Apostles' days, have sprung up and borne *full grown fruit*; and, that the Church now, instead of being the pillar and the ground of truth, is a "great house" wherein there are vessels to honour and vessels to dishonour. The more I contrast the present state of the House of God on earth with its original and normal state, and the designs

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of God therein, the more must I seek and endeavour to be as His mind instructs me, emerging out of confusion and walking according to His mind. The first question is—Is it according to the mind of God, that in the present ruin of the Church there should be any testimony of His mind and purpose in the Church:—and secondly, if He enjoins that there should be, what is the character and what the duties of the witness? Now, it is plain to any student of the Scripture, that so long as any circle or dispensation of God is not set aside by Him, so long is it the first duty of His people, to own and support it; nay—the truer the heart of the disciple is to Him the more will he cling to and maintain the name of God in connection with that circle of interest with which he is engaged. How else could it be? If God have any distinct circle of interest into which He has called me; shall not I, according to my devotion to Him, own and support that circle of interest as He may enable me? Does it not both test, and distinguish the faithfulness of a servant, the extent and ability by which he supports and vindicates the purpose of God, when hope is almost gone At the last extremity, Daniel, though the lions' den loomed before his own soul, yet as he prayed, his windows were opened toward Jerusalem; the spot of God's interest on the earth. Now, as it is plain and natural, that the true servant of God could never be the less faithful amid abounding unfaithfulness, but, on the contrary, more devoted to do what few others might care to do; pressed in his spirit to maintain the mind and intention of God in the circle in which he is called, because he sees it to be little, or no where done; not that he is better than others, but in conscience and heart he feels called on to spend, and be spent, and the more so because of the wide spreading failure.

Let us look through Scripture, and gather up instruction as to the manner and action of God's servants at the declension of every dispensation.

Enoch, I may say, was the first witness in decline. By faith he was translated, and he walked with God three hundred years. The principle of true testimony is seen in him. He walked with God above the abounding un-

godliness. He was the more singular as a witness, because the opposition was rather irreverence and hard speeches of professors; but, this is just what marks the true witness when the declension is greatest. I must be transcendently devoted to my master's cause and interests.

Noah was a witness in decline; building an ark, and preaching righteousness in face of a whole opposing world, carrying out God's purpose and mind in the most remarkable manner when left alone, and men universally had no fear of God before their eyes.

Abraham was a witness; alone and singularly leaving all his natural associations in order to be for God according to His mind on earth. The failure of man on the earth was patent; therefore Abraham is called to walk apart from his natural associations, and follow God on the earth, and the more simply he did so, however great the opposition, the more distinct and assured was his own blessing; and the more truly did he maintain the mind of God on earth. When did the Patriarchs suffer and lose true blessing, but when they wandered from the path of separation and testimony to which they were called? and they always were restored to their blessings when they resumed their place as witnesses. When was Joseph the boldest witness? Was it not when encircled by ignorant and unbelieving Egyptians;—and then, too, was he, in the most manifest way, helped of God, and for God.

Moses in Egypt was a witness when he confronted every opposition offered to God, whether it was Pharaoh, or Jannes and Jambres (2 Tim. iii. 8.), and as the difficulty increased, he was on God's side, and rose up superior to it. The greater the difficulty and the danger, the better did this true witness stand forth for God and vindicate His name and purpose. Then again in the wilderness in the midst of his own people, he acts single-handed for God in the face of the people when they had transgressed; standing at the gate of the camp and exhorting every one who was on the Lord's side to rally round him, and consecrate himself "to the Lord, every man upon his son and upon his brother, that he may

bestow upon you a blessing this day;" and afterwards pitching the tabernacle without the camp that every one who sought the Lord might resort to it.

Caleb was a witness when he endeavoured to still the murmuring multitude of Israel, assuring them that if the Lord delighted in them, He would bring them into the land and give it to them (Num. xiii.).

Joshua was a witness when he warned, exhorted and declared before the assembled Israel, that as for him and his house he would serve the Lord (Josh. xxiv. 15).

Each of the Judges in their day and generation was a witness standing forth alone and single-handed to restore God's people to their proper moral position as the Lord's inheritance. The witness was the more distinct and remarkable according to the extent and greatness of the embarrassments in his way. To be a witness in the true sense of the word, he must stand forth superior to every shade of corrupt influence and antagonism. We see this in a very marked way in Daniel, and in Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego. The truth of God was denied, and they stood forth to maintain and vindicate it. No amount of difficulty or of adverse power deterred them; they shrank not from their responsibility, and were signally successful.

Ezra was a witness, not only leading back the captivity to Jerusalem and building the temple though encountering therein every difficulty; but so entering into the mind of God that he encountered his own people in their tenderest point, in order to deliver them from every association unworthy of God's people (Ezra ix. x.). It is among his own that the fidelity of the witness is best seen, because there it is most tested. I may very boldly and unflinchingly testify against an open enemy, but to oppose my own, and wound them in their peculiar sensitiveness must be, in a good man, the greatest test and proof of his fidelity,—yet, a true witness will meet one as firmly as the other, because it is for God he is acting and not for man.

Nehemiah was a witness. See how he feels for the condition of Jerusalem! Undaunted by the apparent wreck of God's interests on earth, broken up and piece-meal as

they may be, the true witness nevertheless connects himself with them, reckoning on the power of God to maintain his own interests so long as he is pleased to confine them to any particular circle. How Nehemiah pines to do the work! How he surveys the ruins and much rubbish by night, and yet how he builds, prays and suffers! A witness is essentially a martyr (the same word for both in Greek) because death alone can check his career or divert him from his course.

Mordecai was a witness. He imperilled his own life and the lives of all his people because he would not do homage to Haman the Agagite. Cost him what it would he would not forget God's fiat on Amalek, but maintain it at the risk of everything personal and natural. In how small a thing apparently can one be a true witness, and being such, can accomplish such wondrous results. It is when the most disguised inroad is made on the purpose and will of God that the witness necessarily makes his greatest stand, and therefore he always shapes his course according to the nature of the opposition levelled against the truth of God, so that if I know the nature and intent of the opposition I know the direction in which the witness will work, and vice versa.

Elijah was a witness when he confronted all the prophets of Baal and vindicated the name and power of God before all Israel.

Micaiah was a witness when, regardless of personal suffering, he announced the fate of the king of Israel according to the word of God, and demonstrated to the king how he had been deceived. Elisha was a witness when by the word of the Lord he maintained the relief there would be from the famine in Samaria, though the first man in the realm denied the possibility of it. The prophets were witnesses. What a place Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, and Habakkuk occupied in Israel! They stood singly for God and braved continually the enmity and reproach of their own people; declaring, on the one hand, the sin of the people, and on the other, the heart of Him against whom they sinned. I do not stay to adduce particular instances of their testimony, for the whole books of their prophecy are such. Haggai and Zechariah were witnesses, testify-

ing for God to the returned remnant either in encouragement or warning according to their need.

John Baptist was a witness. He came in the way of righteousness, and he maintained it against Herod the King; and his life paid the forfeit. It is not in one bold general line that the chief virtue of the witness is seen; it is in standing forth and giving issue with any principle, power or element which undermines or subverts the purpose and counsel of God at any given time. Our Lord was *the faithful and true witness*. He saw and confronted every departure from God, even the most subtle. His whole life from the manger to the cross was characterized by this. Whenever God is most successfully misrepresented, and by the most acceptable authority, there He stands alone to dispel and break up the false coverings that enshrouded it, and to disclose the simple and clear mind of God. Whether it be Satan in the wilderness, or in the midst of the Synagogue on the Sabbath day; whether it be before the assembled court of the Jewish Sanhedrim; or alone with the desolate thief on the cross, where Satan exulted in His death—in every instance He stood faithful the more manifestly for God, as God was most covertly misrepresented; and His truth therefore the more compromised.

The Lord tells His disciples “ye are my witnesses,” and we mark this in them; that where the truth of God is misunderstood or compromised they present an unflinching front to vindicate it and justify God. While the Church as a vessel of testimony or any dispensation was in freshness and power, there was a more defined and palpable line for the witness; the opposition was more open and discernible; but as the Church became corrupted and disorganised from within, the duty and service of the witness was not only more onerous, but his ability and competency to be a witness was the more severely tested. Unless he could grapple with the insidious and covert workings of Satan, now no longer an open enemy, but transformed into an angel of light, *through the members of the assembly*, he was plainly unequal to the task of a witness in that state of things. Now this is the cause of all the unfitness and inadequacy

which we mark in this day in so many earnest souls who desire to be witnesses. They do not see where the most deadly evil is working; for the deadliest evil is the one which feeds on the soul without detection; and so emasculates the truth of God, that in the end it is left with the pretence of truth which is worse than open evil.

It is plain, then, that the more fallen and disorganized the Church is, the more peculiar and trying must be the course of the witness. His one simple duty is to resist every inroad against the truth and counsel of God, and the more insidious and covered the attempt is, the more distinctly and openly to denounce and expose it. To be a witness of this order, the Apostle Paul instructs Timothy in his second epistle to him. In that epistle we find that the great point pressed on Timothy is clear and positive separation from profane and vain babblings. Previously he had been exhorted to hold fast the form of sound words; and again, "rightly to divide the word of truth," thus intimating that his great and constant work would be to separate the precious from the vile *in doctrine*. What a state of things for a servant of God! His chief and most difficult enemies from within, corrupting and misrepresenting the truth of God which they professed to maintain. What a place of trial and proof! In such a state of things, the witness must purge himself from the vessels to dishonour; he must preserve as distinct a separation between himself and them, as a man washed has between that washed off and himself. The word of these babblers spreads as a gangrene; it is not merely leaven, it destroys vitality, it "overthrows the faith of some." The witness is required to separate in the most marked way from them. His separation marks his faithfulness. It is the distinctness of his separation that proves him a witness. When things had come to this, he has no other way to shew himself as true to his mission but by separation, and the more unequivocal it is, the better witness he will be. A witness thinks not of trials and difficulties; he braves all, for he is on God's side; and he thinks not of them, however timid his nature, because he knows he is on God's side; he only thinks what is his appointed course, and on that, according to

his faithfulness, he proceeds. Here we see that when profane and vain babbling is suffered in the assembly, the witness has no option but to clear himself as clear as washing could do of any connexion or association with any such. The word "purge" implies the most stringent and practical separation. Leaven we find dealt with in another way (1 Cor. v.), but here, where the truth is compromised by teachers in the assembly, the witness is called not merely to denounce and repel such profanities, but in the most marked manner, and in his own person, to draw the line of separation between himself and them; and, having done so, to seek association with them who call on the Lord in a like spirit, as I understand "*pure heart*;" and he was not, so to speak, qualified for this "pure" company unless he had in this absolute manner purged himself. One little comprehends how essential and imperative it is on the witness to be valiant for the truth; and even when some in heart desire it, how often do we find that they are entirely unable to bear against the evil, and simply because they have not rigidly adhered to God's counsel in this epistle. They controvert and disallow, but they do not "purge;" and, consequently, they are not witnesses in such times. In general, we are more distressed by immorality of conduct than by false teaching; but this only proves our lack of spiritual sense. It is very evident that the Church at first had no list of those who should be excluded from the Lord's table; but when the spiritual sense was enfeebled the Apostle gave them a list, though not including in it murderers, heretics, or the more heinous crimes, on the presumption that their spiritual sense was not yet so low as that; but now, when profane and vain babblings are suffered in the assembly, the Apostle enjoins Timothy to purge himself from them; he cannot be a witness if he does not, nor is any one a witness who does not. Has God revealed His word and mind, and in such a way and at such a cost, even by His own Son; and can I, as a witness, suffer any compromise or misrepresentation of it? True, I ought to be gentle, and to "instruct those that oppose themselves," but these must be persons who will listen. The devil was a liar from the beginning, and he used every artifice to mar

and spoil the truth, and therefore the witness, at such a time as is here described, has a double work, subserving to the one end; one rightly to divide the word of truth, and the other to distance himself as positively and as openly as possible from every vain and profane babbler. And not only this, but a witness for these days must "turn away" from them who are described as walking after their own lust, while having the form of godliness but denying the power of it. Now, of these, a worse class arise, who, like Jannes and Jambres, withstand the truth. They are still worse than the babblers, the witness knows them, but abides in the Apostles' doctrine, and holds to the Scriptures as his authority. Nothing must discourage him in these disastrous times; the appearing of the Lord and his kingdom must stimulate and sustain him in proclaiming the word; ever urgent, convicting, rebuking, encouraging with all patience and doctrine. And when the time comes when they who now hear him will no longer hearken to sound doctrine, the witness is only to go on. And be sober, "exempted from false influences" in all things, bearing evils, doing the work of an evangelist; that is to say, as it appears to me; do everything from the very beginning, as it were, commencing anew, reverting to the foundation, and working from it. We are also instructed how a witness, even a woman, should act with reference to an unsound Teacher (2 John), not only not to receive him, but not to greet him. Surely, when one considers the place of exclusiveness which this word demands, we must feel how few real godly witnesses there are in this day. As a rule, is there any of this decided animadversion of unsound teaching in this day? Whoever does not practise it, is not a witness, for he does not meet the exigency.

In Jude, also, we are instructed that the witness's singular and distinct work is to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." Now, the very fact of such an injunction as this being needed, discloses the state of the Church. It is not (mark!) the faith *as it is held*, but, as it was *once delivered*, and it is not in an easy compromising way, but in an energetic decided way that he is "earnestly" to contend for it.

The "Beloved" are called on here to maintain *spiritual ground*, and thus as a matter of course, to be outside *natural ground*. Now spiritual ground in such a day as is here described, involves the necessity of scrutiny and patience with godly fear. Some are to be treated more leniently than others. "Of some have compassion, making a difference; others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." That is, they are to be rescued if possible, but with marked recognition and denunciation of their present place and standing. A true witness not only accords with and heartily accepts all this, stringent and trying as it must be to his natural mind, but, he hails the instructions as to what should be his course of action for meeting the interests of his Lord in an evil day; and never feels himself true to Him unless vindicating His name and truth on earth. How, in the face of these Scriptures, any one can defend anything bordering on indifferentism or neutrality is unaccountable? Any one who does so is plainly not a witness; and, therefore, I can only say, the Lord teach us and stir up our hearts to be for Him as His witnesses, while he leaves us here.

One word more. From Rev. ii. and iii., it is evident that to be a witness, in the state of things described there, you must be an overcomer (*νικῶντι*). And, this is self-evident; for, how could I be a witness for God against surrounding evil, unless I had overcome it? The blessings are for the overcomers; and the witness at such a time is one who testifies against the prevailing corruption, and is, therefore, characterized by the angel or messenger. This the whole assembly ought to be; but whoever is so, is one who, knowing the mind of the Lord, proclaims it and presses it on the conscience of his hearers. Calling on the saints to be overcomers, he presents the truth from which they have swerved, and which, if owned, would deliver them from the surrounding evil. He acts as the Lord's messenger, and, therefore, in keeping with His mind. And this puts him in the position of a pioneer, as well as a teacher, for the message which he delivers is to rally the overcomers, and to shew them the

way to take. And in order to deliver the message he must be on the vantage ground himself: a victor himself and one able to remove difficulties for those who would be victors, to shed the light of the truth on the scene in which they are, and thus practically to shew them their way out of it. Thus the witness must not tamper or parley with any thing which could obstruct the full free deliverance of the Saints. He must repel all indifferentism to the truth or concession to error; because the whole value of his service lies in the power and distinctness with which he maintains the truth, which alone can emancipate. He has one simple thought and work, and that is, to deliver simply and unflatteringly his Lord's message. If it be not his Lord's message, it is not fit for the time, and, therefore, not worth anything, for it is only his own; but, if it be, the care of the witness is to guard it, and to press it on souls. It is the truth — the Lord's mind — His message for the moment, which is his chief thought and care. The effects produced by this testimony he may watch, and they necessarily interest him, but only in proportion to their being genuine effects of the truth, for which he is responsible. To win adherents is not his aim; far less to compromise in order that he may; his business is with *the truth*. To it he stands, rejoicing in all who rally round and espouse it, not for his own sake, or even for their sakes, save as secondary, but because the truth the mind of His Lord, is resumed and maintained. He can never lose sight of the speciality of his service as a witness, and no consideration of effects must turn him aside from his post. Of course he consorts with, and finds help from the receivers of it, but the tie between them and him is the truth, and no lower interest. This is ever the duty and calling of a witness, and the greater the decline the more so, because there is all the more difficulty to maintain the truth without mixture; and to maintain it thus is what every witness for God in every dispensation is called to.

The Lord give us to understand how high and blessed it is to be His witnesses here in the evil day; and to estimate how great is the privilege to be entrusted with

His mind and truth. May we shew daily that *this is* our great care — and nothing short of it; not to gain adherents. Happy and encouraged we are by every true one with whom we can consort; he who walks in truth helps the other; but not *seeking* anything but the truth of which we testify; and which will in proportion as it acts on souls, unite them on the Lord's side, for He is Himself the only perfect expression of the truth, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

FRAGMENTS.

“A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's at his left” (Eccles. x. 2). In Psalm xvi. 8, we read — “I have set the Lord always before me: because *He* is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.” If, then, *He* be at my right hand, where must my heart be if I am wise? The fool's heart being at his left hand is that it is set upon other objects, not upon the Lord.

“Surely a serpent will bite without enchantment; and a babbler is no better” (Eccles. x. 11). A serpent bites because it is a serpent: it wants an *opportunity* rather than a provocation; it is its nature. So, whatever may be a babbler's pretext,—however pressing he may urge the reason to be, why he “ought” to speak his mind, or “discharge his conscience,” with respect to others' failings, he babbles because he is a babbler. “God is not mocked,” and knows how to distinguish between the exercise of a Christian grace, and the indulgence of a carnal propensity, if I do not.

“The labour of the foolish wearith every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city” (Eccles. x. 15).

It is written (Prov. i. 7), “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge”; and we may surely say, that he who is actuated thereby will find *in Christ* all that his conscience or his heart can crave after. He is the “*city of refuge*,” where the soul finds not only shelter from the avenger of blood, but a settled and abiding habitation of security, sustenance, and rest. “Fools despise wisdom and instruction,” seeking for these things elsewhere; but their labour can only weary and disappoint.

In us, the *power* of hope consists in Him being our hope; in the hope in us being—First. The sympathy of His hope (1 Thes. 1—3, and Rev. xxii. 20); Secondly. In the sight of God and our Father. The joy of hope in us is (John xiv.), that He is so occupied with the Father's thoughts and purposes that He must come again for us the children.

[HYMNS.]

I.

OH JESUS, precious Saviour,
 Oh when wilt Thou return ?
 Our hearts with woe familiar,
 To Thee, our Master, turn.

Our woe is Thine, Lord Jesus,
 Our joy is in Thy love ;
 But woe and joy all lead us
 To Thee in Heaven above.

We ponder the long story
 Of this world's mournful ways ;
 We think on holy glory
 With Thee through endless days.

We see God's gracious order
 All spoil'd by man below ;
 See all around disorder ;
 Meek hearts beset with woe.

Where'er we ope' the pages
 In which Thy wondrous word,
 Man's path through varied ages
 Is given us to record,

Of failure, ruin, sorrow,
 The story still we find ;
 God's love but brings the morrow
 Of evil in mankind.

To Thee we look, Lord Jesus,
 To Thee whose love we know ;
 We wait the power that frees us
 From bondage, sin, and woe.

We look for Thine appearing,
 Thy presence here to bless ;
 We greet the day that's nearing,
 When all this woe shall cease.

But oh, for us, blest Saviour,
 How brighter far the lot
 With Thee to be for ever,
 Where evil enters not.

Hymns.

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To see Thee, who'st so loved us,
 There, face to face, above,
 Whose grace at first had moved us
 To taste and know Thy love.

With Thee, O Lord, for ever,
 Our souls shall be content ;
 Nor act, nor thought, shall ever
 Full joy with Thee prevent.

Thy Father's perfect favour
 Our dwelling-place shall be,
 And all His glory ever
 Shine forth on us and Thee.

O come then soon, Lord Jesus,
 In patience still we wait ;
 Await—the power that frees us—
 Our longed-for, heavenly seat.

D.

II.

SING without ceasing, sing
 The Saviour's present grace ;
 How all things shine
 In light divine
 For those who've seen His face.

He's gone within the veil ;
 For us that place He's won ;
 In Him we stand,
 A heavenly band,
 Where He Himself is gone.

There all 's unsullied light,
 My heart lets in its rays,
 And heavenly light
 Makes all things bright,
 Seen in that blissful gaze.

Such, here on earth, I am,
 Though I in weakness roam ;
 My place on high,
 God's self so nigh,
 His presence is my home.

Hymns.

My heart is filled with bliss,
Heaven's own eternal joys !

My soul at rest,
Of peace possessed,
That world its strength employs.

Thus in divine delight,
Of love so richly given ;
God's works below
With beauty glow,
His hand, His grace, I own.

And stayed by joy divine,
As hireling fills his day,
Through scenes of strife,
And desert life,
I tread in peace my way.

That way is upward still,
Where life and glory are ;
My rest's above,
In perfect love,
The glory I shall share.

For ever with the Lord,
For ever like Him then,
And see His face,
In that blest place,
My Father's house in Heaven.—D.

III.

REVEALER of the Father's love,
And sharer of His Joy !
Be Thou, until we meet above,
Our way-worn hearts' employ.

For Thou, for us, wilt surely come,
And we to Thee ascend ;
And then our conflict will be done,
And all our sorrow end.

Yes ! we shall meet in heaven above,
Where all Thy glories shine ;
Thou God of peace and boundless love,
The glory all is thine.—P.

N^o. XVII.

SCRIPTURE DIFFICULTIES.

1. MARY.

- His mother and His mother's sister, } John xix. 15.
 Mary, the wife of Cleopas and Mary Magdalene. }
 Mary Magdalene and Mary, mother of James and Joses. Matt.
 xxvii. 56.
- Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. Matt. xxvii. 61, xxviii. 1.
 Mary Magdalene and Mary (mother) of Joses. Mark xv. 47.
 Mary Magdalene and Mary, mother of James. Mark xvi. 1.
 Mary Magdalene and Mary, mother of James the Less and Joses.
 Mark xv. 40.
- Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary (mother) of James. Luke
 xxiv. 10.

JAMES.

- Jude, brother of James. Jude 1.
 James, son of Alpheus. Matt. x. 3.
 Judas (brother) of James. Luke vi. 16.
 James, son of Alpheus. Mark iii. 18 ; Luke vi. 15.
 James and Joses and Judas }
 And Simeon, Christ's brethren, } Mark vi. 3.
 And His (Christ's) sisters. }
 James, the Lord's brother. Gal. i.

In comparing these statements, there cannot, I think, be any doubt that Mary the mother of Jude, James, Joses, and the other Mary—constantly associated with Mary Magdalene—are the same; nor that Mary the wife of Cleopas is also. Jude is brother of James; and James is son of Alpheus, alleged to be the same as Cleopas (קלפס) ^(ש); and James (Jude), and Joses, sons of Mary, are Christ's brethren; and are sons of Mary, I suppose, wife of Cleopas. Thus the identity and connection of persons is evident. Mary, called the other Mary, the constant companion of Mary Magdalene, was wife of Cleopas, and mother of James, Jude, Joses, and Simeon; and these were immediate relations of Christ: whether by Cleopas or Mary does not appear. This does not affect the question as to Mary's having a family after the birth of Christ, nor her living with Joseph; of which, I think, Scripture leaves no doubt. But, further, this would determine, that that James the Lord's brother is the Apostle, James the Less; because James, the Lord's brother, is brother of Jude (Mark vi. 3). And James the Apostle is Jude's brother (Luke vi. 16), and son of Alpheus, and I think from the place James holds in the Acts and in Galatians, it is the same James and not another. For in Galatians, it is "James the Lord's brother," and "certain came from James;" and in Acts, "tell it to James," and James presides, in a sense, in Acts xv.

It would have been quite incongruous to introduce the Lord's name in an Epistle; whereas Jude, the brother of James, was the distinctive name he had acquired in contrast with Iscariot (Luke vi. 16).

The absence of all addition, in the case of James, is the natural proof of his being the well-known James.

2. In 1 Kings xv. there is certainly confusion comes in after Abijah. It is some question to me if Maachah was Absalom's daughter or granddaughter. If Absalom's daughter, allowing only five years from Absalom's death, she must have been six years old at David's death. The common chronology gives eight. Rehoboam was a year old when Solomon began to reign; so that she was five or seven years older than Rehoboam, if Absalom's daughter, supposing her born within a year before his death, the shortest time possible.

Solomon reigned forty years, this makes her forty-six or forty-eight, at Rehoboam's accession; he reigned seventeen; hence she was at least sixty-three or sixty-five at Asa's accession. It is possible she may have been his grand-mother, as in Chronicles it is not said his mother was Maachah, only the idol referred to. If 2 Chron. xi. 20, 21, 22, be directly connected, it is clearly so. The mother's place was a kind of official one in the East, not the wife's, and still is. There remains 2 Chron. xiii. 2, which if not a mere mis-reading, must be compared with xi. 20—22; and if the same Abijah, raises further the question if Absalom or Abishalom is Absalom the son of David. The fact of 1 Kings xv. 2 and 10, shews that something is to be sought out; some key I mean to it. The author of Kings and Chronicles cannot contradict themselves (nor each other), in the same passage and both on the same point.

I think it evident that it was not Absalom's daughter. It might be his granddaughter, but it is very doubtful. Maachah may have been Abijah's grandmother. But, there seems little doubt Abijah's mother was of Benjamin. It may be, she was called Michaiiah and Maachah, as the change of name is the commonest thing possible. Uriel and Abishalom were both known, one Uriel I suppose her father, the other a well-known ancestor. So Abihail, 2 Chron. xi. 18, is evidently only a descendant of Eliab's. It is thus, though I doubt it, that Maachah may be a granddaughter of Absalom's, and daughter of Uriel. What adds to the probability of this is that Absalom was son of Maachah, so that the name may have been kept in the family, 1 Chron. iii. 2. Uriel was a Benjamite, and called his daughter Michaiiah, Maachah was given in Judah, where David's family connection was naturally kept up.

N^o. XVIII.MUSINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE
HEBREWS.

CHAPS. I. AND II.—The Epistle to the Hebrews strikingly illustrates one quality of the Book of God. It may be read in various lights; yet no one ray interferes with another. In six or seven ways this Epistle could be read with the greatest ease. I will specially look now at the first two chapters. It opens the heavens to you *as they now are*. How blessed is the introduction of such a thing to the heart! You look up, and see the physical heavens above you; but it is only the superficial heavens you see. This Epistle introduces the inner heavens to you, and not in a *physical*, but in a *moral*, character. It introduces us to the glories surrounding and attaching to the Lord Jesus, now accepted in the heavens. We are thus enabled to see the heavens in which He has sat down; what He is about there, and what will succeed those heavens. When the Lord Jesus was here, as we learn in Mat. iii., the heavens opened to get a sight of Him. There was an object here, then, worthy the attention of the heavens. He returned — and the heavens had an object they had never known before, — *a glorified man*. And now it is the office of our Epistle to show us the heavens as the place of this glorified man. And as in Mat. iii., we get the heavens opened to look down at Christ *here*, so, in the Hebrews, you get the heavens opened, that you may look up at Christ *there*.

But supposing you ask, Is that all the history of the heavens? Have *you* gone to the end? Indeed, I have not. In the 4th and 5th chapters of the Apocalypse, we get the heavens preparing for the *judgment of the earth*. Then, at the close of the volume, I find the heavens not only the residence of the glorified man, but of *the*

Apostle; but the day came, when he had to begin afresh with them from the very beginning. "My little children, of whom I travail in birth till Christ be formed in you!" There was excitement without a foundation of truth; and, when mischief came in, the poor Galatians were next door to shipwreck — and this epistle is a witness to the same thing. The Hebrew saints were unskilful in the word. But we must be fortified by truth. A state of quickening wants the strengthening of the truth of God.

And now what shall we say! O the depth of the riches!—O the height of the glory!—the profoundness of the grace!—the wonder of the wonders!—God unfolding Himself in such a way that we may well cover our faces, and while we trust Him in silence, and love Him with the deepest emotions of our souls! But some of us can surely say, "My leanness, my leanness!"

BRIGHTNESS of eternal glory,
 Shall Thy praise unutter'd lie?
 Who would hush the boundless story
 Of the One who came to die;

Came from off the throne eternal,
 Down to Calvary's depth of woe,
 Came to crush the powers infernal—
 Streams of praises ceaseless flow!

Sing His blest triumphant rising,
 Sing Him on the Father's throne;
 Sing—till heaven and earth surprising,
 Reigns the Nazarene alone.

* * * The above article is from notes taken at reading-meetings. Sickness prevents the contributor from finally correcting them.

There are some who because the Epistle is not descriptive of us, as the Church, see nothing in it for us. Truly it is *NOT about us*; it is only about Christ.—*Editor.*

No. XIX.

DEATH IS OURS.

“ALL things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s” (1 Cor. iii. 22 and 23).

A friend lately used to me this expression: “*Death is a terrible monster; I hate it.*” My soul replied: “What and where should I be, but for that terrible monster of *your* hate.” Death is mine in the highest sense; not merely in the lower sense, that, as it is appointed unto men once to die, *I may* have to die; but, in the highest sense, Death is mine; for death itself, in the divine use of it,—in the way God has used it, has been, and is marvellously mine, my own: my boast and my song.

And to what can I turn first, when speaking on this subject, so well as to the blessed Lord’s death?—“The Lord’s Death” (1 Cor. xi. 26); “the death of God’s Son” (Rom. v. 10); the death of “the Prince of Life” (Acts iii. 15) are expressions that may well usher in the wondrous roll. “I am the Resurrection and the Life,” said the Lord. But He could not in His Own Person be The Resurrection without death first; nor, according to divine counsels, was He to take openly the place of being the Life, the last Adam, the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. xv), without first dying... “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John xii. 24). “Therefore doth My Father love me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No one taketh it from Me; but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father” (John x. 17, 18)... And all through his course He could say: “I

have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished" (Luke xii. 50). For the goal of His course who had come, as Son of God, down from the divine glory as displayed in heaven above, to become the Son of Man here on earth, was "death, even the death of the Cross" (Phil. ii. 9). Marvel of marvels, and wonder inexplicable to human reason! The Son of God,—He who created all things, and upheld all things,—The appointed Judge of quick and dead, was, as Son of Man, crucified through weakness (2 Cor. xiii. 4)! And never did His divine glory shine out more brightly than then. A creature, however high, has no right to leave the sphere assigned to it,—its own proper sphere. The Son of God had no such restraint upon Him. He had the right to be worshipped in the heavens, and the right, if He would, to be hanged as the Son of Man on the cross. Creature-glory consists in honour put upon it. Divine glory shewed itself here in His divesting Himself of all external glory as attached to sphere or place, emptying Himself, that He might show the perfect expression of sympathy with His Father's mind. He was one counsel with Him. He would show it in death, the death of the cross. And death, the wages of sin to Adam the first, was, in the case of the last Adam, the Son's payment (in love, how free) of tribute to divine counsels, the expression of the perfect sympathy of the Son of God as Son of Man with the Father's vindication of His own character against the world and Satan, and the whole fallen human race. That cross on Calvary issuing hereafter in the all-pervading glory of the Lamb that was slain, alive and at God's right hand—shews (blessed Lord!) death, death in its most awfully magnified expression, even Thy death, to be mine, my very own,—my boast, my glory. If none other claim it, yet do I: monstrous, but not terrible; nor to be hated, for it was *Thy* death.

2ndly. But I must remark, further, that it was thus that the glory of God, as *the God of Resurrection*, was brought out to light. Eden, with man in innocency, proclaimed the eternal power and godhead; and after the Deluge, in the Rainbow Covenant, the sign of the long-

suffering patience of God to a world in wickedness, came out to light. But Eden and Innocency I have lost; and mercies to me as a sinner in time will not answer the question of sin, nor save me from the wrath to come. But the death of the Lord Jesus was the lowly portal through which flowed forth the light of the glory of God as the God of Resurrection, and of a Resurrection from among the dead. 1st. He that died became Lord of All, in the wide universe; and should sit upon the throne judging, in God's own proper eternity, all men, raised again, at the general resurrection. That glory is certainly His as Son of Man. "For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the grave shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (John v. 28, 29). Awful thought, to be brought up by the irresistible power of the Lord to answer for all deeds and thoughts done in the body, in this life. But, 2ndly, blessed be God, if the Light of the great white throne is seen, we know also that there is, in Him who will sit thereon and judge, also a first resurrection. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead [morally dead in trespasses and sins] shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself!" (ver. 24—26). Save as a result of His death, it never could have been written: "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this, the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 27, 28); and the unfolded results, in circumstances of that lowly death are the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness—for which we, according to His promise, wait (2 Peter iii. 13).

God raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead (Rom. iv. 24). "By Him we believe in God, that raised Him up

from the dead, and gave Him glory that our Faith and Hope might be in God" (1 Peter i. 21). O what should I be, or where should I be, as to salvation, as to trust for present deliverance, as to Hope—if the glory of God, as the God of Resurrection, had not been brought out to light; and how has it been brought forth to light, but by the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from among the dead; the fruits of His death, how precious! 3rdly. But not only is there light, the light of Life, found in His death; but, more than that, this light, so found, is a light in which all the dark things get exposed, their true character discovered, their power neutralized; Satan, the world, man, all are made manifest by the death of the Lord Jesus; and their power set aside, too, to faith. It was thus Satan was met, nullified, and his power set aside, "For as much, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14, 15).

It was his death to which the Lord referred when He said, "Now shall the Prince of this World be cast out" (John xii. 31). And this world has its judgment in that same death; "Now is the judgment of this world,"—judgment made good in the blessing, too, of the believer, as Paul said, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14). It is there, too, that flesh, with the life that is in the blood, gets its measure and true stamp. When He gave up His life a ransom for us, He showed the perfection of flesh and the vileness of flesh in one and the same act. In Himself, he was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sin. Justice could find nothing in Him to find fault with; He was the only one that could not justly be forsaken, on account of what He Himself was. In Him all was perfect. He could bear our sins in His own body on the tree. But in that which He underwent on the cross, in death, there was the expression, from men who did it, of their being at enmity with God and under the

power of Satan, and also, in the forsaking of Him by God at the same time, there was God's measured estimate of our sin. The Just One—Substitute for the many unjust—took the cup of wrath at the Father's hands; and, in crying out, "My God, My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?" gave the true measure, divinely full and perfect, of what fallen man is in the estimate of God. With mine eye on Him I cannot say, "Death is a terrible monster. I hate it." His death—death in the fullest expression of it—death as He only could present it, is most precious and marvellous. God is a God of wonders. And to wonder at Him well becomes a creature in His presence. I wonder at Him; yea, am lost in wonder when I think of death, the Lord's death; open cleft through which all the glory of the God of Resurrection has poured; has streamed down upon flesh, the world, and Satan, and made me, even me, to be able to say, "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." 4thly. But if the spring-tide of death—death in itself—there, where it is worst, and has told forth its awful power, between God and the Son of Man as the Substitute, told its tale in a way that leaves the believer blessed in the hearing of it, yet conscious that there is an eternal, a divine height and depth in the subject which passeth all understanding; what shall we say as to the waves or the ripples of death? Surely faith says, "In all things more than conquerors, through Him that loved us" (Rom. viii. 37). I am Christ's, and Christ is God's. Sheltered in the Rock that was smitten, the dark shadow of death is not to rest upon me, upon my conscience, upon my thoughts:—

Christ died! then I am clean:

"Not a spot within."

God's mercy and love!

"Not a cloud above."

'Tis the spirit, through faith, thus triumphs o'er sin:

"Not a cloud above. Not a spot within."

The Son, now upon the Father's throne, in the glory which He had with Him before the world was—eternal, without beginning,—has made me, through his death,

as free from all the guilt that did rest upon me, as He Himself was always personally free from guilt. God had never anything against Him. He has now, through that death, nothing against me. He always found His good pleasure in the Son of His love. Wondrous, but true; He, even now, finds His good pleasure in me in that Christ.

I count myself His purchase; put apart by Him for His own glory. He took occasion of the circumstances of the fall to bring out the compassion and mercy and grace of God; and showed, amid the ruins of the first creation, His own competency to deal with God about the question of sin and Satan; of the fallen world and of man. His work of humiliation is ended; but how does it all tell of His personal competency to meet every question.

Gone on high now, He uses our position, in the wilderness that lies between an Egyptian world of bondage and the glory, as the occasion to teach us Himself and to teach us our own selves, too. And shortly, when it is glory come, He will Himself put the finishing touch to the work, and show out the faithfulness of His love to the people of His choice; and this He will do at least a thousand years before the new creation shall be put forth as the expression of His competency to *finish* that which He takes in hand. And to what am I set aside, individually, but to be an occasion in which, according to divine wisdom, the personal glories of the Son as being the Resurrection and the Life are to find their expression. He has given me life, eternal life, a life which He Himself is as He is in resurrection and ascension-glory. If, ere He rises up from the Father's right hand, He call me; I die, but I know that the "I die" means only "to all that is mortal," to all that is corruptible down here, cease for ever, and, according to God, to have connection with any such things as mortality or corruptibility; and, absent from the body, am present with the Lord—there to await *with Himself* that time when He shall put forth His glory as the resurrection, openly put it forth, and my body shall then rise a glorified body to meet Him in the air. If He calls me not until He has risen up,

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then I shall never see separation of body and soul at all, but His life-giving power, which has already given to my soul a life, in the power of which I could cast off a body of death, shall fill all up with life, and push mortality and corruptibility out of my body, without its ever being separated from the already life-possessed soul. But is absence from pilgrim scenes and from a body of sin—if changed for presence with the Lord, and being “at home”—is this *death*? Unbelief speaks oft as if it were so; just as if the new place Christ has opened, in which it is far better to be, so far as we are concerned, were little—as though the curtained character of the intermediate state of which Hezekiah spake (Is. xxxviii.) still continued, now that light and immortality have been brought to light through the gospel. With a conscience set free by faith in a risen and ascended Lord, and with the flow of joy which the ungrieved Spirit of God gives to a heavenly man who is a Son of God, what is the fever of disease? what the clammy feel of the body when *its* life is flickering in the socket?—the eternal life within centering the heart and mind the meanwhile upon the person of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself on high. Yes; but there is a coffin before us, and there rests the body of an aged and devoted Saint, happy in the Lord among us and full of love to His saints, and now gone! Ay, but gone whither? To the Lord Jesus. Is He not worthy to have His saints with Him? Has He, think you forestalled God’s counsel in calling this one “home,” home to Himself,—Himself the “Home?” Not so, the words “if ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I,” may be quoted here as true in this case also. Or have we no love for those that go; no love save for our own selves; no willingness to see *them* blessed, if their blessing cost us any privation? It is vile, wretched selfishness, which forgets God’s joy and Christ’s joy in welcoming to His presence a soul that leaves us; which hinders, too, our thinking of *its* great gain, and keeps us absorbed with our own selves and our loss. Well may you who, thus full of your own selves, forget God and Christ and the friends you profess to have loved; well may you be indignant

against your own selfishness and your own narrow-hearted love of self. But there is a jealousy of love in God. He wills that your hearts should know the sufficiency of Christ to satisfy you amid all the writhings experienced in the wilderness. He wills, in that jealousy of love, that you should think of Him to whom He has espoused you, and of His joy over those that sleep in Him; and that you should learn how to think and feel according to that sphere in which Christ is now as its very centre.

What can I tell you about the blessedness of the departed? I can only answer this by another question: What do you know of the attractiveness of Christ; of the blessedness of being *with* the Lord? For if self and selfishness fill you, why, then, *they* find *their* aliment in this world; and if you are full of yourself, of your likes and dislikes, your gains and your losses, you will not profit much from the doctrine of the blessedness of those absent from the body and present with the Lord. It does not suit you in your selfishness, and you may not like to be challenged as to whether you find more attractiveness in Christ than in all else. "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise," was the Lord's blessed word to the converted thief. What did the poor thief know of Paradise, or its blessedness? Probably nothing at all. But he had just made a new friend in One whose fellow there was not to be found. Faith had revealed to him the open and attracting heart of the blessed Lord. His faith had opened the thief's heart to holiness and to confession, and to trust in His Judge, and had drawn into it the sweetness of the promises of inseparableness from that Saviour—"Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise" (Luke xxiii. 45). "With Him;" that was enough. "Absent from the body, and present (at home) with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 3) was the *far better* which Paul knew as to the state of a departed saint. Ay, and of the glory; what description comes up to it, like that, "And so shall we ever be *with* the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 17). But this throws us upon the question of the measure of our knowledge and appreciation of the Lord Jesus Christ? Those who know and make much of Him

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will find much in the thought of being *with* Him. They have His Spirit, and they walk in it; and to Him there is for a saint nothing like "presence with the Lord." If self rules in us, we must have circumstances and details, so as to be able to pick up what suits man when thinking of himself and his circumstances.

But, if you love a saint that has just gone on high, like Stephen, let the thought of the joy of the one you love, who did appreciate the Lord's presence and the taste of it, have some small place in your heart and mind. Happy now is that one in the realized presence of the Lord. If you loved, let the present blessedness of that one you loved, now in the presence of the Lord, counter-balance your sense of your own loss, your own bereavement. It is a little while, it may be a very, very little while, ere the Lord shall rise up. If He did so now, that body would not be interred, but rise to life and glory, and you should be changed and mount up together in the air, and so be for ever with the Lord. When we meet the Lord, we shall know Him, though we never saw Him before. No mistake. In God's presence no second person can ever be mistaken for Him. He will know all His around Him in that day, and they will know one another.

There is a monstrous abortion of unbelief in many minds now, that because earthly ties and relationships cease in Heaven, persons will not be known, or our mutual interest not sustained. The stupid folly of the thought is superficial. I know and love, and am known and loved by many who were once either my masters or my servants upon earth; the relationship has passed, but, thank God, not the mutual love and esteem which our hearts formed in it. A child, when married, ceases to be a child in the parent's house; he or she is, according to God, absolved from the tie, but the love and interest go on; or does a married daughter cease to be loved because she has taken headship under another, and has not the tie and responsibility of a child in the house? In divorce, would the pain and agony of the passed relationship cease to a loving heart because God had pronounced the tie of man and wife to have been broken. Paul's former

tie with the Thessalonians may cease, but not his love of them, or theirs of him, as formed when both were on earth. They will be round him in the glory, his joy, and crown of rejoicing. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" (1 Thess. ii. 19). See also the expression: "Sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" (chap. iv. 13). The condition of those who cannot see this is carnal, occupied with themselves and circumstances, they cannot see afar off, they cannot enter into the Lord's joys and grace.

There is but one thing more that I would add. It may be said to me by some: "According to you, as it seems to us, Death is then nothing." To this I would reply: Not so, by any means. Let death be what it may, Christ is more; and He makes the dark to be light, and the bitter to be sweet. One that is in Christ, and such a one only, can say: "In all things more than conquerors, through Him that loved us." Such a one only can say: "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?" Death in man was the fruit of sin; in death of the body there was an awful expression of how sin had brought in destructive ruin upon the body of man, and it then pointed on to that second death, "where their worm dieth not, and where their fire is not quenched." If the Son of God, as Son of Man, has met the difficulties of the predicament in which man as a sinner was,—He, in meeting and bearing in Himself the judgment due to the sinner, did not, he could not, morally or judicially, make nothing of sin. On the contrary, when He bare the judgment due to our sins on the Cross, there was plainly shown that the wages of sin are far more awful, as I judge, than man ever thought, or ever can know, or show them to be, even in the final casting of the sinner out of God's presence, into the lake of fire and brimstone, prepared for the devil and his angels. The Cross of Christ proved that there could be no inter-communion, even between the Son of Man, faithful in His service, and God,—no light from God given to Him, whilst He held the place of being the sinner's substitute. He cried out: "My God, my God!

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why hast Thou forsaken me?" But he overcame, though having to lay down His life in the pathway of victory. None of the judgment of sin remains to be poured out on the soul of one that believes in Christ Jesus. His judgment was our deliverance; but if delivered, we are not as yet, as we well know, exempt from bodies of sin and of death. *Now* we bear about in the body, however, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body; and, if called to depart and leave the body, the Lord can shew Himself to His people as He did to Stephen. And come what may, to depart is far better; it is to be absent from the body, and at home with the Lord, and to be assimilated in experience to any part of our Lord's course here below, so far as a saved disciple can be, is not strange, though blessed. Now we believe that Jesus died, as well as that He rose again. If I look upon His death as connected with the bearing of the wrath due to me, I say *that* is finished; and faith in me shuts out the thought of my ever tasting it. In that sense, I shall never taste death. If I look upon His death as His act of ceasing to dwell among men down here on earth, in a body that could die, the hour was one of deliverance to Him, and why is it not to be so, through Him, to me?

A. P. C.

14:3:64.

"Tis not
 "So much as e'en the lifting of a latch—
 "Only a step into the open air
 "Out of a tent already luminous
 "With light that shines through its transparent walls."

Lord! who can pay the mighty debt
 Of love so rich as Thine!
 Love — which surpasseth finding out,
 Unspeakable, divine!

N^o. XX.

"A FULL CHRIST FOR EMPTY SINNERS."

THOUGHTS ON JOHN VI.

WELL does the writer remember the effect on his own mind of the perusal, upwards of twenty years ago, of a paper in the first volume of the Christian Witness, on "The distinct characters of the several writings of the New Testament." If not the first, it was among the first means of leading him to read Scripture in the light of the characteristic subject and aim of each distinct portion of it. But, while leaning on God's grace as the only efficient cause of true instruction, every attempt to impart to others what has been so precious to his own soul, has served more deeply to convince him of the truth of one remark in the paper above referred to, viz.: that, "The expression of one's own thoughts, and the acting so as to awaken similar thoughts in others, are two very different things; and the latter is a rarer and more self-denying attainment than the other." It is not as attempting much more than the former, that the following thoughts are submitted to such as bring all they read and hear to the test of the Word of God itself.

Much that twenty or thirty years ago had to some of us all the vividness and freshness of truth newly discovered to the soul, has long, as to the letter of it, at least, been familiar to all who are likely to read these remarks. The way in which the same blessed Person is presented in Matthew as the Messiah of Israel; by Mark, in active service as the Minister of the Word; by Luke, in the fulness of that grace, in which He, the Son of Man, came to men as such, to seek and to save that which

was lost; and by John as the Word which was in the beginning, which was with God, and was God, but which was made flesh, and dwelt among us; all this the reader has doubtless read and heard again and again, until the words remain in the memory, whether they be understood and enjoyed through divine teaching or not. The peculiar character of John's Gospel has been dwelt upon by many. Many have pointed out how the glory which passes before us in that Gospel is the glory of Christ in His highest divine titles and relations; "the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Sweetly has it been shewn, moreover, that while no other Gospel so freely unfolds this highest Godhead-glory of Christ, no other shews the sinner in such immediate contact with Him, receiving of His fulness. These and other leading features of the book, though never losing their interest, have yet to numbers become familiar truth. What the writer would now suggest may bear no comparison in importance with these chief characteristics of this Gospel; but nothing is lost which contributes in ever so small a degree to acquaintance with the precious record of the glory of Him of whom it is said, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

In perusing any book, inspired or uninspired, if we find certain words occurring often enough to awaken attention to the fact, and then, on examination, discover that they are thus used throughout the book, we immediately conclude that they either express its great theme and object, or at least that which is very closely related thereto. Reading thus the Gospel of John, certain words can scarcely fail to impress the mind with the frequency of their use; while a comparison with the other evangelists confirms the conviction that the words in question do really bring out what is in closest connexion with the great leading subject. For instance, the word *life* meets the eye almost at the beginning of the book, reappears most prominently in chap. iii., and afterwards, indeed with such frequency as to awaken the enquiry, can this be one of the leading words in this Gospel? can it have any characteristic force? Let us see. But,

glorify thou me, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Nor would He be there alone. "Father, I will (or desire) that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." Heaven is now the revealed home and sphere of that eternal life which, if absolutely and perfectly displayed on earth in the One of whom we read, "In him was life," is also derivatively enjoyed by all who believe. "What, and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?"

It was for other lips and another pen than the beloved disciple's to unfold this subject in detail. The place in heaven, in and with Christ, bestowed on believers by the grace which reigns through righteousness by our Lord Jesus Christ, is St. Paul's distinctive theme. The manifestation of divine life on earth, perfectly in Christ, and really though derivatively in us, is the theme of John's gospel and epistle. It is, of all themes, the most vital, essential, fundamental. But deeply interesting it is to find such links as our Lord's words last quoted, and those from chap. xvii. 24, evincing that whether Paul, or Peter, or John, be the instrument of communication, it is one vast circle of truth which is revealed, of which the centre and fulness are found in the Person and sacrifice and exaltation of the Son of God and Son of Man. Christ incarnate, Christ slain, Christ ascended, "a full Christ for empty sinners."

Many who had for a season followed Christ drew back from the time when this discourse was delivered. This did not surprise Him; but it afforded Him the occasion of challenging the hearts of those who still surrounded Him. To them Jesus said, "Will ye also go away?" No one wonders that Peter was spokesman for them all; and he might not yet have measured himself, as afterwards, through grace, he did, when he went out and wept bitterly. Nevertheless there is a warmth, an energy, a decision, about his words, that we may well covet, and as to which we may challenge our hearts, dear Christian reader, whether we could reply thus.

A full Christ for empty Sinners.

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Go away! "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." May our hearts repel thus, and disown every thought of any other than this blessed Christ of God. "To whom shall we go?" To whom indeed? O to abide in Him! May we have grace to cleave to Him with purpose of heart, and may He be glorified in each of us, for His Name's sake.

FATHER! we, Thy children, bless Thee,
 For Thy love on us bestow'd,
 As our Father we address Thee,
 Call'd to be the sons of God.
 Wondrous was Thy love in giving
 Jesus for our sins to die!
 Wondrous was His grace in leaving,
 For our sakes, the heavens on high!

Now the sprinkled blood has freed us,
 On we go toward our rest,
 Through the desert Thou dost lead us,
 With Thy constant favour blest:
 By Thy truth and Spirit guiding,
 Earnest He of what's to come,
 And with daily food providing,
 Thou dost lead Thy children home.

Though our pilgrimage be dreary,
 This is not our resting-place;
 Shall we of the way be weary,
 When we see our Master's face;
 No:—e'en now anticipating,
 In this hope our souls rejoice,
 And His promised advent waiting,
 Soon shall hear His welcome voice.

“LORD JESUS, COME.”

Lord Jesus, come,
 And take Thy rightful place
 As Son of Man, Thou risen One!
 Come, Lord of all, to reign alone!
 Come, Jesus, come!

Lord Jesus, come!
 The Man of sorrows once—
 The Man of patience waiting now—
 The Man of joy for ever Thou,
 Come, Saviour, come!

Lord Jesus, come!
 Crown'd with Thy many crowns,
 The Crucified, the Lamb once slain,
 To wash away sin's crimson stain,
 Come, Jesus, come!

Lord Jesus, come
 And take Thy Father's gift;
 The people by Thy cross made Thine,
 The trophy of Thy *love divine!*
 Come, Jesus, come!

Lord Jesus, come,
 That lost in Thee, our souls
 May bow and worship and adore,
 In Thy dear presence evermore!
 Come, Jesus, come!

Lord Jesus, come,
 And let Thy glory shine,
 That quickly these chang'd bodies may
 Each one reflect a living ray,
 Come, Jesus, come!

Lord Jesus, come!
 Let ev'ry knee bow down,
 And ev'ry tongue to Thee confess,
 The Lord of All, come forth to bless
 Come, Jesus, come!

The Spirit and the Bride
 And Him that hears, say, “Come.”
 Yea, Lord, Thy word from that bright home
 Is, “Surely I will quickly come.”
 E'en so, Lord, come!

M. S.

No. XXI.

THE HUMAN ELEMENT IN INSPIRATION.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—As the question of inspiration has been so much before the minds of Christians, and indeed, of all men, in countries where Christianity is professed, and is a vital question for every soul, I would desire to notice one point in connection with it, because on it even those who are accounted orthodox have used very equivocal language. It is what is called the *human element* in it. That there is a human element is evident, for it is men who are inspired, men whose language and whose minds have been used. I say whose minds have been used, for the apostle tells us of speaking with his understanding, but the expression is used to signify *also* the defects and errors to which man's mind is liable. Now this last means *man's mind left to itself*, that is, *not* inspired; a very different thing from inspiring man's mind. The reason I notice it is, that the human element is of infinite price to us, the very character of the grace shown to us and conferred on us. God's favour is (not only shown *to* man, but) *in* man. In the blessed Lord, the centre and effectuator of all grace to us, this is evident, though this is much more than inspiration, for He is a person, the Word made flesh, yet it characterises all God's ways with us. It is what is divine in man. It has a human element, birth, hunger, thirst, sorrow, suffering, his compassion moved by what he saw, growth in wisdom and stature, dependence in prayer, obedience, temptation (sin apart), and when He had given Himself up to it, death; for which, indeed, he had expressly become a man, and though now in glory, yet the human element is there also. The Son of Man is at the right hand of God, and when we are in that blessed place He will gird Himself and make us to sit down to meat, and come forth and serve us, and this

inspiration of God. Every prophecy of Scripture, for Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The New too, for what the Holy Ghost revealed, was communicated in words which the Holy Ghost taught. It is to Scripture we are referred by the Apostle in the dangers of the last days.

As regards the human element in inspiration, of which I have written, especially in the New Testament, we have one or two passages which express it clearly. The Old Testament gave a testimony to Christ besides the historical bases of the whole matter in the history of man and God's people. He was the subject and object of their testimony ; but Christ's, and, through grace, our proper testimony is different. The testimony was the expression of the thing in Himself; so ours, though imperfect, the life of Jesus manifested in our mortal bodies, the epistle of Christ written by the Spirit of the living God on the fleshy tables of the heart. Now the New Testament inspiration partook of this (though there was also in tongues and prophecy, dictated utterances); that is, the full blessing of the thing was conveyed to the heart and understanding. How was St. Paul made an Apostle and even minister of the Church?—by the revelation of Christ in glory to him for his own conversion through grace. So he speaks. "When it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace to reveal His Son in me that I might preach Him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." So in 2 Cor. iv. "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give (out) the light of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus Christ." So indeed in 1 Cor. ii. 12—14. They had received the Spirit to know. Only, when it was to be for divine communication also, they spoke it in words taught of the Holy Ghost. And this is the instruction of the Lord Himself on the subject. "If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink; and, as the Scripture hath said, out of His belly shall flow rivers of living waters. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him should

receive." The streams which flowed forth for others were the fruit of what had been drunk for self. This is true of all so ministering; only, as we have seen, for what is properly called inspiration the WORDS were given by the *Holy Ghost also*.

The very nature of Christianity is God manifest in the flesh, entering personally into all our sorrows, temptations and trials; manifesting God's perfect goodness in them; and then, through redemption, raising man to the elevation of which Christ's person and work were worthy in glorifying God, the divine glory, likeness to Christ as He is, gone in, in virtue of it, to heaven. And such is the character of inspiration, or work of the Holy Ghost as to the revelation of it; and indeed necessarily must be. That is, it enters into the whole place and circumstances of man, reveals the glory into which he is to be brought, God glorified perfectly in Christ being the holy and eternal ground, and the Lord's sympathy with him in all his circumstances. Hence nothing is too great for man—still man, for he is brought into the glory of God, like Christ the Son—and in righteousness and partaker of the divine nature; nothing too little for God, because He is entered into the sympathy of love with all that man is, and introduces divine life itself into every detail,—words,—what? the tone of a man's voice, counts the hairs of his head. It will enter into the case of a runaway slave and his master, of the health of the children of an elect lady. It will take up everything in which divine life can exercise itself and give a tone to our ways, children and parents, masters and slaves. And there is nothing in which divine life does not shew itself. It is the blessed truth that, first in person, then in inspired doctrine and the life of Christ in us, God is entered into everything in which the heart of man is engaged. I find God and God in grace, where the unhappy rationalist only finds *a cloak*.

Scenes down here lose their power on those who, led by the Spirit, have their hearts set, simply and fully, upon the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven. If you can bear unmoved to see me pained by another, you do not care much about pleasing me yourself.

N^o. XXII.SOME OF THE CAUSES OF OUR LOW CON-
DITION OF SOUL AND PRACTICE.

I DESIRE to call attention to some of the causes of the low condition of soul and practice, which so many deplore, and earnestly desire to emerge from. I believe the first great cause of it, and of our consequent inefficient testimony is, that man, and not God, is the object continually before our minds. God's greatest thought was to make Himself known; and, according as this was effected, the counsels of His heart were declared. Now the strength of every soul must be in proportion to its apprehension of God's greatest thought, because it is in comprehending this that it becomes a receiver of grace therefrom. "This is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." The eternal life, God's gift to me, as believing in His Son, leads me directly to know Himself. "No man hath seen God at any time, but the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Man's great crime was receiving as truth Satan's representation of God, and acting on it. Thus he fell; and to this hour, although by industry and research he acquires a certain knowledge of everything in creation, yet he cannot find out God; his greatest advancement, only convincing him the more of his ignorance; like the Athenians in Paul's time, he must, if honest, confess his ignorance on the greatest point which could occupy any intelligent creature, even knowledge of his Creator. In comparison to this, what is any other knowledge? And what is the good of the knowledge of every thing relating to man, if I am ignorant of God.

Let me hold simply and distinctly in mind, that God's greatest thought, is to make himself known, and that, therefore, my highest attainment is that of a "father," as we read (1 John ii.) to "know Him, that is from the

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beginning," even the Son who has declared the Father; and as I do so, I shall not fail to see how constantly and largely we occupy our souls with something selfish, something wherein our interest is expressly before us, and the thought and purpose of God, and His interest in revealing Himself, is rarely entertained.

In the mode and terms in which the gospel is preached (and we shall find the mode of its reception generally answers to the character of preaching), this defect is very manifest. I need hardly insist that our strength, in doing anything, must be in proportion as we are in the line of God's mind and purpose. His Spirit could aid us only there. This is so simple and palpable, that we require only to ascertain what His mind and purpose is, in order to determine our course, and to expose our defects. In preaching the Gospel, I ought to be from God towards man. My subject is, if I know God, that God is love. "In this, was manifested the love of God, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." God has expressed His love. He could not express it, except in righteousness: but in righteousness, His expression of it to us is eternal life, whereby and wherein we know Him, and that He is love. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." I have to present the love of God, and the manner in which it has acted. I have to unfold how He expressed it through Jesus Christ our Lord, who came down here to do His will, establishing his righteousness, so that God is just, and the justifier of every one who believeth in Jesus. "The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." He came forth from God to bear the judgment under which we lay. God's love could not reach us, while sin remained unjudged: He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him was no sin. The love of God could not express itself, but through righteousness; hence, Jesus offered Himself, and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and then the love was known in the gift of eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. The Son of God came to remove the barrier to the expression of

God's love. The barrier (sin) being removed by His bearing in His own body the judgment of death,—the love of God flows out without hindrance to every one believing in the Son. He that hath the Son hath life. The gospel I have to proclaim is the history of God's love, when His nature is maintained and unfolded in all its greatness and integrity. True it is to man I am proclaiming it, and it is for man's benefit; and according as I have the love of God in my heart, so shall I do so earnestly and efficiently; but then the primary thought should always be that it is *God's* love to man, and not a mere service rendered to man. Man, no doubt, is before me, but that which engages my soul is God's love, and therefore, while I zealously set forth to man, the wonders of God's salvation, yet I do not lose sight of Him, whose *heart* I make known. I am strong in making it known, as I am consciously acting from it; but if I am engaging my soul primarily with the benefit man will derive from it, I am making man and not God my object. The Gospel—the point to insist on and proclaim—is what God is, as revealed towards man, a sinner, and at a distance from Him. The love of souls in my heart is divine love, and I must (in order to know its fresh activity in myself) be kept in constant and distinct reference to the source of it, in order to understand the scope and intent of the heart of God, which I am allowed, through grace, to present to my fellow-man. The Apostle Paul has this so fully before his soul, that he thanks God, who always leads him in triumph in the Christ, and makes manifest the odour of His knowledge in every place; “for we are a sweet odour of Christ to God in them that are saved, and in them that perish.” He is thankful that they are allowed to make manifest the odour of His knowledge in every place. The great thought before His soul is God. Did he then the less care for souls—he who also writes “I am made all things to all, that I might by all means save some?” Surely not. Why should it be thought, that if I make God my chief object in presenting His love, (for His love directs itself to man), that I cannot, or do not, more effectually and vividly present the glad tidings, than one who, keeping

man's need in view, is simply engrossed with (as it is admitted) the only remedy for it. Is occupation with the one who is ruined and needs the remedy, likely to be more effective, than occupation with the heart of God, and what is due to it, and therefore, with regard to it propounding the revelation of it, through Jesus Christ our Lord? What more efficacious than setting forth the heart of God in its fulness, making manifest the savour of His knowledge? Paul's commission, from Jesus in the glory, was that he should be a minister of those things which he had seen; the terms of the commission indicated the character of the Gospel entrusted to him. What had he seen? Jesus in the glory—a Saviour in the glory. God could now open out His glory without let or hindrance, to every one receiving His Son, and believing on Him. *He is revealed* to Saul, and forthwith he preached in the synagogue that Christ is the Son of God. How often is the *work* of Christ exclusively dwelt on, and how God has been revealed not touched upon at all! I may be told that this is not intended—that may be so. Yet is it not evident, that if I were engaged with Christ, as the one who has revealed the Father in His love, I could not avoid prominently setting it forth. The simple cause of such inadvertence, supposing it to be such, is that man is more before the mind than God. What is most on my mind, must of necessity, colour every expression which flows from it. If God and the disclosure of Himself in Christ were filling my soul, let me meet saint or sinner, I must declare it, and through the wisdom of His grace to each, and as the state of each required; not without real, deep, divine love for each, but at the same time, with the comfort and strength of the Spirit of God, witnessing that I was speaking *for* God, though doubtless, also, for man's benefit. Man's benefit would be one result of my testimony, but the great object before my soul, would be to reveal His love, which in me made me earnest and ready to suffer all things that I might save some; but, even, if I did not, if my heart were true to its proper mission, I could thank God that I had made manifest the savour of His knowledge.

Let us note how our blessed Lord, the faithful and true witness, testified of God down here. His meat was to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish *His* work. In every thing He declared the Father, walking as a man close beside and in company with men, and he could say at the end, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." He always did those things that pleased Him. Are we at all able to grasp the purpose and work of Jesus as the declarer of the Father? He had all the power of God in His hand, and for this end He used it, and not for Himself, though in many ways needing it. He in feeble flesh, in all His ways and works, set forth to men, and He Himself a man, the wondrous intents and counsels of the heart of God in itself which man through Him is invited to taste of and enjoy. Could our eye follow Him in His course, and not know in our hearts at every step that we were accumulating evidence of how great and wondrous was His work? God manifest in the flesh—a man among men, declaring all the love of God, and the lines of it, in all its integrity and strength. "As the Father knoweth me, so know I the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep." He knew His Father's heart. He knew how to represent it; His whole life and work among men was to declare it, and hence He could say in the end, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip; he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father." When we survey our Lord's ministry in this light, we are imbibing ideas of what God is in His heart towards us. It is *His* side which occupies us. What He is is made known to me. I see the relation in which he would stand to me, and, as I believe in Jesus, I am entering into the blessing of this relation. I find I am gifted with eternal life, and am individually partaker of the love which has been declared. It is God I am learning, and *my idea of Him always indicates the character of my relation to Him*. I see how Jesus has declared Him, and my blessing is in connection with this declaration. As is the declaration so is my blessing; the latter depends on the former, limit the one and you limit the

other. It rests on what God is, and every knowledge of Him is blessing to me, and every blessing to me is a fruit of this knowledge, so that as I am blessed, so am I consciously connected with God through Christ, and deriving my blessing from my knowledge of Him. If I seek for blessing my heart connects it with knowledge of Him; which knowledge is always blessing to me, but, as I know this, it is the knowledge of Him that is uppermost with me, and thus am I sanctified to Him. True, as I know Him, I know the nature of His love to myself,—that I am Christ's object, and that He hath called me by name. I could not make Him my object unless I knew myself His object, for the greater commands the lesser, and the lesser gives return according to the quality which it apprehends from the greater. We love Him because He first loved us; and the quality of our love to Him will always be in proportion to the quality and measure with which we apprehend His to us.

When in preaching and otherwise, man, his need and his blessing, is the object, that which would confer true power is overlooked, and there must be corresponding feebleness in those who are blessed through it. How often do we deplore the feeble link which many quickened souls have to Christ! Why is this? I repeat because their need has been the point pressed and provided for in the gospel as preached to them, and through which, in divine mercy, they have been born again; the utility of the gospel and not the divinity of it has been presented to them; the sweeping of the house to regain the lost silver, or the gain of the prodigal rather than God's claim or relation thereto, and, as a consequence, His satisfaction as the first and greatest consideration. Thus souls, though truly quickened, know little more than relief from judgment, and thus relieved they can pursue their aims in the world without the fear of judgment, which would otherwise have harassed them. It may be asked: Why does God allow conversions through a gospel of which the fruits are such weakly plants? I answer, His mercy, which I do not attempt to account for. I am only attempting to account for the cause of the weakness of the plants, in the hope that the Lord may lead

us into more simple adherence to His own mind, and thus be used of Him to raise His own to the level which His heart desires to see them in. Must not the presenting merely the need, and the provision for the need, necessarily occupy a man with himself, and cause his own ruin and the remedy to comprise the whole of his thoughts? God in His mercy saves through this preaching, for grace reigns; but the plants are so weakly that there is no testimony from them. They are little, if at all, for Christ on the earth, and this, I feel, the servants of Christ ought to regard as indicating defect in their own ministry. Would they feel happy in any degree to say that such were the seal of their ministry; and, if the recipients of the gospel which we preach are so feeble and un-Christ like, do we not well to enquire how we have failed in presenting it?

What a different (and how much greater) thing it is for me to know God and His heart towards me, and as I know it, to know the value and gain of it to myself, than merely to dwell on my deliverance from judgment through the *work* of Christ. Some will say, "Must I not get deliverance from judgment first"? Certainly, but I contend that the true way is to present Christ to you as your life, and the ground of your life, and not merely to relieve you from the fear of judgment by presenting the value of His work for your benefit. In the one case you will count all your blessing from your intimacy with Christ, your knowledge of Him will be everything to you from beginning to end; like the Apostle, the one continued desire will be to know Him. In the other, you will have no thought beyond your own rest, you will measure everything by the measure of quietude and peacefulness which you derive from it, you have not had your cup full. Christ alone can fill the cup; "He that believeth shall never thirst, the water that I shall give him will be in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life." Philip preached Christ; Paul that Christ is the Son of God; the revelation of Jesus Christ, not the mere benefit of man, was the thing prominent with them.

Again, if the preaching be defective, it is not sur-

prising that the same vein of imperfection should characterise the teaching; but there the effects are more injurious still, because instead of correcting the defects in the preaching, it allows and supports them, and consequently contributes permanently to that weakly condition which we are deploring.

To know Him that is from the beginning, is the attainment of a "father." Higher no one can go, and less none of us should aim at. It is the only unerring standard, whether in matters most elementary or most advanced; the one great and simple reference for either is my knowledge of Him. Thus we find such passages as these:—"Some have not the knowledge of God,"—"hath neither seen nor known Him,"—"hereby we know that we know Him." The Apostle tells us that the knowledge of the Son of God is the point we are coming to, for however inconceivable the thought is, we shall know even as we are known, and hence Paul's effort and conflict was to present every one perfect in Christ Jesus; the desire of his heart for the saints and faithful is that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto them wisdom and revelation in the *knowledge of Him*. The tendency of our nature is ever to seek for ourselves and our own happiness, heedless of what God has been gleaming forth from the beginning of man's existence on the earth; even the knowledge of Himself. Every revelation of His grace to man conveyed a fuller knowledge of Himself; and according as man rested in Him thus revealed was His blessing assured. Whereas, whenever man independently sought his own, he lost all, as, for instance, Lot going down into Sodom while Abram learned deeper and fuller knowledge of the heart he trusted in—in its care and provision for him.

The teaching ought to follow up what the preaching had introduced. The preaching ought to present Christ as now in glory, the full expression of what God's love had accomplished. What God is now to everyone believing in Jesus. How God meets everyone coming to Him—with a Saviour to the glory. So teaching should be but a fuller exposition of Christ in glory. The great

end of all teaching should be to unfold Christ to the soul, and so to present Him, in the power of the word, as to make Him its *standard* for everything, and to set forth that our place now is to dwell in Him and He in us, and to grow daily into conformity with Him. Can we estimate what an effect it would have on us if He were thus our standard to which everything was referred, and by which everything was decided. What separation, what purging of ourselves it would entail on us, though the heart, consciously doing it to Him, would have its own reward in the sense of increased nearness to Him. Now, on the contrary, the conscience (and the more enlightened the worse, for then there is more ground for confidence in our own judgment), or the effect produced on the individual soul, is the standard. I mean, this or that association, is allowed or disallowed, as it *affects* myself,—if it does not pain *me* it may pass; if it does I disallow it. I make myself and my own feelings my standard, and not Christ, consequently I cannot but be weak and incompetent.

It is not faith or devotedness, or any virtue from the practice of which certain advantages will flow to me, that real teaching should aim at. It is nothing short of Christ,—that Christ may be formed in me; that Christ may dwell in my heart by faith. When Christ is presented to my soul as the one object, I get to know Him, and while learning thereby that I am His object, my testimony, as I walk here, must ever be true and effective. Read all the Epistles, and you will see that, whatever be the difficulty or the error, all is solved, all removed by living Christ. Every defect arises from not dwelling in Him; without Him we can do nothing. If it be justification by the works of the law, as in Romans “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” If it be the world and its wisdom as in Corinthians—“I determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and Him crucified” and “He of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” If it be a question of ordinances, etc., as in Galatians, “We have put on Christ,” and “they that are Christ’s have crucified the

flesh with its affections and lusts." If it be worldly religious exaction, as in Colossians, "we are risen with Christ" who is our life. *Christ determines everything.* Now the teaching, in general, does not engage the heart with Christ as the great sum and scope of everything in the mind of God. It is not pre-eminently in the mind of the teacher, and, if it be not—the teacher being necessarily in advance of his hearers—neither can it be pre-eminent with them. This being so, how can there be strength in the soul or power in the walk, when God's object, the course and work of the Spirit, is either unheeded or indifferently dwelt on? If I would please anyone, I must ascertain what is the first thought and purpose of his mind. I cannot please God but as I believe in His nature. His Son has revealed Him, and, as I am in the Son, so do I reach up to the knowledge of God; and hence the Apostle writes, "Until we all come in the unity of the faith unto the knowledge of the Son of God." God cannot sustain me and own me by His Spirit, if I am on any line but His own, however commendable it may appear. Good works, the whole range of charities, may be engaged in, and yet the condition be low, and the practice *unspiritual*, simply because the line on which God would display His power, and mark us with His grace, has not been adopted by us.

It is often stated that if we waited more on the Spirit in our meetings, there would be more power. Our not doing so is rather, I believe, a consequence than a cause, for I am assured that if Christ were more our object, the power and presence of the Holy Spirit would be better known. It is as in Christ now in glory, that the Spirit flows as rivers into and from us, and the Spirit cannot support us, when Christ from whom He acts, is not our object. The more simply we look at it, the more easily we see the point of departure. God having made Himself known in His Son, if our hearts are occupied with the Son, all the purpose of His heart will be disclosed to us. I preach Christ to manifest the knowledge of God. I teach Christ, in order to furnish the souls of saints with the revelation of God, even to be filled, through the love of Christ, in His fulness.

Another cause of our low condition, and also the result of the heart being occupied with its own gain, is, I believe, that we seek our own things, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. There is a looking to God for mercies, and faith is used and valued according to the favours vouchsafed of God in answer to it. When this is the case, the whole bent and turn of the mind is selfish. What would suit and meet us here on earth is sought for and valued; and while there is a looking to God, it is ever with this end. In difficulties and pressure, according as there is conscience, God is sought; but the end desired is simply deliverance. There is comparatively little or no thought, and less effort, to walk superior to the difficulties in the strength of Christ. On the contrary, if I *live* Christ, I am, like the apostle, able to say: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." The one looks to God and counts on Him in order to be delivered; the other believes in Christ, derives *nourishment* from Him, and is strengthened in His strength. Is it not evident that there is a great moral difference between these two? In the Old Testament, God was continually shewing favour, in vouchsafing deliverance to suffering man; but now, in Christ, we are made more than conquerors through Him that loved us. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." The more I return to Old Testament standing, the more I regard myself in nature, the more do I seek present favour and interposition from God on my behalf; but the more I am in Christ, the more am I, in His life and strength, superior to and master of the difficulties of this life. I think it will be found that little practical strength or advancement accrues from some of the most signal instances of God's intervention on our behalf. We may turn to Him better; but is there more strength to master the ordinary trials of life? Is there not rather an ever-anxious recurrence to Him for deliverance, while the soul believing in Christ would be conscious of daily increasing invigoration directly from Himself and of Himself, and would be seeking rather to walk above the difficulty than to find an escape from it. True, God in His continual mercy grants to us an escape from the difficulty, but the strength of Christ always makes us master of it. I am

satisfied that the condition of soul must be weakly, which is occupied with its gains, in circumstances, from God; and, more than this, our mercies themselves prove a snare when they engross the heart. Devotedness is the surrender of self, and of the mercies which minister to it for the Lord's sake. If I am engrossed with the mercies I cannot be devoted; for, if the mercies are my object, the Lord is not my object. If I am occupied with myself, all natural mercies are attractive to me, and hailed as from God; and, without perceiving it, I am carried into the current of the world, and my weakness as a Christian is patent to all. Is not temporal prosperity one of the most fruitful causes of declension and feebleness? It was God's test to Gideon's army: "Bring them down to the water, and I will try them for thee *there*." Those who were thinking most of themselves and their own gain from the mercy were engrossed with it;—they went down on their knees to drink of the water. The 300 alone could resist its attraction, for their heart was with Gideon. The water,—any thing which addresses self and engrosses it—diverts the heart from Christ, and feebleness must ensue, for without Him we can do nothing. The importance which attaches to one as the centre of some useful work to man, from the gospel downwards, has, when it engrosses, the same injurious effect; and we never see anyone thus engrossed make any progress in the ways and counsels and strength of Christ. Worldly prosperity, that which is highly esteemed among men, could not engross the heart of a saint who had appropriated the death of Christ, for if we eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, He abideth in us and we in Him. We are in Christ; and, believing in Him, the Spirit flows from us, having enriched our souls with the fulness of Christ. He is our known object, and all our ways and thoughts declare it; for we always seek pre-eminently what *suits* our chief object. If myself is my object, I seek the natural mercies and what lends importance to myself; but if Christ be my object, it is the things which suit Him and interest Him which are my earnest study and care. The things sought after disclose the object of the heart; therefore, if they be natural things, I must be in nature, and weak accordingly.

There is one cause more of our weakness that I would dwell on—that is, that we so little occupy our minds with His mind; we so little seek sympathy with Him in His thoughts and purposes. This is easily accounted for, if we are occupied with mercies which suit and minister to ourselves. How can the heart take an interest in the study of His mind and purpose, if it be full of its own individual advantage? Unless Christ were my object I could not be the friend of Christ; and unless I am His friend, it cannot interest me to know His mind, though my own personal gain, even what He may have given me, may occupy my mind. If I abide in Him and He in me (see John xv.), I have His joy in me, and as His friend He communicates to me His mind. If I am not devoted to Him, His mind is not interesting to me, and He does not communicate it to any one not interested in it. There is no more marked symptom of feebleness than the little sympathy or acquaintance we have with His mind, and the little feeling there is at our want of it; while, on the other hand, there is no greater evidence of strength and faithfulness than to be a man of understanding, enriched with the mind of our Lord and Master, and able skilfully to instruct His people in a day of confusion and ignorance. In the Epistle to the Seven Churches in the Revelation, the angel is always addressed as setting forth in symbol the true place of the Church as bearing Christ's message. The faithful answered to this character, and heard and understood the Lord's message as always suited and pertinent to the difficulty of *the moment*. In all ages the true servant of God was entrusted with His mind as to any crisis or distinct purpose. In the words "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?" the principle on which God always acts is disclosed to us. God has ever made known His mind to His devoted servants, and to them only; for others would not value it.

As with Gideon's army, it is not enough for me to attempt or to begin to follow. I must have my heart with Gideon. I must be devoted. Self must have no place with me; and then, as with the 300, I shall be instructed in the mind and purpose of my Lord. To

the 300 *only* does Gideon tell his mind and plans—
“*As I do, so shall ye do.*”

How remarkable is it, and singularly characteristic of our low condition, that one seldom sees a soul occupied with the present current or course of our Lord's mind. Something in reference to itself marks every enquiry or engagement. Little wonder, then, that our condition should be so low and our testimony so powerless.

In conclusion, I beg again to press that the greatest cause of our weakness arises chiefly from our imperfect apprehension of the Gospel of Christ. I have been told that a greater number are converted under an imperfect gospel than under a more perfect one. What answer can I give to this, but that the fuller gospel makes a claim on the heart of man, which deters him from confessing,—while the other makes no claim, and there is no cross to him in confessing his faith in it.

The Lord lay it on our hearts to see where we are straitened in ourselves, for surely we are not straitened in Him, and He would rejoice in our knowledge of the mystery of God, wherein are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

FRAGMENTS.

Prayer is the key which opens the repository of spiritual food, the wardrobe and the armoury of Heaven. It is the bolt which excludes the thief and the robber, the stormy wind and the tempest. It is the outlet of trouble and the inlet of consolation.

I suppose, if we could but see it, there is no cloud nor trial hampering us in our path but has near it some signal expression of mercy.

There are two ways of learning the Lord—one in glory, the other in trial—the first being the highest; but, as knowing *Him* is the great thing to be attained, it is better to know Him well in trial than only a little in glory. The disciples with the Lord in the ship exemplifies the one—the Transfiguration is an instance of the other.

We are not given sorrow for sorrow's sake, but sorrow for the sake of association with Christ. Is not that blessed? Is it not honour?

N^o. XXIII.

THE LIGHT OF THE BODY.

(A FRAGMENT.)

“The light of the body is the eye : If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.”—*Matt.* vi. 22.

SCRIPTURE describes the believer as a partaker of the divine nature,—one Spirit with the Lord,—possessing Christ within, the hope of glory—a temple of the Holy Ghost, etc., etc. These expressions define that in which the very life of the saint consists, and exhibit the greatness of responsibility inseparable from its possession.

Again, the same authority declares that as Christ, in the days of His first manifestation, comforted, exhorted, warned, and watched over His disciples, so, after His departure to the Father, His place was to be supplied by the Holy Ghost, “bringing all things, whatsoever *He* had said, to remembrance, testifying of *Him*, glorifying *Him* by receiving of *His* and showing it unto them, and *thus* teaching all things, guiding into all truth, and showing things to come.” Thus His brethren (who would otherwise have been as orphans) still have a (Paraclete or) Guardian. A right perception of the mode of the Spirit’s operation is pre-eminently important, for as “*we have the mind of Christ,*” so the *necessities* of that mind are met alone by the Spirit *testifying of Jesus*. That the Holy Ghost alone *can* meet the necessities of the mind of Christ in us, and that he does this by testifying NOT of *Himself*, BUT of the Lord Jesus, are truths ever to be remembered; for they are the only clue to permanency of joy, peace, and righteousness—the only solution of much (otherwise inexplicable) in the sorrows and difficulties of the saints. In the person of the Lord Jesus all the great subjects of faith, salvation, and hope are found; the moment the heart or the mind depart from Him, the Spirit’s power as Paraclete is interfered with, and sorrow and trial consequently ensue.

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The sum and substance of Christianity, regarded subjectively in the practice of the Church and its individual members, is, "We love Him because He first loved us"; the affections of the heart, and the thoughts of the mind (drawn upward by the amazing power of the Saviour's love, through the Spirit,) now leading captive, in the service of the Lord, all the members of a body of sin and death, for the day of whose redemption we have still to wait. I would press the consideration of that which I cannot now stop to open,—the peculiar importance of practical obedience in what may be called "a world of visible manifestation," and the distinct tendency of the Spirit as well as the suitability of the subject-matters of faith to produce full and perfect obedience. Man's eye, indeed, takes cognizance *only* of outward service, but man is not the only spectator of the progress of truth: it is open to the mind of the Father and the Spirit—to the minds of angels and archangels—of Satan, principalities, and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, and wicked spirits in heavenly places: to the eyes also of Jesus (Lord of all) *all* things are naked and open, for He is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Whatever we may think concerning Enoch and Elijah and the saints who rose with Christ, the apprehensions of all the others mentioned are certainly *much* more clear and searching than those of any earthly spectator. Before them a fall is marked, not by external offence so soon as by departure within from the principles and stream of life. So, as to himself, should it be with each believer. The tendency of every such departure of the heart or the mind is unquestionably toward separation from God: the only remedy (for in our own selves there is none) is in the constant interference of redeeming love, restoring and maintaining connexion with the fountain head of life and strength. The most obvious means of this is the indwelling of the Spirit, whose union with the Father and the Son being one of *essence*, not of characteristic correspondence alone, cannot be broken, but by innate power ever labours to bring everything (even the high and lofty thoughts which oppose themselves and the wandering affections)

into subjection to the cross. Let us be humbled for our frequent folly, while we adore the faithfulness and love which will keep that which we have committed unto Him even until the end.

Again, whilst the unvarying occupation of the Spirit in the Church is with Christ alone, His manifestations as to the mind itself vary according to its necessities. In every service and action two things are needed; 1st, the supply of *right motives and proper purposes*, which, though many, are in themselves uniform, fixed, and common to all action; and, 2dly, *light as to the path of present service*, which of course varies as the scene through which we travel shifts. The greatest *motives* or inducements, perhaps, though there are many others, are found in these words, "Reconciled by the blood," etc.; "The love of Christ constraineth us," etc., etc. The unchanging *object* or purpose is "the glory of the holy child Jesus." Time would fail to open these fully; let two remarks suffice: 1st, that as the rest of the mind of Christ in us is *in love*, so its constant tendency is the will of the Father in the glory of the holy child Jesus, whatsoever the part of truth considered or carried into action may be: and, 2dly, as the unchanging occupation of the Spirit is with Jesus (though the parts of truth connected with Him may vary according to the standing, faith, and service, of the individual believer), yet joy, peace, and strength, are greatly dependant upon our being occupied with that especial portion where, as to ourselves, the Spirit is opening and applying the truth to us; the heart in affection, and the mind in thought, travailing as to it with the glory of Christ. And thus every act of our life becomes at once an offering to God, and a means of faith being made perfect through works; for every duty and every relationship is thus brought into immediate connexion with the person of Jesus. *

Nature, which judges by results in man's day, and their accordance with feeling and self alone, can see nothing but bondage in all this; but faith triumphs in it, seeing, as a certain truth, that the measure of the real excellency and importance of everything depends upon

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its measure of connexion with the will of God in Christ. No actions have any real glory, or will *issue* in blessedness, save those which are really, and in the thought of the doer also, connected with Christ. Apart from Him we walk in darkness, and have no light, even as to our own individual advantage. * * *

The Christian has three guides, the Spirit, a sound judgment, and affection; and universally the heart should be in subjection to the mind, and it to the Holy Ghost.

* * * The mind and Spirit of God have to do with realities, as found before Him either in all the chilly coldness of separateness from Christ, or as vested with warmth and fervour drawn from Him as the Lamb that was slain, but is alive again for evermore. Romance and sentiment are marshy vapours from affections and thoughts of man, which, having burst their proper barriers, are deluging the fertilized plain, and are beautiful only to the eye of the adversary or stranger. The will of God, as gathered from Scripture, is the standard of life and death to the Christian. By it the sentence of death should be passed not only upon every action, but upon every thought, every affection, counter to, or *independent of*, the glory of Christ. By it the sentence of life should be recorded to that which is to live. I would that the Holy Ghost should thus sit applying the the word, "Let it live," "let it die," to every thought, every affection! He does it indeed, (dividing between flesh and spirit,) and we should hear His voice, had we but grace to keep everything in connexion with the person of the Lord Jesus.

* * * "Ye are bought with a price." "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself: for whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord, for to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be the Lord both of the dead and living. Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints

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and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts AND INTENTS OF THE HEART. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." (Heb. iv.) But rather than rest here, I will proceed to consider the Lord as our example, embodying in His own conduct the principles whereon we are called to walk. May we all know more and more of the power of it! The strength of Jesus, Lord of all, in all His work, was "the glory of God" carried in a mind (accustomed indeed to rule all things, yet) come into the place of *service and obedience*. "Lo! I come to do thy will, O my God." In fervency of desire after that glory, and in the assured, realised certainty of the Father's will as to the way in which it was to be accomplished, in what confidence of repose did he walk, though filled with the consciousness of weakness, (having emptied himself,) and in the midst of apparent failure all around. Three things were, among others, given Him to do: 1st, to disprove and retort the lies, libels, and slanders of Satan against His Father; 2ndly, to pour out in a rebellious world, the savour of His Father's unchangeable name of love; 3rdly, to make provision for a bride, chosen of the Father from before the foundation of the world. With what full confidence of purpose, though deep agony of soul, did He untie the Gordian knot which Satan had tied, preparing thongs therefrom to bind himwithal! What streams of light as to His Father's love towards the rebellious, did He pour into this dark, dark world! And, lastly, how devotedly did He act and how perseveringly has He followed after the bride chosen Him by the Father, the pearl of great price! His Father's choice for Him He approved, and set His whole heart and mind upon her. Assured that it was *His Father's choice*, that one Bride He sought. He needed not *a wife*, but that, that very wife. For her and her alone, He would come into a far country, taking her up to carry her back to His Father's house. But how jealous at the same time does He seem lest *she* should rest in His love, as a thing separate from the Father's will. That Jesus came to reveal the Father, and to make us

know that all the glory and privilege of Heaven itself the *Father sent Him* to open to us, is perhaps one of the most frequent of all assertions in the New Testament.

Now, if this be so, if the Church's repose as to the salvation which is in Christ, is in the will of the Father:—then surely, we are to be led by the Spirit in all things, and to do nothing save unto the Lord who loved us, and gave Himself for us.

* * * If the hairs of my head are all numbered, and not a sparrow falleth to the ground without my Father, I may ask in every matter, "What, Lord, wilt thou have me to do in this?" And how much perplexity and after anguish might thus be avoided: how many an after sorrow be spared us, in which we find ourselves occupied with ourselves, not with Christ and His glory, even in a modified form. Who knows the heart of man save Jehovah? It will not do, like Israel of old, in the case of the Gibeonites, for us to walk according to *appearance*, according to what *seems* to us best. If we have to stand a spectacle before the devils, angels, the saints, and the world as showing out in action that Christ and we are one,—what can guide us save the eye of God? "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way thou shalt go, I will guide thee with mine eyes." As grace to do this can come alone from God, so can He alone perfect it in us. Our hearts are in His hands, who works "in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure." Dependance, and obedience become us at all times.

* * * The mind of God is quite clear, that the thoughts ought to rest upon nothing save the Lord Jesus Himself, and that every thing else, is only good or bad for us as connected with Him.

* * * In this world there is no conduct so steady, none so firm as that which is based upon the two principles—the love of God, and humble obedience to His written word. As to our avowed intentions to do this or that, I add one word on their connexion with that word, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." No one without a *direct violation* of the word can say, I WILL DO THIS," so pledging themselves, *unless they add*, "IF THE LORD WILL." The devil has caught many

here. When we act in the flesh, we act with haste. How many have thus forgotten this little clause, and smarted for it afterwards. It *would have been* a door of escape, perhaps: but they neglected it, and have in consequence found themselves bound by a tie of their own to what, time shows will bring sorrow and weakness on them. The Lord alone can deliver such from the trap of their own folly: let them confess their sin, and look to Him if haply He will save them.

In conclusion, the wisdom of God is always discernible by the Spirit in the Church; it becomes young Christians, therefore, (even in the days of the Church apostacy) humbly to confer with Christian friends of sound judgment and prayerful spirit, previous to committing themselves to any new position; for if the matter be of the Lord, surely He will give to His saints near discernment to perceive its wisdom and approve and bless the matter, for it is written: "Where *two* or three are gathered together in *My* name, there am I in the midst of them"; and, again, "If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

P.S. Watch and pray, lest ye also enter into temptation.

THE SCRIPTURES.

We should more intensely press the Scriptures in on the soul. We should remember that *all* in us is to be Christ's; the heart, the conscience, and the understanding. The light and joy and beauty of the truth may be received at the *doors*; but the *reality* of the truth must be known in the soul, its *dwelling-place*. God looks for it, that *our very selves* be occupied with this truth. It addresses itself to *us*, in the deep full sense of *us*.—*A Servant of the Bible.*

I love the Father and the Son in personal presence anywhere better than their circumstances. Rather would I have Egypt's cruel bondage, with Christ for my comfort under it than all the brightest scenes in Canaan without Himself. It is *Himself* which is my joy, far above the glory. Will not every renewed heart say "Amen, and Amen!"?

No. XXIV.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE SOUL IN LIFE AND DEATH.

I PROPOSE, as God enables me, to point out briefly what the word of God teaches as to this foundation truth. Everything is in question at the present day—nothing ever so undoubted hitherto but is doubted now; and that by men who profess at least the greatest respect for Scripture. Hence the necessity for the appeal to its testimony upon the present most momentous subject. It is not enough to say that the doctrine of the soul, its nature and immortality, has never been doubted of. The reply is simply it is doubted now. Nor will it do to appeal even to the unenlightened heathen, as more fully enlightened upon this point than many so-called christians; for then we shall be accused of ourselves adopting the vain speculations of pagan philosophy. A happy necessity sends us simply to the word, that “we may be able to give an answer for the hope that is in us,” in this matter. May this answer be required and given, dear reader, as the same word teaches us, “with meekness and fear.”

The opposers of the soul’s immortality, however they may differ upon other points, agree pretty well upon these. They say that man is simply material, of the dust, and to return to the dust again. That he differs nothing from “the beasts that perish,” except in possessing a higher organisation. That to this is due his intellect, his moral powers,—all in short that he is or has. That he lays all down at death and is reduced to nothing—whether saint or sinner;—but will be raised up again at the resurrection to receive his reward: the just to inherit incorruption in the “spiritual body,” the unjust to be again reduced to non-existence, which, they say, is “the second death;” (the arguments will come up presently; I notice only the views themselves just now). Besides which they say that the soul is merely

the life imparted to man; the spirit, either His "breath," or else a principle of life communicated indeed to man, but only lent him by his Maker, forming no part of his individual being, never identified with the man himself, and returning to God at death, unchanged, as it was given.

This is a simple and truthful statement, I believe, of views put forth confidently by many as almost self-evidently Scriptural, and attempted to be proved from Scripture, not seldom with a great parade of knowledge of original tongues, and unhappily less seldom still with many bitter charges of priestcraft and wilful perversion of the truth on the part of those who hold the commonly received doctrines. Happily they invite us to an appeal to an impartial witness,—“Search the Scriptures” is the motto on both sides. May the Spirit of truth guide and bless us while we attempt compliance. May He be with the word of which He is Himself the author; and teach us the most absolute, implicit, reverential subjection to it in all things. “If they speak not according to this rule, it is because there is no light in them.”

I begin with remarking at the outset, that there are two words which are used in Scripture for man's immortal part, and that whether in Hebrew or Greek, and the distinction is sufficiently observed in our common translation. The words I refer to are “soul” and “spirit.” They are often used indifferently for what we also call indifferently either man's soul or spirit. Nevertheless they are not in strictness precisely the same. They are distinguished for instance in 1 Thess. v. 23. “That your whole *spirit and soul and* body may be preserved blameless,” and again in Heb. iv. 12, where the word is characterised as “piercing even to the dividing asunder of *soul and spirit.*” Here surely, what can be “divided asunder” must be distinct from each other. Just noticing this here, I confine myself for the present to the word “soul,” because it meets us first in our enquiry, in fact at the very threshold of Scripture—“Man became a living soul.”

Now, it is quite true that this expression itself decides nothing. Great exultation has been made over the fact that precisely the same term is made use of in relation

to the beast and to the reptile, to go no lower; and, while the exultation might have been spared, the thing is true. In Genesis i. 30 (not to speak of many other passages), where man is carefully distinguished from the lower animals, these latter are spoken of in general under the term, "everything wherein there is a living soul," (marginal reading.) And they say, "if you make man immortal because he was made a living soul, you make the beasts so too, because they are said equally both to have and to be '*living souls*.'" But the exultation might have been spared, as I have said; in fact, the real argument from the use of this expression lies all the other way. We cannot prove immortality from it doubtless. No one in his senses would think of doing so. Nor can we even prove man's pre-eminence above the beasts that perish from it; for the one term is applied to man and beast. But is it nothing that we have in this way something beyond mere matter referred to the beast? Look around you, dear friend, we say; look in how many varied forms the instinct (so called) of the beast displays itself. Look at the sagacity, the fidelity, the affection they manifest, often so conspicuously. Is it nothing for our argument that Scripture, instead of referring these qualities to mere "organisation," teaches that even the beast possesses a "living soul" to which we can refer them. I am thus so little afraid of any argument drawn from the beast's possession of a soul, that I say it greatly helps in testing the consistency of Scripture-teaching with our own. Of all the animal creation is the term used: "Everything wherein there is a living soul." And we are not afraid of this. It does not, whatever men may say still, level man with the beast. A "living" soul is not necessarily an immortal soul. Nor is the soul of the beast necessarily like the soul of man, either in kind or derivation, or in end. What the Apostle says even of flesh comes in with singular force here. "All flesh is not the same flesh. There is one kind of flesh of man, another of beasts." If that be so, how truly we may say then also; "There is one kind of soul of man, and another of beasts." Different in their derivation we know they are. It is never said of beasts that

“God breathed into their nostrils the breath of life.” They sprang simply out of the ground at the word of the Lord, but there was no impartation of any thing from the Lord. But, by THIS, man,—*formed out of the dust before*,—became a living soul. And that which came from God, in that peculiar way, returns to God. “The spirit of man goeth upward,” while “the spirit of the beast goeth downward to the earth.” “The dust,” indeed, “returns to the earth as it was,” but “the spirit to God who gave it.”

Mark, dear reader, these two returns; “dust to dust,” “the spirit to God.” Is the latter ever once said of beasts? Does not the whole sentence prove to demonstration that man has some better part, given of God, more immediately than the body, and which returns to God, while the spirit of the beast goes downward to the earth? In a word, that the soul of man is in every way abundantly distinct from the soul of the beast.

A writer of some notoriety among those we are speaking of, goes further still in his zeal against the doctrine of the soul’s immortality.

He contends that a “living soul” is nothing else than a “natural body.” He argues it from 1 Cor. xv., and, that I may do him justice, I quote his argument in full. “Writing about body, the Apostle says, ‘There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body.’ But he does not content himself with simply declaring this truth; he goes further, and proves it by quoting the words of Moses, saying, ‘For so it is written, The first man Adam was made into a living soul,’ and then adds, ‘the last Adam into a spirit giving life.’ The proof of the Apostle’s proposition, that there is a natural body as distinct from a spiritual body, lies in the testimony that Adam was made into a *living soul*; shewing that he considered a natural or animal body, and a living soul as one and the same thing. If he did not, then there was no proof in the quotation of what he had affirmed.” (Elpis. Israel, p. 28.)

This is about the most extraordinary piece of argument, upon so serious a subject, with which I am acquainted. Especially, coupled as it is with a mis-quotation of Scrip-

ture in its support. The Apostle does not say, “*For* so it is written,” but “and”; meaning not to prove his statement by the passage produced, but only to show its harmony with other parts of the word. If a natural body *suit*ed one that was made a living soul, a spiritual body suited one who was made a quickening spirit. But all Scripture confutes the idea that a natural body and a living soul are one. Take only the verse before mentioned, “Everything *wherein* there was a living soul.” Could you say *WHEREIN* there was a natural body? It is simply an absurdity, and having mentioned it, we may leave it as such.

That the soul of man is distinct from the body, a multitude of passages plainly prove. So distinct are they, that to kill the one, leaves untouched the other, as a familiar passage shows: “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.” Plainly this is something that is not the body; and death is not the end of it—it lives beyond that.

I return to look at the distinction between “soul” and “spirit.” We have seen that even a beast is stated to have a living soul. And, in man, it is throughout Scripture spoken of as that part of his inner being which is connected with his purely animal propensities. It is the seat of his passions, instincts, appetites. “As for me I humbled my *soul* with *fasting*.” “Hungry and thirsty their soul fainted in them.” “Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat.” “If he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry.” “All her people sigh, they seek bread, they have given their pleasant things for meat to *relieve the soul*.” “I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.” A concordance will shew a number of other instances.

These things are never said of the spirit, which is the seat of the *mind*; the loftier part of man’s immortal nature. So, too, there is an adjective derived ($\psi\upsilon\chi\iota\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ from $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$) from this word soul, the use of which affords further proof of the distinction that I speak of. It is used just six times in the New Testament. Twice, Jas. iii. 15, Jude 19, it is translated “sensual.”

Three times it is used in 1 Cor. xv., in the expression "a natural," or, if you please, animal "body,"—a body governed by the senses,—and once in 1 Cor. ii. 14, "the natural man"; in the same way, a man governed by his senses—temporal and sensible things—and rising no way higher. Alas, I know that even the spirit in man naturally is debased, and the mind, naturally, but a fleshly mind. The expressions plainly, however, give us the use of the term—shew us the soul of man as the seat of the senses, passions and appetites which relate to the body.

And surely this is another great argument against the views of annihilationists, that even such like of the lower instincts of man, many of which he really possesses only in common with the beasts, are never referred in Scripture to the body, never spoken of as the result of organisation merely of the body, as these men say, but ARE uniformly referred to the soul. And that even the beasts that possess them have also within them a living—I do not say an *immortal*, but a *living*—soul. While, with regard to man, this living soul *is* immortal, as we have already seen, for they who "kill the body," as our Lord says, "*cannot kill the soul.*"

Let us now look at the use of the word *πνευμα* or spirit. As before said, it is often put indifferently with soul or *ψυχη* for man's immortal part. When distinguished from it however, it is uniformly characterised as the seat of the reason, or mind, and *not* (as in the last instance) the senses, or appetites. Such passages as those just cited, cannot be found in connection with it. Debased and earthly in fallen man indeed it is; yet it is that part in him, which, if any, retains for him some feeble degree of likeness to his Maker. It is that, too, which governs and inspires the rest of his being, as we say a man's spirit is so and so,—meaning his temper and deportment which are governed by his spirit.

Now, as I remarked before, there are two theories by which men try to set aside the Scripture with regard to this. The less subtle of the two makes of the spirit of man mere breath, deriving the argument (if it can be called such) from this being the acknowledged meaning

of the original word in many passages in Scripture. The other speaks of it as a kind of all pervading principle or element, the instrument used of God for giving life to material bodies; thus belonging solely to God, and no part really of man, though for a time lent him; but which returns again to God unchanged, at death. The advocates of this theory, moreover, contend that man is never in Scripture identified with his spirit, but everywhere with the body; and they gravely tell us how Joseph was embalmed and put in a coffin in Egypt; how Moses died and the Lord buried him in a valley over against Bethpeor, and how Peter, standing up at Pentecost with the eleven, declared to all his hearers that David was not ascended into the heavens, but was dead and buried, and his sepulchre remaining unto that day.

A very brief examination will suffice to shew how thoroughly unreliable are all these statements.

In the first place, that the spirit of man is not a *mere* communication from God, given to inspire the lifeless clay, one passage of Scripture alone will prove. "The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel, saith the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and *formeth the spirit of man within him*" (Zech. xii. 1). Is that a mere communication? Is it not a *creation*? and numbered with the other grand creations of God, as of equal, or more importance than "stretching forth the heavens, and laying the foundations of the earth." The spirit of man is therefore, we cannot be wrong in saying, something very specially belonging to him. As I have before said, it forms his whole character.

"Poor in spirit,"—"of a contrite spirit,"—"a meek and quiet spirit,"—"a perverse rebellious spirit," and such like expressions continually recurring, mark how perfectly the spirit gives its character to a man, and is that to which he owes everything of moral individuality, yet after all no part of him? A principle of life common to all *could* give no distinctiveness to any; and there could be no proof, I believe, stronger of the spirit being indeed of the very essence of the man, than that this distinctiveness it *does* give.

But we are warranted in going further still, "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" All intelligence is thus referred to it. If this, then, be not something in the truest sense belonging to him, I know not what can belong. Formed within man by his Maker, giving him intelligence, characterising, individualising him; and yet no part of him! But I go further: Man is identified with his spirit in the language of Scripture, not once or twice, but constantly. It is its common phraseology; so far from man being everywhere identified with his body, wherever the inspired writers speak their own faith, and to faith, it is invariably the reverse. "Before I go hence." "I will endeavour that after my decease (*εξοδου*, departure) ye may have these things in remembrance." "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my *departure* is at hand." "Having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." Take a slightly different class of expressions. "We that are in this tabernacle do groan." "Not that we would be unclothed." "At home in the body." "Absent from the body." "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle." "Whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell."

Let me ask anyone possessed only of common fairness, with which, body or spirit, is man identified in these expressions? Is it spirit or body that goes hence, departs, puts off this tabernacle? Is it the body or spirit which is spoken of as "in the body," "absent from the body," clothed or unclothed with it? Would a materialist, of any kind, be at a loss to know whether he were in the body or out of the body,—at least according to his own theory that the body is all? I shall leave my reader to settle these questions with himself, and also another question still, as to whether it be ignorance only, or dishonesty, which says that man is everywhere identified in Scripture with his body, never with his spirit. Meanwhile, without meaning to weary him, I must direct his attention to another proof; "Moses died and was buried by the Lord in a valley over against Bethpeor." None knew of his sepulchre, but we have the express statement of the word as to the fact: "Moses died and

was buried." How came he to the Mount of Transfiguration with one who had never seen death—not raised, mark, for Jesus Himself was the first to open the graves, the First fruits, and First begotten from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. How came Moses there, and how comes Scripture to speak of these two (in the eyes of some in the present day) strange associates, the dead man and the living one, in that simple way, "two *men*, which were *Moses* and *Elias*?" Blessed be God for this sight, for this association of the living and the dead, — for this converse, this communion of the unseen world—we may not fear to call it now the world of *spirits*,—which we have been made privy to. We know now what it is to depart and be with Christ, which is far better;—that it is not annihilation,—not unconsciousness;—that it is such a state that in comparison of this we might desire, like Peter, to build tabernacles and stay there where we might be participators in its blessedness.

Man is then, in the word, identified with his spirit. A disembodied spirit even is called a man, appears and holds converse with living men, and is seen "in glory."

It is objected, however, that this was a vision. And because the Lord said, "Tell the *vision* to no man," as the disciples came down with Him from the Mount, they argue, we can make no use of it to establish a point of this kind. But the word "vision" used there (*ὄραμα*) is simply a "thing seen," no matter where or how. The Lord's words are, "Tell what you have seen to no man"—nothing more than this. And if you look into the narrative of the circumstances (Luke ix.), it will be seen that the transfiguration was no vision in the sense they use the word. The disciples did not see it when they were asleep, but when they were awake. And more—the thing itself took place before they saw it at all, while they were asleep, and could not see it; and only "when they were awake they saw His glory." Lastly, supposing even (what is not the case) the whole were a mere dream or vision, still the argument remains. For in it certainly the death of Jesus, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem, was contemplated as a future thing. And,

therefore, the vision of Moses was either deceptive or it was that of a man “absent from the body”—*after* death, and *before* resurrection! Any way, we obtain what we want; but, in fact, the transfiguration was no visionary thing, as I have proved before; we cannot mistake that, if we have the least confidence in the language of the word.

Man is then identified with his spirit. A spirit absent from the body is come to assure us of the fact, that they who kill the body are not able to kill the soul, that it survives the body, and (in the case of a believer) abides in happy consciousness and personal communion with the Lord. But this leads us to a distinct part of our subject, and one which requires a fuller and more detailed examination.

Before we go on, however, to consider the Scriptures which speak of the soul in a state separate from the body, we must look briefly at some further objections which are here brought against such separate existence.

In the first place, there is the question as to the conditional character of immortality as found in the word. Men say it is held out always as conditional, in the way of hope or reward; and they argue, justly enough were the premises ascertained, that if it be the reward of faith, or conditional upon anything, it could not be that which every man possesses.

But Scripture never speaks of it as conditional. The passage brought forward sometimes to prove this is a mere blind; and men pretending to be versed in Greek should know it. Yet we *do* hear Rom. ii. 7 quoted as decisive: “To them that seek for glory and honour and *immortality*.” This last word here is not a proper translation of the original word. It should be “incorruption” (*αφθαρσια*). Now this is only applied in the word to God, or to the portion of the saints in resurrection, except when figuratively used, as we use it when we talk of “incorruptible” integrity, and so forth. It is used just fifteen times in the New Testament. Twice of God, (Rom. i. 23) “The glory of the incorruptible God”; and (1 Tim. i. 17) “The King, eternal, immortal (or incorruptible), invisible.” Once to our reward (1 Cor. ix. 25)

“They do it for a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible.” Five times of the resurrection-body to the believer (1 Cor. xv. 42, 50, 52, 54) “Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption,” etc. Once to our inheritance (1 Pet. i. 14) “An inheritance incorruptible, undefiled,” etc. Once to the word of God (1 Pet. i. 23) “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God.” Three times figuratively (Eph. vi. 24) “Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in *sincerity*.” Titus ii. 7: “In doctrine showing uncorruptness.” 1 Peter iii. 4: “The hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible.” And lastly, the word occurs in 2 Tim. i. 10: “Who has abolished death, and brought life and *immortality* (incorruptibility) to light by the Gospel.”

Thus it never is applied to man, saint or sinner, as a *whole*, nor to his soul or spirit. The resurrection-state of incorruption — (the wicked are raised, but not raised incorruptible) — is, if you please, conditional. It belongs only to the child of God. Immortality of soul belongs to all men.

But it is still objected to this that “God only hath immortality,” as 1 Tim. vi. 16 says; and this surely excludes it emphatically from man. I answer, Yes; in the same sense in which it excludes it also from the angels of God. Are *they* immortal then, or are they not? This is just the reason why I never speak of man,—I would not of angels—as *naturally* immortal. “God only hath” it, as what belongs to Himself. Men, and angels too, have it not in *themselves*. They are not independent of Him. They subsist surely eternally, but only by Him “who upholdeth all things by the word of His power.” When we speak of man being immortal, we only speak of God’s revealed purpose about him. The text says nothing about what man is in God’s purpose, but about what is natural to him—and surely it is natural to a creature to be dependent. And that for all things: life and every thing else. But this is as true of the angels as of man. If it implies necessarily that a single individual among men will ever as a fact cease to exist, it implies that all men and angels will.

Considering these objections as disposed of, we meet with others in the shape of a great array of texts taken out of the Old Testament, and mainly from three books of it, viz., Job, Psalms, and Ecclesiastes; these prove to us, they say, what death is. I quote, as the only fair way, the most forcible of them. Thus in Job iii. 13, 19, "For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept; then had I been at rest Or as an hidden untimely birth *I had not been*, as infants which never saw the light." Again, chap. x. 18, "O that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me; *I should have been as though I had not been.*" Again, chap. xx. 6—8, of the wicked, "Though his excellency mount up to the heavens . . . *Yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung*; they that have seen him shall say, Where is he?" etc. So in the Psalms, xxxix. 13: "O spare me a little that I may recover my strength, before I go hence *and be no more.*" And so again, Ps. vi. 5, "In death there is no remembrance of Thee; in the grave who shall give Thee thanks?" And the answer to that, Isaiah xxxviii. 18: "*For the dead cannot praise Thee*, death cannot celebrate Thee; they that go down into the pit *cannot* hope for Thy truth. The living, *the living*, he shall praise Thee." And yet once more, Ps. cxv. 17, "The dead praise not the Lord; neither any that go down into silence." Ps. cxlvi. 3, 4, "His breath goeth forth; he returneth to his earth; and in that very day *his thoughts perish.*" Ps. xlix. 19, 20, "They shall go to the generation of their fathers; *they shall never see light*; man that is in honour, and understandeth not, *is like the beasts that perish.*" Finally, I quote one passage from Ecclesiastes, chap. ix. 5, 6, "The living know that they shall die; but *the dead know not anything*; neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten, and their love and their hatred and their envy *are now perished*. Neither have they any more a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun."

These texts are confidently claimed as decisive of the matter. After quoting them one writer says: "This host of Scripture testimony is conclusive. It decisively

settles the point against all philosophical speculation. It shows that death is a total eclipse of being—a complete obliteration of our conscious selves from God's universe, and thus establishes the doctrine of the resurrection upon the firm foundation of *necessity*, for in this view a future life is only attainable by resurrection." (Twelve Lectures, Lect. III., p. 43).

I will place one fact before my reader, and then leave him again to judge as to the perfect honesty of such statements. The fact is that passages lie intermingled with these quoted, which taken absolutely (as this person takes these) would *do away* the resurrection.

Take some parts of the former passages:—Eccles.; "Neither have they any more a reward" (i. e. the dead); "neither have they *any more* a portion *for ever* in anything that is done under the sun." Of all the dead this is spoken. Again in Job vii. 9, "As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall *come up no more.*" So again, chap. x. 18—21 (I quote the first part for the sake of the connection), "Wherefore then hadst Thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh that I had given up the ghost and no eye had seen me! I should have been *as though I had not been:*" a part quoted with so much emphasis by these writers. Now read on—"I should have been carried from the womb to the grave. Are not my days few? Cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little *before I go* WHENCE I SHALL NOT RETURN, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death; a land of darkness as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death without any order, and where the light is as darkness." And so he says again, chap. xvi. 22, "When a few years are come, then I shall go the way *whence I shall not return.*"

Now what do such writers as the one above quoted say to this? What do they say to the fact that side by side with passages which they quote as conclusive as to there being no consciousness or separate being for the soul of man at death we find passages which, taken *precisely in the same way*, are just as conclusive against the truth of resurrection? The truth is, they say

nothing, for they seem to be utterly unaware of them. Yet there they are, and how shall they be accounted for? Shall we say, and say it of the dead universally, with Ecclesiastes, "That there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever"? That the dead "have not any more a reward"? "No portion for ever in anything done under the sun"? or with Job, that "he that goeth down to the grave comes up no more"? That there is no resurrection therefore, and no future reward? We might just as well say this, surely as that "the dead know not anything," etc., taking these as precise and absolute expressions.

But if you say that the doctrine of the resurrection is taught plainly in abundance of passages, I answer so is the immortality of the human soul. Both these things are true. But where is the consistency of retaining one, while we deny the other upon the warrant of expressions which, taken exactly in the same way, would equally deny either?

But still, what of these passages? They are popular expressions, similar to many in constant use among ourselves: true, if looked at from the stand point of him who utters them, but not meant to be carried farther. We say still, as to other things, "the sun rises" and "the sun goes down," though astronomy has persuaded all of us that it is the earth revolves around the sun, not the sun around the earth. So we speak of all the souls on board a ship perishing, etc. though not believers in annihilation. So too the inspired writers can speak of Moses dying and being *buried*, and yet show us afterwards this same Moses, a disembodied spirit, having but put off his tabernacle, in converse with the Lord. So too of Enoch, it is said in the same way, "He was not." Could anything be clearer according to these men as to his annihilation? but no, "He was not, for *God took him*," and "He was translated that he should not see death."

Thus the question is answered. If any one still has doubt, let him read carefully the passages with their contexts; let him mark how that context invariably speaks of the world, of worldly prosperity, or the loss of

it; how they are never the *revelations of God*, but the language and experiences of men, even where inspired men, and I surely believe his doubts will vanish, if only he be subject to a guidance never denied to men seeking it; *but denied*—mark that—by most of those who hold the views I am speaking of, the guidance of the Spirit of God. And now there is one thing I would remind my reader of. If death be extinction, ceasing to exist, the wicked no more truly perish than the child of God himself; and this these people themselves say: all lay down their being at death, whether saints or sinners, and in the strictest sense “are not” until the resurrection.

But what saith the Scripture? “Verily, verily, I say unto you”—mark, this *is* revelation, the absolute statement of One who had perfect knowledge, the Son of God Himself—“he that heareth My words and believeth on Him that sent Me hath *everlasting life*, and shall not come into condemnation, but *is* passed from death unto life.” These are important words.

It is singular enough that these very men contend zealously that “eternal life” means “eternal existence,” and argue from this being the portion of the righteous, that others will not eternally exist. Now, according to their own showing, our Lord then here affirms of the believer that he *has* everlasting existence. And lest it should be said, as it has been said, this “has” means “*will have*,” He answers that by saying that such a believer “*is* passed from death unto life.” Words could not more positively affirm that this is a present thing. So the apostle John writes of the opposite state: “No murderer hath eternal life *abiding in him*.” There is remarkable force in this expression. The believer *has* eternal life abiding in him. And if the life he has be eternal, how can he pass ever out of being?

But “eternal life” is not simply eternal existence. It *implies* that, surely; but the wicked who never have eternal life will exist for ever. Eternal life is what a man receives in regeneration, and by virtue of which he becomes a “child of God.” Faith in Christ is the evidence, on our Lord’s own testimony, of having passed from death to life. He has been new born—received a

life from God: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." Physically, in the flesh, he was alive before; but without *this* life therefore, dead, in that sense, while he lived. But this life received from God is in its own nature eternal. In this way we see that eternal life is not simply eternal existence. It is a thing given of God to men while here; so that if they have it not, they are said not to have life at all. Yet they exist. And as here, so in the judgment. The wicked have not eternal life, but exist, and exist for ever.

In fact, the whole idea of death held by materialists is completely contrary to Scripture. The Scriptural idea is separation, never extinction. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and *die*, it abideth alone; but if it *die*, it bringeth forth much fruit." "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it *die*." Here the change in the buried seed is called both by our Lord and the apostle *death*. But is it extinction? Is the grain of wheat *annihilated* in order to its bringing forth fruit? How foolish were such a question! Yet there is decay; there is corruption; and there is the separation of what decays from the living germ which springs up and brings forth fruit. How like the separation of the decaying body from the spirit, which is the Scriptural definition, we may say, of the death of man. How like, too, to that spiritual death in which the soul, separate from Him in whose favour alone is life, corrupts morally in "trespasses and sins." The analogy is perfect. And this is the Scripture use of that great mystery, death. But the buried seed *exists*. The soul dead in sins *exists*. And man separated from the body *exists* likewise. In any use of the word in Scripture the idea of the cessation of existence never enters.

The way is now fully prepared for us to look at the passages which speak of the soul or spirit in its disembodied state. A brief glance at these will end this hasty sketch of an all-important doctrine. I have already spoken of the case of Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration. I turn now to other, and if it were possible, clearer instances.

The belief of the Pharisees, however it had come about in the face of the (as is imagined) plain statements to the contrary—all found in the Old Testament—is acknowledged by our adversaries to have been on this point the same as our own. This is, indeed, beyond question; but it is exceedingly important, too, in connection with one text which we now come to examine. Paul, in Acts xxiii. 6, standing up before the Jewish council, identified himself doctrinally with the Pharisees, “Men and brethren,” he said, “I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.”

That you may not imagine the resurrection was the only point of identity in the faith of the Apostle and of the Pharisees, the inspired historian goes on to give some further points. “For the Sadducees say there is no resurrection; *neither angel, NOR SPIRIT*; but the Pharisees confess both.” These are two more points in which the Christian accorded with a large part of his adversaries. The Pharisees confessed—the very word implies it, for we do not speak of *confessing* what is false—the Pharisees confessed the truth as to these. In what way they held the doctrine of the spirit is clear from what follows: “If an angel or a spirit hath spoken to him,” they said, referring to the voice of Jesus which Paul had heard on his Damascus journey where grace met him, “let us not fight against God.” In fact, we know abundantly what was the doctrine of the Pharisees on this point, and with them Paul identifies himself.

Not only Paul; another did so, who is of much higher authority than even he. Our Lord’s parable of the rich man and Lazarus is acknowledged to be based on Pharisaic sentiments. It is quite plain, too, that it speaks of conscious happiness or misery in the separate state. The only question is—and surely it cannot be a question for any one that knows and loves his Lord—whether He, the living Truth Himself, here sanctioned truth or error. The only thing I say about this is, that those who can doubt about it may and must for me. I care not to say one word to them.

A second time our Lord sanctioned a similar belief

with a precise statement, whether true or not men must again pass judgment if they choose. The passage is in Luke xxiv. 36—39: “And as they thus spake, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, ‘Peace be unto you.’ But they were terrified and affrighted, and *supposed that they had seen a spirit.*^a And He said unto them, Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is *I* Myself; handle Me and see, *for a spirit*^a *hath not flesh and bones*, as ye see Me have!”

Our Lord’s words are here as distinct as possible. Reading their thoughts that what they saw was only the spirit of their deceased Master, He assures them He is no mere spirit, because a “spirit hath not flesh and bones.” Was He speaking of another spirit from what they thought? or what else would the words be than deception if there were no such spirit?

Turning back again a little to the previous chapter, we find still another proof of our doctrine in the well-known words of our Saviour to His dying companion, “To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.” All kinds of attempts have been made to make these words speak a language consistent with annihilation doctrine. It has been said that the connection should be, “I say to thee to-day,” instead of “to-day thou shalt be with Me,” though anyone must see that this is unmeaning absurdity. Others say that “to-day” (*σημερον*) means “in *that* day,” i.e., the day of Christ’s coming in His Kingdom, which is quite untrue, for *σημερον* simply means “to-day” and nothing else. But the grand argument used is derived from our Lord’s words to Mary after his resurrection (John xx.), “Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go and tell My brethren I ascend unto My Father, and unto your Father, and to My God and your God.” Whence they

^a Spirit in both these places is the ordinary word *πνευμα*. Men try to insert instead of it, on the authority of Griesbach, in the first instance *φαντασμα*, which means a phantom or appearance. But both Griesbach and every other editor *reject* this reading. In the 39th verse no other reading was ever thought of.

argue that the spirit of Jesus could not have been in heaven with the thief before this. But evidently the words to Mary were spoken as the Risen One. He had not presented Himself before God with the spoils of death. It matters not where His spirit had been, for that would have been more as conquered of death than conqueror. Now only in resurrection could He take His place there *for us*, "leading captivity captive, and giving gifts unto men." The spirit of Jesus had been in Paradise because *He said so*. His words are incapable of another meaning, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." And as to where that is, the Apostle, speaking of his being caught up to the third heaven, turns round to us immediately, and calls that Paradise: "I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago (whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth), such a man caught up to the *third heaven*; and I knew such a man (whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth), how that he was caught up into *Paradise*, and heard unspeakable things, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

Turn we now to still another proof. We have had the faith of Paul, the doctrine of the Lord, and now we come to the faith of the early Church: a three-fold cord which is not quickly broken. In Acts xii. we have the record of Herod's persecution. James having been slain, Peter is next taken and shut up in prison; but prayer having been made to God for him, an angel at midnight opens his prison doors. His reception at the house of Mary is thus related: "And when he considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, whose name was Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, 'Thou art mad;' but she constantly affirmed that it was even so. *Then said they, 'It is his Angel.'*"

We could not have more clearly set before us the faith

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of the early Church. I shall not comment upon it, for comment is needless. This use of the word angel, however, for the human Spirit, throws light upon another passage, sometimes considered an obscure one. It is found, Matth. xviii. 10: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." That is to say, the little ones—the babes these men despise—for whom they say there is (in common with idiots, and some of the heathen) *no resurrection*—their spirits are, through the blood shed for them, even *before* resurrection, in converse with their God; and our Lord says of them expressly, "Take heed, despise them not."

I have done; it only remains to sum up briefly the doctrine of the Word.

We have seen that even the beast has a living soul, the Spirit of God thus teaching us to refer all the *self-government*, as we might call it, even of a beast, *not* to organization, *not* to the body, but to the soul.

Man has not only a living but an *immortal* soul, for they who kill the body are not able to kill it.

To this soul, or the spirit, are referred all passions, instincts, appetites, disposition—all moral individuality.

Man is identified with this soul or spirit wherever faith is speaking or spoken to. The *man* goes hence, that is, the Spirit departs to God.

Immortality is never in Scripture conditionally offered to man.

Eternal life is more than eternal existence. It is a thing abiding in the regenerate now. The unbeliever is even now in this sense dead; yet he exists.

Death is not, in Scripture, extinction; the seed dies and is not extinct; man dies, and his spirit goes to God.

Finally, we have looked at the state of the spirits departed. Twice the veil of the unseen world has been removed for our instruction. We have had the Lord's testimony, the Church's, Paul's, and all is perfect harmony with our view of Moses. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord."

May He give us true wisdom and subjection to His Word.

F. W. G.

N^o. XXV.

THE A. P. U. C.

THE origin of the Crimean war is said to have been in a squabble between some members of the Greek Church and some of the Roman Church, as to the custody of the keys of that which they designate the Holy Sepulchre, where the Lord was laid. The Emperor of Russia, as head of the Greek Church, and the Emperor of the French, as the Eldest Son of the Roman Catholic Church, thus found a pretext, the one against the other. The tendency of that war was to bring the East more into notice, and perhaps, in the course of God's providence, to give development to principles at work in Europe, political and ecclesiastical, beyond what many think. Protestant England took part with Roman Catholic France, and had to submit to be dragged in the wake of the Emperor's plans. But Protestant England had been busy, with other Protestant countries, about the Holy Land before that; and the proof of it, clear to all, was the Bishopric of Jerusalem.

The speculations of many minds were active as to the results of a bishopric in Jerusalem, and a bishopric upheld too, not by England only, but by European Protestantism as such. But my thoughts are upon another matter, connected with the Land too, and indirectly connected, more than at first sight may appear, with the hierarchical system of this country. The A. P. U. C. is that to which I refer. What is the A. P. U. C?

I answer,—from “SERMONS ON THE RE-UNION OF CHRISTENDOM, by Members of the Roman Catholic, Oriental, and Anglican communions.”^a The title-page has “Beati pacifici” as its motto; and the statement, “Printed for Certain Members of the Association for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom;” so that A. P. U. C. is the short for *Association for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom*, the first letters

^a Joseph Masters & Son, Aldersgate-street, London, 1864.

of the four words, Association, Promotion, Unity, Christendom.

Sermon XIX. (on "The A. P. U. C.," signed A.) may as well stand as my introduction to the subject. The italics are mine.

SERMON XIX.

THE A. P. U. C.

"In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.—Amen.

"We speak to you on this occasion of a wise and charitable work which was set on foot in the metropolis of Great Britain some years ago to bring about a corporate Re-union between those separate churches, which, taken together, make up what is commonly regarded as the Christendom of the present day. It is a work of love, in which the only work done is the powerful labour of daily prayer and intercession. *The orison which is used is taken from the Sacred Mass, added to which a Pater-noster is said daily.* The founders of this excellent Association—an Association which breathes in its very address the messages of good-will and of peace in one well-blended sentiment,—have displayed great wisdom by wisely resolving to pledge those who joined themselves in the work to the policy of carefully avoiding needless disputes and argumentative frivolities with regard to doctrinal differences. With them these are not discussed; they are not called upon to dwell either on the cause or the fact of division, but on its abundant and increasing evils. They are not solicited to attach themselves to this political section or to the other, to this ecclesiastical school or to that, nor are they expected to accept ecclesiastical opinions as of dogmatic force; but they are asked, and they voluntarily oblige themselves so to do when they join the society, to pray simply that, when Providence may think well to restore the peace and unity of past generations, unjust prejudices and misrepresentations on their part may be unknown. We are informed under his own hand, by a Right Reverend Brother of the mother country, who is himself a member of the Association, of the many important objects which the Re-unionists are enabled to bring to pass, of which evidence is afforded. And it is pointed out to us by others who are accurately informed, that the blessing of the ALMIGHTY appears to rest on their charitable labours.

Now surely we may hope, when we see such excellent intentions so well set forth to the Christian public, that great good may be produced by what we must all admit to be *at least a very remarkable movement in the Established Church of Great Britain.* Our separated Brethren, if we understand them rightly, appear to desire what they call a "corporate re-union" with the mother Church, *with the mother and mistress of all Churches, the Holy Catholic and Roman Church.* And from the nature of their publications which we have examined, there is little difficulty in

understanding in what manner they would wish to see their desires carried into operation. *They speak with respectful and affectionate regard of the British saints, of the great and holy Saint Thomas, of the Sacrifice of the Mass, of the blessed Mother of our Lord; while their publications are filled with commendable defences of the Catholic religion, ably planned and judiciously carried out, such as would do no discredit to any Catholic theologian.*

“What, then, should be the attitude of Catholics with regard to all this? I have little hesitation in publicly declaring that our attitude should be one of deep thankfulness to the Almighty Source of all mercies for a fresh and apparently large outpouring of His Spirit. Those who were called to curse have blessed us again and again. Those who were aliens in fact as well as in spirit have proved themselves—or, at least, are far on the way to prove themselves—children of Holy Church and followers of our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Deo gratias!* the Lord be praised! Added to this, therefore, we should take heed that no unkind words nor any unnecessary fault-finding be made use of to those who are thus labouring for so blessed an object, and are proving themselves to be what both they and we should wish them in deed and in truth to become. We should further remember that for Great Britain the miseries of division and heresy were brought about by those who denied their Lord, and by others who left Him and fled away. The schism of the sixteenth century was, if it may be allowed us to call it so, a corporate act. The people effected it, because they were prepared for it, and willed it so to be. Kings and ministers would have been impotent for evil had priests and prelates of a previous generation been watchful to sound an alarm. Still less could such evils have been brought in, if the practices of religious duties had not given place to a mere formal profession of faith. And deep as was the mischief, and wide spread, yet may we be thankful that the unbelief of Geneva and the rationalism of Germany have little hold over the British people.

“Therefore, in bringing these remarks on this interesting subject to a close, I would counsel a kindly watchfulness, an earnest sympathy, a charitable bearing, and that many thanksgivings should be made. Prayer is the centre of the Association’s life. Without prayer it would be but the bare scaffolding of some well-designed fabric, as yet unbuilt; but having prayer for its great means, and “the restoration of intercommunion and peace” for its aim, it thus possesses, of its own very nature, a divine property, of which none shall be able to rob it, and by this means acquires a power of working which, in God’s way and time, may enable its promoters—whom we bless with a divine benediction—to reverse by degrees the evils of past separation, and to restore in the end the Visible Reunion they desire.

P. 307–311.

“A.”

*Further remarks:—*1. The work is dedicated (in Latin) to Pius, by divine providence Pope, Bishop of the

Apostolic Chair; and to Sophronius, Archbishop of Constantinople (both of whom are blessed and most holy); but also to Charles Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of all England (he is most honored and most reverend)—in hope of the future union of the flock of Christ. (This pious breathing is added): “Alas! how long internally divided, and in the expectation of the universal diffusion of the Catholic faith throughout the whole world, which may the Lord God Almighty grant.—Amen.”

The Association is seven years old (p. 9 of preface); contains about seven thousand names.

“The Association was originated in the year 1857. On the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, certain Roman Catholics, Greeks, and Anglicans met in the parish of S. Clement Danes, Strand, in the city of Westminster,—having that morning previously, at their respective altars, asked Almighty God’s blessing upon their contemplated plans,—and after duly arranging its organisation, and drawing up the well-known paper of the Association, thirty-four persons formally enrolled themselves members. A dignitary of the “Scottish Episcopal Church” was in the chair. The following resolution was moved by a distinguished Roman Catholic layman, seconded by a well-known clergyman of the Church of England, supported by members of the Greek Church and others, and was unanimously adopted:—

“That a society, to be called the Association for the Promoting the Unity of Christendom, be now formed for united prayer that Visible Unity may be restored to Christendom; and that the Paper now before this meeting be sanctioned, printed, and circulated, as the basis upon which this Society desires to act.”

“Since that day the Association has steadily increased, as will be seen from the following statement:—

“On September 8, 1858, a year after its formation, there had enrolled themselves members 675

“On Sept. 8, 1859 (in addition)	833
” 1860	”	1,060
” 1861	”	1,007
” 1862	”	1,393
” 1863	”	1,202
” 1864	”	929 ^b

Thus making a total of 7,099

“Of these the great majority are members of the Church of

^b “The record for the present year is incomplete, many of the local secretaries not having made any returns.

England; but there are nearly a thousand belonging to the Latin communion, and about three hundred members of the Eastern Church. The paper of the Association has been circulated far and wide; about thirty-nine thousand copies in English have been already distributed. It has been translated into Latin, French, Greek, and Italian, and sent abroad in various ways and by different channels. Local secretaries, both at home and in foreign countries, are being increased, and many correspondents are labouring energetically, and with considerable success, in the cause. The Association has been approved in the highest ecclesiastical quarters, both among Latins, Anglicans, and Greeks. *The Holy Father gave his blessing to the scheme when first started, and repeated that blessing with a direct and kindly commendation to one of the English secretaries, who was more recently granted the honour of a special interview. The Ex-Patriarch of Constantinople and other Eastern Prelates have approved of the Association, and so likewise have several Bishops, both Anglican and Roman Catholic, in England, Ireland, and Scotland, as well as on the Continent and in America. And no wonder; for the work proposed is simply to pray for the restoration of Visible Unity to Christendom, and to ask continually for the blessings of peace.* (Preface, p. x.—xiii.)

Sermon I. (Our Lord's Continued Presence a Pledge of Future Unity, signed H. H.) begins with the Emperor Constantine's appeal to the Synod assembled at Tyre, A.D. 335, commanding the prelates to hasten to Jerusalem. The decree was obeyed, and the representatives of the Macedonians, Pannonians, Mœsians, Persians, Bithynians, Thracians, Cilicians, Cappadocians, Syrians, Mesopotamians, Phœnicians, Arabians, Egyptians, Libyans, &c., completed the reverend chorus; such was "*the multitude which flocked to the consecration of the Church round which the sympathies of the greatest number of Christian men centre, and in which they converge—that sacred building which embraces within its precincts the spot where the Saviour of the world suffered death, and also the tomb from which He rose victorious over death.*" (Page 2.)

"On this spot we may see, as it were in a glass, the fortunes of Christendom reflected. Here, during the long depression of the Church under the powers of the world, the greatest pains had been taken to efface those memorials, so precious in the eyes of Christians; first, by heaping upon the spot piles of earth and rubbish, and ultimately by building upon the mound a temple for the impure worship of Venus. Here then, on that central spot of Christendom, was a vivid representation of what was going on throughout the entire Christian Church. At Rome,

the metropolis, the Church was worshipping underground, in the darkness of the catacombs; whilst above, all the impurities and impieties of heathenism were celebrated in open day, and with the additional zest derived from its opposition, now open and declared, to the spreading religion of Christ our Saviour.

The Church, however, had now at length passed that phase of its existence. The Emperor Licinius was subdued by his Christian coadjutor, A.D. 323. In three years from that time, it was revealed to the piety of S. Helena where she was to find the memorials of our Blessed Lord, which from henceforth were designed to exercise so abiding an influence over Christendom. Having served her generation, the pious empress was summoned to her rest; her work remained to testify to her piety, and now, seven years after her death, the spots to which she had directed the workmen having been in the meantime enclosed in a noble building—worthy of God, writes the historian, and of royal magnificence,—all that man could do was completed, and the imperial summons collected for its consecration the august assemblage described by Eusebius.” (P. 3—4).

Then come (p. 4) the strange admissions: “Athanasius was under the ban of that very Council. . . . And though we know that *all* who took part in the proceedings were not heretical, yet the Council at which they had most of them been assisting was so. Arianism was for the time triumphant, and where but at the sepulchre of Christ should it show that it was so? Piety caused the Church to be built, but heresy must needs consecrate it to His service, whom it denied to be truly God! (P. 4).

“He, too, Who suffered so many of the heretical opinions to be represented on the day of the consecration, yet confided to the hands of His true servant Macarius, the actual dedication of that Church which was to last as long as the world itself, and long after that special error which then prevailed was laid asleep. On that day, then, 13th of September, 335, He came down, in answer to the prayers addressed to Him, again to resume possession of that house which was His, and had been occupied, in token of His right, for forty hours, three hundred years before. He accepted the sacrifice of commemoration offered for the first time on the newly raised altar, and He appeared, notwithstanding the shocking divisions of the time, which may even make ours appear tolerable, as the future cementer of all schism, in the Sacrament of Unity.

“No longer now was the tomb empty. It could not be said, as on the morn of the Resurrection, “He is not here,” for the whole house was filled with His glory. No longer was the Cross concealed underground, but was reared in the face of all men, to

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proclaim the triumph of Him Who, having vanquished death, had raised to new life the world formerly lying dead in sin.^c All things there were full of His Presence, and people from the furthest regions of the known world acknowledged that the Lord had taken up His abode^d in His holy temple, by flocking to worship on the spot consecrated by the memorials of what had there been done for the sins of men, and to assist at the Sacraments, the evidence of His abiding Presence." (P. 6—8).

Pass on to p. 15.

"The multiplication of heathen systems led of necessity to hopeless disorganization; but all separatists from the true Church, who have carried with them a Priesthood and a Sacrifice, have really in possession that which not only enkindles love, but on each repetition also increases and supports it." (P. 15).

Turn now to pages 16 and 17.

"Is Christ, then, still in His holy temple at Jerusalem? Undoubtedly He is. He Who in watchful care preserved the true Cross under the ruins of Jerusalem,—He Who sealed up the tomb wherein He lay for three days, until, three hundred years after, by special revelation He pointed out its site to the mother of the first Christian emperor,—He Who, meantime, tolerated upon that spot the impure worship of the heathen goddess, whose name was a by-word of heinous immorality,—He Who with such fore-knowledge guarded the spot rendered sacred in the eyes of all Christendom, and which exercises, and will continue to do so, the most extensive influence upon Christian souls,—He, be sure, has not given over the temple, which He first condescended to bless fifteen hundred years ago, to the spoiler. Never has proceeded from the high altar in that Church the Voice which did proceed from the holiest place of the temple hard by, "Let us depart hence." Though the powers of hell have done their worst, and intruded themselves into the Very Divine Presence, and have there successfully sown the crop that has sprung up, hatred and variance, emulation and strife, seditions and heresies, yet have they not prevailed. If they could not succeed in defiling that spot by the impure worship thereon celebrated for two hundred years, and if God has, throughout its history down to the present time, still preserved the precious memorials there enshrined from fire, robbery, Mahometan spoliation, and the intestine jealousy of Christians themselves, shall we deny that He still fills that Church with His Presence, and dispenses to those who seek Him in it aright the Sacraments which are to begin and continue the Union between Himself and the members of His Body." (P. 16—17).

In a foot-note a little lower down on page 17, we are told that the dome is now unsafe, that repairs are to be

^c(!!!).

^d(!!!).

undertaken on the responsibilities of Russia and France. "East and West in this case are working in common." It is hard to read such a bare-faced falsification of facts laid as the basis for idolatrous worship with the thought that the writer is an honest man.

Next I open, page 19.

"But if, despite these unseemly separations, which all confess to be indefensible and most profess to deplore, God still continues to reside in His Holy Temple at Jerusalem, and has attracted to Him the hearts of all people; we need not fear that He continues to reside with those who elsewhere carry out the several rites the diversity of which does not absolutely repel Him there." (P. 19.)

Sermon II. (Work for Reunion, signed D. C.).
1. "*Prayer*: it is not powerless. . . . Christ has said that prayer made in His name will be heard; and S. Philip Neri has not hesitated to assert that it is all but omnipotent" (pages 29 and 30). 2. *Self-denial* (p. 30).

"As regards the form it is to assume, I may say that the Baptist's camel's-hair and Anthony's solitude are too severe: the penances of the saints are not likely to be practised. But though the form need not be such as that which pleased S. Rose of Lima, and Blessed Leonard of Port Maurice, yet self-denial can be exercised without long vigils and exhausting fasts. Even divested of every mark of severity, and hidden from the searching eye of daily companions, self-sacrifice may do its work, and that too effectually. It is difficult, however, to state exactly what mortifications may be used as a test of the sincerity of prayer for the great and holy object of union; but it is easy enough to *hint* at them. For instance, a prayer for those who have wronged us; a glass of water left untouched when pressed by thirst to take it; an alms to the poor, an offering to a church, a visit to a lonely invalid,—when frequently and *systematically* practised, and offered along with our prayers for the union of Christendom, cannot but test their sincerity." (P. 31).

What a corrupting of both self-denial and of prayer!

And Sister Emmerich learnt in a vision, "Let thy sufferings teach thee a lesson, and *offer* them to God for all who are separated." (P. 33).

Sermon III. (The Joy of Unity, signed G. A.), "We may well hope that it (the Holy Eucharist) may *propitiate* the Father, and by His blessing kindle anew in her (the Church) her first love, and restore the visible unity which was once her chiefest glory." (P. 44).

“Ere long the half-extinguished spark of ancient heresies burst out into a flame, and the internal corruptions of the Church inspired such men as Wickliffe and Luther and Calvin to form the parricidal idea of setting up a new religion, and making war against their Mother.” (P. 47).

The human mind, away from God and under the pressure of Satan, has felt the need of something to lean upon ; it has thought upon unseen things and their connection with things seen ; and false gods have been the result. But these men, the library of God in their hands, have been *a-thinking*, and have confounded God’s earthly witness in Jerusalem with His Heavenly Witness; flesh and man’s standing in the first Adam they have substituted for the Spirit and the standing of the Saint in the last Adam, and a worldly sanctuary in place of a heavenly one. The stupid senselessness which must result when man trifles with the word of God—to mould and interpret it according to his own notions! Piety, without faith in God’s word as the word of God, and without the guidance of the Holy Ghost, has led them into an imaginary world of their own creation, as unreal so far as God’s word is the test, as their notions are contrary to the faith of God’s elect.

In Sermon IV. (The Church’s Unity; signed H. C.) we have more of rationalistic than of pious error. New *foundations* are introduced. P. 52, “Man must be considered *as one whole*, each individual being but a part of this whole Mankind feels drawn together, for they are the same flesh and blood. They are necessary to each other’s well-being; to separate them is an act of rude violence, since *they are all part of one Adam*,” and p. 56, “For this purpose God sent His Son into the world, that, taking human nature to Himself, He might make it the medium of regeneration *for the rest of the human family*. He, as man, was to be the head of the renewed human nature, and an inexhaustible fountain of regeneration to *all* mankind.” P. 57, “The Church, then, is the mustard-seed of the gospel.” “The Church not only received His (Christ’s) mantle, and a double portion of His spirit, but *became the extension* of

Himself Her life is His life, her wisdom His wisdom, her love His love." P. 64, "The Church offers men also a treasury where each may place in common their merits, their prayers, their offerings, their sacrifices." P. 71, "Power, influence, and wealth are poured into her (the Church's) hands, because she does not seek these things."

In Sermon V. (Unity a Motive of Action and a Pledge of Grace; signed H. N. O.), p. 75, we read of "the nine-fold choir of the angel hierarchy;" p. 86, "God has been pleased to accord to His children's prayers, a power over His own divine will, and made them, so to say, the law of His providence, *the measure of His compassion, the illimitable limit of His love.*"

Sermon VI. (The Blessing of Unity; signed R. F. L.), p. 104, "She (the Church of England) is pledged to no quarrel with the East; no impassable gulf divides her from the West. Still the Catholic Creeds resound in her temples; still the three-fold hierarchy ministers at her altars, still *the one bread is broken, the one Sacrifice presented.*"

Sermon VII. (Reunion our Need and our Desires; has no signature). Sermon VIII. (Visible Reunion a special Necessity), p. 131, "We make the Bible, the written Word of God, the standard of our whole system; not indeed as understood by you or me, this person or that, each one for himself, but as *interpreted by the records of the early Church*, when the remembrance of the New Testament writers was, so to speak, fresh in men's minds, *and the traditions* they had imparted were held fast in their original purity." P. 132, "We have only one rule given us to walk by, one manual of faith, devotion, and practice, to which we are all alike bound to conform—our Book of Common Prayer." P. 138, speaking of the blessings possessed by the Church of England,—“The full Catholic faith, Apostolic order, an edifying ritual, the heavenly nourishment of Christ's body and blood, the ministry of the Holy Ghost *in confirmation, the graces of the lesser Sacraments, the due observance of holy times, communion* with the saints living AND DEPARTED.”

I will not weary my readers by more citations. My object is not to warn them against the errors of the book. Those for whom I write are not of the night.

I have referred to it as showing another proof of the state in which the so-called Church of England now is. What could it do against the writers of the "Essays and Reviews"? What has it done as to Colenso? What can it do as the mother of such an association (or confederacy) as this? It is constrained to be the harbour of refuge and protection to all of these. Being an integral part of the world itself, it cannot purge itself from the works of the flesh or of the mind. A stronger than man rules in it.

The tenth Sermon, "Shall not the Church of England be heard" (signed N.) is, to do her justice, a most wicked libel upon the establishment as set up and as a subject of history.

P. 329, "N.B.—The names of members will be kept strictly private."

There is in the volume one witness who signs himself ✠ D. His paper (though written under shelter of a false view of prophetic truth,—namely, that a millennium of blessing is to set in for the Church down here, after an eventide of persecution and trouble), has some pointed and true words in it. The zeal may be as that of Jehu, but it has a fervour about it which savours of natural honesty, which is more than can be said of the other productions.

John xii. 31: "'Now shall the prince of this world be cast out,' says our Lord. Here is the evil spirit of heathenism ejected from the civilised world. But his rejection is not final. 'With seven other spirits more wicked than himself,' he ultimately regains possession of his once deserted habitation, and 'the latter end' of his victim 'is worse than the first.' Heathenism dies into Christianity, but is revived in a more intensified and blasphemous and diabolical form in *anti-christianity*" (p. 283). Confusion between 'kingdom' and "Church," and ignorance of the difference between 'house' and 'body' are here apparent. But the words—"Heathenism dies into Christianity, but is revived

in a more intensified and blasphemous and diabolical form in ANTI-CHRISTIANITY," are remarkable words, and so are these—"Many seem to think that, if only visible intercommunion in Christendom can be re-established, on whatever terms, all will be well. The world will meekly bow her neck to the yoke of the Cross, and a bright millennial period will be peacefully inaugurated. Ah! they forget that the *evening* precedes the morning, that life only comes through *death*, the *Cross* prepares the *Crown*, the Church *suffers* with Christ before she reigns with Him" (p. 287). So again, "Many seem to imagine that visible unity, at any price, is a great boon. But no! A restored intercommunion based on anything, either *short of*, or *more than*, the One Old 'Faith,' once for all delivered, would be no blessing, but a curse to the Church, a perpetuation of weakness, a deadly enervation and enfeeblement of her real powers" (p. 288).

What God may permit, it is not for us to guess. Certainly, a new central Church, such as the A. P. U. C. proposes, would be "the WHORE" in unclouded simplicity. But that is not my point now; nor are the many signs of the day which seem to point in the same direction. What is the hierarchical establishment, and what is it about, when such things are proposed in it, and are being actively sought after by its members? What is the body corporate which could not deal with the writers of the Essays?—which could not deal with Colenso?—which cannot deal with *this* new form of evil?

. The *italics* are often mine as Editor.

What have I to do down here? To learn to know God better and to serve Him. Entire surrender of all one *is* is what I covet,—surrender to God and to His work. To be an imitator of God as a dear child,—Christ Himself my ensample; that is my calling. I have divine life; I would walk in it, and offer up, all that I am and all that I have, to God, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. He claims me; and to meet His claim is my bounden duty and my highest present privilege.

XXVI.

“THE WORLD.”

THE term “world” occurs in Matthew’s Gospel nine times; in Mark’s three; in Luke’s three; and in John’s seventy-eight times.

In chapter xvii. alone, it occurs nineteen times. This chapter presents us with Jesus Christ, when in principle the world had rejected Him, and was about to crucify Him,—His eyes lifted up to *Heaven*, and His soul pouring out to His Father His thoughts and feelings in prayer concerning *His own* whom He was about to leave. He had come unto Jerusalem, to the people who were to be His nation; but they received Him not; but as many as received Him, to them gave he power to become *sons of God*. Israel was about to crucify Him—these believing sons of God were for heaven and not for earth, and connection with God’s eternity was to be their mark even in time. Let me just trace out these three subjects so far as this chapter presents them.

“Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said:—

THE LORD.

Ver. 1. “*Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.*”

The Son of the Father, knowing all the times and counsels of God, asked to be glorified by the Father, that He, the Son, might glorify Him. Serving as “the sent one to Israel,” they would not have Him; He was then free to take up another service, and remove from earth to heaven to set forth the glory of the Father.

2. “*As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*”

The power was His; yet as Messiah, the sphere of its exercise was limited to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But there were some given to Him—unto ETERNAL LIFE; this eternal life He would communicate to them. *What* this was *He* knew right well; not the knowledge of Moses or of things down here; but—

3. “*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*”

4. “*I have glorified thee on the earth : I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*”

5. “*And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee.*”

The Father, He knew; and knew that none could present Him to man save Himself, Jesus Christ the Sent one; He knew, too, how he had made manifest the moral glory of the Father upon earth; He was it; His work was done, He would return thither whence he came, even to the eternal, divine glory.

THE WORLD.

But note, here, that at the close of v. 5 He brings in the world: “the glory which I had with Thee *before the world was.*” He had in his days of humiliation been faithful to God and to Israel, God’s people for the earth, whose portion was to be in this world. But to Him there was a “*before the world was*” too.

6. “*I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world.*”

HIS DISCIPLES.

In the power of the glory which was His in person with the Father *before the world was*, He had when in the world (Himself the despised by Israel) thought of men given to Him by the Father *out of the world*: of them he could say,

“*Thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.*”

The gift of the Father to the Son, from among the

men of the world—the Father's own and His gift to the Son; keepers of the word. And not only so, but—

7. *“Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.”*

So far did their knowledge go as to things. As to Himself it went further:

8. *“For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.”*

In the ninth verse the (to Israel awful, yet to us blessed) truth comes out: *“I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me.”*

They that clave to Him had a place in His heart; they honoured His Father. *“I pray for them,”* and this because He had taken them up at the Father's hand: *“them that thou hast given me.”* To His eye there was an inestimable preciousness about them:—*“For they are thine, and all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.”*

The savour of His Father's love upon them, the consciousness through them, that there was perfect community between Him and the Father, that the display of His glory was at stake in them! What blessed privilege. But then came the expression:—

11. *“And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves”* (12, 13).

In these verses we have, 1st, our *position* marked for us: *“in the world”*; and, 2nd, what our alone preservation, while here, can be; the Holy Father keeping us, and the instrumental means of its being so, our knowledge of the Father and of the glory peculiar to Him; 3rd, the gracious love of the Son of God in speaking these

things, that *His own joy might be fulfilled in us*. He had had the joy of known fellowship with the Father, amid all the sorrows of His humiliation.

Then (ver. 14) comes responsibility, and the conflict, and consequent thereon, the joy of the knowledge of their origin. "*I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*" Then as girding up the loins to patience, and strengthening the soul against the notion of escape from the furnace:

15. "*I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*" Their origin is again adverted to, and honoured as being associated with (not with creature things, but) with Himself, the Son of God, the Truth, the Word. Their mission into the world, recalling His own mission by the Father, follows.

16. "*They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.*" (17 and 18).

Next we have (in ver. 19) the grand means of the making good, now openly, of this entire separation to the Father of sons down here in this world. Himself, the Son, would sit down as Son of man upon the Father's throne, and His people down here should know Him in the Father and themselves in Him, and His spirit in them.

19. "*And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.*" And this was not only for them then present, but for all that should believe through their word:

20. "*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.*" The contrasts between the world and these sons of God which follow are of a different kind from those noted before; Ist, such a manifested union, in life, by the spirit all-pervading was to be theirs, that the world should believe in the Son's mission by the Father. This was fulfilled, perhaps, in one sense, at Pentecost; another and a fuller accomplishment may yet be hoped for hereafter.

21. "*That they all may be one, as thou, Father,*

art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us ; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Then follows the blessed outshining of more of the Son of God's heart toward these adopted sons of God. How He understands and acts out the blessed truth, "God giveth liberally."

22. "*And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them ; that they may be one, even as we are one ; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.*" (v. 23).

He that gave *Himself*, how should He keep back the sharing of His glory from these sons? The expectation of this realised, manifested fellowship leads to unity; and when the glory is come, then we shall realise the full revelation in Him of the Father, and His glory outshining will perfect the fellowship of those among whom it shines; and then the world shall own both the mission of the Son and the Divine heavenly love bestowed on those who left the world to follow Him.

The last three verses put the contrast between these sons by adoption and the world, if possible, even more markedly still. 1st, He has a will, as Son, delighting in the Father's love and gifts to Him, and that will is that these should be let into the presence chamber; should behold His glory as given to Him as the one loved before the foundation of the world; 2ndly, He appeals to the *righteous* dealings of His Father as to these that have known and owned Him as the sent one; 3rdly, To them the Father's name and character (which was his joy) had been set forth, and should be set forth. All the Father's love to Him should rest on them, and Himself be in them.

"*Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am ; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O, righteous Father, the world hath not known thee ; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me ; and I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*"

I desire to put it home to my own soul, and to the soul of him that reads, whether these things are so as to our own selves; and whether our outward life and ways bear witness to a present and entire separation between us and the present evil world, through our owning, by faith, that we belong to an earth-rejected, but God-honoured Lord.

ASSOCIATED WITH CHRIST.

A FRAGMENT.

WHAT wondrous terms does the Holy Ghost apply to the Believer in Scripture! to the Believer since the day of Pentecost!

1. *Co-plant* in His death and life (Rom. vi. 6).
2. *Co-heir* with Him of suffering and glory (Rom. viii. 17).
3. *Conformed* to Him in humiliation (Phil. iii. 10) and in glory (Rom. viii. 17; Phil. iii. 20).
4. *Crucified together with* (Rom. vi. 6).
5. *Dead together with* (2 Tim. ii. 11).
6. *Buried together with* (Rom. vi. 4; Col. ii. 12).
7. *Quickened together with* (Eph. ii. 3; Col. ii. 13).
8. *Made alive together with* (Rom. vi. 8; 2 Tim. ii. 11).
9. *Raised up together with* (Eph. ii. 6; Col. ii. 12; iii. 1).
10. *Seated together with* (Eph. ii. 6).
11. *Co-workers* (1 Cor. iii. 9; 2 Cor. vi. 1).
12. *Fellowcitizens with* (cf. Eph. ii. 19, and Phil. iii. 20).
13. *One body with* (Eph. i. 22, 23, and iii. 6).
14. *Partakers* of the promises *with* (Eph. iii. 6).
15. *All of them compacted* (Eph. iv. 16) or *knit together* (Col. ii. 2, 19).
16. *Fitly framed together* (Eph. ii. 21, and iv. 16). in the body of which He is head.

N^o. XXVII.

MAN CANNOT ESCAPE FROM GOD.

RESURRECTION comes, not from the first Adam, but with the last Adam. The first Adam had a creature's portion, his—while he was innocent, in Eden. The last Adam *is*—it would have been impossible for us to have known “*who*” or “*what*,”—if God had not, by His Spirit, written for us His own thoughts about the Son of His Love as God manifest in flesh.

In that word we read, that when all the subdivisions of time, as connected with God's dealings with man upon this earth, are over,—then, past all dispensations, there is to take place the resurrection of the wicked,—a last resurrection unto judgment. For the *first* resurrection of the blessed will have taken place a thousand years before the last resurrection.

The eternal immortality, which will fill and surround those who have part in the first resurrection, has its source in God's love and in God's delight in the Son of His love; by whom and for whom He will bring into blessedness, past all our power to conceive, the people who have believed in Him and obeyed Him;—this through the Spirit. The Son will raise *from among* the dead His own people and take them to share His glories.

But this same Son will, afterwards, raise the wicked too. Is their resurrection according to the power of the first Adam; or is it a restoring of them to earth, or to the circumstances of time? No: the Son of Man will raise them;—they will stand in God's proper eternity, and their circumstances will, thenceforth, be (not according to man's earth, but) according to God's judgment upon Satan—the adversary of God and His Son—the power whom the wicked now serve.

The “for ever” of the blessing of the one, and the “for ever” of the curse of the other, is as to duration according to the “for ever” of God's eternity; and

the state of the one and of the other according to the moral condition and experience which they have previously been in. The one, lovers of Him that had loved them and having experienced association with the Lord during the thousand years, shall be, according to God's own "for ever," blessed. The other, the fearful and unbelieving, will find themselves to be, according to God's own "for ever," under the curse and with Satan. The power that raises them is irresistible;—the mind that wields that power knows no change. They are raised, all dispensations past, in God's proper eternity;—there, where the true character of everything is detected and will be judged. As to annihilation, or a change of condition, or position for those who have been cast into the lake of fire—there is no such thing in Scripture. It is the folly of the human mind, set on by Satan if it be subject to him, which alone ever ventures to create for itself such a fiction: a fiction which will be found entirely fallacious—a fiction which is easily judged to be a fiction even *now*, because it makes man's convenience and liberty to be independent of God its centre and end, and not (as does the written word) the glory of God in His holiness, redeeming to Himself by the Son of His love poor sinners through grace from the wrath to come. See John v. 19—29, and Rev. xx.

This is another point whence to look at the questions referred to and answered in the Article No. XXIV., page 357.

God will take care *what* you go through. Do you take care *how* you go through it?

How different is the Lord's sympathy in sorrow from man's—aye, the very best of man's—meted out as His must ever be, to the exact extent and depth of the sorrow itself; and also to the *fluctuating* SENSE of it, in all its ups and downs, affected as that is by every wind that blows.

I may think you have a little load compared to mine, or *vice versa*. But it matters little as to the weight; the great point is the spirit in which it is borne, and the strength ascertained in bearing it.

God is seeking to build us up into the likeness of Christ, and nothing marked Him more than patience and longsuffering.

N^o. XXVIII."TO ME TO LIVE *IS* CHRIST."

PHIL. I. 21.

IT is on my heart to say a few words upon this passage; and, first, there is instruction to be gleaned from the contrast, which the context contains, between "to live" and "to die." If living is Christ and dying is gain, it would seem that both life and death have to do with the same party; as he says immediately afterwards, "If I live in the flesh," if I "abide in the flesh," and then, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." In both cases, himself as living in the body, and himself as quitting the body, was the individual spoken of. There was a present experience which he had as an individual, and a future close at hand; and he had his own wishes and thoughts about it, and his own private judgment too. I should like to leave this scene here below—but loving Him into whose presence I should then enter, and knowing how His interests are concerned in the people among whom I am, I judge I had, for their sakes, better stay—and so I know I shall stay.

There are blessings in heaven in Christ, which belong to *all* the children of God alike; and there are blessings and privileges which now belong to every believer down here. The Father's love, which has placed the Lord Jesus at His own right hand, has placed us *in Him there*. "In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me." And again, of every believer that is true, which the same verse states, "and I in you." Christ in God, and we in Him, and these things known to be so, characterise faith now. So all the shining of light into a heart is sealed by the Spirit in it, and He abides in us for evermore. Paul would not have allowed that any believer was separable from the Father's thoughts of

Christ in heaven, first-born among many brethren, Head of His body the church, which is the complement of Him that filleth all in all. All the saints at Philippi had that true of them, and all had faith and the Spirit. But all could not, did not say (each one for himself)—to me, living *is* Christ, and dying *is* gain. They could say, Christ in God and we in Him up there; and He in us down here: God's appropriation of us to Himself. But Paul went on, and could and did say: Not only has God made the riches of the person and work of Christ now up there to attach through faith and the Spirit to me down here, but it is all appropriated in my heart and mind and life, so that, to me, living *is* Christ.

Could the saints who were preaching Christ, even of envy and strife, of contention (not sincerely), supposing to add affliction to Paul's bonds, have said so much? (chap. i.) Could the "all who seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's," who were not "like-minded" (with the Apostle) have said so? (chap. ii.) Could those who, loving not the cross of Christ, made Paul weep, who minded earthly things, have said so? (chap. iii.) No: their faith and spirit was the same as Paul's. The same Father, the same Christ, the same Heaven, the same position up there, the same calling down here: but if, in the range of God's eternity and Heaven, there was now but one blessing common and open to all believers—Paul, in the range of his own being in time, now and down here on earth, could present himself as a vessel *filled* with Christ. How is it now with us, with me, with you, reader? Can we say, "To me to live is Christ, as well as to die is gain?"

The expression is a remarkable one. To me to live *is* Christ. Christ was a person. To me, not to live is joyous, or merely fruitful in labour, well worth while. But to me to live *is* Christ. The person of Christ is so filling the mind and heart and life of Paul that, if he speaks of himself, the adjective he uses as the predicate of 'I'—(Paul renewed) is Christ. As to me, living *is* Christ. Surely, He in the Father (and known to us to be there) and we knowing that we are in Him there, and that He is in us down here, ought to lead to and

result in the absorption of Him, and the manifestation of Him by us. According to the ought and duty of the new nature which we have, this is quite plain. There are three things which may be noticed here as to man in action. He has motives (right or wrong—consistent or inconsistent); he has an energy; and he has an end or ends in what he does. Paul drew his motives from Christ. Christ was his motive. That which influenced him to get into action, which was the *motive* cause to Paul, was Christ. His *energy* was Christ. *The end* which he sought was Christ: and (not merely was Christ in the glory the point to which his whole course and journey tended but) he had for himself, to-day, down here, a present end, and that was that Christ might be magnified in His body, whether it be by life or by death.

Nothing, perhaps, shows the present privilege of the Christian more than his competency, through grace, to separate himself from himself, and to judge, as in the presence of God, both himself and all that passes within and from himself. When he was dead in trespasses and sin, walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience—having his conversation. . . in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind—by nature a child of wrath even as others, he could not have done so. For the God of this world blinds the eyes of those which believe not. But now he can do so. This we see in 1 Cor. xi. 28—31. He can examine himself, test his motives, his energy, and the end that he has before him,—judge himself. And if he does this instrumentally, through the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever, he has also in Heaven One who knows how to wield the Sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:—quick (or living,) and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, a discernor of the thoughts and of the intents of the heart. “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to

do." What the instinct seeks, what the mind is upon, all the connecting links, and all the hidden sap found in those links, all the thinkings of the mind, all the intentions of the heart are all open to Him. Solemn but blessed truth. Had it not been so, nor Abraham, nor Isaac, nor Jacob, nor Samuel, nor David, nor Job could have been saved. Jehovah knows the heart in all its depths, windings, and folds. The Lord Jesus knows his own heart and mind and life; knows what ours *were*, what they *are* and what He has undertaken to make them to be. No film on His eye, no veil over our hearts can hinder His reading us as we are, according to truth; and He never swerves in His purposes to make us that which He has apprehended us for.^a

MOTIVES.—That there is a motive in us for everything we do, I do not doubt. There being a motive, and our knowing that there is one, or what it is, are very different things. Poor inconsiderate wretch that man is, while in nature, knowing not his responsibility, or that the eye of God is upon him, reading all his bad motives and seeing the absence of all good motives—inconsiderate man, I say, goes on, led he knows not whither: yet motive he has, and motive which is noted on high, motive which oft his mind gets a glimpse of and is ashamed of.

Paul shows us what his motive was. What it was that set him, according to the new nature, in movement, and kept him therein. Motive, which while it filled his *heart* with the liveliest sense of holy liberty and practical freedom, gave also the light of a sound judgment, by means of which his *mind* could sit in judgment upon all things and enable him, steadily and firmly, to resist all the evil of the world, the flesh, and Satan; giving no place, cost what it might, to evil. The old "I" was reckoned

^a Every motive savours of the source whence it comes, carries with it the essential perfume of that source, and tends to the end destined by God for the produce of that source. A worldling's "I like, I choose," is Godless and Christless. It savours of its own source and origin, viz.: the right which man in fallen nature supposes he has over himself, as though there were no such person as the Creator, who had made His creature for his own glory. And if man is not quick in the fear of the Lord to perceive the scent, God perceives that also.

by him crucified, dead, and buried together with Christ. The new "I" (not I, but Christ that dwelleth in me) was able to keep him, Paul, in full occupation (as a divinely-made freeman of Heaven) with the Christ whom God had revealed to him as being in Heaven.

What privilege, freedom, and service are blended together in him in 2 Cor. v. 13—16. What privilege—"we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance and not in heart. For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause." As though he had said: I praise not myself; though you may glorify God for what he has wrought in me. I have no time to think of myself—absorbedly occupied either with God in ecstasy, or soberly labouring for you (vers. 12, 13).

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (vers. 14, 15). Constraint is a strong word, Paul. Do you mean that you are led about captive, dragged against the current, led whither you would not? Yes and no—says Paul. Yes, as to my Saul-nature and its circumstances, if you will: no, as to my Paul-nature and its circumstances. But, of a truth, as to this constraint, there is, so far, no battle. It is the love of Christ, the love which He bears to me, as to one given to Him from before the foundation of the world; for whom he left divine glory in Heaven above and came down here,—became God manifest in the flesh, gave Himself (His love was stronger than death or than God's judgment against me); as one to whom He has shown Himself,—He being gone on high; whom He loves and will love, even unto the end; one for whom He is about, a second time, to leave the Father's Throne and come and take to share His own Throne. The Eternal Lover of my soul, He draws me and I run after Him. Made willing in the day of His power, able to say, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine,"—I am drawn according to the new nature. No bondage

this, but the Heavenly and divine freedom of a son of God. But, then, if the love of CHRIST *constrains* on the one hand, (and who that ever tasted that, but what found that his heart was too narrow to contain the overflowing fulness of Christ's love to his people), it give joyous freedom and leads captive, as the magnet separates and draws out the needles whose heads are towards it from those whose points are towards it and the heads the other way; on the other hand, this is no unreasonable thing, "because we thus *judge*, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (ver. 14, 15.) Instinct and love first, but sober conviction and calm judgment afterwards. We were all dead in trespasses and sins, and He died under the penalty due to our sins: and, as here stated, he had an object in doing so, even the having of a people, now, who should live: and live (not unto themselves, but) unto Him which died for them. Paul's judgment was made up and settled; for himself, he meant to meet this object which Christ had in His mind when, seeing the moral death in which man was, He revealed to Paul His own death, which set Paul free, that he might live to Christ.^b Deliverance from

^b The profound depth out of which such a cry as "God be merciful to me a sinner," comes;—the anguish which led to the cry, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (when the heart had been pricked) cannot be looked upon as either pure selfishness or as a mere fruit of nature in distress. There is, be it noted, in such cases, an appeal to *another, outside of self*;—to God in the first case, to those who had the testimony of God in the second; just like, "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." The selfishness of fallen human nature cannot renounce self and look up to God. If it can be wrought up to see, in some sense, its ruin and its danger, it cannot turn its back upon self and start afresh with the resources and energy and ends of God. There is *reality*, when a soul that meets God, or is met of God, both discovers its ruin and looks outside of itself for *guidance*. It is, perhaps, the only real experience of what is true as to God, when it is in His presence, which it ever had; defective, of course, but real and true as far as its capacities go. The system which reduces faith down to man's giving the sanction of his judgment as man to God's testimony, either about man or God, is pitiful and untrue.

moral death and the judgment against it, which had been borne by another, in order to have him not any longer, practically the slave of Satan (by indulgence in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,) weighed upon Paul to cut him off from all that Saul had been, and to be devoted to every claim of Christ over him. Here it is not love and joy and privilege only, according to the new nature; but intelligence and judgment, and a firm purpose to stand against all that was of the old man,—all that, in our circumstances, Satan would use to entangle us with, and to go out as individuals meeting the mind of Christ, living to Him who died for us and rose again. Many only look at the constraint of love, Christ's love to us, as though that would do everything: not so Paul. The constraint of Christ's love was the ornament of his heart, the joy of his soul;—but, there was the battle too. The keeping under the body;^c the judging of flesh and spirit; clean separation from the world, and resisting of Satan too; enduring hardness as a good soldier of the Cross of Jesus Christ. Paul had faith, and had received the Spirit like us all; but Paul was, and stood down here, *for* Christ, even as Christ was up there on high *for* Paul. Paul was a lover of Christ and a servant of Christ, and would be so, even as Christ had shown Himself to be the lover of Paul and the One that served him, in scenes and circumstances in which none but He could serve. He has loved and served us: can we add, and we love and serve Him?

The second passage I would turn to is Rom. xiv. It shows us the extent to which this motive of living to the Lord alone is owned by God and Paul, in every detail of our lives here below: and that we are bound to own it in others, and honour it in them, even where their knowledge and intelligence is defective. The spirit of life down here of a Christian is in seeing the Lord every where and doing everything as unto Him. The Lord will have

^c The word translated here (1 Cor. ix. 27) "keep under," is remarkable: literally, "give myself a black eye;" "beat myself black and blue."

us honour those who in conscience^d live to Him. One believes that he may eat all things; another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Both are right as to their actions. Only "let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand." So as to days, as well as meats. "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. *For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, THAT HE MIGHT BE LORD BOTH OF THE DEAD AND LIVING* (ver. 5—9). In righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost we have to serve Christ in all these things, in order to be well-pleasing to God. I have got to serve Christ amid all the weaknesses of those that are in His company with me. I must have faith, and have it for myself before God amid all the weaknesses of unintelligent Christians around me. But I must insist upon every one of them doing what he does as unto the Lord; living as unto Him.

^d Conscience is not mere feeling,—“I feel,” as man says,—but the deep, inward intuitive persuasion of a thing being right or wrong before the Lord. Let us hold to that, and the Lord will hold to us. It is the only thing in this world, in man, which God owns. Woe to him that despises it in himself, or who tramples it down in another. Yet, at the same time, it is not mere feeling; for often a timorous, superstitious mind will hesitate and falter and adhere to meats and days and plead conscience as its excuse, when, if the question is simply put to it: “Can you say to the Lord that you honestly believe that He would have you abstain from this or that meat, or observe this or that day,”—the person will honestly reply “No, I cannot.” In several cases I have seen morbid feeling set aside, and true conscience honoured by this appeal to it.

And this is enforced by Paul, in the fact stated by him, that each of us must stand at the judgment seat of Christ—bow and confess to Him—give account to God of *why* we acted as we have done. A solemn and an important truth to induce us to look well to what the regulating motive of our actions down here is. Oh, how little do the Christians of one thousand eight hundred and sixty-five *think* even of these things! Surely they therein forget their own mercies,—mercies of the wilderness-pilgrimage, under the guidance and eye of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But if “to me to live is Christ,” points me first to Him as my *motive*, it secondly points me to Himself Christ, likewise, for *energy*,^e the energy or power which a Christian wants to carry him right up against the current of all here below, and to enable him to stem the tide of difficulties from the world and self and Satan here below. This we have shewn to us in 2 Cor. chap. xii. and also in chap. i. It is the principle of resurrection from death. Paul got his first lesson ere he entered upon service. Caught up into the third heavens by a power not his own, the body made nothing of, so that, whether he was in it or out of it, he could not tell; he found himself in and amid all the circumstances of the glory of Him that had loved him. But the Lord knew His captive better than the captive knew the captor. And the Lord would

^e Energy is according to its source; and the end accordingly; and each kind of energy, the human and the divine, has a way peculiar to itself. A godly man cannot get into the use of human energy without all going wrong with him. This, to a great extent, explains the failure of all the religious societies of the day. To print and distribute bibles, to send out missionaries to the heathen, and to the dark parts of Protestantism, England too, is all right,—but, where right in the starting point and in the end proposed too, many have failed from human energy, ways and means having been unconsciously substituted for divine. Let it be remembered, that when “Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. Then Moses said unto Aaron, *This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified*” (Lev. x. 1—3).

use Paul as a vessel and channel by which to set forth, not the knowledge of the glory, but the present grace of the Lord Himself. Lest he should be puffed up a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan is sent to buffet him. The inconsiderateness of the piety of a good man appears. He will go straight to the end at once. "Take away this thorn. Take away this thorn. Take away this thorn." Such is his prayer. Instead of which the Lord says: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." The Lord knew all the secret counsel of God—all that Paul was—all the need His own heart felt to have Paul dependent upon and consciously and willingly dependent upon the everlasting arms which were underneath. He would not go at once to the end. Death and resurrection were the principle He had owned and acted upon all through *His own* course; He would have Paul, also, willingly to appropriate death and resurrection as the principle on which he meant to walk too. Would you rather be strong in yourself, and strong because there are no difficulties in the way, or crippled and crumpled up in weakness but strong because He that has bought you with His own blood is perfecting His strength in your weakness? Surely anything that makes me see the need, I have, and makes me willing to profit from the daily grace of a risen and ascended Lord, who is obliged to cripple Paul, yet has the heart to put His own arm under the cripple's weakness ever after, is most precious. Paul can now speak out freely: he had no account to give of the glory, none of that which he heard when in it; but now he can speak out freely. The stream of the water of life flows through his own soul and fills his circumstances. What can Satan, what the thorn, what the buffeting, avail to silence a man who finds that the living Christ of God, though in heaven, is now graciously perfecting His strength in the weakness of His servant. The triumph fills His soul, and He gathers from all around occasion for triumphing. "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak,

then am I strong.” Such seems to me to have been *the principle* which the Lord taught Paul ere his service began; namely, that the power was God’s in which he had to run; and that that power wrought in an un-human way, a divine way—as in the Redeemer’s own course—through death and resurrection.^f This was fourteen years before the first chapter of the epistle, in which he relates another thing—how, being in his work as apostle, when the question came out at Ephesus of whether idolatry could stand against the word of the gospel, he found himself thrown into prison. Had he forgotten the principle taught him fourteen years ago?—that he should have despaired even of life, being pressed out of measure beyond strength. Well, if he did forget, the Lord, who was, all the while, nearer to him than his weakness and than any of his circumstances—yea, was using them too to show that the work was His and not Paul’s—acts on his soul. And then he can write: “But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.” The expansive power of faith, too, is shown, and a *past* deliverance leads to a calculation for the *present* and for all *future* needs. “Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us.” “All things work together for good to them that love God” (Rom. viii. 28). And as to all circumstances—tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, the sword,—if they can reach us they can not reach Christ, to extinguish in His heart the love which He bears to us; nor hinder our saying, “Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ

^f This is one of the fine turns which the Lord’s hand gives to things. He endears Himself to us, while He discovers to us the pitifulness of what we are in ourselves, and separates us thus from self and makes us count on Him, and find occasion to triumph over all that the adversary or circumstances or we (in ourselves) may be in His sight. His grace is sufficient. *His* strength made perfect in weakness.

Jesus our Lord" (ver. 37—39). What can change Him, or remove from His heart the love which God bears to us in Christ? And what can take away the knowledge of it from us?

Man's way is to prove his own competency and self-sufficiency by at once towering up to the point he desires to attain to; this he cannot do, *if* he is walking with God. God will not give His glory to another. And if He takes up a poor sinner, to lead him through foes and over difficulties, He will have the poor sinner to know that it is "not by might nor by power, but by My spirit" that the end is to be gained. And note here, that there is a present purpose gained by the Lord perfecting His strength in weakness. He gets glory now. And the servant gets honour too, as being thus used by the Lord for the display of His grace. To the Christian this application to himself, by the Lord, of the principle of death and resurrection, in daily experience, is a most precious thing. The cross is to the Jew a stumbling block, to the philosopher foolishness. But unto them who are called, whether Jews or Greeks, Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God. No flesh shall glory in His presence. But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord (1 Cor. i.).

There is nothing which more unsuspectingly lets self and worldliness into a godly soul than human energy. Paul set out with divine motives, and an object or end in his mind which were in perfect harmony with the energy which the Lord meant to be his, and the path that energy runs in. "He is a chosen vessel unto Me to bear My name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the Children of Israel: for I will show him what great things he must suffer for my name's sake." (Acts ix. 15, 16). Yet we find this special vessel breaking down. Whether the honour was too great for the vessel, or whether the service was too great for his measure of communion, he broke down: broke down too on the blessed side of over-care for what his Master loved. It may be that he did not sufficiently keep before him the difference between obedience and fellowship, between serving his master and doing. But he would go up to Jerusalem; and would not be stopped by fear of bonds and imprisonment—was

he not ready to die, also, at Jerusalem? And he went up, and shaving of heads, vows, appealing to the prejudices of the Pharisees against the Sadducees followed thereupon: things which were not according to the divine energy, and which had no savour of death and resurrection in them. But if he had overstept himself, his divine master allowed bonds and imprisonment to roll in, that in the crippled state of His servant He might Himself be able to show his grace, and to cheer His servant therewith. "And the night following, the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul, for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (Acts xxiii. 11). Perhaps the Lord saw that the bonds and the captivity which followed were the best preparative for the testimony before the kings and rulers before whom Paul is now to appear,—and the best testimony, too, to them, as to their position and state. I am persuaded that it was so with Peter in his falls, whether in the denial of the Lord, or the compromise of the gospel at Antioch. He loved the Lord: O, how loyally! The end before him was in accordance with this motive power. But until he had judged the energy in which he ran, he could not judge the ways into which that energy would lead him, and did lead him. And when he came to his death, his own energy, plans, and doings were all to be set aside; and the Lord to have the honour of putting the crown of martyrdom upon His servant. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, 'Follow me.'" (John xxi. 18, 19). And Abraham in Egypt, and in the matter of Hagar; and Isaac with his Rebecca; and Jacob at Jabbok; and David, and Job, etc., etc., in olden times; all had to learn the same lesson. False energy (not of faith) has not the Spirit,—and where we walk by sight, sense rules us, and our minds get hold of plans and ways not of God. O how much of this lies at the root of the modern Christianity.

ENDS proposed by faith.^s THE end which God has proposed to faith now, is to meet the Lord at His second coming from the Throne, and then to be for ever with Himself. This, as we may see, absorbed Paul's soul, in the 3rd chapter of the Philippians. But when it is so, he that hath this hope in him, those to whom He Himself is the hope, the mark of the prize of their high calling, necessarily purge themselves, even as He is pure. Thus a second end, as it were, becomes ours: we want to be found by Him without blame, as to our course down here, sanctified wholly in body, soul, and spirit. If we are to meet Him as our hope, we desire that we should be able to do so to the unhindered delight of Him who will say to those that are waiting and ready for Him: Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord.

This end was earnestly sought by Paul; and we see it in Phil. i. 20, as the one blessed ambition of his soul for himself in this life. "I know that this shall turn to my salvation According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death." It filled his soul—it was an expectation earnestly occupying him as well as longed for. What? First, negatively, in no one particular to be put to shame. Secondly, positively, and in a tone of soul harmoniously according with the greatness of the end which he had in view; "even with all boldness, as at all times, so at that particular moment also," (what is all this laboured speech leading up to?) "that Christ shall be magnified in my body." Yes he would, and he sought that all the fulness that is in Christ might be set off, openly presented in him in the body down here. Magnified is a strong word.

^s Our gospel is the Gospel of the present possession of eternal life, and our call is to walk now (not as though we had our standing in the first Adam; then we could not attempt to walk save as men should walk, but) as having our standing in Him who rose from the grave and has ascended up into Heaven. Our walk is to be as imitators of God, like dear children—the life of the risen and ascended Lord—the last Adam. As he is to be displayed as firstborn among many brethren, so we have now to walk as sons of God.

Christ magnified is a very strong expression. But that was what Paul's end was; and if that was gained, as he felt assured it was, whether it was by life or by death he cared not. For to me to live is Christ. What could God do more for us than He has done; placed us in Christ in Himself; and placed Christ's Spirit in us. Paul saw and he attained to more, even to this, to such a simple consistency with the faith given, and such a subjection to the spirit, that he could say, "I am for Him down here, in the details of the wilderness life, as He is up there for me."

Oh! that Christians would lay this to heart and act upon it, and become letters of Christ, known and read of all men. I am persuaded that nothing but this will give the power of bearing much fruit. Christianity was not meant merely for the soul of individuals, but to purge the conscience and to cleanse the heart, so that the eye might become single, and that fruit might abound, and that our joy too might thus be full. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John xv. 8—11). . . . "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John xv. 14). . . . "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" (John xv. 16.) Even as the blessed Lord had said: "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (John xv. 12—15). . . . "But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake,

because they know not Him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father" (John xv. 21—24). Everything around us, now, is in ruins and declension; but the Christian has his own principles, and the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ is in nowise changed. If ever there was a day when it was important for every professed follower of Christ to stand fast and to be true to his profession, I believe it is the present day. There is no answer to infidelity like the life of Christ displayed by the Christian. Nothing puts the madness of the infidel, and the folly of the superstitious, more to shame and silence than the humble, quiet, devoted walk of a thorough-going, heavenly-minded, divinely-taught Christian. It may be in the unlearned and poor and despised; but, like the scent of the lowly violet, it gives its perfume abroad, and both God and man take notice of it. Works, if only hypocritical doings, go for nothing; but works which are the genuine expression of living and walking with God in Christ, are of the same sort of value as the hands of a good clock. A good clock without hands is, for practical purposes, of no value; but the hands on the face tell the measure of the value of the works within, and tell the lapse of time. "We are His (God's) workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. ii. 10). Now is the time for works and for overcoming; to him at least who has an ear to hear (Rev. ii, iii., and compare with chap. xxii. ver. 11, 12).

Let the friends—brethren in Christ—who avow that they are not of this world, even as Christ was not of it, study Matthew vi. 19—34. It is a heart-searching portion but a most blessed one, too, as showing what the present practical comforts are which flow out from a single eye. Let them seek and obtain that single eye, and they will find their portion, even now, in the wilderness to be large and abundant.

N^o. XXIX.

THE TABLE OF THE LORD.

MANY ideas are current on this subject, and that on the part of those I truly love and value, and used by others with different intent, which I think unfounded, and I now send you these few lines on the subject. It is insisted that the table is the table of the Lord. No one, of course, doubts it; or that He whose table it is, is the Lord, has peculiar claim to this title, this distinctive title. But while the heart joyfully owns this name, it is not, cannot be, the highest and happiest aspect of the Lord's supper; not that which especially belongs to Christians in it. Of course were Christ not the Lord, not only the table, but Christianity would be gone. But "Lord" is not the name in which Christians have communion there, and that is their precious part in it. Communion with the Lord, is an ill-sorted term.

The term Lord is used as to the table, where it is used in contrast with evil, or as a place of dignity and judgment. The table of the Lord, in contrast with the table of devils; the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils. Hence it is added, "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than He?" Again as to judgment: "This is not to eat the Lord's supper: he shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." "Hence if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged of the Lord." And so on.

But when the Apostle speaks of *communion*, he does not speak of the Lord. But "the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ; the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" And this is the more remarkable, because the moment he begins, in the same passage, to speak of authority, contrast with devils, and judgment of evil, he says always "the Lord"; but as to communion, not.

created after God, *like* Him in righteousness and true holiness, what He is as knowing good and evil. Such is the new man as characterised in Ephesians. In Colossians, we have put on the new man, a new one (*neos*) we had not before, which is renewed, new in character (*καλως*), after the image of Him that created us. Here Christ is in all; and the image, not the likeness, is brought out. No doubt it is like; still, what is made prominent is, the image, what is to represent and glorify God; and, as we have seen, Christ is all and in all. So it is forgiving one another, as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. Hence, in the first chapter, we have Christ the image of the invisible God; and His place in creation, the firstborn of every creature. Yet, see how carefully His divine nature and title is guarded. Not only is He the creator; but all the fulness was pleased to dwell in Him; and in Him, in fact, dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. In the first chapter of Ephesians, you have “holy and without blame before Him in love,” which is likeness to God in His presence. I do not go further here than to suggest these thoughts. That the second man, the Lord from heaven, is the true image of God, is clearly taught; but, I think, with other precious truth, from which I have no wish to divert the attention of the reader of these precious Epistles, this difference will be found to pervade them. Our conformity to Christ in this respect, and our progressive conformity to Him, is taught in many passages, as Rom. viii. 29; 1 Cor. xv. 48, 49; 1 John iii. 1—3; 2 Cor. iii. 18. But it gives a wonderful testimony to what the Christian is, and ought to be; his place in Christ.

Occupation with Christ Jesus in glory has, through faith, an almighty power. Himself my portion and my all,—fallen human nature is judged; while communion changes into the same image from glory to glory. In learning Him I become more like Him in character and spirit,—in will, interests, hopes and life.

No. XXXI.

DIVINE RIGHTEOUSNESS.

THE progress of discussion on the question of Divine righteousness, and a rapid review of what I have myself written, present the whole matter to me in so serious a light, that I have been led to resume my pen upon it. I do this the rather as I see that more are entangled in the pernicious error which I seek to oppose than I was at first aware of, and that the error is more grave than I had thought when I first rejected it as wrong.

That the "British and Foreign Evangelical Review," and, after it, the "Irish Christian Examiner," should have admitted an article so utterly anti-Christian in doctrine as they did, proves such utter blindness as to what truth and error is, in the professed leaders of religious opinions, that I feel, more than ever, the need of having the truth as to the righteousness of God, fully and clearly before the mind. I am not unaware of the clamour that has been raised, nor of the warnings against dangerous errors, which have been the natural resource of those who could not answer what was said, and would not admit the truth that was produced. Nor am I ignorant how any error was accepted, provided the divine truth I insisted on from Scripture was condemned. All this has only served to show me the real source of the opposition, and the importance of the question raised. Were it merely a question as to brethren (so called), I should not feel disposed to stir; but this is in no way the case. What the church is, and its present state, and the presence of the Holy Ghost, is that which is important, and, with that, the coming of the Lord. But the question of what is righteousness before God, and the righteousness of God, is of vital importance for the whole church of God. I am satisfied that a large number of souls are misled as to it, and that a right apprehension

the brethren. I am become light in the Lord, and I am to arise from among the dead, and He will give me light. But the principle of the contrast is clear. The law requires us to love our neighbour as ourselves. The gospel calls the Christian to act like Christ, and give himself up for others in the path of love. That is the kind of love wanted in a sinful world. But these are consequences; the main point is that I stand in God's righteousness, according to the effectual work of the Lord Jesus, for the glorifying of God; which is so imputed to me, that I shall be with Him in the glory, and meanwhile know the love which has imparted to me the unspeakable gift, the love shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost given to me.

It is God's righteousness by grace, and the work of Christ, not man's righteousness by law, for God. What God has wrought for man, not what man has wrought for God. That of which God's glory, not man's duty, is the measure; though man's failure in that duty has been atoned for in it.

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.

END OF VOLUME XIV.