

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

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לא בחיל ולא בכח כי אִם־ברוחי  
Zechariah iv. 6.

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VOL. III.

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# THE PRESENT TESTIMONY.

ETC., ETC.

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

## EXHIBITION OF THE THREE WORDS IN THE PSALTER, **GO-I, L'OM, AM.**

IN the Hebrew Psalter, the three following words occur, גוֹי, אֲמִתּוֹת, עַם or עַמּוֹת. In the authorised version, these words are somewhat indefinitely rendered, by the words "heathen," "nation," or "people."

It has been attempted, in the present case, to translate the Hebrew more accurately, by rejecting the word "people" altogether, and by substituting "gentiles" for "heathen."

The word "people," even when occasionally modified by the plural form to suit the Hebrew plural, is far too indefinite to convey accurately the meaning of the original. "Peoples," indeed, would signify the same, or nearly the same as "nations"; but it is hardly English, nor has it been employed in the authorised version of the Psalms. "People," in the singular number, leaves the reader in the dark as to whether it means:—1. the Jewish people; 2. the Gentiles; 3. all nations, including the Jews: or, lastly, whether it is a generic term for Mankind.

The word "heathen" was probably more nearly correct when the authorised version was made than now, it having acquired in our own day a peculiar signification, i. e. not Gentiles as distinct from Jews, but any nation who does not *professedly* worship the one true God; in other words, all mankind, except Jews, Christians, and Mahometans.

The plan, then, that has been adopted, is:—

I. *Always* to render the above Hebrew words by

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## 2 "Nation" and "Gentiles" in the Psalms.

"nation" when they occur in the singular, *always* by "gentiles" when they occur in the plural.

II. As this rule has been *universally* adopted in the text, the very few cases of exception in which even the word "people" might be preferable, are noticed in the margin.

III. *Never* to depart from the words of the authorised version, except in the employment of the words "nation" or "gentiles"; or where such a change having been made, the grammar or sense absolutely requires some farther alteration.

As the writer's object has been to furnish a critical help, rather than a new version to supersede the old, he hopes he has in some measure succeeded.<sup>1</sup>

- Ps. 2: 1. Why do the gentiles (ג pl.) rage, and the gentiles (ב pl.) imagine a vain thing?  
 8. Ask of me, and I will give thee the gentiles (ג pl.) for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.
- 3: 6. I will not be afraid for ten thousands of the nation<sup>2</sup> (י sing.), that have set themselves against me round about.  
 8. Salvation belongeth unto the Lord; thy blessing is upon thy nation (י sing).
- 7: 7. So shall the congregation of the gentiles (ב pl.) compass thee about: for their sakes, therefore, return Thou on high.  
 8. The Lord shall judge the gentiles (י pl.): judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to the integrity that is in me.
- 9: 5. Thou hast rebuked the gentiles (ג pl.), thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.  
 8. And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the gentiles in uprightness (ב pl.)
11. Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion; declare among the gentiles (י pl.) his doings.
15. The gentiles (ג pl.) are sunk down in the pit that they made; \* in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.
17. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the gentiles<sup>3</sup> (ג pl.) that forget God.

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<sup>1</sup> Having inserted, whilst verifying this paper, for גי, *go-i* (ג sing.), when it was found in the singular number, and (ג pl.) when it was found in the plural; and for עי, similarly (י sing.) and (י pl.); and for אב, similarly (ב sing.), and (ב pl.), I have taken editorial liberty, and allowed them to remain, for the saving of time to those who know Hebrew. The versification is according to the English Bible.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Or "people."

<sup>3</sup> Or "nations," including the Jews, but gentiles seem to be specially meant.

*“ Nation” and “ Gentiles” in the Psalms.* 3

- Ps. 9: 19. Arise, O Lord; let not man prevail: let the gentiles (*3 pl.*) be judged in thy sight.
20. Put them in fear, O Lord; that the gentiles (*3 pl.*) may know themselves to be but men.
- 10: 16. The Lord is king for ever and ever; the gentiles (*3 pl.*) are perished out of his land.
- 14: 4. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my nation (*y sing.*) as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord.
7. O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his nation (*y sing.*), Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.
- 18: 27. For thou wilt save the afflicted nation (*y sing.*); but wilt bring down high looks.
43. Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the nation (*y sing.*); and thou hast made me the head of the gentiles (*3 pl.*); a nation (*y sing.*) whom I have not known shall serve me.
47. It is God that avengeth me, and subdueth the gentiles (*y pl.*) under me.
49. Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the gentiles (*3 pl.*), and sing praises unto thy name.
- 22: 6. But I am a worm, and no man: a reproach of men, and despised of the nation (*y sing.*).
27. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the gentiles (*3 pl.*) shall worship before thee.
28. *For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the gentiles (3 pl.).*
31. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a nation (*y sing.*) that shall be born, that he hath done this.
- 28: 9. Save thy nation (*y sing.*), and bless thine inheritance; feed them also, and lift them up for ever.
- 29: 11. The Lord will give strength unto his nation (*y sing.*); the Lord will bless his nation (*y sing.*) with peace.
- 33: 10. The Lord bringeth the counsel of the gentiles (*3 pl.*) to nought; he maketh the devices of the gentiles (*y pl.*) of none effect.
12. Blessed is the nation (*3 sing.*) whose God is the Lord; and the nation (*y sing.*) whom he has chosen for his own inheritance.
- 35: 18. I will give thee thanks in the great congregation; I will praise thee among a great nation (*y sing.*).
- 43: 1. Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation (*3 sing.*): O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.
- 44: 2. How thou didst drive out the gentiles (*3 pl.*) with thine hand, and plantedst them; how thou didst afflict the gentiles (*3 pl.*), and cast them out.
11. Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat; thou hast scattered us among the gentiles (*3 pl.*).
12. Thou sellest thy nation (*y sing.*) for nought, and dost not increase thy wealth by their price.
14. Thou makest us a byword among the gentiles (*3 pl.*), a shaking of the head among the gentiles (*3 pl.*).

## 4      “Nation” and “Gentiles” in the Psalms.

- Ps. 45: 5. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the gentiles (*y pl.*) fall under thee.
10. Harken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own nation (*y sing.*), and thy father's house.
12. And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the nation (*y sing.*) shall entreat thy favour.
17. I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations; therefore shall the gentiles (*y pl.*) praise thee for ever and ever.
- 46: 6. The gentiles (*ᵛ pl.*) raged, the kingdoms were moved; he uttered his voice, the earth melted.
10. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the gentiles (*ᵛ pl.*), I will be exalted in the earth.
- 47: 1. O clap your hands, all ye gentiles (*y pl.*); shout unto God with the voice of triumph.
3. He shall subdue the gentiles (*y pl.*) under us, and the gentiles (*ᵛ pl.*) under our feet.
8. God reigneth over the gentiles (*ᵛ pl.*): God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.
9. The princes of the gentiles (*y pl.*) are gathered together, even the nation (*y sing.*) of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God: he is greatly exalted.
- 49: 1. Hear ye this, all ye gentiles (*y pl.*); give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world.
- 50: 4. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his nation (*y sing.*).
7. Hear, O my nation (*y sing.*), and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God.
- 53: 4. Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people (*y sing.*) as they eat bread: they have not called upon God.
6. O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when God bringeth back the captivity of his nation (*y sing.*), Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.
- 56: 7. Shall they escape by iniquity? in thine anger cast down the gentiles (*y pl.*), O God.
- 57: 9. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the gentiles (*y pl.*); I will sing unto thee amongst the gentiles (*ᵛ pl.*).
- 59: 5. Thou, therefore, O Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the gentiles (*ᵛ pl.*): be not merciful to any wicked transgressors.
8. But thou, O Lord, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the gentiles (*ᵛ pl.*) in derision.
11. Slay them not, lest my nation (*y sing.*) forget; scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O Lord our shield.
- 60: 3. Thou hast shewed thy nation (*y sing.*) hard things, and thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.
- 62: 8. Trust in him at all times; O nation (*y sing.*), pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.
- 65: 7. Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the gentiles (*ᵛ pl.*).
- 66: 7. He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the gentiles (*ᵛ pl.*): let not the rebellious exalt themselves.
8. O bless our God, ye gentiles (*y pl.*), and make the voice of his praise to be heard:

“ Nation ” and “ Gentiles ” in the Psalms. 5

- Ps. 67: 2. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all gentiles (*3 pl.*).
3. Let the gentiles (*y pl.*) praise thee, O God; let all the gentiles (*y pl.*) praise thee.
4. O let the gentiles (*3 pl.*) be glad and sing for joy; for thou shalt judge the gentiles (*y pl.*) righteously, and govern the gentiles (*3 pl.*) upon earth.
5. Let the gentiles (*y pl.*) praise thee, O God; let all the gentiles (*y pl.*) praise thee.
- 68: 7. O God, when thou wentest forth before thy nation (*y sing.*), when thou didst march through the wilderness;
22. The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan. I will bring my nation again from the depths of the sea : <sup>4</sup>
30. Rebuke the company of the spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the gentiles (*y pl.*) till every one submit himself with pieces of silver; scatter thou the gentiles (*y pl.*) that delight in war.
35. O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places; the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his nation (*y sing.*).
- 72: 2. He shall judge thy nation (*y sing.*) with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.
3. The mountains shall bring peace to the nation (*y sing.*) and the little hills, by righteousness.
4. He shall judge the poor of the nation (*y sing.*), he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.
11. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all gentiles (*3 pl.*) shall serve him.
17. His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all gentiles (*3 pl.*) shall call him blessed.
- 73:10. Therefore his nation (*y sing.*) return hither; and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.
- 74:14. Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the nation (*y sing.*) inhabiting the wilderness.
18. Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O Lord, and that the foolish nation (*y sing.*) have blasphemed thy name. [77 ver. 14, thou hast declared thy strength among the people (*y pl.*) Ed.]
- 77:15. Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy nation (*y sing.*), the sons of Jacob and Joseph.
20. Thou leddest thy nation (*y sing.*) like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.
- 78: 1. Give ear, O my nation (*y sing.*), to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
20. Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his nation (*y sing.*)?
52. But made his own nation (*y sing.*) to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.

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<sup>4</sup> The words “my nation,” here, are a supplement of the English translators, and have no equivalent in the text of the Hebrew.—ED.

“Nation” and “Gentiles” in the Psalms.

- Ps. 78:55. He cast out the gentiles (*ᵓ pl.*) also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.
62. He gave his nation (*y sing.*) over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance.
71. From following the ewes great with young, he brought him to feed Jacob his nation (*y sing.*), and Israel his inheritance.
- 79: 1. O God, the gentiles (*ᵓ pl.*) are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem in heaps.
6. Pour out thy wrath upon the gentiles (*ᵓ pl.*) that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.
10. Wherefore should the gentiles (*ᵓ pl.*) say, Where is their God? let him be known among the gentiles (*ᵓ pl.*) in our sight by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed.
13. So we thy nation (*y sing.*) and sheep of thy pasture, will give thee thanks for ever; we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.
- 80: 4. O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry with the prayer of thy nation (*y sing.*)?
8. Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt; thou hast cast out the gentiles (*ᵓ pl.*), and planted it.
- 81: 8. Hear, O my nation (*y sing.*) and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me;
11. But my nation (*y sing.*) would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me.
13. O that my nation (*y sing.*) had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!
- 82: 8. Arise, O God, judge the earth; for thou shalt inherit all<sup>5</sup> gentiles (*ᵓ pl.*).
- 83: 3. They have taken crafty counsel against thy nation (*y sing.*) and consulted against thy hidden ones.
4. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation (*ᵓ sing.*); that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.
- 85: 2. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy nation (*y sing.*), thou hast covered all their sin.
6. Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy nation (*y sing.*) may rejoice in thee?
8. I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his nation (*y sing.*), and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.
- 86: 9. All<sup>6</sup> gentiles (*ᵓ pl.*) whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.
- 87: 6. The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the<sup>7</sup> gentiles (*y pl.*) that this man was born there.
- 89:15. Blessed is the nation (*y sing.*) that knoweth the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.

<sup>5</sup> Or, “nations,” including Jews. <sup>6</sup> Or, “nations,” including Jews.

<sup>7</sup> Or, “nations.”

“Nation” and “Gentiles” in the Psalms.

7

- Ps. 89: 19. Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the <sup>s</sup> nation (*y sing.*).
50. Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants; how I do bear in my bosom the reproach of all the mighty gentiles (*y pl.*);
- 94: 5. They break in pieces thy nation (*y sing.*), O Lord, and afflict thine heritage.
8. Understand, ye brutish among the nation (*y sing.*): and ye fools, when will ye be wise?
10. He that chastiseth the gentiles (*3 pl.*), shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?
14. For the Lord will not cast off his nation (*y sing.*), neither will he forsake his inheritance.
- 95: 7. For he is our God; and we are the nation (*y sing.*) of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To-day if ye will hear his voice,...
10. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a nation (*y sing.*) that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:
- 96: 3. Declare his glory among the gentiles (*3 pl.*), his wonders among all gentiles (*y pl.*).
5. For all the gods of the gentiles (*y pl.*) are idols: but the Lord made the heavens.
7. Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the gentiles (*y pl.*), give unto the Lord glory and strength.
10. Say among the gentiles (*3 pl.*) that the Lord reigneth; the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved; he shall judge the gentiles (*y pl.*) righteously.
13. ...before the Lord: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the gentiles (*y pl.*) with his truth.
- 97: 6. The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the gentiles (*y pl.*) see his glory.
- 98: 2. The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the gentiles (*3 pl.*)
9. ...before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the gentiles (*y pl.*) with equity.
- 99: 1. The Lord reigneth; let the gentiles (*y pl.*) tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved.
2. The Lord is great in Zion; and he is high above all the gentiles (*y pl.*)
- 100: 3. Know ye that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his nation (*y sing.*), and the sheep of his pasture.
- 102: 15. So the gentiles (*3 pl.*) shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory.
18. This shall be written for the generation to come: and the nation (*y sing.*) which shall be created shall praise the Lord.
22. When the gentiles (*y pl.*) are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord.
- 105: 1. O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the gentiles (*y pl.*).

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<sup>s</sup> Or, possibly, “people,” may be preferable.

## 8 "Nation" and "Gentiles" in the Psalms.

- Ps.105:13. When they went from one nation (*♁ sing.*) to another (*♁ sing.*), from one kingdom to another nation (*γ sing.*)
20. The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the gentiles (*γ pl.*), and let him go free.
24. And he increased his nation (*γ sing.*) greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies.
25. He turned their heart to hate his nation (*γ sing.*), to deal subtilly with his servants.
40. *The nation*<sup>9</sup> asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.
43. And he brought forth his (*γ sing.*) nation with joy, and his chosen with gladness.
44. And gave them the lands of the gentiles (*♁ pl.*): and they inherited the labour of the gentiles (*♁ pl.*);
- 106: 4. Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy nation (*γ sing.*): O visit me with thy salvation;
5. That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation (*γ sing.*), that I may glory with thine inheritance.
27. To overthrow their seed also among the gentiles (*♁ pl.*), and to scatter them in the lands.
34. They did not destroy the gentiles (*γ pl.*), concerning whom the Lord commanded them:
35. But were mingled among the gentiles (*♁ pl.*), and learned their works.
40. Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his nation (*γ sing.*), insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.
41. And he gave them into the hand of the gentiles (*♁ pl.*); and they that hated them ruled over them.
47. Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the gentiles (*♁ pl.*), to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise.
48. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the nation (*γ sing.*) say, Amen. Praise ye the Lord.
- 107:32. Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the nation (*γ sing.*), and praise him in the assembly of the elders.
- 108: 3. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the gentiles (*γ pl.*): and I will sing praises to thee among the gentiles (*γ pl.*).
- 110: 3. Thy nation (*γ sing.*) shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.
6. He shall judge among the gentiles (*♁ pl.*), he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.
- 111: 6. He hath showed his nation (*γ sing.*) the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the gentiles (*♁ pl.*).
9. He sent redemption unto his nation (*γ sing.*): he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.
- 113: 4. The Lord is high above all gentiles (*♁ pl.*), and his glory above the heavens.
8. That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his nation (*γ sing.*).

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<sup>9</sup> "The nation" here has no word to represent it in the Hebrew.—Ed.

“ Nation ” and “ Gentiles ” in the Psalms. 9

- Ps. 114: 1. When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a nation (*y sing.*) of strange language ;
- 115: 2. Wherefore should the gentiles (*ג pl.*) say, Where is now their God ?
- 116:14. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his nation (*y sing.*).
18. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his nation (*y sing.*)
- 117: 1. O praise the Lord, all ye gentiles (*ג pl.*): praise him, all ye gentiles.<sup>10</sup>
- 118:10. All gentiles (*ג pl.*) encompassed me about : but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.
- 125: 2. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his nation (*y sing.*) from henceforth even for ever.
- 126: 2. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing : then said they among the gentiles (*ג pl.*), the Lord hath done great things for them.
- 135:10. Who smote great gentiles (*ג pl.*), and slew mighty kings.
12. And gave their land for an heritage, an heritage unto Israel his nation (*y sing.*)
14. For the Lord will judge his nation (*y sing.*), and repent himself concerning his servants.
15. The idols of the gentiles (*ג pl.*) are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.
- 136:16. To him who led his nation (*y sing.*) through the wilderness: for his mercy endureth for ever.
- 144: 2. My goodness and my fortress; my high tower and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my nation (*y sing.*) under me.
15. Happy is that nation (*y sing.*) that is in such a case: yea, happy is that nation (*y sing.*) whose God is the Lord.
- 147:20. He hath not dealt so with any nation (*ג sing.*): and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord.
- 148:11. Kings of the earth, and all gentiles (*ג pl.*); princes, and all judges of the earth:
14. He also exalteth the horn of his nation (*y sing.*), the praise of all his saints, even of the children of Israel, a nation (*y sing.*) near unto him. Praise ye the Lord.
- 149: 4. For the Lord taketh pleasure in his nation (*y sing.*): he will beautify the meek with salvation.
7. To execute vengeance upon the gentiles (*ג pl.*), and punishments upon the gentiles (*ג pl.*);

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<sup>10</sup> The word in this place is another word, not one of the three under review, viz., גִּמְיִם or גִּמְוֹת it only occurs here and in Genesis xxv. 16., “twelve princes according to their nations;” and in Numbers xxv. 15., “head over a people.”—ED.

\* \* The Editor suggests that in Ps. vii. 8 and Ps. ix. 5 the word rendered “God” should be as in the authorised version, “Lord.” In noticing the omission of the word “Selah” from this paper, he would avail himself of the opportunity to remark that Jerome renders the word “Selah” by SEMPER, i. e. ALWAYS; Comm: vol. i. p. 49.



## No. II.

## THE CANDLESTICK.

To any soul quickened into life through Christ Jesus (risen from the death due to us), and thus and then united to Him,—must be deeply interesting, the path and service he may observe to be well-pleasing to the Lord; and not only so, but also, the definite testimony which he, in common with his fellow-partakers in this life, as members in the one body, should pursue here, as expressive of the reality and blessedness of union with the Head.

I need scarcely remark that, until our own individual interests are assured to us in the Lord, we shall have no heart or power to be interested for His glory in the Church, or for the members of it. A true servant must be un-selfish. Until peace keeps my heart and mind, “the Apostles’ course is little regarded by me” (Phil. iv. 9), and the source of the peace is imperfectly known to me. But to one from whom the pathetic appeal of Jesus “Lovest thou Me,” can awaken the same plain, earnest response as it did from Peter,—it must be a subject of no small moment, *how* he may prove his love, according to the word, in feeding and caring for (and both are implied) the sheep,—objects of the love of Christ. Love to the Lord Jesus is the great ability and qualification wanting to most for such service. The service is feeding and caring for: no political movement, no amelioration of the propensities of our nature can ever reach to the deep and important and *personal* interest expressed by “feeding and caring for.” If we love, let us show our love. Dear to Christ Jesus is the feeding and caring for the sheep, and not less can satisfy the heart that loves Him. The Church should be of things on earth, our sole interest and service. St. Paul could say—I fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His body’s sake which is the Church; and again, I endure all things for the elects’ sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in

Christ Jesus with eternal glory. The great point is, *Service to the Church*; this is too plainly enforced to be denied, though the manner in which this is attempted to be rendered is the fruitful cause of many and grievous mistakes. In truth, to know how rightly to feed and care for the Church we need to be instructed in the nature and doctrines of the Church. If that which we call the church is but an assembly bound to observe a certain ritual and ceremonies,—to serve it will fall very far short of the intention of Christ and lead to a very different course from that which a man will follow who regards every believer as a member of the mystical body of Christ, and as one who ought to be served referentially to that union, which is true in Christ, and would be declared here but for the interposition of the flesh, and *is declared* so far as the flesh is crucified; for the Spirit is one, and spiritual service must lead to this; not merely to a nominal union but to a union, as true and as real and as holy as that which the members in particular have with the Head. The Spirit cannot countenance less nor can He work in God's servants for less. So that whenever any thing discordant or disaffective to the union, as it is in Christ, arises, then, just so far, there must be a breach in union, in godly union here. True service begins with Christ, who is the Head, and when Christ is forgotten then the service is defective; it has lost connection with the spring and fountain of all service, because it is from the Head that *all* the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered increaseth. The body is of Christ and He loves it as He loves Himself, and every one who would serve it will best learn to do so by knowing His heart and purposes towards it. In a word it is Christ serves, though it may be through us. We are but "joints and bands:" if we are not *derivative* and *communicative* from Christ, we are useless. To be useful, my eye and heart must be on Christ, and not on the issue of my service; though if true to Him, the end will vindicate me too, however disheartening the interval. He who judges of his service by present appearances will judge by the blossom and not by the fruit; and after all the service is not for the sake of the Church but for the sake of Christ; and if he

be served in the Church, though the Church own it not, yet, Christ being served, He will own it. Now the constant effort of Satan is to disconnect, in our minds, Christ from our service; and this, much more than any of us, perhaps, have fully discovered. Whether in reading, or praying, or speaking, how seldom, if we judge ourselves, do we find that we act simply as towards Christ and Him alone! How often may sentimentality and natural feelings affect us in our service, instead of simple love to Him?

Such was the sin of the church of Ephesus. You could not say that they did not show interest for the members, as far as man could see; they had works and patience—could not bear them that were evil—had tried them which say they are apostles, and are not. Laborious, righteous, strict in discipline, nay, labouring also for the sake of Christ, and yet they were wanting in the all-engrossing undivided affection for Christ, which “first love” designates. The absence of first love entailed the loss of “first works” and the inevitable judgment was the removal of their candlestick, or ability to hold light for the guidance of others. The symbol of a candlestick illustrates the peculiar and blessed office of the church upon earth to be a lightbearer in the midst of surrounding darkness, and thus a guide; but this it forfeited when it failed in simple and abstract reference to Christ as the centre of affection and the object of all service. If the first fruits of service are not rendered to Christ, there can be no real service to the members. If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another: there could be no fellowship in the flesh; flesh is selfish; fellowship obtains when flesh is silenced, and in the light to which Jesus has introduced the quickened members of His body, through His own life. If we love our brother we abide in the light and light is in the presence of God where Christ has set us; it is known to us by our union with Jesus—when we walk in it we walk in the consciousness of Himself, because He alone is our light. <sup>a</sup>

He is the light of men. When we walk in the light

<sup>a</sup> The church is called the candlestick; the Lamb is the candle  
 λυχνος (Rev. xxi. 23.)

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we must serve according to the mind of Christ. If we attempt to serve otherwise, it is no service. If we are not abiding in Christ we are not in the light, and hence our service will be in darkness and we can do nothing. If we abide in Christ, we are supplied with strength and nourishment from Him who supplies the members. He is the light and gives us light, and by Him alone can we bear light; without Him we can do nothing; we have no light to know our own course, we know not at what we stumble; apart from the light we can not guide ourselves, much less others; we are but blind leaders of the blind, we forfeit the blessing of giving light.

If Christ, who would give power and ability to us for service, is lost sight of by us, we have not the first works which *grow out of the heart devoted to Christ*; and we consequently lose the effect which they would produce. In the church of Ephesus I doubt not but that the first incipient form of declension is denounced, and the judgment for such declension is the removal of the candlestick. The removal of the candlestick was not the penalty of open evil: it was the first punishment for the first and earliest form of declension.

Adam's first emotions which led to his fatal fall were doubts of the perfectness of the love of God. He left his first love. He was the first example of man losing the place of lightbearer to this earth, because his heart swerved in fidelity and love to God. He did not eat of the tree of life; but he that overcomes this, the first and earliest tendency of our poor faithless hearts, shall eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

I think it is important to note that there is no allusion to the intent of removing the candlestick to any church after Ephesus. The reason of this, I think, is that the other churches had sinned more grievously, and hence their judicial treatment is more severe than with Ephesus. Here let me observe, that I fear we shall err much if we forget that the seven churches mentioned in the Revelation, as representing the candlestick are *all under judgment now*. This is important, because if I take them for precedents for my present action, I am manifestly, by

adopting any of their maxims or principles, placing myself under judgment where they are. True it is, I may be described by one or other of the churches, but I assert that no zealous and devoted saint or company of saints could seek to follow any of their ways as a whole, yea, rather but would seek to be unlike them, seeing that they are under sentence of judgment for being what they are, and instead of seeking to them for lines of guidance we should rather seek how we may avoid resemblance to them. We need only refer to Paul's opinion of them as expressed in 2 Tim. i. 15; where he says, "All they which are in Asia are turned away from me." Now I should not gather from this that all the Christians in Asia were deceivers, and had given up the profession of Christianity; no such thing. I believe they had departed from the truth relative to the churches present position and hopes; just the same as Demas in the 4th chapter; "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present age (*τόν νῦν αἰῶνα*). He had not necessarily given up Christianity; he gave up the idea that the church was purely heavenly without any earthly hopes, and that it was only to traverse this dark world as heavenly citizens bearing the light of God through it, as the body of Christ. He could not bear to regard himself as so completely cut off from earth and no longer to have a hold, position, or citizenship here; he could not brook the doctrine that our citizenship is in Heaven (see Phil.). And like him were all they that were in Asia. Hence the seven churches are presented to me not as patterns for imitation, but specimens of the declension which would occur, and from following which we ought to be deterred by the judgments inflicted on them. Ask me to shape my course by any number of Christians, whom the Apostle tells me "have turned away from him"! no surely. Rather it relieves me to find that there is especial notice taken and judgment passed on them, who disregarded his high and holy teaching; and though, as I have already allowed, the seven churches so dealt with, may and do stand there as representative of the general condition of the church, yet this in no way affects my statement; they are not for our guidance but for our warning. And he who follows them, follows that which

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was under sentence of losing its blessing. Nor is it an argument of any weight to say that because certain solemn duties are not mentioned as being observed by them, and which they are not admonished to observe, that, therefore, they were not obligatory in a condition similar to theirs. Can a church or any body exercise discipline or observe solemn duties till it first rights itself corporately as touching foundation-truth. Ephesus was applauded for her discipline, but when she lost her candlestick, would she discipline? Did any of them retain the candlestick? Unless cleaving to the Lord with purpose of heart what was the value of discipline? Does it not argue a very low state of spiritual apprehension to remind a church of one of the essential attributes of its existence as discipline undoubtedly is? Is not Pergamos censured for retaining (ἐχέουσ ἐκεῖ) amongst them "those that hold the doctrine of Balaam," and also, "those that hold the doctrines of the Nicolaitanes." How (I may ask) could they get rid of these but by discipline? and yet some quote Pergamos as a precedent to us for not using discipline. Why, their fault was that they had *not* used discipline. Nay more, they had not discovered the power of Christ as the sharp sword to repel and destroy such false doctrines. In like manner it is alleged, that, because in Sardis a few names are said not to have defiled their garments, and that, consequently, they shall walk in white, that this is a precedent for us to satisfy our consciences that, though we are in connection with what is manifestly erroneous, yet we may be individually pure and untainted ourselves, and hence indifferent as to separating from such unhallowed associations. If this is the light which Sardis diffuses, it savours little of Him who is the light. In a corporate character, Sardis is described as having only a name to live, and her works are incomplete before God. She is accordingly warned, that unless she remember how she has received, and heard, and holds fast, and repents, that judgment will come on her as a thief; but even in the event of this judgment being consummated, a few names will be carried through the tribulation. There are some sincere ones who have not defiled their garments, they shall overcome the evil influences affecting Sardis. They

shall walk in white and he that overcometh shall *thus* be clothed (see Greek) in white. We are told in the end of chap. 7, whom "white" characterises; and, therefore, we may conclude, that the wearers of white here are not those who remained in the low condition in which Sardis is here described, but rather those who have overcome, and through trial renounced, the deadness and evil there so dominant *for they alone have white garments who overcome*; they did not assent to the evil; they had not defiled their garments, but they were to do more, they were to renounce and overcome it; and they would do so, for "they *shall* walk in white for they are worthy;" no neutral ground but a decided victory and superiority over the pressure marked their course—their destined course. It is unnecessary for me further to pursue this subject, deeply interesting and important as it is. But to return to consider a little more in detail the characteristics of the candlestick. To the quickly sensitive and affectionate heart it must have been painful to hear of disqualification from bearing of light. Light is of God—Christ is our light unto God. From Adam to Christ every witness had failed to hold out the light of God to the world. In Christ was life and He was the light of man. He shined in the darkness; but the darkness did not comprehend Him. In Christ the saints have life; and this is the argument of 1 John i. Therefore we are in the light, we have fellowship with the Father and the Son: as long as we abide here we are in the light; we have fellowship one with another, and we know whither we go. And if the candlestick have failed, nothing can rob us of the privilege individually of being light-bearers, but loss of "first love;" loss of that deep and fervent interest in the person of Christ, which would supply us with power and intelligence to guide the souls of others. Paul could say, "Be ye followers of me as I also am of Christ." Nothing so attracts the sheep as the shepherd: none can guide as He does. None can restore but the Shepherd. The soul is in an unhealthy state when anything but Christ appears to restore it. Devotedness raises the question, "What is thy beloved more than another Beloved?" It is not doctrine, dry and correct, that feeds and leads the souls of Christ's

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flock. It is Christ Himself, vividly and truly declared. He is the bread of life. The pasturage attracts the sheep, for Christ stands and feeds in the strength of the Lord. If a number of believers meet together, there is no promise of blessing unless they meet *in* the name of the Lord Jesus. The Apostle when directing the Corinthians how to vindicate the holiness of God among them, tells them they are to gather together in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. If they assembled otherwise they could not reckon on the *power* of our Lord Jesus Christ. "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." If it be said, and alas! it may justly be said (with sorrow and humiliation) that we know little of the power or presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only answer is, It is so, because we do not simply meet in His name. This I again repeat was the sin of Ephesus; this is the first form of declension, and practically we know what a sad train of weakness and carelessness follows with it. Meeting in His name implies, at least, that we unreservedly commit ourselves to Him, that we depend on *nought* save Him and His Spirit to feed and satisfy our souls; nay, that nought else is allowed. May our minds weigh the portentous meaning of these words to which are attached, even to the end, such wondrous blessing and blessings, alas! so little known by us. Do we want blessing as for the two or three meeting together? Let us meet in the name of the Lord Jesus. Do we want power? Where will the power we need be found, save in that Blessed One. Do we desire that our light may shine forth? The tender all-absorbing emotions of first love alone can effect that. Let us not think that our devotedness to Christ, however earnest and self-sacrificing, will discourage or deter any Christian. Doubtless it will raise opposition where there is a name more than a reality; but the sheep will follow the shepherd's voice. The more undilutedly His grace flows from us, the more will it commend itself to the simple-hearted saint. When did Abimelech seek unto Isaac? (Gen. xxvi.). After Isaac by slow and sorrowful steps had separated from all the attractive region of Abimelech's influence. He proved his superiority by renouncing what the other lived



in. This manifestation of moral power led the Philistine king to Isaac's retirement, and to seek a covenant with him. Here he was indeed light-displaying. Again, David in Adullam's cave, the cheerless hold, had more numerous and more illustrious followers than in Saul's palace (1 Sam. xxii. 1). Simple suffering devotedness is always attractive. The maintenance, the strict and holy maintenance of truth in honor to Christ, whilst it repels the Deceiver, assures the heart and invigorates the purposes of the faithful. Witness the effect of the solemn judgment in Acts v. 13, 14, "of the rest durst no man join himself to them;" and yet, "believers were the more added to the Lord multitudes both of men and women."

In the consummation of all blessing "the Lamb shall be the light," and around Him, in one holy and bright array will all the saints be marshalled, and as we are like unto Him now, as "Christ is formed in us" (which the Galatians needed) are we the bearers of light before the world. S.

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ACROSTIC PSALMS.

1.—Ps. CXIX.

*Each of the verses 1—8 begins with a Aleph.*

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|--|--------|
| <sup>1</sup> <b>A</b> LL blessings for the perfect in the way,<br>who walk in the law of the Jehovah.                | ver. 1 |
| <sup>2</sup> <b>A</b> ll blessings for those that keep His testimonies,<br>they shall seek Him with the whole heart. | ver. 2 |
| <b>A</b> lso they do no iniquity;<br>they walk in his ways.  | ver. 3 |
| <b>A</b> command thou hast given,<br>diligently to keep thy precepts.  | ver. 4 |
| <b>A</b> h! that my ways were directed<br>to keep Thy statutes!  | ver. 5 |
| <b>A</b> shamed I shall not be, when I have<br>respect to all Thy commandments.                                      | ver. 6 |
| <b>A</b> s learning Thy righteous judgments,<br>I will praise Thee with uprightness of heart.                        | ver. 7 |
| <b>A</b> h! forsake me not utterly,<br>I will keep Thy statutes.   | ver. 8 |

<sup>1</sup> lit. Blessedness of the perfect.

<sup>2</sup> lit. Blessedness of the keeper.

N<sup>o</sup> III.

## THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

John xiii.

THERE are, I think, three characters in which the love of Christ is presented to us, and is to be learnt by us; that is, his love to the saints, for I speak not here of his love to the sinner. The first we shall find, I believe, in the third chapter of the Ephesians, that is, his love to *the church*. Paul had been dwelling there on the mystery of the church, as in union with Christ—its mystery as to its earthly calling, and constitution, “that the Gentiles, should be fellow-heirs, and of *the same body*, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel” (chap. iii. 6), that the middle wall of partition should now be broken down, and that God should form out of Jew and Gentile, “one new man” in Christ, and one “temple,” (chap. ii.) his own habitation by the Spirit. He had dwelt, I say, upon this *external character* of the mystery, and passed on, I believe, in his mind, to the interior, and essential mystery, in ver. 8., viz., that the body should be in union with Christ in heaven, for this is the “unsearchable riches of Christ,” in view of which he becomes but the least of all saints; this is the mystery kept secret from the ages, and hid in God, when he created all things by Jesus Christ, and by which now principalities, and powers, are learning the manifold wisdom of God. It was, I judge, clearly in connection with these thoughts that he here speaks of the love of Christ. They are to learn it “with all the saints.” It is the love of Christ to the church. And it is truly of infinite importance to know that there is a body, which Christ loves with a special, and peculiar love, and that body is the church. Christians commonly hindered by the trammelling systems of man, only think of themselves as

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individuals; they think of Christ's love to them as individuals; but they do not identify themselves with Christ's love to the church, as a body. But let me say, it is utterly impossible ever to enter into Christ's love in its fulness, without this; Christ is not thinking merely of individuals, he is thinking of a body, a body which God prepared for him, and gave to him (John xvii. 6), a body for which he died (Ephesians v. 25), and for which he lives, and which lives in, and by him (John xiv. 19), soon, too, to be presented in glory to Him (Ephesians v. 27). I say, upon this body, Christ's love dwells with *infinite* fulness. We must see this, then, in order to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and know the love of Christ, that *passeth knowledge*, and thus be filled with *all the fulness* of God.

This is true; yet is it well also to see the love of Christ to us, as individual members of himself. This is presented in (Ephesians v). He there speaks much of the church, yet still he says, "*We are members* of his body, we are (Greek) of his flesh, and of his bones," we are individually in union with Him, He with us, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." And how blessed to think that the love of Christ rests upon us, individually, severally, and specially. What a comfort is this in affliction, and trial! Our flesh might perhaps think that the Lord deals hardly with us; but how impossible! "No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but does nourish and cherish it, even as the Lord the church." Be the stroke ever so rude, and overwhelming, it is but the tender hand of Christ after all. It is wisely and gently dealing. It cannot do otherwise, for "no one ever yet hated *his own flesh*, but does nourish and cherish it."

But beside these two characters, John, I think, opens to us another thought, which "sealeth the sum;" and that is, that this love which is resting upon us, is a *Divine* love. That is the character of our Lord, so much brought out in John, viz., as *the Son of God*; and that is what ever gives it such value to the saints. And so it is, I judge, very much in that character that our Lord acts here (John xiii). He knew that he "came forth (Greek) from God, and that he goeth to God." He was

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in the full possession of what he was, and what he has, "that the Father had given all things into his hands." And *then* it comes out, that, "having *loved* his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end." Yes, it is a *Divine* love that is resting upon us, upon his own; it is the love of the Son of God; it is the love of GOD. The other parts, as shewn, bring out the love of Christ in constituted relationship to us; but this, as I said, brings out a higher thing still, the nature of Him that loves, and the *nature* of the love. May we learn all more fully, that we may more fully adore Him "that loves his own."

I will not dwell here upon the nature of the action he there performs for his own; in type, the priestly intercession, and washing away of His people's defilements. Surely it is blessed to have such a One to "wash our feet"; and may we learn day by day more fully in quiet submissive love to leave all our sins there, where Jesus would put and leave them, in the basin—the laver. Let us not in apparent humility, but in real pride, and self-righteousness of heart, refuse to submit to this washing, saying, like Peter, "Thou shalt never wash my feet;" but since our Lord will have it so, even let it be so; let ours be the blessing, His the glory. "Behold," says Mary, *the handmaid* of the Lord; "be it unto me according to thy word." Soon shall we come where the streets are of pure gold: there will be nothing that defileth there; meanwhile, whilst wandering here, may we learn more fully the grace of Him with whom we have to do. It is our privilege, as I said, to leave even all our sins and all our defilements there in the basin, or laver, of Jesus; all our needless worldly cares and anxieties we may leave in the same place too; for, after all, it is but the dust of our feet. Jesus loves us: it is our privilege, like John, here to lean on his bosom; let us do heartily whatsoever we have got to do of earthly business; but as to needless care, it should find no place for one leaning on the bosom of Jesus. May sin and sorrow thus be more removed from us!

G.

## No. IV.

## DEUTERONOMY XXXII.—HABAKKUK.

## ACTS XX. 29. — 2 TIMOTHY. — JUDE.

MOSES and the Apostle Paul, each in the respective times or dispensation in which he lived, prophetically bore witness to this, namely, God's people corrupting their ways. They testify of the apostasy and ruin of that entrusted to man's hands—yet (and seen, may we not say, the brighter *because* of it?) the unchangeable goodness of God—His glorious Majesty and all the unfailing power of His grace, and love, and tender mercy above the sphere of man's conduct, and whatever failure there may be, though He deal with it, and judge it, for He must judge, in that sense, His people.

The prophet Habakkuk establishes and confirms the testimony of Moses. Jude that of Paul. "In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word is established." Others, indeed, as Peter in his second epistle, witness the same. It may be found instructive to examine and compare the Scripture as to this testimony, for where are we? What is God's present testimony to us? Assuredly it is as to His faithfulness and blessedness in spite of failure and corruption. There is witness enough as to the ruin and failure, and, alas! abundant practical proof of our unbelief and folly, but *the* point which God presses on our consciences is that He is the same. The same God and Father, whose mercy endureth for ever. The same God the giver in all His unsearchable riches and inexhaustible fulness. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The same God the Holy Ghost in all His present living energy and witness, given "that He may abide with you for ever." Blessed truth! With this, and having special faith in this, there is a remnant recognised and addressed in the Word, represented in lively way by Habakkuk in his triumph of faith, and specially testified of in Jude, who—in communion with

God's thoughts, and walking with and before Him as the living God, and cheered by the promises and truth suited to their circumstances—work on (as those in Ezra) for the building of the House and are sustained in doing so (notwithstanding all the trial and difficulty of the way), by the moral power—the secret divine energy of faith, looking on to the glory itself, not working or building with reference to the scene here only, or so much—as to the time when He will appear, who alone is worthy and able to bear the glory and sit and rule upon His throne. Oh that our hearts could enter into this. That there was given to us the needed confession of sin and failure, the broken and soft heart, and the faith that will work on, not for man or present things, but having “respect to the recompense of the reward” and to Him who will dispense crowns of gold and better than that, (Rev. ii. 17), “hidden manna” and “a white stone and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” But let us glance at the Scriptures quoted. In Deut. xxxi. 29, Moses speaks to the people, the elders and officers “For I know [compare Paul's identical ‘For I know’ to the elders of the Church at Ephesus, Acts xx. 29] that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you, and evil will befall you in the latter days:” It is then on the fore-known failure of the people, and fore-declared corruption of their ways that the magnificent song (chap. xxxii.) and utterance of the Holy Spirit by Moses proceeds. It is based on man's failure, but oh! what a testimony as to our God. “Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear oh earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb and as the showers upon the grass [and how or why was the doctrine to be such a cleansing, fertilizing, refreshing blessed doctrine?]: because I will publish the Name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are judgment, a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He”; and what does he find at man's hands? “They

24      *Deuteronomy xxxii.—Habakkuk, etc.*

*have corrupted themselves,*" and with what tender and affecting words does Jehovah speak of His dealings with the people, ver. 9, "For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. He found Him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock." How the very terms and thoughts (the pure grace) are calculated to penetrate our very souls and affect our consciences indeed (if heart and conscience be not as the nether millstone); but what of the people Israel, ver. 15, "But Jeshurun *waxed fat and kicked,*" the very exuberance of the grace and manifestation of God's goodness not held in communion with Him, turns them aside. "He forsook God which made him and *lightly esteemed* the Rock of his salvation." Thus early, ere the dispensation had well begun, does Moses speak as to man's failure, but utters such a glorious testimony as to the perfectness of the work of the Rock of Ages, and how does Habakkuk witness towards the close of the dispensation? "Although the fig tree shall not blossom" failure and disappointment may be all around, "Yet, I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength." He can fall back upon the faithfulness and perfectness of Jehovah the Rock. But the prophet Habakkuk did not get these blessed thoughts without due exercise of soul—yea, deep searchings of heart; surely the three chapters of his prophecy are replete with instruction, and give a very exact picture of the course pursued, and the exercises of conscience of many a saint of late.

In the 1st chapter Habakkuk manifestly is not in communion with God as to what is going on around, he is astounded at circumstances and the conduct of many—complains to God Himself, even vexed in spirit at the

scene before him. Mark the expressions, ver. 2, “O Lord, *how long shall I cry and thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save! Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention.* Therefore the law is slacked and judgment doth never go forth,” etc. We see from the entire chapter (see ver. 13 to the end) that the prophet is occupied with the scene below, like a field of battle for confusion. He does not get above to the pure atmosphere of God’s counsels and *the needs be* for such things, he is taken up with himself and man—expediency and circumstances. What a picture of the condition of many a soul! but the scene changes in chap. ii. The prophet gets into God’s presence and mark how, with self-judgment and lowliness and watching, “I will stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower *and will watch to see what He will say to me, and what I shall answer, when I am reproved.* And the Lord answered me.” And what a truth does his God meet him with, ver. 4, “*Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.*” Here is the principle, the secret, which when understood, removes difficulties and accounts for God’s dealings with His people oftentimes. They get away from Him. The Lord Jesus loses His due and proper place, as the centre of their affections—the object of their faith and service—the eye is not single—worldliness comes in—independency and, presently, haughtiness of spirit: the soul becomes “*lifted up*” (just the contrary to the word “learn of Me, for I am meek and *lowly* in heart”). The Lord judges it and sifts because of His Divine, unceasing, as unchangeable love. This blessed Divine culture and teaching was not lost on Habakkuk, for in chapter iii. we see him fully in the Lord’s thoughts. In the power of communion with God he has the vision of the Holy One from Mount Paran, the manifestation and power of the Son of Man, whose glory covered the heavens and the earth was full of His praise. And then, notwithstanding all his exercises, ver. 16, “and disappointment and failure all around,” ver. 17, he comes to the blessed conclusion, that let man or things fail, God is



full of grace and truth. "The Lord God is my strength and He will make my feet like hind's feet, and He will make me *to walk upon mine high places.*" How hard it is for the human heart to give God His place, and to put man in his place ! and to *walk and abide* in the power of such faith !

Thus we see the beginning and end of that time or dispensation marked with this emphatic testimony. And what is witnessed to us in the Word for our own time, or during this dispensation in which the Church is gathered ? The same truth. Blessed it is to know that while man fails, God does not fail. He may set aside or close dispensations, but His people "are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." The existence of what is entrusted to man's hands will depend upon man's faithfulness. The existence, *i. e.* salvation, of the people of God depends on His faithfulness, our un failing security. And it is good to remember this, for in such a scene as presents itself to many an eye now, souls may, through unbelief, begin to question God's purpose and grace. Now the Apostle Paul meets this very blessedly in his second letter to Timothy. There he draws a most dark fearful picture (chap. iii.) of the last days and perilous times in which our lot is cast. In his description of corrupt Christianity, the reader may remark that many of the terms employed by the Apostle describing the character of those of whom he speaks, are the same terms which are used in Romans i. in setting forth the horrible account of the gentile world; but the picture in 2nd Timothy is more fearfully bad, because of that word "having a *form of godliness.*" The name of God is tacked on to the abominations of man. Now in this very letter, giving such an awful, frightful description of the time we are in, how truly precious are the words of comfort, the beacons of light for humble souls, brought into contrast with that which would alarm the soul. Mark the sentences of truth to support the soul cast upon God. We find in chap. i. that which is to be laid hold of by faith and gloried in, ver. 9, "Who *hath* saved us." Ver. 14, "The Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." In chap. ii. ver. 8, "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed

of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel." Ver. 13, "*He cannot deny Himself,*" the only thing our Lord Jesus *cannot do!* In chap. iii. ver. 16, "*All Scripture* is given by inspiration of God." How good how beneficent is God! With the sad, awful dark history of such a time. Our God furnishes that truth for humble weak souls who look to Him, which can raise them up, out of, and above all the turmoil, confusion and failure. "What hath God wrought!" Is the soul alarmed and confounded at what is passing? Sweet the assurance of our God "Who *hath* saved us and called us with a holy calling [just what Satan would have us to question and deny] not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality [incorruptibility] to light through the Gospel." Is there a "great house" containing those from whom a man must purge himself, if he be obedient, "a vessel unto honour sanctified and meet for the master's use"—The faithful man is thrown upon Him who cannot deny Himself, he has all Scripture and the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, to lead into all truth. How tender is our God! The witness of Jude is in the same strain. After a hideous picture of apostasy and man's corruption, the Spirit of God by Jude addresses a remnant *out-side* professing bodies "building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God." Not their love to God, but their hearts being established in grace, to know God's love to them, and all His dealings according to His love and grace and not according to their apprehension of it. The Spirit then inculcates large-heartedness with faithfulness and abhorrence of the evil. "Of some have compassion, making a difference, and others save with fear, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." O that such a heart were formed and found in us, because faithful and true to Christ, large towards the brethren (compare Job xlii. 10, "And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, *when he prayed for*

*his friends.”*). The Holy Ghost then casts, as it were, this feeble remnant on the Lord Jesus Himself. As if He had said, you will be sensible of weakness and failure and your hearts may be sinking within you at times, but here is that which will never fail you (*the point of testimony which we set out with*). Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, Amen. A.

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A FRAGMENT.

“Two passages in Revelation seem to admit of being more easily explained, and to save some controversy, if we adopt the simple interpretation, that  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ , in these places, means dead ‘body’ instead of ‘soul,’ see Numb. ix. One is Rev. vi. 9, describing the opening of the fifth seal, where we read of ‘souls’ under the altar, the other the celebrated passage in Rev. xx. 4, I saw the ‘souls’ of them that were beheaded. An objection may be raised, How can dead, headless bodies speak? It may be a sufficient answer to say, How can a soul speak without a *body at all?* To which we may add, It seems contrary to common sense to see a *soul*. To make a soul visible would not only be (we may suppose) to suspend the course of nature, and achieve what is called a *physical* impossibility, which is the very nature of a miracle, but, beyond this, to bring to pass what is rather a metaphysical or mathematical impossibility, i. e. that which, in the very nature of the case, can no more be than a sound can be seen, or a colour be heard, or two and two can make five. At all events, this difficulty is worth considering. Corpses cannot *literally* speak, no more can *blood*, yet in figurative, i. e. scriptural, language it has a voice, see Gen. iv. Heb. xi. Again, corpses, *as such*, do not live and reign, neither do *souls* (according to the common version) without bodies. In the one case the first resurrection unites body and soul, in the other it not only does so, but repairs the loss the mutilated body had sustained.” B.

## ON THE DIVINE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE.

THE question which I would here consider, is not that of the amount of inspiration. I do not enter on the discussion of *verbal* inspiration—interesting as it is to those who believe in a revelation from God.

My object is the truth of inspiration itself, the reality of a written revelation, and indeed of all revelation given through the mouth of man.

It is not open infidelity as to the facts and doctrines of Christianity, which we have to combat. Our subject is the Divine authority of the books which relate these facts and treat of these doctrines. The existence of these truths is admitted, but their immediate communication to us by God, is denied: with the exception possibly of the inward revelation of the person of Christ to the soul; if indeed that could be true consistently with these principles. It is the existence of the Word of God, having authority as His word, which is in question. It is owned perhaps that Christ bore the title of the Word of God. But according to their system, they have no real authority for this—it may have been a mistake of John's, or a rabbinical or rabbino-Platonic tradition; and in fact the expression is found in writings of this description. It is important to keep the question clearly on this ground. The denial of any communication of Divine truth which, coming from God, would have the authority of God as truth. *For us*, if there is no inspiration, there is no divine truth: because a truth which is not communicated with divine certainty, is not a divine truth to man. Or, to speak more accurately, an existing fact, which cannot be naturally known to

\* This article is part of a letter (in French) written in answer to an "Attack upon Divine Inspiration." The author has corrected the present translation, and made many alterations and omissions from the original letter, which was not intended for publication. The remembering this will account to the reader for the abruptness and brokenness of the style.—ED.

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man, because not belonging to this creation; cannot be a truth to my soul if it be not communicated with divine certainty. There might be an immediate revelation to each individual in each case; otherwise, in order to believe, there must be an inspired communication either written or by word of mouth. I am not speaking of truth being applied to the conscience by the Holy Ghost, but of the means of possessing a divine certainty of truth, by knowing from whom we have received it. A doctrine cannot have more authority, as a truth, than the means by which it is communicated. A man without being inspired may be the channel through which truth is imparted, and the truth may act through the Spirit's power, on the heart and conscience; but this does not constitute a divine basis for faith in him who hears. The effect has been produced in the soul by God; the man may say "I believe this;" but if I ask him, "Why do you believe it?" he has no answer. He can give no account of his faith.

Let us remember, then, that when authority is spoken of, and it is said there is no authority, the words *Divine certainty* may be substituted for *authority*; and that the doctrine inculcated is, that there is no Divine certainty in the things of faith; that is to say, that there is no such thing as faith at all. John the Baptist describes faith in these words, "He that has received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God." But this no longer exists in the system which denies inspiration. There is no longer such a thing as faith. The testimony of God is excluded. This may be called an *a priori* argument. But no, I only place the doctrine in its true light; which is often enough to convince a sincere person. If any one disputed the interpretation of a text, and I could show that his mode of looking at it, the effect of his reasoning upon it, was to make Christ wicked, or to prove that He was not the Son of God; to state the real question, would be, in fact, to decide it, in the mind of one who knew Christ.

Besides, there are two kinds of *a priori* arguments,

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which it is important to point out here; they differ totally from each other and are morally quite opposed to each other. Suppose that some one tried to prove God a liar. I answer that cannot be! I condemn your reasoning as false, *a priori*. My judgment is sound, perfectly logical and philosophical (if you like to take that ground); because it is much more sure, nay, it is infallibly sure, that God cannot lie; whilst it is very possible, that your reasoning is false, even though I were unable to detect the fallacy. How many things there are as to which man wants the capacity for reasoning rightly! And this is the safeguard which God has given to the simple-minded, namely, a divine conviction with respect to those things which are beyond their reach—beyond the reach of man; while the philosopher who undertakes to explain them sinks in the mire. It is also what is called *a priori* reasoning, to say “God ought not to be so and so,” but of an entirely different kind. In the first case, I measure the folly of man by the certainty of what God is; in the second, I measure what God ought to be, taking man for my measure; which is necessarily false. “Thou thoughtest,” said God, “that I was altogether such a one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set before thee the things which thou hast done.” In the first case, I say God is true, therefore your argument which denies it must be false! In the second, I say, this is my thought, and God must be according to my thought. To measure man by the certainty of what God is, and to measure God by man are two very different things. This may be termed *a priori* reasoning. It is true, that it presumes there is the knowledge of God; and all men have not the knowledge of God. “He hides these things from the wise and prudent, and reveals them unto babes.”

It is evident, that whatever may be the competency of witnesses, from their own faithfulness, and from the ever interesting and important fact of their proximity to the circumstances they relate, and to the living source of Christian doctrine, yet to deny direct inspiration, and to put in its stead the competency of witnesses; is to substitute a merely human belief for a divine testimony. The aim of such a system is to shut out God.

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But I pursue my subject. It is asserted (for without this it would be open infidelity) that Revelation is allowed, although not inspiration. That is to say, that the Apostles, or others, employed to communicate truth, had a Divine basis for their faith; but that other believers have not. For that is plainly the effect of this supposition. Truth has been revealed from heaven, that is, divinely communicated, to the Apostles and others; but since then there has been only a human testimony—however godly it may be, only human—no Divine basis, as to testimony, which, on God's part, could shield the church from error. I say on God's part, because no one disputes the possibility of man's falling into error through his own folly or negligence. The mere statement of this doctrine is almost its refutation; but it is needless to dwell further upon it, since it is formally contradicted in the word itself. "But God," says the Apostle, who carefully states the opposite of the notion which we combat, "God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit" (I suppose no one would venture to assert that the communications made through Paul were of a different character, or of another nature than those given through Peter or John or any other prophet). The reason the Apostle gives for this revelation is very striking! "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are given to us of God." I was going to dwell upon this argument, forgetting that the Apostle had used it; I will now only insist on the force of what he says: "*Without a divine communication there can be no faith.*" That which belongs to man, which is within the limits of his intelligence, may be known to man through sight, through reasoning, or through the testimony of man; but it is not so in the things of faith, in Divine thoughts and truths. God alone knows them, and God alone can make them known; consequently, man must be entirely ignorant of them, unless God reveal them. But He makes them known by His Spirit, that is, by Revelation; giving the Holy Ghost Himself, who reveals it in the heart. I

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speak of the Apostolic work. The question then stands within very narrow limits. It is this: The Apostles, having received the knowledge of these things in a divine manner, did they communicate them to us in a manner, excellent indeed, but not inspired? God had revealed them to the Apostles by His Spirit; how did they communicate them? Was their inspiration what is termed "simply religious inspiration?" was it only that operation of the Spirit which is found in a spiritual preacher, and which leaves him still liable to error. Nothing can be more precise than the testimony of the Apostle on this point. Continuing the passage already quoted, he says, "which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, *but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.*" Could the idea of inspiration be embodied in a form of words more absolutely definite than the expression, "words—which the Holy Ghost teacheth?" Here then there is nothing equivocal. When the Apostle set forth the truths which the Holy Ghost had taught him, he used words which the Holy Ghost had also taught him; that is, it was *God Himself speaking* through the mouth of man. And remark here, that inspiration is asserted in cases where religious inspiration was impossible, as in that of Balaam, when "He took up his parable and spoke, having heard *the words of God.*" Finally, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and so many others who have said to us, "Thus saith the Lord," "The word of the Lord came unto me, saying," etc., are all examples of positive, and properly-so-called inspiration. Nevertheless, the arguments which deny inspiration must be applied universally. Here, however, there is nothing doubtful. The prophets boldly proclaim their inspiration, and we have it in a written form. In examining this subject, one cannot honestly leave out the Old Testament, because the arguments (except, perhaps, that which relates to the Canon) apply to both; to the Old as to the New. Has the Old Testament authority, and has the New none? Is the Old Testament the Word of God, and not the New? It is very convenient to reason upon a subject and leave out that part of which the proofs are incontestable. Inspiration is a reality, and we possess the



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absolute authority of God's own Word. The Prophets have affirmed it, the Lord has recognised it, *i. e.* that of this body of writings as it stands ; and He has declared that nothing can invalidate its authority. The Apostle also has declared that these Scriptures were given by inspiration of God, and are capable of making us wise unto salvation. The principle of authority is true, the principle of inspiration is true. The question is limited to this; Is the New Testament inspired also? The Old Testament leaves no room for any argument which would make inspiration questionable. It affirms its own inspiration in all the prophetic part; and the words of the Lord and of the Apostles prove *that* of *all* the books it contains. This should be thoroughly understood. Inspiration is certain, the divine authority of the Word of God incontestable. This question alone remains. Is the New Testament a part of that Word? Principles which deny that which the Lord and the Apostles affirm, inspire no confidence in the judgment of any one who can entertain such false and even blasphemous principles. He who denies inspiration, denies that which the Lord and the Apostles maintain—for they maintain the inspiration of the Old Testament. He has, therefore, already destroyed all my confidence in his judgment; and I cannot listen to him when he tells me that the New Testament has not the authority of inspiration.

I will not multiply quotations to prove that the prophets assert the inspiration of their prophecies; because it recurs at the beginning of almost every separate prophecy; but I will point out the passages in the New Testament, which recognise the Scriptures of the Old as having this authority. Luke xxiv. 44, "All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me." Jesus here recognises the body of writings, called the Old Testament in its three parts—still thus entitled in the modern Hebrew Bibles. The Lord gives them equal authority, ver. 27, "And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." John v. 39, "Search the Scriptures, for, in them ye think ye have eternal life,

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and they are they which testify of me." "And the Scripture cannot be broken" (John x. 35). These passages demonstrate that the Scriptures of the Old Testament were a body of writings recognised by the Lord, and that, in the detail of its present divisions, recognised as having absolute authority. But, to have their writings is something more, as to the form of communication, than having the truth spoken by word of mouth; even though it were by the mouth of the Lord Himself. John v. 47, "If ye believe not *his writings*, how shall ye believe my words?" The *writings*, then, were the object of faith, and consequently had the authority of the Word of God. "They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them"—"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke xvi. 29, 31). When the Apostle preached the truth at Berea, the Jews—his hearers—"searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so," that is to say, they made use of the Scriptures, *as an authority*, to judge the teaching even of an Apostle; and they are commended for so doing (Acts xvii. 11). The inspiration of the Old Testament is then demonstrated, its authority recognised by the Lord, and the whole—as we possess it—declared to be authentic, and to be clothed with an authority which nothing can invalidate.

The Scriptures, as a whole, are owned of God, as a distinct class of writings, having a certain authority; namely, that of HIS WORD. As it is written in Prov. xxx. 5, 6—"Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him. Add thou not to His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Finally, the Apostle Paul (2 Tim. iii. 16) gives a remarkable testimony to the same effect, and which clearly designates this class of writings; "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." We have only therefore to learn whether the New Testament forms a part of "the Scriptures," or whether the Church is entirely without a divine communication entrusted to

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herself; and possesses only the Old Testament. And here I would notice the folly of a principle set forth by some of those who deny inspiration. It is said, that the claim to inspiration is necessarily limited to the Book which makes the claim; or, at least, to the writings of the same author. There is no sense in this assertion. Why could not an inspired author, or the Lord, declare all the other Books, or some amongst them, to be inspired? And, on the other hand, there is no necessity that the other writings of an author should be inspired, because one of them is so. The Lord sets His seal to the entire Old Testament; and Paul declares that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Does this only prove the inspiration of the Epistle to Timothy in which the assertion is found? Those who seek to overthrow the foundations of truth by such arguments as these, deserve chiding rather than refutation. In 2 Peter i. 19—21, we find, “the word of prophecy,” “the prophecies of *Scripture*,” which “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” There are persons who reject this Epistle; but I am not bound to own their authority. The style of the Epistle is not that of an impostor. Yet if not written by Peter, it is certainly the work of an impostor, for he calls himself the Apostle, and says it is his second Epistle. But I leave this. There is another point which must be noticed in this discussion. They maintain that we cannot avail ourselves of the New Testament, till the Canon is settled. Why not? Let us suppose (although I do not believe it of the Word) that a wilding is found in my garden, can I therefore make no use of the good trees which are in it? supposing the second Epistle of Peter were spurious, and that the Apocalypse deserved all that is said against it by certain authors, what has that to do with the Epistle of John, or that of Paul to the Romans. I might admit that one Epistle was questionable—which I do not admit—without, the least in the world, questioning the others.

I return to direct proofs. We have seen the inspiration, the authority, the Canon even, of the Old Testament fully proved; and the principles which deny inspiration itself, utterly overthrown. But we have seen more than

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this. Paul received "*by revelation*" the truths he taught, and he communicated them in "*words which the Holy Ghost teacheth,*" that is to say, by inspiration; consequently, it is certain that the early disciples had the truth communicated to them by inspiration, as the foundation of their faith. And the argument which denies inspiration to the New Testament, if true, would only prove that God had changed His mode of acting, and left the succeeding ages without this foundation, and without Divine basis for their faith: a change incredible enough. But when Paul says, "which things we speak" does he mean those things which he spoke by word of mouth only? And has he taught nothing by writing? We well know that he has taught by writing that which had been revealed to him; that is to say, that his writings for this purpose were inspired. He even says so, which would not have been necessary after the passage we have quoted from Corinthians. But God has favoured us with this additional proof. "How," he says, "by revelation He made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote afore in few words, whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ?" Should any say, "It may be so when fundamental truths are concerned, but not otherwise;" even this refuge is denied them by Scripture. In giving details for the inward regulation of a church (1 Cor. xiv. 36, 37), the Apostle says, "Came the Word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. *But if any man be ignorant let him be ignorant.*" The communications then of the Spirit to the church or to the world, were the "Word of God," and that which was written by the Apostle to direct the Saints, was "the commandment of the Lord." "For this cause," said the Apostle to the Thessalonians (1 Thes. ii. 13), "we thank God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." Thus we see that the Apostle puts his writings on the footing of

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commandments from the Lord, with the sorrowful consolation for those who cannot discern it, "If any man be ignorant, LET HIM BE IGNORANT." Now will any one tell me, that the Apostle, acting in the self-same character and addressing himself in the same manner in virtue of his Apostolic sanction and authority, to the Romans or to the Galatians, is less inspired than when he addresses the Corinthians? Such an argument deserves no other refutation than "if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant!" To say God has willed that the faith of the Ephesians and Corinthians, should rest upon Divine inspiration, and that of the Romans and Galatians on a human basis, deserves no serious answer. We have a particular class of writings; and this class of writings is called "The Scriptures." The sixteenth chapter of Romans defines this principle very clearly in ver. 26. "But now is made manifest [*i. e.* the mystery] and by the prophetic writings [see Greek] according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." This passage again points out that class of writings which we call the Scriptures. Writings which have the authority of a revelation, an oracle of God; they are "prophetic writings." In short, to sum up this part of the testimonies we possess, Peter in his second Epistle, recognising these writings as the Scriptures, tells us, when speaking of Paul's Epistles, that those who are "unlearned and unstable, wrest them, as they do *the other Scriptures,*" proving that Paul's Epistles form a part of *the Scriptures*, a term very well understood and having the same meaning then as now; as the Lord's own words demonstrate. I know, indeed, as I have already said, that some reject this Epistle; but I do not accept their dictum as an authority.

The existence, then, of prophetic scriptures, of the scriptures of the New Testament, which have the authority of the Word of God, of the commandments of God, is most clearly proved. He who finds more authority in the words of the Lord's Apostle than in those of the adversaries of inspiration, he who reveres the Word of God and the revelations of God, will have no doubt on the subject. But, if there are the writings of John or Peter

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making the same claim, addressing Christians in the same manner; and that in perfect accordance with the divine ministry committed to them; as, for instance, those of Peter to the circumcision, could a Christian say, "The writings of one apostle are inspired, but those of another are not; although entirely of the same nature, and although he speaks expressly in the name of his apostolate and as exercising the authority of his mission? I assume now their authenticity; and that they are really the writings they claim to be. We need not look for the words "I am inspired." We find in them the unequivocal expression of authority. The faith of Christians consequently clothes them with this authority. They announce the truth, as having a right to impose their thoughts, as such, and in fact imposing them. Take the first Epistle of Peter. Does he not speak with full authority as apostle? And when Paul said, "If any obey not our word by this Epistle, note that man and have no company with him;" had not that written word apostolic authority? When John said, "We are of God: he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us" (1 John iv. 6), exercising thus divine authority over the conscience, do you think he meant that these words pronounced so solemnly had not altogether the same authority? It would be a contradiction in itself, for if they rejected his words they did not hear him. One cannot attribute authority to his words spoken elsewhere, without attributing it to the words which claim that authority. If I say, "I command you to obey me," the command which I give, and the authority of that which I have already commanded, stand or fall together. I cannot believe the authority of Peter to be less great than that of John or of Paul. He was sent forth with the same authority by the Lord.

Well then what have we proved? That there is a class of writings called "the Scriptures" which are inspired, which possess absolute authority as the Word of God, recognised by the Lord and His apostles, and brought forward constantly by them with the greatest solemnity. We have found that a very large portion of the New Testament is spoken of as forming part of these Scriptures;

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that there is a body of writings attached to the apostolic work, prophetic scriptures used by the command of God, a body of writings which has the authority of the Word of God. The question then is narrowed into very small dimensions. The assertion that there is no inspiration no Divine authority for the word, has been proved entirely false. It is in flagrant opposition to the authority of the Lord and the apostles; and seeks to overthrow that which they maintain. The only question is this, does such or such a book form a part of this inspired collection? A very important question; but which, by the very fact of its being asked, presupposes the existence and the authority of the Word of God; and only seeks not to confound human pretensions with the divine authority it reveres; the full value of which it seeks to preserve untouched and without alloy.

It will be felt that this is not the place for detailed proofs of the authenticity of each book of the New Testament: it would be to write an introduction to the New Testament. I will point out farther on, some general principles of the ways of God in this respect. The great question is decided. It did not consist in enquiring whether such or such a book were genuine, admitting the inspiration of the rest; but in ascertaining whether there be such a thing as inspiration at all. Now, inspiration has been proved; not only *revelation*, but *inspiration*. The revealed truth communicated in words taught by the Holy Ghost. If this be so (mark it well) the system which denies it, bears the character not only of a false principle, but of a principle hostile to God and to His goodness, subversive of the truth He has condescended to make known to us, and of the very foundations of our faith. It is a very important thing to judge the source and the character of that which presents itself as truth. "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; for many false prophets are gone out into the world [to act]." Following this injunction of the apostle's—of the Holy Ghost's—I solemnly judge that the principle in question proceeds from Satan. It were out

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of place here to examine how far the principles current in the religious world, have given occasion to this inroad of the enemy. Whatever saps the foundations of faith, in opposition to the express declarations of the Spirit of God, comes from the enemy; and I have always found that to deal with that which is of the enemy openly and publicly as from the enemy, is the wisdom of God and is accompanied by His strength and His blessing. I deal thus with the doctrine that denies the inspiration of scripture.

There is one kind of proof of the authority of Scripture, that is to say of a collection of writings having the authority of the Word of God, which is difficult to produce, on account of the very thing which constitutes its value. I mean; the constant appeal to the Written Word when addressing believers as to a recognised authority. It is used as an authority which no one, except a professed unbeliever, would think of disputing. Open the New Testament at almost what page you like, you will find a proof of this. "It is written, it is written," settled every question, decided every controversy. It is not the Scriptures which have to be proved, they serve themselves for an absolute and final proof. This is the strongest testimony we can have. If I say—in canvassing some point of human conduct—the law says this, and the law says that, as settling the question; that takes for granted the existence of the law and its sovereign authority over all disputed points—an authority which no one can gainsay. Thus it is in the use of Scripture. If the word of the Apostles were the word of authority, like that of the Church (as has been said) and were not the word of God, which I entirely believe it to be, even this word of authority submits itself most absolutely to the authority of the Word. The Scriptures are searched to ascertain whether the teaching of an Apostle were true. "These things were done that the Scripture might be fulfilled."—"Jesus, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst."—"Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers."—"Promised afore by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures."—"Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures,



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and was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.”—“And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith.”—“And the Scripture cannot be broken.” “Give place unto wrath; for it is written.”—“That by comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

It was the highest of all the Jewish privileges, that the “oracles of God” were committed to them. “For what saith the Scripture?”—“The Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation.” The Jews made “*the Word of God* of none effect through their traditions.”—“Then opened He their understanding, that *they might understand the Scriptures: and said unto them, Thus it is written.*” Is it in accommodating Himself to man, that the Lord opens the understanding that they may understand things which have not divine authority? No, the Scriptures are treated by the Apostles, by the Lord himself, as having an incontestable and divine authority as the *Oracles of God, as The Word of God.* This is so entirely true, that when—in fulfilling his divine mission—it behoved the Lord to undergo the temptation of the enemy, this was the weapon He used—as being divinely tempered—against which Satan had no power, and his devices no possible success. It sufficed to say, “*It is written.*” The tempter would have betrayed himself if he had questioned the absolute authority of the quotation: his best resource was to quote Scripture his own way; but it does not fail under this trial. The second Adam still replies, “*It is also written.*” One may, without blame, prefer the wisdom and the perfection of one’s Saviour, to the self-sufficiency and unbelief of human wisdom. And observe here, the importance of this use of the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures, the Oracles of God, by the Apostles and by the Lord. People say, “But there are various readings, bad translations, statements which the increase of knowledge has proved impossible, so that Scripture cannot be used as an authority.” The Lord, then, was mistaken!

There were various readings, bad translations (especially that of the Septuagint), pointed out by those who deny Inspiration, and supposed inconsistencies,

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at the very time when the Lord said, "The Scriptures cannot be broken." When, in his controversy with Satan, he employed the Scriptures, Satan, lest he should appear to be Satan undisguised, durst not question their authority. These things existed too when the Apostle called them the *Oracles of God*. None of these things prevented the Lord's recognising their absolute authority on every occasion. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men." As to proofs which may be given of the authority of The Word, it carries its own proof with it, as does every testimony from God. This is a fundamental principle. It does not require proof, it furnishes its own proofs of every thing to the soul. We do not bring a light to the sun in order to discern it, it enlightens us. The Word of God is not judged, it judges. If God speaks, and we have seen that the Scriptures are called His Word, woe unto him that knows not *it is God who speaks*. There are those assuredly who will not own that it is He. If this refusal to believe be final, they are lost, sentence has already been passed upon them; the light is come, and the darkness comprehends it not. "The word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It is received, whether spoken or written, as the Word of God; he who rejects it is lost. If any remain in ignorance of some of its details, if any are mistaken as to some book, they lose just so much of it through their pride. "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple..... moreover by them is thy servant warned."—"The entrance of thy word giveth light, it giveth understanding unto the simple." Read the whole cxixth Psalm. This conviction that the Word is its own evidence, is all-important; this alone maintains the true character of the *Word of God*. Like Jesus, it "receives not testimony from man." He who believes not in the Son of God will be condemned. He that believeth not the record that God gave of his Son hath made God a liar, and hath not life. Now, according to the Lord's own words, the Scriptures

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testify of Him. The fundamental principle is this—The Word of God must be received by *Faith*; and the reasonings of man cannot be the foundation of faith; if they were, it would not be faith in God, nor faith in His word. “*He believed God.*”—“They shall be all *taught of God*; every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath *learned of the Father* cometh unto me.”

Having established this principle, I would enter into some details respecting the ways of God in this matter. We have seen the Lord setting his seal to the Scriptures, but observe, in so doing, He has set his seal to the faith of all those who had previously believed in them. It was not because He had done so that those faithful ones believed. Their heart, their faith, had been previously tested. They had faith, because they had received the testimony of the Scriptures before they were thus sanctioned, at the time when they were presented to their faith, on the ground of *their own authority*. When Jeremiah spoke, it does not follow that all received his testimony; there were some who had not ears to hear, but who listened to false prophets. When God is to be owned it becomes a moral question: but in all ages, believers have received the testimony of God, and unbelievers have not been able to discern God in the testimony; it is so now. God gives, in His word, sufficient moral evidence to commend it to the conscience. When He has set up a new thing, or when He has sustained faith at a distance from the sanctuary, He has added a sufficiency of extraordinary evidences. But with this comes the *moral responsibility of him who hears*, which God never sets aside; and also the grace which acts in giving and in establishing faith: the reception of the Word, and afterwards the understanding this Word, is a thing presented to the responsibility of man. Grace alone can enable him to receive and to understand it. Nothing can set aside this responsibility, or take away the necessity of this grace, or destroy its efficacy. The positive authority of the Apostolic testimony, claiming submission, as it does, in the most peremptory manner, cannot alter this. “If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you

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are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant." An Apostle cannot go beyond that. For the things which are communicated in words taught by the Spirit, are spiritually discerned. It was thus in the days of all the prophets. "Hear ye and give ear," said Jeremiah, "be not proud: for the Lord hath spoken. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride." Now, the condition which brings judgment upon the house of God is marked by this—the Word loses its authority, excepting over the remnant preserved by Him. "And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed. And the book is delivered to him that is not learned; saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men." This is the condition of the people and the cause of the judgment which falls upon them.

Then the Lord said "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples . . . . To the law and to the testimony." Thus also in the New Testament "In the last days perilous times shall come." What is then the resource? "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." The resource in the last days, is reverence for the Holy Scriptures, and the assurance of their sufficiency. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Therefore whether amongst the Jews, whether in the Church, the resource in evil days is confidence in the Divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. The Lord has pointed it out, and sanctioned it, but this confidence in the authority of the Word existed before He had given it His sanction.

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And it is this faith, without any other sanction than the Word itself, which He has sanctioned. Precious testimony for after-days, since the same sanction applies to them also. The apostle, in warning us of perilous times, directs our thoughts beforehand to the same means of establishing the soul. Those who had faith in the Scriptures before the Saviour's testimony, having been enabled, through grace, to discern what was God's word, before Jesus had sealed the whole, have thus been approved by Him. Those who do so afterwards, have already this approval. They have the same responsibility as to what they receive; but although this responsibility exists, God does not fail to use means. There is another principle which should be noticed here. It is, that the oracles of God are committed to His people. The Church cannot impose her authority upon us; but she is responsible for preserving that which has been committed to her. Thus Rome has shown her unfaithfulness, by adding apocryphal books. Now, although the Church may, in detail, fail in her responsibility, it is impossible, in any thing essential to it, that God should fail His Church, or that Christ should cease to nourish and cherish it. God watches over all this; not to keep the *learned* from stumbling, but that believers may have food from Him, and an unerring rule of life. It is not the babe and the way-faring man who find difficulties; God has given them the Bible, and preserved it for them; and their conscience bears them witness in the Holy Ghost, that God works in them by this Word. The Holy Ghost enables them, according to the measure of their spirituality, to use and understand it. A heart, full of joy because taught of God, discerns the Word. It is read perhaps in a bad translation; and doubtless, something is lost thereby; but God has taken care that enough should remain to teach the heart with certainty His truth and His ways. This Word is the sword of the Spirit—it carries conviction with it, when the Spirit uses it in the power of His grace. It leaves man under the responsibility of having rejected it, whenever it has been presented to his conscience.

A man of little information, but taught of God, is much more able to apprehend the whole truth, even

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through the medium of an indifferent translation, than the learned man who thinks he can judge of the whole canon; and for this reason. The Church puts the New Testament into his hands, for the oracles of God are committed to the Church; this does not indeed impart faith, but it is the means which God uses. The Church presents us with them; not with authority as having power to judge the Word; but as the faithful guardian of that which had been committed to her. This is done through relations, friends, ministers; and there is a general belief in the professing Church that it is the word of God. The simple-minded do not set themselves to judge the whole canon of the New Testament before reading it; they read it, and the Word *produces faith*.

A man receives, by the teaching of God, first one truth and then another. To such a one, the history of Jesus is all divine; it communicates to his soul what he receives with divine knowledge, for these things are spiritually discerned. The word has judged him, the Word has revealed Jesus to him. The epistles unfold divine truth—he enjoys the word with a divine certainty that God has spoken to him. He makes use of every book in the New Testament, without knowing what the term “*Canon*” means. And if some great scholar would deprive him of his treasure; to wit, the authority and inspiration of that word which he knows to be of God; this Word is the sword of the Spirit in his hands, to teach him the folly of human wisdom. He pities the learned man who is without all that, of which *he* has the divine fruition.

He who has eaten bread knows what bread is, although he may not understand the art of baking. If, through grace, the believer grows in divine knowledge, he sees the harmony of the whole, the adaptation of the several parts. He has not only the full assurance of faith, but the full assurance of understanding also. He perceives the divine wisdom of the Bible, and not merely the divine truth in it. He finds perhaps a text spoilt by a bad translation—it does not harmonise with what he knows to be the truth of God; he will say, “I don’t understand that passage” (I am supposing him deprived of all

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spiritual help, which is not the case, according to the ways of God in His Church). Humble in heart, he will attribute it to his own ignorance. The wisdom of this world reasons about the canon, and will form its judgment before it reads, and it receives nothing. The mind of man cannot create for itself the things of God. Human reason cannot pronounce upon the authority of the word of God. It may be said, this is trusting to a feeling; but no, it is trusting to God. “They shall be all *taught of God.*” The authority of the Word can only be known by believing in it.

He who has only man’s thoughts will say, “But I must know that it is the word of God before I can believe in it.” I reply, “You cannot.” It is true, happily true, that we receive the New Testament as the Word of God, on the faith of our parents or of our education; but it is never really received as such, till it is “mixed with faith” in those that read it. For my part, I receive the New Testament with full assurance, in its present form, as adopted by the universal Church. Circumstances having called me to it, I have examined the external evidences, and found them satisfactory; but that does not produce faith. It may be useful, to obviate the objections made by those who do not live upon the Word, and cannot judge of it. The authority of God is not subject to human intelligence. I know that some of the epistles were questioned in the early ages, at least in certain places; but I doubt not, that in receiving those books which form the New Testament, as inspired, the Church was guided by God. The means of communication are not the rule of authority; but these means may be used according to the certainty of the rule. A mother instructs her child in the truth, but she is not the rule of the truth. Thus the poor Christian receives the New Testament in the form in which it is distributed. It may be that he cannot demonstrate its authenticity, but he happily profits by the fact that the Church receives it. When he has read it, he finds it divine. God thus uses means to spread the truth, and the book which contains it. The multitude of believers profit by it. It is God who acts thus. If an answer must be given to unbelievers who dispute

the authority of that which others enjoy, it may be that only a few amongst them are able to convince gainsayers; but that does not hinder God's using these means, and giving faith to those who use them; and then the folly of gainsayers and of those who have fed themselves upon unbelief, becomes manifest.

I have said that the man who is exercised in the word according to God, finds not only the proof of its divinity in the application of passage after passage to his conscience, but will gain the deepest conviction of its perfection as a whole, through the knowledge he will thus gain of the fulness of Christ. I will take an instance, which is used to prove that there are things in the New Testament which are outside the province of spiritual discernment. The Spirit of God cannot, it is said, make us feel the value of a genealogy. Such a remark only betrays ignorance of the Word and of Christ Himself. To set forth the varied glory of Jesus, according to the counsels of God respecting Him, it is needful to present the different characters He bears; this is the substance of God's revelation. Now His connection with Abraham and David, and His connection with Adam, are leading points in this revelation; and the genealogies set this before us. But this is not all. They correspond exactly with the character of the Gospels in which we find them. The Gospel by Matthew treats especially of the Messiah, of the relation of Christ to the Jews, of the fulfilment of prophecy in Him, and at the same time, of His rejection as Messiah, and the transition to a new dispensation. Luke sets before us, after the Saviour's birth, the great features of grace brought in by the second Adam, and the great moral principles belonging to it; so that in the body of this Gospel, events are not arranged in chronological order, but according to their moral bearing. This is true, even in the history of the temptation. John, on the contrary, gives us the person of the Saviour, who is above all the dispensational dealings of God in the earth. The Jews are set aside throughout as rejected, therefore no genealogy is given. The Word was God. John's gospel begins before Genesis, and at the close, we find neither the agony in Gethsemane, nor



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the forsaking on the cross; but other things are mentioned which are not found in Matthew or in Luke. Thus the different glories of Christ are manifested, and by degrees the admirable perfection of the Word shines forth in all its splendour. The criticisms of man fade away, like the stars before the sun, which makes them disappear, with the darkness that allowed them to be seen. The Bible presents us with a perfection both in its details and as a whole, which leaves no doubt in the mind of one who has tasted it, that as a complete whole it is divine.

I have already spoken of its divinity in its separate parts, as the sword of the Spirit causing its power to be felt in the soul, judging it, and revealing Christ to it; but I speak of it now as a whole, of what is called the *canon* of Scripture. If Matthew were wanting, we should not have the Messiah, Son of David, and Son of Abraham. If Mark were wanting, we should not have the Servant, made in the likeness of man; if Luke, we should not have the Son of Man; if John, we should lose the Son of God. In the Acts, we find the foundation of the Church, by the power of the Spirit of God, the commencement and development of the Church in Jerusalem, through the instrumentality of the twelve; then the Gentiles grafted into the good Olive Tree by Peter, the Apostle of the circumcision; and, when Jerusalem had rejected the testimony, the Church, fully revealed, and called by the ministry of Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles. The Epistle to the Romans furnishes the eternal principles of God's relationship with man, established in blessing by means of Christ, dead and risen, and the reconciling of these things with the speciality of the promises made to the Jews by Him whose gifts and calling are without repentance. In the Corinthians are found details respecting the inward regulation of a Church; its walk, its order, its restoration when it had gone astray, the patience and the energy of grace; the whole sketched by the Spirit of God, acting through an apostle, and declaring the divine authority of His commands. In Galatians, the contrast between Law and Promise as well as the source of ministry; in a word the condemnation of Judaism, even in its very roots.

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In Ephesians, the fulness of the Church's privileges, as the body of Christ, her connection with Him, and "the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations," in which all the counsels of God, for His glory, are unfolded. In Colossians, the fulness which is in the head for the body, and the solemn warning not to separate practically from this standing of union with the Head, through allowing a show of humility to glide into the bosom of the Church. In Philippians, the Apostle's experience of what Christ is to the Christian; as sufficient for all things, whatever his position may be. His immediate sufficiency, even when the Christian should be deprived of apostolic support; and the walk of the Church in the unity of grace, in unity maintained by grace, when the spiritual energy of her human leaders should be wanting. It is a precious epistle in this point of view. In Thessalonians the hope of the Church in the freshness of her affections; and the mystery of iniquity ending in the manifestation of the man of sin; a mystery notwithstanding which, the Church is called to maintain this hope and her affections. In Timothy and Titus, what may be termed ecclesiastical care for the maintenance whether of truth or of order. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, the Church had been seen seated as a body in the heavenly places. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the faithful are viewed as journeying in weakness upon the earth, and Christ is consequently seen apart, for them, in heaven, in contrast with the earthly figures of it given to Israel. This gives rise to a glorious unfolding of the person of our Lord, as God the Creator, as man, and as the Son over His own house, the Creator of all things, and lastly, very fully as High Priest; after the order of Melchisedek, as to his personal rights; after the likeness of Aaron, or rather in contrast with Aaron, as to the present exercise of priesthood. This leads to the unfolding of the life of faith, the faith common to all saints; and to the final separation of the believing Jews from the camp of earthly religion, as having "come to the heavenly Jerusalem." James sets before us that girdle of practical righteousness, which restrains the natural tendency of the heart to abuse grace; and the last dealings of God with the

twelve tribes (as in Jonah with the Gentiles) when the light and perfection of a new order of things eclipsed that old order to which those tribes had proved unfaithful. In Peter, we find the Christian a pilgrim on the earth, placed in this position by the power of Christ's resurrection, according to an election which is not that of an earthly people, but unto eternal life.

This was addressed to the Jews of the Dispersion (Peter was the apostle of the Circumcision), and was particularly adapted to them, setting them free from the idea of an earthly establishment, to be pilgrims, through grace, on the earth, in view of an incorruptible inheritance. THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER is written in the prospect of his departure, and of the flowing in of evil. It exhorts them to press forward. On the one hand, it gives the picture and the assurance of the glory of the coming kingdom, in its heavenly aspect but manifested on the earth; on the other hand, the corruption which would degrade and swallow up Christianity; and the consequences of this in judgment. Peter never represents the Church as one body in heaven, as Paul does; he views her, or rather her members, as on the earth; and they are pilgrims there. The exact correspondence of every detail with this point of view, even in the manner of presenting the glory (2 Peter i.), manifests a perfection which proves its divine origin. Jude admirably unfolds all the features of the apostasy; its beginning and its results; recording that which we should otherwise have lost, the solemn prophecy of Enoch; proving how clear was the testimony of God before the flood—God, who is unchangeable in purpose from the beginning to the end. John presents us with all the features of the Divine nature; first of all as manifested in Jesus; and then as characteristic of the whole family; a safeguard against every pretension, which, not having these features, would seek to pervert the faithful; and the means of strengthening and establishing the faithful by the development of these qualities of the nature of God, with whom, if light be in them, they have communion; and in whom, if love be in them, they dwell, and He in them. This is true of every believer in Jesus.

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This love was manifested in Christ's coming down into the earth; and was perfected, by setting us, in full enjoyment with Him, in His own place above. Philemon, and the two lesser Epistles of John, shew us that if the mystery of God is revealed to us by one Apostle, and the nature of God set evidently before us by another; if they lift us up to the height of His counsels and of His being, they can—and the Christianity they preach can—be occupied with the interests of a runaway slave and his master, and with the anxieties and practical difficulties of an excellent lady, and a kind and worthy brother, as to receiving persons to whom Christian love might open the door, but who brought not the doctrine of Christ. They shew us, that that *love* which dwells in God, which is the very nature of God, which is manifested in the glorious work of Christ, that wisdom, which ordains all mysteries for His eternal glory, disdains not to provide, with perfect delicacy, for the difficult relationships between a master and his slave; nor to manifest the tenderest solicitude with respect to the details of life. This love, in the perfection of wisdom and grace, links the fulness and the perfection of God with every emotion of the human heart, with every circumstance of our life in this world; and sanctifies a people who are to dwell with God by the revelation of what he is, and fits them for His presence by creating pure affections, and by making a holy love the spring of their whole life.

In the Apocalypse, the Spirit of God, after having given, in an admirable review of the state of seven Asiatic churches, the elements of a perfect judgment with respect to every state in which one connected with the Church could be found; after having at the same time encouraged the faithfulness of those who had ears to hear, by promises of blessing from above, specially suited to the difficulties of these several conditions; after having declared that these blessings are prepared for "him that overcometh" in the conflict, which the declension of the Church brings him into (a declension which had already commenced in the days of the Apostle, in their leaving their first love, and which will end in compelling Christ to spue out of His mouth those who

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bear His name); after having thus furnished the Christian with all that he needs in the midst of the difficulties presented by the state of the professing Church; and having revealed the judgment of Christ with a perfection, and a circumstantial adaptation which are most admirable, the Holy Ghost then lifts the veil, to shew where all this will end in the judgment of the world. He reveals, first of all, chastenings in outward things; then more directly upon man himself; afterwards, all the features of man's dreadful apostasy, the diabolical organisation of his forces against Christ; and, at length, the judgment which will break forth at the coming of Christ himself, the King of kings and Lord of lords. This judgment making way for an administration of blessing and happiness (Satan being bound), which will only be interrupted by his being loosed from his prison, to try those who have enjoyed this happiness, and thus to bring on the final judgment of the dead, and the eternal state in which God will be all in all. This is the methodical and complete development of that which Jude, 2 Peter, and 2 Thessalonians had made known to the Church in its moral elements.

At the close of the book the connection of the Church in Heaven with Christ, and with the times of blessing enjoyed under the reign of Christ, are more particularly unfolded.

There is another striking feature of the perfection of the Apocalypse, which may be added here; that is, its moral unity. The standing of the Church is indeed defined in the opening and concluding paragraphs, by the expression of her own sentiments; but there is never throughout the book, one thought connected with the living communication of grace from the Head to the members. It is a prophetic book of judgment, first of all that of the Church, seen in its responsibility upon the earth. In the chapters which speak of the Church, there is promise, threatening, warning, judgment of its condition, revelation of the characters of the Son of Man, everything connected with responsibility. The Head, the source of life and knowledge to the body, is not mentioned in these chapters. After the judgment

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of the Church comes that of the world; a judgment increasing in severity, up to the destruction of the Wicked One. In this part of the book is found all that the faithful need, in order to understand the ways of God, and to discern the path He has marked out for them in these perilous times; but never Christ the living source of grace: everything is in its right place, for it is the work of God.

The New Testament presents us then, from the manifestation of the Man Christ in humiliation on the earth, up to the eternal state when God will be all in all, with the full development of all the ways of God, and of what He is in Himself, in order that man may joy in Him, know Him and glorify Him: that the believer may be kept through all the difficulties and dangers of the way, by the wisdom and the admonitions of God; and that he may understand His wisdom and His infinite love. Man could not have composed this as a whole, could not have foreseen the necessity for each part. One feels in it the energetic spontaneity of life, that is to say, of the Spirit of God. But take away one single part—when we possess the whole—and the breach is immediately felt by one who has seen and appreciated its completeness. The perfection of the whole is manifested, as in everything which God has made, from the insect which sports in the air, to the admirable details of the body of man, united to a mind which can be taken up with God, and, through grace, express Him in His countenance even, and in His ways. The Word is not a shapeless mass, it is the complete body of the revealed thoughts of God. More perfect even than man to whom it is addressed, because more immediately divine, it expresses itself in man, because God will introduce man into it; but it is God who expresses in it all His thoughts. Yes, man who would be wise, does not understand this body, because he does not perceive it; he judges one of its members according to the little pitiful history of ecclesiastical weaknesses and contentions, the most pitiful of all contentions. The things of the Spirit are spiritually discerned. Divine perfection shines forth at every page for him who is spiritual; and the unity of the

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whole, the perfect connection of its several parts, the relation of these parts to each other and to all the ways of God, to the person of Christ, to the Old Testament, to the heart of the renewed man who, through grace, knows himself, to the necessities of sinful man, to the dangers and difficulties which long afterwards sprang up in the Church, all combine to crown with divine glory the demonstration of the origin and the true Author of the book which contains these things. Its author is so much the more evidently God, from the human instruments having been many and diverse. But its unity and, above all, the intimate union of its different parts, demonstrate a complete and perfect body. If but one joint of a finger were wanting to a man, he is not a man such as God made him; it is at once perceived, he may have life, but he is imperfect. Take away a book from the New Testament, the remainder is divine undoubtedly, but it is no longer the New Testament in its divine perfection. As in a noble tree the inward energy, the freedom of the sovereign power which works in it, produces a variety of forms, in which the details of human order may appear to be wanting, but in which there is a beauty that no human art can imitate. Cut off one of its branches, the void is obvious; the minute connection of the remainder is destroyed, the gap which is made in the intertwining of its tender leaves proves that the devastating hand of man has been there. This then is how the Christian possesses the Word; each part of it acts divinely in him, and, in proportion to the progress he makes, it unfolds itself as a whole to the eyes of his faith, with a divine evidence which unites itself with every element of his faith, with the varied glories of the person of Christ, and with the universal perfection of the ways of God; a perfection of which the christian has not judged *a priori*, but which he has learnt in the Word itself.

When I see a man do I need to be told that his form is complete? The more I know of anatomy the more I shall admire its structure. But it is the sight of the man himself which makes me apprehend his perfectness. Thus it is with all the works of God; only His Word

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requires, as it produces, spiritual discernment. If any one be a prophet or spiritual let him acknowledge it. And do you know how the Word disposes of those who do not acknowledge it? "If any be ignorant let him be ignorant." It is humbling, no doubt, to have all one's learning treated thus; but this is as it should be between God and man. I repeat, I doubt not that outward evidences confirm the spiritual judgment. The learned man who creates doubts for himself, needs evidences to remove them. The simple Christian feeds on that which is divine, and knows nothing of the difficulties which man's poor learning creates. Lastly, I will go over, in order to show their futility, some of the arguments which are used to deny inspiration. It is a melancholy task, after having had one's thoughts directed towards the perfection of the Bible.

The first thing which strikes one is that all is judged from without. We are told that at the time of the reformation one authority was substituted for another. But observe, it is not through anything found in the Bible that unbelief judges its authority. Men would have faith to rest upon historical certainty and moral evidence. But this shews entire ignorance of what faith is. He who could be satisfied with this has never had divine conviction, feels not the need of divine faith, and knows not its nature; for no historical or moral certainty can be faith more or less. *Faith comes from God*, and receives a testimony, whereupon it sets to its seal that God is true. The rationalist, who has not the Spirit, can only see in Scripture the testimony of the man who wrote it. This is easy to be understood. He gives up the Spirit and the Word together, and falls back upon his own reason. Stress is laid also on the imperfection of the text of the New Testament, on its being written in a dead language, on its being read in translations; and, finally, we are told that its authors followed the opinions of the day in which they lived. This last objection is itself but a judgment formed upon the opinions of the present day, and is not worth a refutation. It is an accusation, not a proof: and the accusation is but a calumny. In fact if it were well-founded;



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the same should be said of the Lord's own discourses, or the whole history should be rejected as false (see John iii. 33, 34; viii. 47). As to the other objections, I have a divine certainty of their futility, because, as I have already shewn, the Lord has set his seal to the Old Testament scriptures, in spite of the same difficulties. I would add a few words. Those who reason in this way confound the rule of faith with the means by which it is made known; in the latter, the imperfection of the instrument is felt. No one would assert that a translation was divine; but this is merely saying that through human diligence we profit by a divine work. The deposit, the rule of faith, remains in its original purity.

If clouds, formed by exhalations from the earth, obscure the light of the sun, they only prove, by thus veiling it, the power of that light which still suffices for all human purposes, although not seen in all its brightness. This objection, then, only tells us that when God gives blessing, we profit by the blessing according to our diligence. But this is not all. It is said that we do not even possess the original in its purity. This is, in the main, the same principle we have just touched on.

All that God gives He puts into the hands of men for their use, and they never know how to keep it as they ought. The revelation of God has been placed in the hands of men—of the Church. Man has not preserved it in its absolute perfection: be it so. God allows man to learn what he is; but faith knows that behind all this, there is the faithfulness of God, who watches over the Church, and that Christ nourishes and cherishes her. Experience teaches, and the Day of Judgment will make manifest, that faith in God is always in the right. Thus the believer quite supposes it possible that, through the carelessness of man, some defects may have crept into that which was committed to him; but he has full confidence in the faithfulness of God. His experience, as we have seen, confirms his faith, for he finds the Word divine. The judgment of God will decide that question for the unbeliever, which divine faith has already decided for the believer.

The examination of the text by learned men has,

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indeed, shewn the rashness of infidel knowledge; but has left no serious doubt, except as to an extremely small number of texts, or rather of words, nor a shadow of obscurity upon any passage of the slightest importance as to the truth.

One learns that God was there, as much in His caring for, as in His gift of, the Word; although, apparently, He left all to the responsibility of man. To say that the meaning of a passage is doubtful, in order to deny its inspiration, is too absurd an argument to be repeated. It is saying, that the ignorance and incapacity of man are a proof that God has not acted in anything which man does not understand. There is a superficiality in such reasoning as this, which reveals the true value of mere human wisdom. The meaning is doubtful! doubtful to whom? I ask. It is said that the writers of the New Testament implicitly followed the translation of the Seventy. The contrary is the truth. When this translation gives the sense they used it. Half their quotations are faithfully rendered from the Hebrew; and if there are passages which differ from the present Hebrew text, the researches of the learned have proved that they are borne out by the testimony of the oldest translations. In many instances the meaning is given without attaching themselves to the exact words. Conscientious research on this point strongly confirms the divine inspiration of the authors of the New Testament. Inaccuracies, errors, and contradictions are alleged. I deny these contradictions and these inaccuracies. Let us remember that the certainty of the objector's knowledge must be first ascertained, and I have no confidence in it. I have known many cases in which man would prune away the fruit of the spontaneous actings of the Spirit, and carve the beautiful tree into a round or a square. For my part, I have seen divine perfection in the form it has. All is divinely adapted to the object which the Holy Ghost had in view. We have seen that John does not mention the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane; Matthew and Luke omit what John relates. What does this prove to me? That John was not there? Not so; but that the Holy Ghost is the author of the two accounts, and not John

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and Matthew. Man would have related what man had seen. The Holy Ghost sets before me in the one Gospel, the man and the Messiah suffering; in the other, the Divine Person who offered up Himself, and whose life no man took from Him. I see divine perfection where human wisdom see blemishes. Luke puts the offer of the kingdoms of the earth before the temptation on the pinnacle of the Temple, and, in consequence, omits "Get thee hence, Satan!" "This is wrong!" cries the worldly scholar. "What perfection!" says the Christian. Matthew gives the historical order, Luke the moral order; for the spiritual temptation, through the written word, was of a deeper character than that of the offer of the whole world. The Man, the Messiah, Son of Man, the Holy One, relying on the promises, duly succeed each other. Now this moral order is characteristic of the whole of Luke's Gospel, excepting where the historical order is necessary to the truth of the recital. It is the Holy Ghost who writes. I have found difficulties in the Word: this has not surprised me, ignorant as I am; but I have found these difficulties, one after another, to be but the means of entering more fully into the perfection, the wisdom, and the divine beauty of the revelation of my God. If I still find more of these difficulties, and I do so, I wait upon Him to solve them for me; and I do not say "the meaning is doubtful," but "the meaning is doubtful *to me*." I do not say "there is inaccuracy, and I am accurate enough to judge it without divine light;" but "I am ignorant, and God will enlighten me in due time." Some have even gone so far as to say, that Scripture does not lay claim to inspiration. This shews an ignorance, or a disregard, of its contents, which, especially on such a subject, renders the arguments of those who could assert it unworthy of the attention of a serious man. The apostle asserts the exact contrary in the most clear and absolute manner. We have already seen how the Word, as a principle, speaks of the Scriptures. I will not return to it. I have already exposed the folly of the argument, that inspiration is limited to the passage which asserts it—I say its folly; for *why could not* a text say, "All these writings are inspired." The

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fact is, that the passages which assert it, limit it neither to the book which contains them, nor to the writings of the same author. They establish a principle, or allude to the writings of another, to invest them with the authority of Scripture. They establish the existence of a class of writings having divine authority; they ascribe this authority to the entire Old Testament.

The Church, it is also said, may have made mistakes. Be it so; but is there no God? Would He allow us to be deceived on so essential a point? Those who do not know His goodness answer that He might; and boldly pronounce about books which have edified the Church for centuries. But what is this opinion worth? That must be settled before we allow it to invalidate the Book it refers to. I by no means admit the authority of the Church; but I recognise that it is her duty to preserve the deposit committed to her; and I believe in the faithfulness of God. In a certain sense, everything is necessarily referred to individual judgment, that is to say, each one is under its responsibility for himself. A Socinian claims a right to deny the divinity of Christ and the Atonement. Were I the Pope, I could not hinder his thinking so; but being a Christian, I know that he is lost if he remain in this state. I cannot make another believe the inspiration of the New Testament: each one must judge for himself. But he who rejects the Word, the Word will reject him. He is bolder than man should dare to be; but he will not be stronger than God. Salvation does not depend on faith in the inspiration of the New Testament. A man may be saved, without knowing that the book exists, by the truth which it contains reaching his heart through the lips of another. To reject the Word of God, when it is before us, is quite another thing.

I admit that there is a difference between the inspiration of the New Testament and that of the Old; not as to its authority, but as to its character. The prophets of old said, "Thus saith the Lord"; and they announced the thoughts of God, in His own words, on a particular subject, at the moment when his word was addressed to them. But the Holy Ghost—come down as the Com-

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forter to lead into all truth—is different from the Spirit of Prophecy, although the same Spirit (see 1 Pet. i. 11, 12). “He searches all things, even the deep things of God.” “Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.” Christ being glorified, the Holy Ghost dwells in His disciples; and can open all the treasures of the glory of the Lord, all the tenderness of His love, of His connexion, as man, with his own. God was made man, and God the Holy Ghost dwells in the Church, and thus, if I may so speak, humanises Himself, while not ceasing to be God; He expresses Himself in grace and blessing in all the details and circumstances of human life: He helps our infirmities. He that searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to God.

The inspiration of the New Testament partakes of this character. It unfolds itself, in the unity of the Church, in feelings and affections, and ministers to her need by telling of the love and the ways of the God-man in a world of sinners; but if the Holy Ghost has thus acted in the Church, united to the Head whom he glorifies, what He spoke and what he caused to be written, was none the less the Word of God, the thoughts of God communicated in words of His own teaching. As Christ did not cease to be God because he was made man, so he that received the testimony of Christ set to his seal that God is true. We do not give up (alas! too many human teachers have given it up) that presence of the Holy Ghost in the church which produces religious inspiration; that is, the energy which acts in power and blessing in Christians, without making them an authority; neither do we give up the *authority* of that which has been communicated, whether by word of mouth (had we been present to profit by it), or by writings and words taught by the Holy Ghost; nor do we give up those things which are the Lord's commands.

Observe also, that it is not apostolic authority only which is the question, but the authority of the Word of God. A prophet who spoke by inspiration, and who could say, “The Holy Ghost saith, Separate me Barnabas

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and Saul;" had as much authority in that instance as Paul or Barnabas. He was but the mouth of God, just as what Paul and Barnabas spoke by the same inspiration was the Word of God. To allege that the Gospels were not written by Apostles is idle. If an Apostle had written without being inspired, his book would only have had the value of that of a godly man. If one of the least in the Church has been used by the Holy Ghost, his book has the authority of the Word of God. The infinite value of Scripture proceeds from its Author, and not, in any instance, from the spiritual personality of its authors.

The two Gospels which are not written by Apostles are none the less the perfect presentation of God manifest in the earth, in that aspect which the Holy Ghost had in view. It is Christ, it is God, who was there. The instrument used in giving us the history of our Saviour is of no importance; the only essential thing is, that Christ should be faithfully presented as He was, as God would present Him.

Doubts are raised especially about the Epistle of Jude, the second of Peter, and the Apocalypse. Let us briefly examine these three books. Peter's Epistle contains the assertion that it was written by himself: it has a tone of deep and spiritual holiness, a dignified confidence, most remote from imposture; yet such it must be if it were not written by the Apostle Peter. I find in it minute allusions to things which happened to himself, related elsewhere, which would not have occurred to an impostor: not the smallest deviation from divine truth: a solemnity and an authority nowhere found except in inspired writings: a direct application to the soul, as from God, of the authority of its contents, which is one characteristic of Inspiration. The manner in which the Word is used in it, as well as the events of the life of Christ, has a divine character. We see in it also a knowledge and a use of the grand principles of divine truth, which are unquestionably original, and which possess, at the same time, that divine force which belongs to the whole Bible; an absence of amplification only to be found in the Bible, and which is the result

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of that consciousness of authority with which an inspired man would speak, or which was rather the natural consequences of his divine authority. Those who have read the Epistle of Barnabas, which some would compare with that of Peter, will be able to judge of the difference between them, and of the discernment of those who could put it on a level with that of the Apostle. Not to say that it is scarcely doubtful that this so called Epistle of Barnabas is a fabrication, even the one which has been sifted, one has but to read the Epistles of the Fathers (called apostolic) to see that God has guarded the testimony of His Word by the counter-proof of the futility of the writings even of the Apostle's companions; one would scarcely find so much nonsense in these days, even in the religious books written for children. There are two epistles by Clement—kind and amiable enough—written to make peace at Corinth, but they are the only passable ones; and even these are as inferior to the New Testament as, doubtless, the humility of the author would have admitted them to be. Jude is accused of having made use of fables and apocryphal books in his Epistle; but where is the proof of this? The Epistle, on the whole, contains deep and wonderful instruction as to the features of the Apostasy which is foretold in other parts of the Word; supplying elements which, although linking themselves with the whole Scripture, are found no where else. It contains deep principles of eternal and divine truth, and sketches, with surprising distinctness in a few words, the moral progressive steps of man's apostasy; as well as its historical beginnings in the Church, beginnings confirmed doctrinally, and by allusions to other parts of the New Testament. It bears the same marks of inspiration and divine authority which I have pointed out in Peter, and the same contrast with what we know to be of man. But, it is said, there are fables in it; which are they? Is the fall of the angels a fable? The Lord Himself tells us that Satan is a fallen being: we learn from Peter that there are angels reserved for judgment. The temerity of human knowledge calls every thing which is beyond its reach a fable. Jude and Peter are borne out, if that were needful, by

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other passages. All Revelation is a fable to him who believes not: perhaps Michael contending with the devil is meant. But this, as a scriptural principle, is recognised, not only in the Apocalypse and the second of Peter, but also in the book of Daniel (x. 20, 21), quoted by the Lord Himself; and that passage shews that Michael especially interests himself in Israel: He is there called their prince. We find the same thing in Dan xii. 1, a chapter, one part of which is especially pointed out as worthy of attention by the Lord Jesus. It proves that Michael is used of the Lord in behalf of Israel. One can easily understand the use which the Israelites would have made of the body of Moses, as we know what they did for centuries with the brazen serpent. We know also that the Lord buried him, carefully concealing the place of his interment. Does He not use the angels in His service, for these things, and Michael especially, for Israel, and against Satan, who opposed his service to that people. So that there is not an element contained in Jude's statement that is not borne out, in principle, by the general testimony of the word of God. That Jude should have been commissioned to add another act to all this is no difficulty to one, whose mind is imbued with the word of God. On the contrary, there is much solemnity in the instruction. It has none of those curious and idle details which we find in the fables of the apocryphal books; but that which throws much light on that invisible world of Providence, the existence of which is proved by a multitude of passages, and which will be unveiled to us when we shall know even as we are known. If I reason thus, it is not that I question the inspiration of Jude: no; for his whole epistle is stamped with the love, the holiness, and the authority of God; and has its own manifest place in the series of the books of the New Testament. I am not proving the truth of what Jude spoke by inspiration, but the superficial character of the objections brought against the epistle. As to the accusation of borrowing from the apocrypha, where is it proved? I conclude it is the prophecy of Enoch which is alluded to, as it is found in an apocryphal book.



bearing the name of Enoch, which was published in England some years ago, and which exists in the Ethiopian language. But there is no shadow of a proof that Jude borrowed it from this Ethiopian book. There would be nothing extraordinary in the idea that the author of the so-called book of Enoch may have been acquainted with this prophecy. The prophecy itself is confirmed by a multitude of passages in the Old and New Testament. Its divine truth is proved by innumerable texts of all kinds. Is the preserving that which is certainly true, and nothing else, a proof of *not* being directed by God, whilst he who composes a book, known to be an imposture, adds to it a mass of crudities? Is it not rather a proof to the contrary, if proof were needed? Jude gives us a true prophecy, and nothing else. Another avails himself of the truth of this prophecy, which had come to his knowledge, to accredit a mass of errors. And this is brought forward as a proof that the former was not under the direction of God, and that he must have quoted the true prophecy from him, who made so bad a use of it. And this is called reasoning, and wisdom, and knowledge! To a Christian, the preservation of this prophecy has an affecting interest. In adding the fact of its having been prophesied by Enoch, to a truth taught elsewhere, we have a testimony that, even before the flood, the man of God, who walked with Him, who was taken from the world—as the church will one day be—had already, at that early period, announced the judgment of the world he was leaving. “Known unto God are all His works, from the beginning of the world.” All His purposes are fixed beforehand, whatever may be His patience and His dealings in long-suffering and in righteousness with man, ere those purposes be accomplished.

In short, to say that this passage has been taken from an apocryphal book is an assertion destitute of proof. It is a question whether this book were in existence when Jude wrote his Epistle. The date of the apocryphal book of Enoch is controverted. And this must be settled before there can be any foundation whatever for alleging that the passage in Jude was taken from it.

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We have only now to consider the Apocalypse. This book is only rejected because not understood. Ignorance assumes the office of judge, and decides with the temerity natural to it. It is obscure in its style, to one not familiar with the Word; and in its matter, because it treats of subjects which naturally tend to make it so. But there is no book in the New Testament of which the date and the author are established by more precise, more ancient, and more competent evidences; not one which has acted in a more holy and solemn manner on the conscience of true Christians; not one which — if it be not the simple truth, commending itself — links itself more admirably with the whole structure of the New Testament, completing the whole edifice; and the absence of which, in this respect, would be more sensibly felt. Not one that connects itself so much with the Old Testament, by borrowing the imagery of the prophets to unfold its revelations, while so far altering it as to adapt it to the New Testament.

This mode of acting forms the most perfect connection between heavenly and earthly things — a connection fully established in the New Testament — and makes the symbols more easy to be understood, and the object of the book more apparent. There is scarcely a point, from the first chapter of Genesis, with which the Apocalypse does not link itself, without effort, and in a manner which is altogether beyond human art. This book has the impress, the lofty range, the perfection of the mind of God, precisely in those things from which man has endeavoured, apart from the Bible, to borrow something from God to give a more exalted character to the idolatry of his own heart. Creation—the Jew—Man, his power in the world, the work of Satan, that of Christ in its results of glory to Himself and to the earth, the church, the condition of the saints in relation to God and to the earth, the government and the long-suffering of God, the angels—all these subjects are treated of, set in their relations to each other and to God, and yet in no respect whatever is this book deficient, as to any one doctrine revealed in the Word; not copying these doctrines, but expressing them in new forms. and in altogether new

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circumstances, which throw fresh light upon the former ones, and receive it from them in return.

One understands, that a book which, like the Bible, sets forth all the ways of God, from the creation to the return of that creation — long rebellious and miserable, but now redeemed — into the order and blessing in which it is set, by the fulness of God, in safety, shutting out that only which is incompatible with the blessing itself; one can understand, that a book which reveals the eternal Son of God, who was before creation, standing in the midst of this whole scene, to bring out of it glory to His Father, and a more beautiful order than that which had been lost; one can understand, I say, that such a book would not close without taking up again all the threads of this wondrous divine process, in those results which (when the work of the Son is perfected, and all things subdued) will bring in the full and perfect dominion of Him who surrounds Himself with the eternal blessing of that God who has made himself known in Him. This is what the Apocalypse sets before us.

Who is it (to enter into some details of another part of this book), who is it that in choosing seven churches (a number which, in itself, suggests the idea of a complete whole), could give us, in two short chapters, every moral position in which the Church (and even every individual who has ears to hear) could be found, from the beginning to the end of its career? Who is it that could, with this, give us the most precious revelation of heavenly blessings, adapted as special encouragement to the difficulties of each of these respective conditions, and, at the same time, revelations of the divine and varied glory of the person of the Son of God, a glory which beams with all-pervading brightness over every part of the subject; and that in such details as are calculated to strengthen those who are in the circumstances which these chapters describe, whilst making known to all the glory of Him who speaketh. This is what we find in chapters ii. and iii. of the Apocalypse. One understands, also, that when the inspired communications made to the Church were about to be closed; when those who were commissioned by God to superintend were being removed.

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and evil, as the Word everywhere testifies, was coming in like a flood; one can understand, I say, that the Spirit of God should have thus left to the Church—to the faithful who needed it—a moral summary, which could meet their need in the moral darkness which was gathering around them; a summary which, if God aroused those who were His, would explain the course of events which had taken place during this darkness, and make it manifest that nothing happened without God, even although the Church might slumber; a summary which would, also, give warning of the judgment which will fall upon that which, in the world, is the result of this forsaking of God and of His light by the Church, or by those who profess to be the Church; in a word, upon that which is the result of this corruption of God's last manifestation of Himself to man—a result which will leave room for nothing but judgment—a judgment which will establish righteousness by divine power.

One understands that such a book as this would close up the revelations of God. Rationalism sees nothing in it but historical speculations—an opinion worthy of such a system. That there should be in it things hard to be understood is not to be wondered at; it is only in proportion as the Church awakens, takes her place (in humbling herself,) and apprehends her true relationship to God, that she will be able also to acquire a Divine understanding of this rich treasury of all which enlightens her outward position, and to comprehend the way in which God resumes the government of the world to place it in the hands of the First-begotten, whom He brings into it.

Rationalism prefers man to God, or, at least, would rather listen to him, and that is in truth preferring him. This will be exclaimed against as calumny. I shall be glad of it, for at least it will shew that conscience feels it is a horrible thing if true; and that a system which has this for its root and principle, condemns itself. Well then, I repeat it, it prefers man to God, and avows that it does so. The Bible is no longer the Word of God for the rationalist. Human reason pronounces upon it, upon its verity, upon its moral worth; but it is self-

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evident that this cannot be done with the Word of God. It is equally certain that the rationalist does thus judge the Bible, and chooses rather to rely on his own reason than to acknowledge Divine authority, be it in what book it may. One of the most recent expositors of this doctrine in France, says, "The Bible is no longer the Word of God, and I know not what detriment it will be to the cause of piety to exchange a written code for the living produce of apostolic individuality," that is to say, an inspired collection which has the authority of God, "a uniform impress of divinity," for that which gives man in his individuality, man as he is, godly perhaps, yet *man*; "authority for history; and, to speak plainly, a cabalistic ventriloquy, for the noble accents of the human voice." If this be not preferring the word of man to the Word of God, what is it? Inspiration, which makes man the mouth and the voice of God, is a cabalistic ventriloquy!!

This author would have the human voice: he thinks it a more noble voice. Poor rationalists! self-admirers, to whom the voice of God, too clearly heard, is a deathly alarm; an unknown sound, which too plainly tells them what they are! Yet hearken to it, ye wise men, who are tempted of Satan to search into good and evil by yourselves; hearken to it: you will find it a voice of grace which can restore you, if it convict you, and cover your moral nakedness with the perfection and the glory of the second Adam—of the Son of God.

One of the shapes which error has taken of late years, is to assert that rejecting the inspiration of the Bible and its authority over believers, allows the Holy Ghost to resume His right place. I fully allow that the Church has grievously forgotten the presence and authority of the Holy Ghost dwelling in her. But I cannot understand how rejecting the authority of what He has already spoken, can enhance His authority. It appears to me to be rather opening the door to human pretensions and the devices of Satan. I have seen the latter effect produced by the same cause; and in the writings which advocate this system, we are already given over to the former. "Instead of the authority of the Word, we shall

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have the word of authority; instead of referring the poor proselyte to the articles of a code, to the ritual of a dogmatist [which I would no more do, than the author whom I quote], or to the pages of *I know not what mysterious oracles*; we will refer him to all the great prophets of all ages, to the living instruction of the Church, to the Word of God, personified in His servants, to the Spirit and to His manifestations, in a word, to the immediate contact of the heart with truth." How my heart would be in more immediate contact with truth, by listening to the voice of man, than by listening to "the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," is difficult to conceive. I accept "the manifestation of the Spirit," if by that is only meant the exercise of spiritual gifts for the edification of the Church, and the energy of the Spirit manifested in these gifts; but I warn the believer to be carefully on his guard against all false claims to these "manifestations." I have witnessed such, and could plainly see in them the presence and active energy of Satan. It is not every spirit which is the Spirit of God; and Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light. Such manifestations, when accompanied by the rejection of the Word and of its direct authority over the soul, proceed from the enemy of souls. This is the case with the Irvingites, and there have been others. It seems to me that the enemy is preparing some attempt of this kind, if the Lord hinder him not. The Church in general does not sufficiently own the Holy Ghost to have real strength against such pretensions. But it is not in giving up the Word which the Spirit has given us, that we shall find strength.

Observe, we are asked to give up that which we have now heard called "I know not what mysterious oracles," but which Stephen calls "the *lively oracles*," and Paul, "*the oracles of God*" (and remark, the lively oracles were the letter), and to give ourselves up to "all the great prophets of all ages," *i. e.* to all the vagaries of the human mind, without God, perhaps under the influence of Satan, and that without remedy; for there is *no Word of God*, only the noble accents of the human voice, and a word of authority: that is to say, whether it be an individual, or a body, which assumes this authority, *man*, instead of *God*.

I recognise the existence of the evil which this system attacks. It is one of the commonest devices of the enemy, to attack an evil when it grows old and loses its power over the mind of man, in order to set up some other evil more in accordance with the state of men's minds. Thus the Roman mythology was assailed by the scoffs of infidelity, as soon as it had been shaken by Christianity. Eclectic philosophy began also to display itself. Modern rationalism is doing the same thing. It attacks that lifeless dogmatic theology which makes use of the name of God, to fetter—not man, but the Holy Ghost. But while doing this, instead of bringing us back to the authority of God, it sets up that of man; instead of restoring the liberty and the rights of the Spirit of God, it gives us up to the spirit of man, publishing its unbelief as to the Word, and undermining as far as it can, all that is certainly of God. This once taken away, and when (as they avow) there is no more authority, *i. e.* authority of God, which alone secures true liberty to man; when there is no other authority than that of him who speaks, or of the Church who will then be free.

It is said that faith in the person of the Saviour will remain; doubtless this is the centre and the strength of Christianity: but I do not very well know what this faith would be, or in what Saviour, if the Word of God were taken from us.

The Holy Ghost is spoken of in this system:—I own most fully the way in which the precious Comforter sent down from Heaven has been grieved and forgotten; but, if the authority of the written Word be set aside, it is something vague and mystical, and nowise answering to what inspiration says of the Comforter. It is a kind of principle, which forms a community, and not the revealer of Christ, and the power of a Divine person in the Church.

The Holy Ghost is the only source of strength, of power, and of understanding in the Church, and in the Christian. But if you separate the idea of the Holy Ghost from the inspiration, and the authority of the written Word, you give yourself up—either to the imaginations of the mind of man, or to an authority which is merely human; whatever may be its pretensions, or the

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ecclesiastical form it may put on. It is authority, and not truth. The Word of God is the authority of the Truth, and of Him who reveals it

There is an important point which I have not yet brought forward; and on which I would add a few words.—That is, authority of the Word, independently of the effect it produces on the heart. I may be led to recognise the authority of the Word of God, through the effect it has had upon me; but, evidently, it is not this effect which gives it its authority. If the Word produces this effect, it is because it possessed the authority, which I recognised before I yielded to it. I recognise it, because it exists. If Christ pronounced the Words of God, his words had authority, whatever might be the unbelief of his hearers; that is to say, they possessed intrinsic authority. Nor have they lost it, by being written. The Lord speaks of "*Writings*" being the highest order of means of communication. If the Apostle has made the will of God known to us in "*words which the Holy Ghost teacheth,*" the revelations he received—*his words* have a divine authority over the conscience, even though they should be rejected by man. The authority of the Word does not depend upon its being received by him who hears. It is not *he* who is to judge it, except at his own peril. "The words which I speak, the same shall judge you in that day." This may indeed be called possessing authority, independently of him who would judge it.

We are not now discussing the authenticity of the Testimony, but its authority, allowing it to be authentic. Wherein lies this authority? Suppose two persons read a book of the Bible: the heart of one is touched and convinced of the divine authority of what he reads, the other remains in his unbelief. Does the authority of the Word depend on the faith of the one who believes, or is it the same for both; although unrecognised by him who believes not? It is evident that either he who believed was mistaken, or if not, that the authority of the book, although unrecognised by the unbeliever, is as great for him as for the one who bowed to it. The authority lies then in the Word itself, independently of the effect



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produced by it; or, of the opinion man forms of it. It possesses intrinsic authority. The judgment of the last day will prove it. "The words which I have spoken, the same shall judge you in that day." It could not be otherwise with the Word of God; but it is important clearly to establish this principle.

The Word of God can be of no profit, if it be not received; nevertheless it retains its full authority, because it is the Word of God. Unless the existence of any divine communication be denied, this principle cannot be questioned. He who denies all such communication is an unbeliever. So that the point is not to reason upon what the Church possesses in the Scriptures; but to convince an unbeliever. Moreover, this unbelief does not destroy the authority of the Word; for the rebellion of man cannot destroy the authority of God. The day of probation is granted to man: the day of judgment will make good the authority of God. The Word itself establishes this principle. "And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear; for they are most rebellious" (Exodus ii. 7): Compare 1 John iii. 11—27.—"He that believes has the witness in himself." This is the inward power of the testimony: "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar:" here is the guilt of him who believes not. The authority then, of Testimony from God is independent of the judgment man may pronounce upon it. The testimony will itself judge man.

Other passages, founded upon this principle, apply it to the Scriptures as a body of writings; seeing that from a child "thou hast known the holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus," 2 Tim. iii. 15. Here *the holy Scriptures* exercise authority over man, from his childhood, as well as make the man of God perfect. It is not then the opinion of the man of God which determines the value of the Scriptures. He who knew their value as making the man of God perfect, recognised their authority over him at a time when he was quite incapable of judging at all on the subject. That is to say, they possessed full and absolute authority over him,

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independently of his power to receive them: an intrinsic and divine authority. The most advanced man of God is glad to receive them in this spirit, 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2. The principle of authority is formally laid down by the Apostle in the same passage, “Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned—*knowing of whom thou hast learned them.*” The authority of Him from whom he had learned them, was the reason for continuing in them.

The intrinsic authority, then, of the testimony of Scripture is clearly established. Authority independent of the reception of the testimony by the hearer. So entirely independent that the Word will judge him who is not obedient to it. This proves to us that God has endued it with moral evidence, powerful enough to bring him in guilty, who does not receive the testimony; thereby making God a liar. Nevertheless, it is only the grace of God which can overcome the moral resistance of man’s heart; unbelieving as it is by nature and by will, when God is in question, though full of credulity as to the things of man.

There is another point which I have only glanced at, and which I desire to put forward a little more plainly. Many circumstances testify that the narratives of the evangelists were not written merely by man, but by the Holy Ghost. John was one of the three apostles who were with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, close to the scene of His agony. He says not a word about it. Nothing can be more affecting and more solemn than the Saviour’s agony; and most certainly John had not forgotten it, for he remembers many other circumstances which are not to be found in the other gospels; for instance, that those who came to take Jesus went backward and fell to the ground. John accompanied Jesus also to the cross, yet he says not a word of His having been forsaken of God, although he relates a multitude of other circumstances which prove that the Saviour was as calm there as when he shewed Him to us in the garden. A *man* who had written the history of the sufferings of the Saviour, would not have failed to relate things so deeply interesting, and of which he had himself been an

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eye-witness. Matthew also would have related the remarkable incident which occurred in the garden of Gethsemane, of which he was an eye-witness, namely, that they all fell to the ground; but he does not mention it, whilst he gives an account of the agony of Jesus and his prayer, although he was not one of the three who accompanied Him at that time.

Now, if you examine these gospels you will find, that this peculiarity—inexplicable as this would be if they were not inspired—becomes quite intelligible when we recognise their inspiration. One and the same author wrote them all. The Holy Ghost, whose office it is to take of the things of Christ and to shew them unto us, furnishes us in John with those circumstances of the history of Jesus which would bring out the glory of his person—His glory who offered Himself to God for us. In Matthew he gives us that which is needed to make known the suffering Messiah. The result is not only harmony between the parts of each gospel, but also between all the gospels; producing a perfect whole, exhibiting the design and the workmanship of one and the same author. This principle is applicable to the entire contents of the four gospels. I have only called the reader's attention to the garden of Gethsemane and to the cross as striking instances. One who is well versed in the gospels, and who has spiritual discernment, would know by the manner in which the subject is presented, in which gospel it is to be found. Compare the connection between the end of Matt. xxi. and the parable in the beginning of xxii.: also the way in which the corresponding parable in Luke xiv. 16 is introduced, with that of the husbandmen in Luke xx., and you will perceive that the substance, the form, and the diversities of these parables are in perfect harmony with the design of each gospel. In Matthew, the rejection of Christ in connection with the relation of the Messiah to the Jews; in Luke, the moral order of the events, the acts and ways of the God of grace, founded on the broader, more moral and less official basis of the character of the Son of Man. The same thing may be observed in comparing Matt. xxiv. and Luke xxi.

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There is another testimony to the truth of inspiration, the peculiar character of which deserves the reader's attention. It applies especially to the Old Testament; but it brings out very clearly the difference between the inspiration of the Old, and that of the New. It is that the prophets did not understand their own prophecies, but studied them as we might do. We read in 1 Peter i. 11—"Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister," etc. They searched into that which the Holy Ghost had spoken through themselves. Their inspiration was so absolute, and so independent of the workings of their own minds, that they sought the meaning of what they uttered, as one of us might do. This is not precisely the character of the inspiration of the New Testament; but it is not, therefore, the less real. It is declared in the succeeding words—"reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven."

The Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven leads into all truth, and thus inspiration acts in the understanding and by the understanding; but it is not the less inspiration. On the contrary, the apostle Paul preferred the inspiration which acts by the understanding, to that which is, apparently, more independent of the man. 1 Cor. xiv. 14—19—"If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prayeth; but my understanding is unfruitful." Dan. xii. 8 gives us an example of that which Peter describes—"And I heard, but understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And He said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end."

The reader will remember that the passage I have quoted, is the one to which the Lord Himself referred the disciples, in order that *they* might understand it. Now if the prophet did not understand the revelation he gave; if the prophets searched into their own prophecies to understand them, it is most evident that

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those prophecies were given through direct and positive inspiration. I desire to add a thought which tends to confirm the truth I seek to maintain, and which applies to the whole of the Bible. Our attention is called to the fact that the Bible is not one book, but a collection of writings by different authors. It is precisely on this fact I ground my argument, adding to it that they were written at periods very remote from each other. In spite of this great diversity of times and of authors, there is a perfect unity of design and of doctrine: a unity, the separate parts of which are so linked with each other, and so entirely adapted to each other, that the whole work is evidently that of one and the same Spirit, one and the same mind; with one purpose, carried on from the beginning to the end, whatever might be the date of each separate book. And this, not at all by means of mere uniformity of idea, for the Promises are quite distinct from the Law; and the Gospel of Grace is distinct from them both; nevertheless, its parts are so correlative, and form so harmonious a whole, that with the least attention, one cannot fail to perceive that it is the production of ONE MIND. Now there is but One who lived through all the ages during which the various books of the Bible were written, and that One is the HOLY GHOST.

Look at Genesis. You will find doctrines, promises, types which are in perfect harmony with that which is more fully developed in the New Testament events, which in this book are narratives, related with the greatest simplicity; yet in such a manner as to give the most perfect picture of things which should happen in after-ages. Feelings natural to piety (speaking historically) are so related as to possess a meaning, which when we have the key to it, throws light upon the most precious doctrines of the New Testament, and the most remarkable events of prophecy. Look at Exodus; and you will find the same thing. Every thing is made according to the pattern Moses saw in the Mount, and furnishes us with the clearest exposition we possess of the ways of God in Christ. At the same time the Law is given. A Law which is not imitated in the Gospel, which does not

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contain a copy of it, nor any human order. Nevertheless the Law is linked with the Gospel in a manner which makes it impossible to separate them, and which gives to the authority of this revelation, a divine and absolute character. Were it not so, Christ would have died to suffer the consequences of a partly human thing; for He bore the curse of the Law. Observe this carefully, the curse of the Law, revealed to man; and of which He had said, that not one jot or tittle should pass away, till all were fulfilled. And moreover, it was not when reasoning with the Jews, upon their own ground, that He said this; but when teaching His disciples, according to His own perfect wisdom, and solemnly setting before them the principles of His kingdom. Take Leviticus; the details of its sacrifices furnish a light, which throws upon the work of Christ, rays so bright that nothing could replace them; supplying a key to all the workings of the human heart, and an answer to all its need, such as it is found even among the heathen. These details prefigure every aspect of the work of Christ, as doctrinally unfolded in the New Testament, whether by Himself or His apostles. For the inspired writer, they were Jewish ordinances. Take Numbers, the history of the journey of God's people through the Wilderness. "These things," says the apostle, "happened to them for examples [types] and they are written for us, upon whom the ends of the world are come;" Who was it that wrote them for us? Certainly, not Moses; although he was the human instrument. It was He who knoweth the end from the beginning, and who orders all things according to His good pleasure.

All the circumstances of Christian life are found treasured up in these oracles in so complete a manner, that the apostle could say, "They are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. On the other hand, the New Testament is equally far from merely repeating the substance of the Old, or from making void its authority. It brings in an altogether new light, which—while setting aside a multitude of things, as fulfilled—throws a light upon the contents of the Old Testament, which alone gives it its true bearing. All

this applies to the moral, and to the ceremonial Law; to the history of the Patriarchs; to the royalties of David and of Solomon; to the sentiments expressed in the Psalms, as well as to other subjects. Is it not ONE MIND which has done all this? Was it the mind of Moses or of Paul? Assuredly not. Observe also, that all this refers to Christ, and to all the various glories of Christ; glories which God alone knew, so as to reveal them beforehand; and to give, in the history and ordinances of His people, and even in that which is related of the world, precisely that which would serve for the development of all that was to be manifested in His Son Jesus. Accordingly, what says Peter? (Acts ii.) "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David; that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day; therefore being a prophet, and seeing this before, he spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption."

I will not go through all the books of the Bible, to give proofs of this unity of design, which is manifested in a work wrought by such various instruments, and at periods so remote from each other. A unity realised in the accomplishment of a work which precludes all idea of its having been intended by the persons who executed it. I only use this thought in confirmation of the doctrine I maintain; but to one who has any knowledge of the Word of God, it is an incontestable proof.

I will add but one word. In judging of Inspiration by the precision of the account, a mistake is committed as to what should be sought for. The Holy Ghost does not aim at that accuracy which would be needful to prove the truthfulness of man. The Holy Ghost has always a moral or spiritual object; the revelation of some eternal principle of truth and grace. Every circumstance which has no bearing upon His object is omitted. He pays no attention to accuracy in that respect. But the moral accuracy is all the greater on this account; and the picture presented to the conscience much more complete. The introduction of something needful to human accuracy, would spoil the perfection of the whole, as God's

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testimony. God does not seek to amuse the mind of man by stories to no purpose, but to instruct his heart by truth. This might sometimes make it rather difficult to balance the whole, as a mere narrative; but there are two ways of explaining the cause of a difficulty—the ignorance of him who feels the difficulty, or the impossibility of the thing which has perplexed him. And man willingly attributes to the latter cause, that which proceeds from the former. He who understands the design of the Holy Ghost in what He says, seizes the perfection of the Word, where the mind of man is perplexed by a thousand obstacles.

ABBA, FATHER.

\**Ἀββᾶ* (Abba) occurs but three times in the New Testament.

“And he said, Abba, Father,” Mark xiv. 36.

“whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” Rom. viii. 15.

“into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” Gal. iv. 6.

In all three of which occurrences, it is, evidently, an invocation, and has the Greek word which is equivalent to it placed immediately after it.

The passage in Mark is in the narration of the agony in the garden: “Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt.”

The citation from Romans viii. is from the epitome of Christian privileges presented in that blessed portion: “Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption (*υιοθεσίας*), whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

The third occurrence is in the laboured argument of the apostle to recover certain Galatians from error. After urging, “Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (chap. iii. 26. [i. e. the present standing of acceptance in the family of God to all that have faith]), he goes on to shew the result of this in them; for there was, “I in you” to those to whom “ye in me” (of John xiv.) was made good; and so he says, “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

It is a blessed truth, that our “Lord and God,” who has called us “*Brethren*,” as the sons, by adoption, of God, thus puts into our hearts (as in Galatians) the power which leads us in daily habitual communion (as in Romans) towards His Father; according to the title, Abba, even that by which He, the only begotten Son, addressed Him.

The word Abba is not Greek, nor Hebrew, but appears to be Chaldee, and to be in what is called the *status emphaticus*. In the little Chaldee which exists in the Bible, we do not meet with it; but it exists in the Talmud (Fürst says) frequently *אבא*. It may be as well to observe, that while each of the occurrences is an invocation, the vocative *πατερ* is not the form which is used after it, but *ὁ πατήρ*, that is, the nominative. W.



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

## THOUGHTS ON THE BOOK OF JONAH.

I HAVE been much struck with the way in which the Book of Jonah and the 139th Psalm mutually illustrate each other. There are several points of coincidence which may have escaped even intelligent readers and which it may be well to notice. First, as to the import of the name Jonah. It signifies "a dove." This at least seems to be one of the meanings of the word (see Cruden). It was a godly wish in the Psalmist, "O that I had wings like a dove" to escape from the presence of the ungodly (see Ps. lv. 6). But it was a most ungodly wish in Jonah to seek to flee from the presence of the Lord. And the presence of the Lord is the thought with which the 139th Psalm opens: "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me." This *taken by itself* is one of the simplest truths of natural religion. It needs no grace to perceive (though it needs much grace to remember and act upon it) that He that formed the eye can see, that He that planted the ear can hear. This nature itself teaches us; and thus learned men of the world are very familiar with the doctrine of God's omnipresence. They admit it without hesitation, they prove it logically from the very being of a God, nay, from the existence of anything at all, or as if all proof were superfluous, rank it among the first and simplest axioms of philosophy. Still they *know* rather than *believe* it.

But this truth sat heavy on the mind of Jonah, he *felt* the omnipresence of God. And whether in the case of Jonah, the Lord's disobedient servant, or in that of Adam immediately after his fall, the conscience of a sinner can only suggest to him the false and fruitless endeavour to get away from the presence of God. Adam seeks to screen himself behind the trees in the garden. Jonah's plan, if possible, is more deliberate. "But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the

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presence of the Lord." Here then we have the "silly dove without heart" taking the wings of the morning (*i. e.* going from *the east*), and preparing to dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, forgetting that there should God's hand lead her, and his right hand hold her. And God's right hand *does* overtake her. Strictly speaking, with God there is no time. Before the mountains were brought forth or ever God had formed the earth and the world, God knew what the heart of Jonah would be, and knew the precise spot at which the storm would overtake him. "But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken." To the eyes of men the storm was an accident, the natural accompaniment, perhaps, of that season of the year. But to the eye of faith it was the Lord that sent it. If God makes His angels spirits<sup>a</sup> it is also true that he makes the winds his angels (*i. e.* messengers). Or, again, some may advance a step farther and do more than merely attribute the storm to natural causes. They may know something of morality and something of Providence, but they know nothing of *grace*. And these might say, "Jonah was an Israelite, the mariners were heathens, therefore God sent the storm against *them*." But this would have been a mistake. Servants of God were not yet called Christians, and the discipline of God's house was not yet set up; but the same principle was *so far* in exercise that even then it was true "them that are without God judgeth (or will judge)." "You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities." Jonah's conscience does its office, "For my sake this tempest is come upon you." He was the lightning conductor of the vessel, at once attracting and carrying off the storm. "The men rowed hard." Men have often prevailed against wind and tides but no one has ever prevailed against God. Who has hardened himself against God and prospered? And here I would

<sup>a</sup> *Wind* and *spirit* are the same word in Hebrew, and also in Greek. Only let it be remembered that there are places where none but a Socinian would substitute the one for the other. In other words קָוָה and πνεῦμα in many parts of Scripture signify the Person of God the Holy Ghost.

notice the striking contrast between Jonah's history and the event recorded in John vi. In both cases the problem is to bring the ship to land. In the one case, Jonah must be cast out; in the other, Jesus must be taken in. Jonah is cast out and the sea ceases from its raging. Jesus is taken in, and the boat is "immediately at the land whither they went." God is Jonah's God, *therefore* Jonah is afflicted.

It is now time to remark, that a greater than Jonah is here. One antitype in Scripture has often many types; and sometimes, though not so frequently, one type has several antitypes. This will be found to be the case in several of the Psalms. I would instance the fortieth. There we have David, the Lord Jesus, the Jewish people, and less strictly the Church, and every individual saint belonging to the Church.

We must, of course, bear in mind that sometimes the antitype goes beyond the type, and also that neither David nor any other mere man can come up to the measure of the stature of the fulness of that character which *exactly* describes the Lord Jesus. None but Jesus could say in the same high sense, "Thy law is within my heart: Lo I come to do thy will, O God."

The case of Jonah, however, is more simple. He is a real, historical, and at the same time, typical personage. He represents, as a little Sunday-school child knows, the Lord Jesus laid in the heart of the earth and raised again. He *also* represents the Jewish people, and every individual saint. In other words the following order is found in the case of all three of the parties: death, resurrection, testimony. There was of course, this difference, that Jesus could be a witness without death, but *not be the head of His people*. They, whether Jews or gentiles, *must* pass through death before they can testify. And here again we find a coincidence between the Book of Jonah and Psalm cxxxix. That Psalm may be divided into three parts:—The unburied, unraised, unquicken soul, apprehends (at all events *may* apprehend) the truth of God's searching presence *carnally*. There is no echo of the spirit to the voice of God, no heart Amen, to bid the light welcome as it enters the

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recesses of the soul. There is all this at the end of the Psalm ; but this is the very doctrine we are taught, as it seems to me, by the threefold division of it, that death and consequently resurrection must come between the beginning and the end. The Apostle, once alive without the law—Jonah, without the experience of the whale's belly—the Psalmist, contemplating the naked doctrine of God's omnipresence apart from grace—these three agree in one. And the Apostle thanking God through Jesus Christ when the law of the spirit of life had made him free from the law of sin and death — Jonah knowing that Jchovah was God, and that salvation was of the Lord, and the Psalmist, crying at the end of the Psalm, "Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts," all bear witness to the same gospel fact—that spiritual life can only be attained through death. It is one of our Father's most glorious titles that He is "God which raiseth the dead;" and it would seem that He would have us acknowledge the principle of resurrection in several distinct and what some might think dissimilar processes. I would especially mention the finding the lost, and the ushering an infant into the light of the natural world from the place where it was "made in secret" and visible to no eye but God's. Birth and resurrection are clearly associated in the mystic generation of our Lord from the grave (who we know was the Son of God in *another* sense from all eternity). "Thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten Thee." Again, resurrection and finding the lost one are identified in the case of the Prodigal Son: "This my son was *dead* and is *alive* again, was *lost* and is *found*." May we not then, seeing that not man, but God has joined these ideas together, consider that both in Jonah and the 139th Psalm the Spirit (to say the least), *glances* at the finding the lost tribes of Israel (qy. the body of Moses?) which God buried, whose sepulchre no man knows of, and which none but God can find?

But we must not forget that in each of these cases of deliverance the Lord has a practical purpose to answer, "Let my people go that they may serve me." "This people have I formed for myself and they shall show

forth my praise." The prophet, the restored house of Israel, and the converted sinner in our own day, are all in turn witnesses of this. God not only sets their feet on a rock and orders their goings, but he also puts a new song into their mouth, even praise unto their God. He opens their lips, and their mouths show forth His praise. Jonah has learned two lessons. The one is his own badness, "They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy." The second is God's goodness: "Salvation<sup>b</sup> is of the Lord." In giving utterance to this critical truth, Jonah seems to have touched the spring which made the doors of his prison-house fly open. For *immediately* after we read, "And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land." I would mention one or two parallel cases in Scripture (2 Cor. iii). "When it (*i. e.* the heart of the Jews) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away." Another instance, as it seems to me, is afforded by the account of Zacharias as the representative of unbelieving Israel. He is dumb for a season, because he believed not the words of the angel. But at last he gives a striking proof of faith. He refuses, as we may say, to know his own child after the flesh, and though none of his kindred were so called, he gives him the name of *John* (*i. e.* the grace of the Lord). "And his mouth was opened immediately and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God." May not the case of Zacharias, I would ask, lawfully remind us of the condition of Israel as described in the first verse of Psalm lxxv. (marginal reading). "Praise is *silent* for thee, O God, in Zion"? Israel is dumb till they can speak of *grace*. Then shall the veil be taken away, and the tongue of the dumb sing.

But praise to God is testimony to man, and conversely we then honor God in this world, when we faithfully (*i. e.* obediently) testify for Him in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. This, Jonah, raised from the dead in a figure, is now prepared to do. Marvellous is the grace of God in thus dealing with this rebellious one,

<sup>b</sup> We must not forget that salvation is *by* faith and *of* the Lord. A believer's faith has no more *merit* than a believer's works or an unbeliever's either. So here Jonah believes, and with his mouth makes confession unto salvation, but he is not his own Saviour.

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not only pardoning, but employing him in His service. And this is the privilege of all believers. To preach, *i. e.* bear testimony for God, was what Jonah was first *commanded* to do, he is not *prepared* to do it till he has been through the waters of death. He is God's missionary to Nineveh, the great gentile city, typical, we may suppose, of Israel in the latter day when they, or part of them, shall "call the people to the mountain."

I would not pursue the history of Jonah farther, instructive as the two last chapters are, but conclude with a few thoughts suggested by the latter part of the 139th Psalm, in connection with that which has been our subject throughout. We have seen that resurrection must precede testimony, and of course death must precede resurrection; but there is a certain moral qualification which fits us for testimony, and which we only possess in virtue of our interest in Christ's death and resurrection. This is truth or truthfulness, "Grace AND truth came by Jesus Christ." And this truth or truthfulness, this *honesty of soul*, is the special subject of the concluding verses of the 139th Psalm, "Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

A good conscience toward God is the great practical blessing of the new covenant. The leading thought of the New Testament, as regards God, we may say is *grace*, as regards man is *conscience* (see Hebrews, *passim*). And where the one is purged by the operation of the other, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ. The word *conscience* does not appear in the Old Testament; and this very omission is not without significance, for the veil was not rent. But though the *name* of a good conscience does not occur in the vocabulary of the Old Testament, the *nature* of it is described in Ps. xxxii. 2. "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in *whose spirit there is no guile*." The light of the Gospel has a reciprocal effect. It enables us to see God, and makes us willing that God should see *us*. Then we are spiritually Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile. Then having beheld with unveiled face the glory of the

Lord, and having received *mercy*, we faint not, but have renounced the hidden things of *dishonesty*.<sup>c</sup> And thus the conscience being purged from *dead* works, we are prepared to serve the *living* God. Many know that faith without works is dead, who do not know that works without faith are dead also. And service to the living God rendered by a living soul is the essence of real good works, or usefulness, or testimony.

To recapitulate briefly what has been said, the beginning of the Psalm states the fact of the omnipresence of God, the latter part says Amen to it *willingly*. The first part gives us a doctrine, the last the experience of a soul capable of contemplating the doctrine without fear. Between the two, in a confessedly obscure passage, we may discern the *secret formation of a predestinated body*, described in one verse as a process of covering in the womb, in another as a curious operation in the lowest part of the earth. Viewing this Psalm in connection with other parts of Scripture, it is almost impossible not to perceive the same principle in action whether in the restoration of the Jews, the resurrection of the saints, or the conversion of a soul. The lowest parts of the earth clearly testify of burial and death, and generation is a type of regeneration. If any question the analogy between the raising of the dead and the restoration of Israel, that point seems to be settled by the divine authority of the 37th of Ezekiel, ver. 11, "Son of Man, these bones are the whole house of Israel." There may be more room for doubt, though I confess I do not think there is much as to whether Dan. xii. 2, does not at least *allude* to the restoration of Israel; and still less reason do I perceive for questioning whether Isaiah xxvi. 19, refers to the same subject.

I would add a few words to prevent mistake on the subject of the body of Moses. To speak, as some have done, of Israel being the body of Moses in the sense in which the Church is the body of Christ is foolish, not to say profane, but to say there is a striking coincidence

<sup>c</sup> In the remarks that have been made on the 139th Psalm, it is not meant that the writer of it did not *know* grace at the beginning, but only that he does not *express* it till the end, and the order of his *words* may be that of another man's experience.

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between what Scripture says of Israel and what it says of the body of Moses is only to state a fact of which any reader of the Bible may judge for himself. In Deut. xxxiv.5,6, we read that the *Lord buried Moses, and no man knows where his sepulchre is to this day.* In Ezek. xx.23, and elsewhere, the Lord threatens to scatter Israel. Ezek. xxxvii.21, *Israel is scattered*, of course by the Lord, and, referring to ver. 11, this seems to be the antitype of the figure of the resurrection of the dry bones. It is not unworthy of notice that both the burial of Moses and the vision of the dry bones are said to have taken place in *a valley*, (*i. e.* if the translation of Ezekiel is correct). Again, it will hardly be denied that in Zech.iii, whatever else may be meant, the brand plucked from the burning is Israel or some part of Israel. There we read, "And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee." In Jude, ver. 9, we read, "Michael the archangel when contending with the Devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."

## ACROSTIC PSALMS.

2.—Ps. cxix.

*Each of the verses from 9—16, begins with a Beth.*

<b>BY</b> what shall a youth cleanse his way, To guard (it) according to Thy Word?	ver. 9
<b>By</b> (or, <i>with</i> ) my whole heart I sought Thee; Let me not wander from Thy commands.	ver. 10
<b>Bestowed</b> I Thy word, in my heart, That I might not sin against Thee.	ver. 11
<b>Blessed</b> art Thou, O Jehovah: Teach me Thy statutes.	ver. 12
<b>By</b> my lips have I declared All the judgments of Thy mouth.	ver. 13
<b>By</b> the way, I have rejoiced in Thy Testimonies as over all riches.	ver. 14
<b>By</b> means of Thy precepts I will muse And have respect to Thy paths.	ver. 15
<b>By</b> thy statutes do I delight myself: I will not forget Thy words.	ver. 16

\* Query. Is the meaning "I being in the way," etc. or as the English version "in the way of Thy testimonies!"



N<sup>o</sup>. VII.

## THE GLORIES OF THE SON.

## HEBREWS I.

THIS first chapter, and, indeed, the Epistle to the Hebrews generally, remarkably sets forth to us the glories of the Son. We would desire, under the Lord's guidance, to dwell upon them: may He bless it to the profit of our souls!

He introduces it to us by the thought, that the God, who in times past spake "in many parts, and in many manners," hath, in these last days, spoken to us in one full, unbroken, complete revelation of Himself by His Son. "The only begotten Son, which is in the *bosom* of the Father, He hath *declared* Him." Meet person to do so! He only meet! How fully, then, does He unfold the glories of the Son. By Him He made the worlds, or ages; and for Him, as Heir, he made them. For Him, I say, as *heir*; for 1 Corinth. viii. 6 (where "*in him*" should be "*unto him*" [*καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν*—ED.]) shews us, I believe, the Father as the ultimate object. "To the glory of God the Father" (Philip. ii. 11).

And let us pause, to see with what distinctness the Son is spoken of in Scripture as the Creator (which, to many of us, of course, need not be written, as "though we knew not the truth"). John says (i. 3), "All things were made by Him, and *without Him* was not anything made that was made." With equal certainty does the apostle say—"By Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him."

And as He is the Creator of all, so in the same undoubted certainty is He the Judge of all. John v. 26—"For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself [it is spoken, I apprehend, officially, as Head of His Church]; and

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hath given Him authority to execute judgment, also, because He is the *Son of Man*". And (v. 22)—“For neither doth the Father judge any man; but hath committed *all judgment* to the Son.” Which resurrection-power, I believe, he sets before us, when he says—“The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.” I take this to be, “they that are Christ’s at His coming;” they, and they only, hear His voice at that time, and come forth, for ever to be with their Lord. Lazarus was the practical exhibition of this. And not only they; but the hour is coming, in its own time, “when *all that are in the graves shall hear His voice*. And shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” And all this for the express purpose, as He tells us, “that all should honour the Son even as they honour the Father” (ver. 23). And how thoroughly do our hearts assent to, and echo, that word—“He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father that sent Him.”

What a chain of glory, therefore, is here indicated to us! Creator of all, Preserver of all (as I believe that word “upholding all things by the word of His power,” and (Colossians) “and by Him”<sup>a</sup>—perhaps better “*in Him*”—all things consist, shews us), and finally Judge of all. “The judgment-seat,” we know, is that of “Christ.”

This is part of His glory: [<sup>b</sup>but there are some of His glories which we may, and I think it is most important that we should, look upon, as, after all, less than Himself, His own *person*, and glory:] because they are *official* glories. Thus the expression (Col. i. 15), “The first-born of every creature, or of all creation.” That there can be no identification intended with the creature, the

<sup>a</sup> I unhesitatingly prefer “by” in both passages, and think the *contexts* entirely disprove the correctness of the suggested alterations.—ED.

<sup>b</sup> The part in [ ] seems to me to be a hasty and an unweighed statement of the writer (and the rest of the paper proves it to be so), for surely “*some of all*” will always be less than “*all*”; and all His *glories* must be less than the infinite God Himself.—ED.

*context* entirely proves; for the "FOR," which, in verse 16, elucidates this *first-bornship*, is not as though he were only the first-born among the rest of the creatures coming after him; but the *first-bornship* stands in this connection, "FOR by Him were all things CREATED, whether they be thrones, or dominions," etc.

The first-bornship I would take to be a thing answering to that of the 18th verse, that of the Church. It points, I would suggest with all reverence and deference, to Him, as appointed from everlasting to the headship, first of *creation* ("I was set up," Prov. viii., strictly, "anointed" [נסכתי ED.], from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was), and then as the ulterior object (Eph. iii. 9 — where for "from the beginning of the world," read "from the age") to the Headship of the Church. This does not touch the question of what he *was* in Himself.

And so again with regard to the Kingdom, when it comes, glorious as it is, yet is it less than what He is in Himself. "Then cometh the end when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that did put all things under him, that God may be all in all." He has received the Kingdom from the Father, and when he has gathered out of it all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, put down all authority, and power, and made it meet for the Father, he lays all down at the Father's feet, that God may be all in all; the last grand and glorious token of obedience and love (John xiv. 31). It has been a mediatorial official glory. "He is the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person."

And then what joy it is to our souls to find what comes after; "When he had, *by Himself*, purged our sins." All the value of his person was thrown into his *work*: and in the value of that work He now stands before God for us, and *we in Him*. As the living bird in Lev. xiv. dipped in his fellow's blood, stood now in all the value of that blood, though alive; so Jesus, He

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that was dead and is alive again, stands now before God in the value of all he did on the cross for us, a Lamb as it had been slain.

See again how the value of this truth tells on what follows in chap. ii. That one should have been humbled, as Jesus was, is no so great wonder; but that one, who was what Jesus was—“Jesus the Son of God”—should have been “made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death; that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every one”: this is a thing calling upon us, like Moses, to turn aside and see the great sight.

What value of grace again does it put upon his priesthood, who, like Aaron, became “a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” What strength, too! “Having a great high priest (chap. iv.) that is passed through the heavens, Jesus, the *Son of God*, let us *hold fast our profession*.” He is *able* to help us all through.

See the further testimony to his glory (chap. iii), the contrast between Moses, “the house,” and He that built the house, that builded all things, which is God, even Jesus.

Then, again, what a lively type does Melchisedek present of Him, standing solitary, and alone, “without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but made like unto *the Son of God*, abideth a priest continually.” The tenderness of the Aaronic, the strength of the Melchisedek priesthood, both unite in Him.

“Join all the glorious names,  
Of wisdom love, and power,” etc.

“Set down (in chap. viii.) on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, a minister of the true sanctuary” shaking both earth and heaven<sup>c</sup> (in chap. xii). Great in his humiliation, great in his priesthood, great in his kingdom, great in Himself.

<sup>c</sup> I may remark, that whilst John sets before us the *Son of God* in his love, Hebrews, I think, sets before us the *Son of God* in his power.

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How sweet to know, that though thus great, yet is it true, what the Psalmist said of him: "Thou art *fairer* than the children of men; *grace* is poured into thy lips; therefore God hath blessed thee for ever (Psalm xlv). Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the *oil of gladness* above thy fellows." It is the same Jesus, who was meek and lowly in heart—giving rest to the weary and heavy-laden. It is the same Jesus, who "by himself purged our sins"—with whom we are *united*, "bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh." May we know him increasingly! May we come increasingly "into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the *Son of God* (Eph. iv.), that so we may be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." May we know Him more in His grace and love, taking our proper place, like the poor woman, washing His feet with our tears; being increasingly, too, conformed to Him in His meekness and grace, and telling forth His salvation and love to perishing sinners.

## A PRAYER.

Accept, O Lord, the simple prayer,  
Which in Thine ear we pour;  
Behold! it is our souls' desire  
To know Thee more and more!

*We know* that we are Thine, O Lord,  
Redeem'd with Thine own blood;  
*We know* that we shall shortly be  
For ever with our God.

But we would prove our fellowship,  
E'en here, from hour to hour;  
Would catch the Spirit's "Abba" cry,  
And taste His heav'nly power.

So should our souls with holy love,  
And deepest peace abound,  
And we shine forth, O Lord, and yield  
A light to all around!

G.

N<sup>o</sup>. VIII.THE CONDITION OF ISRAEL DURING THE  
PROPHECIES OF MALACHI.

ONE of the first lessons that Israel was taught by Jehovah was, "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me; and before all the people I will be glorified."

In the ninth of Leviticus, Aaron and his sons enter upon their service, according to the commandment of the Lord by Moses. The offerings were accepted; 23rd verse, "And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people, and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people: and there came a fire out from before the Lord and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering, and the fat, which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces."

Immediately upon this, we have an account of the sin of Nadab and Abihu. Chap. x.—"And 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.* And Aaron held his peace."

This vindication of the holiness of God should have served for Israel all along, up to the remotest part of their history. It was God's standard. He changed not. We see a corresponding lesson taught to the Church in its early days, in the case of Ananias and Sapphira; God then vindicated his holiness against their sin. The same judgments may not have fallen on like sins during the apostasy of the Church; but God has not changed. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed

speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”

The spirit of God by Malachi, reproves the people for the way in which they were carrying on the worship of God. Those who had come up from Babylon in answer to the call of God, had in the midst of much weakness reared the temple; and their sin was not that the doors of the temple were closed, but this: “Who is there among you, that would shut the doors for nought? neither do you kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.” They were not rebuked for not offering sacrifices. “But ye have profaned my name, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even His meat, is contemptible. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! ... and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord.” They had their priests, but the word to them was, “The priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts. But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of Hosts. Therefore, have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.”

The judgments of God had interrupted the idolatrous course which Israel for so many generations had followed. Those judgments had cleared the land of its idols. The people, on their return, had started afresh; and, alas! this is what they had come to—the form of godliness without the power.

Their conscience had fallen, too. When the prophet charges all these things home upon them, they do not own their sin, nor bow before the word of God. It was a tender way in which the Spirit of God spoke. “A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of Hosts unto

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you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?" and when the word of mercy was spoken to them—"Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord," they said "Wherein shall we return?" It was the conscience of Israel in the midst of such corruption, that left their case hopeless. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Self-justification and self-righteousness widen the breach between God and man. The pride of the human heart dislikes to be told of sin; it dislikes, still more, to own it: acknowledgment of sin must precede blessing. "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished" (Prov. xvi. 5). This state of things in the sanctuary had its fruit in the character of the people. "Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts. And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered."

Bad religion, bad conscience, and bad walk are linked together. Israel had got away from God; they were not walking with God. The light of God's glory—manifested when Nadab and Abihu died before the Lord—they were not walking in; therefore all this evil. It is "by the fear of the Lord that men depart from evil" (Prov. xvi. 6). "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name." "The condition of Israel at this time necessarily threw those that regarded the honour of the name of God outside." Those, who with the Psalmist could say—"How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even Thine altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King,



and my God. . . . For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness"—could have no fellowship with that cold heartless service which was around them. "Who is there among you that would shut the doors for nought?" and how true is all this in our own day! How much of the religion around us would fall to the ground, were it not upheld in the same way.

"Doth Job fear God for nought?" is Satan's taunt. This is not the case with them that love God. There is something truly lamentable in the condition of Israel. How must those who loved and honoured their God, have mourned to see his table rendered contemptible! What special regard had ever been paid to the sacrifices which God had required—the firstlings of the flock—the lamb without blemish. Even Saul attempted to justify his sin, when he said, "The people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord thy God;" but now the torn, the lame, and the sick were offered unto the Lord. Our hearts shrink from the thought that God's name should be thus dishonoured; and yet how much this resembles the evil of our own day, too. Where do we find the full appreciation of the character of our God? The divine holiness of His name, that perfect righteousness, which could rest satisfied in no offering—could accept no ransom—but the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. The heart that is true to God will be sensitive to all that would dishonour His holy and ever-blessed name—alive to aught that would lower the dignity of the person and work of the Lord Jesus: every thing that is dear to the Lord is dear to him;—that which glorifies Christ his heart unites in, in the spirit of the apostle—"Whom having not seen we love." There are evils so gross, under the name of Christ, that even the world can expose them and war against them. This is a day of strife—system against system; but, amidst it all, how little tenderness is shewn as to what is well-pleasing to God. The priests of old were alone entitled to bear the ark of God. Broken hearts healed by divine grace,

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through the precious name of Jesus, and in-dwelt by the Spirit of the living God, are they alone that can appreciate what is acceptable to God. When gross corruptions, abominable cruelties, and idolatries were prevalent, as in the days of Ahab and Jezebel, the rough hand and stout heart of Jehu were used of God. But the place of testimony required tender hearts, hearts in communion with God, when Malachi prophesied. Right thoughts of God will regulate His worship; communion with God gives an elevation to those who realise it; walking with God will keep us out of the world's religion. Nothing else will. The Lord keep His children—those whose hearts have been brought out to bear peculiar testimony for Him—and strengthen us to hold on.

May we remember those words, "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." We live in a day when self-complacency in evil, is as strikingly manifest as at this period of Israel's history. There seems little or no conscience towards God left; men struggle with evils, but not as those who sought, in the fear of God, to please Him, but as those who have their own objects to obtain, their own systems to uphold. "Jealousy for God's honour, and for this alone, is true testimony in an evil day;" and where the Spirit of God leads on the testimony, it will take its character according to the state of things against which it is borne. The comfort of those who feared the Lord was, that they were owned, fully owned in their service by God; and that when the day of reckoning came on that which they had left, the word of the Lord to them was, "they shall be mine in that day when I make up my jewels." "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall."

M.

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"**THEN** they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not."—Malachi iii. 16–18.

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

## BELSHAZZAR.

Daniel, Chap. v.

It is no uncommon weakness in the child of God, that the non-reception of the truth by others leads him to question it. Aroused to the apprehension of the coming of the Lord, he is chilled by the torpor and indifference of those about him. This sensibility to external impression may arise, because walking too little in the power of individual communion. The Spirit's witness through the word is the fullest persuasion; and we depart from His guidance when the heart asks for collateral testimony. But the word of God has obvious teaching in this respect. "All scripture is given by inspiration." The antediluvian world was heedless of the preaching of Noah. "They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all." So in Sodom, when Lot went out and spake unto his sons-in-law, which married his daughters, and said, "Up! get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law" (Gen. xix. 14). Indifference to the testimony of God, and the warnings of His word, betokens the proximity of judgment. We who believe in the speedy advent of our Lord, will do well to take heed that nothing from without, or even from within, distract the attention from the solemn cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" The warning brought many into active service, and drew them outside the camp, bearing the reproach. The word reached their consciences. They sought to be prepared. But fellowship has its snares as well as its blessings. Much of joy, and no little of danger. Individual energy may give rise to corporate fellowship; but the latter may decline into individual apathy. Association may deaden, as well as revive. The position which God gave to many of His people in

our day, was taken when escaping from a chaos of confusion. They had light, and a measure of faith, and this insured a blessing. Sympathy of soul with others about the Lord (unless the eye is kept single), may degenerate into sympathy with one another, and unity occupy the soul instead of the object of union; and thus individuality be crushed for a season—conscience seared, and the torpor of others, affect ourselves. “But the word of God is quick and powerful.” Blessed that it is so!

It is a solemn narrative which is brought before us in the judgment of Belshazzar. A tragic drama in human history! Portraying in vivid colours the careless world on the brink of ruin. Ages have rolled on in unbroken succession, striking events have occurred in the annals of mankind; but so concise a narrative of haughty pride, on the verge of destruction, is hardly paralleled.

Belshazzar had positive warning, and this was disregarded. “A more convenient season” (Acts xxiv. 25), is the plea of some; a pressure of engagements, the apology of others. Sudden destruction is the doom of procrastination. “Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed” (Prov. xiii. 13). The habit of good may be gradual in attainment, the habit of evil gradual in its development; unlooked-for results occur in both. “Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?” At one time, we may blush at the thought; at another be hardened for the act. “Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.”

The prophet Daniel brings home to the conscience of Belshazzar, that he had slighted reproof and scorned instruction. In verses 18 and 21, God’s dealings with Nebuchadnezzar are noticed, and the summary in verse 22, “And thou, his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this.” How effectually does this short notice unravel the history! How it recalled to remembrance the marvellous dealings of the God of Israel with his predecessor on the throne, in the person of Nebuchadnezzar! Surely the chart of his life was retraversed in that moment of agony. How quickened his memory! How vivid

the past! The mysterious ways of Jehovah! His singular power! His arm of protection thrown over his captives in Babylon! In bondage, yet occupying a palace! Hated and despised, yet respected and powerful! Mixed up with the nation, yet dwelling alone! The seed of the patriarchs, expelled their inheritance, because they had broken God's covenant, yet preserved and exalted because of God's promise!

Gorgeous splendour surrounded the youth of Belshazzar. The Chaldean empire, with Babylon for its capital, had just reached the zenith of its glory. A succession of conquests, under renowned leaders, and the permission of God in His providence, had brought the then known world, to the feet of the dynasty of Babylon. The head of gold was significant of this. Doubtless the education of Belshazzar had regard to his position and destiny. Near the root of this greatness, events were sufficiently green in man's memory to rouse emulation. A stirring time gives birth to active energies. The symbols of empire and trophies of victory had not faded with age. Power was consolidated; and the struggle to obtain it, unforgotten as yet, and remembered to give joy, amid the *security* which success had accomplished. The empire was won, and won for Belshazzar.

Imagination has no place in the records of Scripture. The facts are so full they occupy space in the heart of a man, and colouring them is only to crowd in what is needless. Yet the youth of Belshazzar, and his mind in his youth, would not lack culture. Chaldean historians would bring before him the records of his race, and their contests with Israel. Stern battles had been fought, victories won, and defeats sustained. Sudden panic in the moment of triumph! A summons to halt, in the same breath with the charge to advance! Mysterious power destroying whole hosts in a night! This and far more, the prince would hear in his boyhood, and Eastern colouring would give a charm to the narrative. Then, there was the cleansing of Naaman the leper, the siege of the prophet in Dothan, the defeat of Sennacherib, and the midnight alarm of the Syrian camp in the days of Ahab. Men can afford to amplify danger, when they

have succeeded in overcoming it, and gather fresh reasons for triumph in the resolute resistance and determined valour, they had finally subdued. But more to the purpose in the life of Belshazzar is recorded in the chapter before us.

The children of Israel, of the blood royal of her kings, were inmates of the palace of Nebuchadnezzar. Strange wisdom was theirs. To tell of the past is human; to foretell the future, divine. The Chaldean sages were baffled; the youth of Israel triumphed. The dream of Nebuchadnezzar had departed from him (chapter ii.)—the impression remained. Yet who could bring it fresh to his memory? The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said—“There is not a man upon earth that can shew the king’s matter” (verse 10); but God revealed it to the seed of His chosen (verse 19). Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night-vision (verse 46). And “the king Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and worshipped Daniel”; and “the king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a Revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret” (verses 48 and 49). Surely Daniel found that “in God’s favour was life, and His loving-kindness better than life.” The captives were lords in the king’s household.

The 3rd chapter of Daniel records the triumph of Israel over the image of gold which Nebuchadnezzar the king set up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. The furnace was prepared for the destruction of the witnesses of Jehovah. Yet the guards, who essayed to cast them bound into the fire, were consumed by the heat of the flames without; Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, were uninjured within. These marvels would have their influence on the mind of Belshazzar: the conscience of youth is tender, and easily impressed. But the prophet’s voice in the hour of his judgments revealed his awful impenitence—“And thou, his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this”!

But more striking still was the humiliation of Nebuchadnezzar the king. Surrounded by greatness, untaught by his dreams, uninstructed at the furnace, unhumiliated

by all, he boasted in his glory, as if he alone had achieved it, and magnified his possessions, as though he were sole architect of his fame. Chap. v. 29—"At the end of twelve months Nebuchadnezzar walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" "While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee" (verses 32 and 33). Verse 34—"And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation." Thus God wrought on the mind of the first representative of Gentile power. The head of gold was taught to tread softly in the position of empire. In himself both the moral and the precept. It might be when his hair had grown grey he instructed Belshazzar. How marvellous the lesson—not less so the instructor. The might of Jehovah had given him dominion, and when seated in dignity he had neglected to own Him. The power of God had visited him in chastisement; yet, marvellous loving-kindness, it was not to crush him. He had lifted himself against God, and assumed His prerogative. God condescended to chasten, and then to restore; He bruised, that He might heal; He suffered him to become as a beast, that (humbled and lowly) he might henceforth remember he was but of dust. And his understanding returned, and he gave God thanks, and blessed the King of kings and Lord of lords. And Belshazzar, his successor, was instructed in this; but, alas! in the words of Daniel, "he did not humble his heart, though he knew all this."

There are gradations in evil. But Scripture is silent on the career of Belshazzar, until the curtain is withdrawn in the chapter before us. He had given reins to his lusts. Impatient of restraint, like an impetuous steed, he took the bit in his mouth, and disdaining

admonition, rushed on in the frenzy of pride. He would be served with the vessels which were consecrated to the worship of Jehovah. In the folly of his heart he would be as God. But the moment of triumph was the hour of judgment. "Did any ever harden themselves against God and prosper."

"Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof. Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished" (Dan. v. 1—9).

Solemn moment! anxious expectancy absorbed the mind of the king—the mysterious hand and mystic writing disturbed his revels. The music was still—the guests breathless—fear upon all. Their impious effrontery was awed by the finger of God. The inebriate became sober, the dread of judgment was stronger than the fumes of the wine. The careless were attentive, the jocund still, and the quiet of the grave reigned in the chamber of revelry. The hand-writing upon the wall accomplished this. The rumour spreads (verses 10, 11, 12): "Now the queen by reason of the words of the king and his lords came into the banquet-house: and the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever." That voice sounds strangely on the ears of the monarch. She had hurried



to the scene of festivity, forgetful of all but the terror of him, whose steps she had guarded in infancy, and now saw trembling, though crowned with a diadem. Who should shed light on the characters, who should explain their purport? "Then was Daniel brought in before the king." The man of God who had given the warnings, which had passed unheeded, was now called in to read the sentence of judgment on the eve of execution. Large gifts were promised as if in remembrance that he had been neglected. The dignity of office was proffered, royal power proposed. Strange inconsistency of man. To give like a king in the hour of terror, helpless to all that he needed! (verses 13 to 24).

"And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it. TEKEL; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians. Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain."

"How was he brought into desolation as in a moment" (Ps. lxxiii. 19). How different the end of the believer! "Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel and afterwards receive me to glory" (v. 23). There is intimate connection between the book of Daniel and the Revelation of St. John. Evil is developed in both, and judgment follows; much of the one is matter of history now, much in both remains for fulfilment. As has been remarked by another, the first six chapters of Daniel give us power in the hands of the Gentiles, and their conduct in possession of it. In the book of Revelation we have the fact, that the Gospel amongst the Gentiles would end in utter corruption, and the testimony of our Lord to the judgment of the nations, and the call of his people to be separate would be disregarded, and men seek to improve it, and find a home in it. Luke xix. 12, 13, 14.—"A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for

himself a kingdom, and to return." The faithfulness of his servants in his absence depended upon the assurance of his return; the character also of their service upon their estimate of his character. In Mark ii. 18. the question was asked of our Lord, "Why do the disciples of John and the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days." The return of the Lord was to be the hope of the church. The measure of faithfulness in testimony depended upon the brightness of this hope: His love brought him into the world, where he was set at nought and crucified. His people are given him out of the world, left here to witness of the grace which was ready to pardon the vilest sinner, but also of certain judgment on the impenitent. "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. i. 7 and 8).

The coming of the Lord will surprise the world, as the flood did its inhabitants in the days of Noah, or the destruction of Sodom in the days of Lot. It will be as unlooked for as the change from the banquet in the palace of Babylon to the midnight slaughter of Belshazzar, and the transfer of the kingdom to Darius the Mede. And this judgment will take place when the iniquity is at its height. Repeated testimonies superciliously disregarded. The cry "Behold He cometh!" the subject of merriment! "There shall come scoffers in the last days, walking after their own lusts and saying, Where is the promise of His coming?" (2 Pet. iii. 3). And Jude declares, "There shall be mockers in the last time" (ver. 18). Let not then the non-reception of the truth by others lead us to doubt it, but the rather, seeing Scripture speaks of the coming of Christ surprising a careless professing people and a guilty world, "Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thess. v. 6).

W.

## THE MIDNIGHT CRY.

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“Behold the Bridegroom cometh”!—Matt. xxv.

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“He comes! He comes! The Bridegroom comes!”  
 The “Morning Star” appears;  
 The “cloudless morning” sweetly dawns,  
 Saints quit this vale of tears!  
 Your absent Lord no longer mourn;  
 Reproach no longer bear;  
 “He comes! He comes!” Rise, happy saints,  
 To meet Him in the air!

“He comes! He comes! The Bridegroom comes!”  
 The Church is now complete;  
 Her Lord beholds her clean and fair,  
 A partner for Him, meet.

“He comes!” His purchased bride to claim;  
 Her mansion is prepared;

“He comes! He comes!” rise, ready saints,  
 To meet your ready [or waiting] Lord!

“He comes! He comes! The Bridegroom comes!”  
 He shouts, for great his joy;  
 As yet, unseen by mortal flesh,  
 He tarries in the sky.  
 The marriage o’er, to earth he’ll come,  
 No longer hid from men:  
 He’ll come! He’ll come! *With* all His saints  
 As “Son of David” then!

“He comes! He comes!” The “Son of Man,”  
 The “Second Adam,” now  
 The “King of kings,” the “Lord of lords,”  
 All knees before him bow.

“He comes!” His Israel in the Land  
 Of promise to install;

“He comes! He comes!” to clear away  
 The ruins of the fall!

“He comes! He comes!” The “Lion” now!  
 Alas! rejecting world!  
 He’ll meet your rebel standard raised,  
 Defiantly unfurl’d!  
 But nought shall stand before Him, then  
 In terror you will cry,

“He comes! He comes! Alas! Alas!  
 Where from Him can we fly?”

“He comes! He comes! The Bridegroom comes!”  
 O sinners hear the sound!  
 Accept Him *now*, if you among  
 His chosen would be found!  
 Still mercy’s offer’d—costless—free—  
 No longer turn away,

“He comes! He comes!” O linger not—  
 Come “while ’tis call’d to-day!”

A. M.

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

## JOSHUA.

WE have gone through, by the goodness of God, the five books of Moses. They have set before us, on the one side, the great principles on which the relations of man with God and of God with man are founded, and on the other, the deliverance of a people set apart for Himself, and the different conditions in which they were placed: whether under grace, under law, or under God's government established over them by the special mediation of Moses.

We have had occasion in them to examine the history of this people in the wilderness; and the pattern presented by the tabernacle, of things to be afterwards revealed; sacrifices and priesthood, means of relationship with God granted to sinners, wherein is indeed wanting the image of our perfect liberty to approach God, the veil not being then rent, but wherein the shadow of heavenly things is placed before our eyes with most interesting detail;—finally, we have seen that God, having, at the end of the journey, in the wilderness, pronounced the definitive justification of His people, and caused His blessing to rest upon them in spite of the efforts of their enemies, declares under what conditions the people should retain possession of the land, and enjoy His blessing in it; and what would be the consequences of disobedience; revealing at the same time His purposes with respect to this people, purposes which He would accomplish for His own glory. This brings us to the taking possession of the land of promise by the people under the guidance of Joshua.

This book is full of interest and instruction, as setting before us in type the conflicts of the inheritors of heaven with spiritual wickednesses in heavenly places. If the church is blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, they were temporal blessings in earthly places which Israel was to enjoy. It is easy to understand, that if we may rightly use the name of Canaan as a figurative

power of God, who had blessed them, declare that they will serve the Lord alone. They are thus placed under responsibility; and undertake to obey, as the condition of their possessing the land and enjoying the fruit of God's promise. They are left there, it is true, in peaceable possession of it all, but under the condition of obedience, after having already allowed those, who should have been utterly destroyed, to remain in the land; and when, from the outset, they had not at all realised that which God had given them. What a picture of the Church ever since the days of the Apostles!

There is yet one remark to be made. When Christ shall return in glory we shall inherit all things, Satan being bound. Now, the Church ought to realise, by the Holy Ghost, the power of this glory. But there are things, properly called heavenly, which are ours, as being our dwelling-place, our standing, our calling; there are others which are subjected to us, and which are a sphere for the exercise of the power that we possess. Thus the limits of Israel's abode were less extensive than those of the territory to which they had a right. Jordan was the boundary of their abode, the Euphrates that of their possession. The heavenly things are ours; but the manifestation of the power of Christ over creation, and the deliverance of this creation, is granted to us. It will be delivered when Christ Himself shall exercise this power.

Thus the "powers of the world to come"<sup>e</sup> were deliverances from the yoke of the enemy. These were not things proper to us; nevertheless, they were ours.

<sup>e</sup> So called, I doubt not, because they were samples of that power which will entirely subdue the enemy when Christ shall appear.

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HEBREWS xi. 29 – 32.

By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets.

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

## DAVID SERVING HIS GENERATION.

“For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep.” Acts xiii. 36.

It is truly wonderful to mark the controlling power of God over agents the most unconscious and unwilling, so as to render them subservient to the effectuating His own counsel; “howbeit in his heart he thinketh not so.” But it is equally important to see, when God has, from time to time, raised up special instruments for the work He has to be done, such instruments have ever manifested that both the wisdom and power they have is derived from God. So long as they have acted in their proper sphere they have succeeded; because they have acted in faith. “The Lord of Hosts is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.” Such considerations give great present calmness to the believer: God has given to us “the spirit of a sound mind.” We know that God has a counsel, and it shall stand, although he bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought; we need not feel ourselves as though God could not carry out his own counsel without our plans or assistance. “Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?” In the rich grace wherein God has abounded toward us in redemption, he has “abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence.” He has left no contingency to be provided for by the wisdom and prudence of his saints: their power of serving him is faith. Hence, says the Apostle, whom his adversaries would charge with acting from policy, “Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have

had our conversation in the world." But it is one of the results of the fall that man affects creative power, and rejoices in the works of his hands; but that which he makes is like himself, even without continuance. He may strive to perpetuate that which he vainly conceives he has originated; but God knows the thoughts of man that they are but vain. That only can stand which God both originates and perpetuates. On this point, as well as others touching the pretensions of man, God will come to an issue with man. To those who know redemption, the issue has been already joined, and the result is, that no flesh can glory in His presence; but he that glorieth can only glory in the Lord: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." He alone can "bear the glory," who is able to say, "I am the first and the last," "the Alpha and the Omega," "the beginning and the end." The essential glory of His person is the security for effectuating His work. All real subordinate ministry flows directly from Him. He has ascended up on high, and "he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers," and he still gives them, according to his own sovereign will. He has not left the ministry for the building up of his body to depend upon succession, as the Aaronic priesthood; or on the schools of philosophy, as in ancient times; or on universities or academies, as in our day; or on popular choice, as in the case of the seven deacons recorded in the Acts; but directly on Himself. In giving such gifts of ministry he has not given to them the responsibility of devising means to perpetuate his work: He works in them, and "with them;" and they only work healthfully as they hang upon Him, and fill up that place in the body which he has assigned to them for its present service. Hence in their ministerial capacity, as well as their capacity as Christians, they alone "stand by faith."

The analogy afforded by the history of Israel is very striking. After the death of Joshua, God was pleased to act by the extraordinary ministry of Judges for four hundred years. "Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that

*David serving his Generation.*

spoiled them; and yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them; they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers had walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord, but they did not so. And when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for it repented the Lord because of their groanings, by reason of them that oppressed them, and vexed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way." When the men of Israel would have perpetuated their blessing after their own thoughts, in the case of Gideon, one of their judges, Gideon, refused their offer. "Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you." Gideon had fulfilled his mission, and served his generation. God had wrought by Gideon to bring Israel to depend on Himself, and Gideon sought to answer the same end. On the other hand, the prominent failure of Samuel, otherwise so remarkably blameless, was the attempt to perpetuate his own mission in his sons: "And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel....And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment." This led to the people's desire for a king: "Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." Samuel may have seen more distinctly than Gideon that such a request was the rejection of Jehovah himself as their king; yet he had vainly thought to perpetuate good government through his sons, whom God had not called to that ministry.

Among many instructions afforded us in God answer-



ing the desire of the people for a king, in giving them Saul, and then removing him, according to the word of the Prophet: "I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath"—the important truth, that perpetuation of blessing rests alone with God, is sufficiently apparent. So that even when God himself "raised up unto them David to be their king, to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, which shall fulfil all my will," the highest honour which God put upon David was to be a type of his own seed, in whom alone blessing can possibly be perpetuated—"Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever." It is in this order that the Holy Ghost himself leads our thoughts by the apostle (Acts xiii.), abruptly turning from David to David's seed: "Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus." But David served his own generation, and in doing so did that which he sought to do in another way, even serve posterity. This is an important principle, that in serving our own generation, doing our appointed service in God's way, and in His time, we do really secure the very thing which we attempt to secure by providing for the future by means of our own devising. In trying to act for posterity we retrograde, and oppose a barrier to others carrying on the work which God may have assigned to us to commence. In this manner it would seem that the Reformation was hindered; the reformers were anxious to secure that precious truth which God, through them, had revived. In doing this they hindered their own progress, and got off the ground of faith. They succeeded in establishing that which they allowed to be imperfect and incomplete; and by this Establishment have hindered to this day the progress of others, because their established imperfection has become the standard to their posterity. Most blessedly did David serve his generation, when the Lord took him as he said, "From the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: and I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great

*David serving his Generation.*

name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth." It was the time of David's "trouble," but it was also the time of his real greatness, and of his most important service to his generation: David then magnified the Lord, and the Lord magnified David in the sight of all Israel. Walking before the Lord, David could afford to appear vile in the eyes of Michal, and of all who despised him. No two things are morally more opposite, than the Lord making an individual great, and the same person whom the Lord has magnified acting the great man himself. Here truly is found the need of "hind's feet" to tread on our high places. The Lord magnified Moses by his promise, "Certainly I will be with thee." "And the man Moses became very great in the land of Egypt, and in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people." The Lord would not allow any insult to be put on his chosen servant, but promptly resented it. Once only did this chosen servant magnify himself, and it is written for our instruction: "And Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice.....And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them."

David had most blessedly served his generation, "when the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies." At this time, "when the king sat in his house," the thought came into his heart that it was not suitable for the ark of the Lord to dwell in curtains, whilst he was dwelling in a house of cedar. David knew well the value of the presence of the Lord, and he sought to secure it in a way which seemed right in his own eyes, and which commended itself also to the judgment of Nathan the prophet. But "who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him." The man after God's own heart, and an inspired prophet, are

alike destitute of true counsel when not walking by faith under the immediate guidance of the Spirit of Truth. The thought of David was a pious thought, it was the expression of that desire of the renewed heart for rest, without conflict, in the immediate presence of God. "Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart, notwithstanding thou shalt not build the house." Zeal without knowledge, and piety apart from actual dependence on God, have proved alike dangerous to the truth of God: it has pleased God to shew that He of his own grace delights to "provide some better thing for us," than we should choose for ourselves. Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration, out of a true heart, said, "It is good for us to be here"; but what better thoughts had the Lord for Peter, that, instead of being under the shelter of the glory, as he then stood, he should be actually in the glory with Jesus, where he had seen Moses and Elias. Had David been allowed to act under the impulse of his own heart, and to build the house which his son built, what a loser had David been: every quickened soul is almost unconsciously drawn to David, and as unconsciously little interested in Solomon. David "in his troubles" finds truer sympathy in our hearts than Solomon in "all his glory." Had David, according to his desire, acted for another generation, instead of serving God in his own, we are all able to see what he would have lost. Nathan now instructed in the mind of the Lord, is sent to David with the message of the Lord. The first great truth announced is, that the will, even of the saint, is not to take the lead in the things of God; if permitted, the result would be "will-worship," one of the most fearful evils in the Church of God. It is our part to "prove what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God." So long as God is pleased to "walk in a tent, and in a tabernacle," it is not for any one to build him a house. Solomon, according to the promise of God to David, his father, did build a house for the Lord; the house was filled with the glory of the Lord, and called by his name; but in due course it becomes the subject of prophetic

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denunciation (Jer. vii. 11—14): its history, with brief gleams of relief, is the history of Israel's abomination, till at last the Lord himself suddenly comes to His temple and finds it a den of thieves, and utterly repudiates it; it is no longer a house which he could own as his, "Behold *your* house is left unto you desolate."

The next thing announced by Nathan was the determinate counsel of the Lord, in His own time and way, to give settled rest to his people Israel, according to and far beyond their heart's desire: "Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more." This is the happy theme of many a prophecy, the cheering close to many a heavy burden, "Jehovah-shammah" (Ezek. xlvi. 35. Jer. iii. 16—18. Obad. 21. Luke i. 32, 33).

But the most blessed part of the announcement still remains to be noticed: "Also the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee an house." David would have been content to have built a house for the Lord, but the Lord's thoughts were higher, even for the Lord to build a house for David. This was the word of recovery to David's soul. It brought him before the Lord. He reviews all the gracious dealings of the Lord with him, and becomes suitably impressed with a sense of his own insignificance, "Who am I, O Lord God?" Such was not the thought in David's mind when he sat in his own house, he then looked from himself, but now from the Lord to himself. It is this which ever checks the thought of the consequence of our own service, as well as the attempt of doing that which the Lord has not called us to do: "By the grace of God I am what I am; I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." It is equally a sin to run without being sent, and not to come to the help of the Lord against the mighty when he calls. The Lord can do without us, but we cannot do without him: if he be pleased to use us, sufficient is the honour of being the servants of such a master, but we only really serve him as we do the work of our

own generation; the moment we cease to serve by faith, we regard the sphere of service as our own, forgetting that the husbandry and building on which we are occupied is not ours, but belongs to Him whom we serve. Needful is it also in contemplating any service, to retrace the way the Lord has led us "hitherto." But all is "small" now in David's estimation compared with the promise of the Lord of making him a house: David's work of making a house for the Lord is now superseded by the happier thought of God making him a house. If we would happily and healthfully serve our generation, it must be by giving to the Lord his due pre-eminence in service as well as in every thing else: "I am among you as he that serveth"; and he still serves at the right hand of God, making intercession for us.

"And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God, but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?" The manner of man is to rejoice in the work of his hands: he seeks to achieve something great to make himself a name. His work will often survive him; but in process of time it falls to decay, to add to the monuments of the vanity of man by the very means he seeks to secure his greatness. But what God does he does "for ever." David served his generation and fell asleep, but the promise of God to David, when he was disappointing his desire to build a house for the Lord, became the sustainment of faith throughout Israel's dreary history, and will be again, when faith shall be revived in Israel. The multitude looked to the temple; faith in the godly remnant regarded the promise to David. God brought judgment on Israel for their confidence in the house, but he showed mercy for David's sake. David's disappointment has, in the result, proved to be his service to his posterity. Is the house of David threatened with extermination by the confederacy of Israel and Syria in the days of king Ahaz: "It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass." God had made David a house, and this confederacy shall only tend to prove its stability: "Hear ye now, O house of David, is it a small thing for you

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to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," David's son and David's Lord. Is Hezekiah sorely beset by the armies of the blasphemous king of Assyria; the cry of Hezekiah to the Lord is answered in mercy, "For I will defend this city to save it for my own sake, and for my servant David's sake." It had not been said in vain, "Also the Lord saith, I will make thee an house." Do the people go into captivity and emerge from it only to be "servants" in their own land unto the kings whom the Lord had set over them because of their sins; how cheering must have been the angelic announcement, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of his father David." What a meaning in the words, "I will make thee an house!" "Is not this the Son of David?" and, "O Son of David have mercy on us!" were the expressions of faith during our Lord's own personal ministry. And if either ourselves or Israel look for security of blessing, we are led back to David's disappointment in his service to God (Acts xiii. 32—34). And David still lives in our memories in Him who, in his closing words of the scripture of truth, announces the fulfilment of all the ancient promises to Israel in announcing himself, "I am the root and the off-spring of David."

But how entirely did David's disappointment in his contemplated service turn to the stability of his own soul in the sure grace and faithfulness of God, "Solomon built him an house," and after accomplishing the "magnificent" work, he leaves, as it were, his last words for our instruction: "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." "What hath a man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart wherein he hath laboured under the sun?" But how different the last words of David, the lesson he teaches is not only happier but deeper: "Although my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow." These

are last words indeed, and such will ever be the train of thought of those who serve their generation. There will be no rejoicing in any result of their own service, for the only satisfying result will be, that which the Lord himself will introduce: our expectations may be disappointed, but there is no disappointment to him whose expectation is from the Lord. If a present palpable result be the object we propose to ourselves, we shall certainly be disappointed; but if it be the honour of Christ, and there be no present result answering the desire of our heart, whilst deeply humbled under the sense of our own imperfection, we may take comfort from the language of the only perfect servant, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God."

The apostle Paul served his generation, but he could find no rest in the work of his hands. He had laboured more abundantly than all others, yet what profit had he of all his labour under the sun, if he had regarded merely the result. "A great house" had indeed been reared, but it needed purification from within: "All in Asia had turned away from him." But there is no such querulous thought as that which escaped the prophet before him, "I only am left." His soul rises with the emergency: "Be not thou ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of me his prisoner." "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure," however tottering the superstructure, the result of his arduous labours, might appear in his own eyes and the eyes of others: his labour was not in vain in the Lord. His house, if Paul regarded the result of his own service, might not be so with God, but the foundation was sure, and it was all his salvation, and all his desire. He was not discouraged by the result, but gives a solemn charge to Timothy, "to preach the word," "to do the work of an evangelist, to make full proof of his ministry," for he had nearly closed his service to his generation. "*For* I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid

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up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge will give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing." Had the "great house" been that which was according to the desire of the heart of the apostle, he might rightfully have rejoiced in the result of his service: but in the wisdom of God it was not so, and the apostle, in serving his own generation, and in finishing his course, has served future generations, even to our own day. Error and evil of every kind were allowed to show themselves in the Church in the days of the Apostles, and the correction of these errors and evils by their inspired writings, supply to us even the place of themselves. Whilst we look to Paul's labours, and praise God for the grace given to him, we look to his writings for the confutation of the errors of our own day, which the apostle met in serving his generation. True it is that men, and even Christians look at the "great house," and seek either to support it by their own wisdom, or, turning from it in disgust as a failure, strike out a fresh path for themselves to produce something better. It is thus that many are turned away from the truth to infidelity: but faith regardeth that which faileth not, "the foundation of the Lord," and finds the Scriptures more wonderful and more profitable as corruption deepens.

How shall we then serve our generation? This question must be answered by another. Does it please God to walk still in curtains, or to fix his presence in any special place, so that his people may "dwell in a place of their own and move no more"? Does the Holy Ghost still assert his sovereignty with respect to the servants whom he will use "for the work whereunto he calls them"? (Acts xiii.) Does he still appoint the sphere of their labour, as when he "forbad them to preach in Asia"? Does He still show the special objects of his grace as when He opened the heart of Lydia? If it be so, then establishment is not his order, and we shall not be serving our generation by seeking it. Such a thought would take the care and keeping of the Church out of



the hands of its Head, and interfere with the prerogative grace of the Holy Ghost.

Union is strength; men find it to be so, and it is characteristic of our age to seek to effect every purpose by combination.<sup>a</sup> Shall we serve our generation by seeking Christian combination? The Word of God is very pointed here: not only does it say, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord;" but "For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me, that I should *not walk in the way of this people*, saying, Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread, and He shall be for a sanctuary." To seek even Christian combination would not be to sanctify Jesus, "Jehovah-sabaoth" in our hearts, and, therefore, would not be to serve our generation.

Let it be fully granted that the unity of the body is a truth, as blessed as it is practical, and if carried out would be the great moral demonstration of Christ's mission (John xvii); yet it is not *the* truth, and is only valuable as it is subservient to the truth. The unity of the body is not a combination of Christians, such combination neither produces nor promotes it. It is an actual reality resulting from the fact of the redemption of the Church by the finished work of Christ, and by the coming down of the Holy Ghost in consequence of that finished work. To promote this unity practically, can only be a suitable object of service when the unity itself is regarded as a result of a higher object. The Church is not the object proposed to our faith, but Christ himself. We are not exhorted to hold fast the Church, but to hold fast the Head who holds fast the Church. If we see the result of seeking the unity of the Church to the disregard of the honour and glory of Christ, in the wide-spread abomination of popery, have

<sup>a</sup> How far the influence of this principle has tended to the dearth of great public men in our day might, morally and socially, be an interesting enigma; that it tends to destroy real independence of mind is sufficiently obvious.

we judged the principle in ourselves in the readiness of our hearts to maintain a combination of Christians at the expense of Christ's honour and glory. Unity is, indeed, both good and pleasant; but it is the result of the comeliness which Christ has set upon us; and we must not trust to "our own beauty," but "to Him who has beautified us, who is altogether lovely." To endeavour to keep "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" is the common responsibility of all Christians; but it is much easier to keep the rules of any Christian association than the unity of the Spirit. This last cannot be effected without holding fast the Head, and it is the only unity which does not interfere with individual faith and conscience: on the contrary, it is really promoted by both being kept in exercise. The essence of all confederacies is, that they hinder the exercise of faith and conscience towards God, and shelter self-will; for if the confederacy be honoured, all else is disregarded. If we seek *as our object* to promote unity, we shall not serve our generation; but if we seek Christ's honour first and singly, we shall serve our generation, and secure the blessings which flow immediately from Him.

Human institutions are soon out-grown by the progress of society, and constantly need remodeling: but there is no such pliancy in the truth of God, and that because it is *the* truth. When the soul is once awakened to the recognition of the truth of God, it finds in *the* truth the standard to measure the declension of Christians and the alone power of recovery, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." In the too plainly verified prophetic declarations of the evil of the last days, we find the only remedy propounded by the Apostles to be recurrence to first principles. They are first and last, because embodied in Him who is "the first and the last." When the Apostle Peter portrays the fearful corruption arising from damnable heresies privily brought in "by reason of whom *the way of truth* shall be evil spoken of"; there is no remedy but in the Lord himself: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." If "scoffers"

arise it would be dangerous to answer the fool according to his folly; but how safe in such a time to “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Thus that which would apparently alarm the soul only tends to its establishment in the sure grace of God: “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”

Jude speaks of very evil days, denial of the Lordship of Jesus, connected with the disowning of all constituted authority, and the “turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness.” The power of safety and of recovery is found in earnest contention for the faith once delivered to the Saints, and in building up ourselves on our most holy faith. There can be no enlargement of our creed to meet the progress of the human mind, no human aids to attain a sanctity which results from faith alone, “our most holy faith.”

As ministers of Christ we shall best serve our generation by “preaching the word.” The Gospel survives, in its blessed simplicity, all the revolutions of empires, and all the errors and controversies of Christians, and still asserts its majesty as the only power which can effectually meet the need of man. It sternly rejects the proffered aid of human advancement. The spirit of the age would “heap teachers to itself according to its own lusts,” and seek to give the tone to the Gospel, instead of receiving its impression from it. The Second Epistle of Paul to Timothy looks forward to the full-blown evil of the last perilous days. He describes his Apostleship accordingly: “Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, *according to the promise of eternal life* which is in Christ Jesus.” Eternal life was no where else to be found. In the earlier days of his ministry he had made this profession to the Christians at Rome: “I am not *ashamed* of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth”; and now that he is a prisoner at Rome for

the Gospel's sake, as if to appearance his labour had been in vain, he writes to Timothy: "Be not thou therefore *ashamed* of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." The gospel which was the power of God unto salvation to every one that believed in the name of Jesus, brought with it also to those who believed the power to endure. Some, indeed, thought its cause hopeless, others content to know their own personal security, shrunk from the open confession of Christ, because of the cross it involved, and turned their backs on the zealous Apostle of the Gentiles as if his mission had failed: not so Onesiphorus. Of him says the Apostle, "he was not ashamed of my chain, but when he was in Rome he sought me out diligently and found me." If men think the gospel antiquated, and not adapted to the progress of civilisation, ministers of Christ will serve their generation by not being ashamed of the testimony of the Lord. Man has need of the gospel as an instrument for his own advancement; and by this means it has lost its real character, and just in proportion as it has by this abuse elevated the world, it has degraded the church. But the gospel, as the instrument of God, is his "power unto salvation": it is "the word of truth;" it has to do with realities. It maintains the unsundered holiness of God, and regards man in his truthful position of sin and helplessness; and then, through the proclamation of the cross, it adjusts the claims of God, and relieves the conscience of the sinner from the guilt of sin, and brings the sinner into peace and nearness with God. This is the truth. The shame may be greater now to "preach the word," because man has made such progress; and it is a strong temptation for ministers of Christ to meet the craving of the age for novelty, talent and learning; but God sets his way in direct contrast with the way of man—"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

The Apostle John speaks to believers generally as to the last days and many Antichrists, and we shall serve our generation by giving heed to his word: "Let that

therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning; if that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father: and this is the promise which he hath promised us, even eternal life." Christian progress essentially differs from the progress of the world, the leading of the Spirit of God from that of the spirit of the age. As the world runs its course, luxuries are turned into necessaries, new wants are created, and inventions multiplied to satisfy them. The spirit of the age so eminently utilitarian, turns science itself to the account of profit and comfort. It is truly said that you cannot arrest progress; success emboldens enterprise, and nothing seems to be withholden from the daring genius of man. What a contrast to this is Christian progress: "The father in Christ knows Him that is from the beginning." He centralises everything in one object, even in Christ. The Spirit of God glorifies Christ; and taking of his things and showing them to the soul of the believer satisfies him, "All my springs are in thee." The world leaves the established Christian to himself as one behind the age; but he is in reality before it, having his soul occupied, not with the result of human progress, but with the certain accomplishment of the divine counsel: "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world, and the world passeth away and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." The Christian will best serve his own generation by maintaining his own proper ground, and asserting the blessedness of the knowledge of Christ at the very moment when man is magnifying himself. It is well, indeed, to be able truthfully to say of Christ, He is "all my salvation"; but how blessed to add, He is "all my desire," and this too in the face of all appearances, "although he maketh not to grow."

PRESBUTES.

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PSALM XXXII. 8, 9.

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

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

## LOVE.

1 Corinthians xiii.

THE connexion in which *love* is introduced in the thirteenth chapter of Corinthians, must, I suppose, have struck most who study God's word. It bears the same impress of power and of suitability which ever characterises His word. May we, therefore, led by the Spirit, the inditer, dwell upon it for a little.

The cause of all the mischief in the Corinthian Church was a remarkable one—one which testifies surely of the great goodness of God. It was the abundant grace and goodness of God acting upon *unsubdued flesh*. The testimony of Christ was *confirmed* among them (i. 6): they were in every thing enriched by (or, perhaps, *in*, as it is *in* the fourth verse) Him, in all *utterance* and all *knowledge*. But though there was much gift, grace was not in the same proportion. The seed had been cast abroad richly, but the earth had not been deeply ploughed up; consequently, it much mixed its own productions with the gift of God. The testimony which had been brought among them was estimated by some external characteristic, rather than *as* the testimony of God, as with the happy Thessalonians (1 Thess. ii. 13). And consequently, one was for Paul, another for Apollos, and another for *Christ*, shewing that in a sectarian, independent spirit we may stand even *for Christ*, or apparently for him.

Their moral standing too, shewed that there was not much depth of earth. In chap. iv. "they were full, they were rich, they reigned as kings" without the more faithful saints; they found themselves comparatively at ease in the world, a state which rendered them an easy prey to a *doctrine* which, in chap. xv., assured them that there is no resurrection of the dead; a doctrine which could not so readily suit one who had to say, "I die

daily." Even when terrible evil came in, it did not disturb the light complacency of the flesh. Chap. v. "they were puffed up, and did not rather *mourn*, that he which had done the deed might be taken away from among them." The same lightness of work, too, made them bad judges about Christian liberty; for Christian liberty does not consider so much what we *may* do, as what will be for the glory of God, and the welfare of *the brethren*.

The same state of mind made them also but badly prepared for the use of the spiritual gifts which were so richly amongst them. Chap. xiv. 26. "every one of them had a psalm, had a doctrine, had a revelation," etc., a thing which he does not check, but regulates: therefore he says, "Let all things be done unto *edifying*." It is only in the Spirit that we can handle rightly the things of the Spirit.

It is, therefore, to meet this state of things that the Apostle introduces this digression in the midst of his discussion about gifts; for without it, gifts—I might say, even graces—would just split up the Church of God. He proposes it as the tempered mortar. "Though I speak," he says, "with the tongues of men, and of *angels*, and have not love, I am a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." It is that which gives *fulness* to the sound, like the High Priest's bells of old, the bells of the sanctuary. "And though I have prophecy, and know all mysteries, and all knowledge [a thing by the way which pretty clearly defines the gift of prophecy, so often mentioned in the New Testament], and though there be all *power*, too, so as to remove mountains;" yea, and even though apparent *grace* and *devotedness* comes in, so that we either crumble our property into bits (see Greek) to bestow it on the poor, or give even *our body* to be burned, and yet have not *love*, we are profited nothing. What a declaration at the hands of God, that nothing external—power, devotedness, whatsoever it be—is of value before God without that *love* which makes it of savour to Him, and of real refreshment to others. "Love," he says, "beareth long, and is kind. Love envieth not: love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up;

doth not behave itself unseemly [and this love teaches us our place, Ephesians v. 21]: seeketh not her own [and, therefore, of all things most of Christ, Philippians ii. 21]: is not easily provoked: thinketh no evil." It is remarkable that the *quieter* fruits of the Spirit indicate more of his *power*. Galatians v., "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Love is *holy* in its tastes and feelings, "It rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth *with* the truth," in kindredness of spirit; "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." How fully, then, does he let us into the real and noble nature of Love. It is the highest of all; those things which we are so apt to glory in, as setting *us* forth, tongues and prophecy, are only arguments of our imperfection. They are only to supply our mutual need, and are in us imperfect; "we know in part, and prophesy in part," until we obtain the perfect state of things. But when all need is satisfied, all imperfection is done away: love will still find its full element, as it will for ever have to do with the God of love.

I have dwelt upon this, because it may be particularly suitable to us in present circumstances. Contention against evil has been, I believe, the great thing to which God has called us latterly. This has broken through, in some measure, that false love or charity, which is, perhaps, the great sin of this professing age, and which is just a counterfeit of the true. That false charity lets anything become of God's truth, rather than speak out faithfully, and disturb the robber in his prey. But it is required of *stewards* that they be found faithful: a man may dispose as he will of his own property, but if he dispose, in the same ready way, of another's, we remind him, that he must be just before he is generous. And so the truth is God's property, of which we cannot dispose, save as He guides us by His spirit; and He would have us careful of the trust. We are all in this sense *stewards* of the mysteries of God.

Paul, we find in Galatians ii., approached his elder Jewish brethren with something of trembling, lest, through his own weakness, he, by any means, should



run, or had run, in vain. But when God's truth was really in question, he gave place by subjection not for an hour, but "withstood Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed."

As I have said, thus it has been, and very very much there is all around that will call to contend. Yet, meanwhile, let us seek to be careful, that, whilst contending against evil, we love fervently and cherish all that is, and all that are, of the truth. The Apostle John, after telling them in the fourth chapter of his first Epistle, not to believe every spirit, "but try the spirits," etc., then returns to his more pleasing, and still most incumbent, occupation; ver. 7. "Beloved, let us love one another: or love is of God." It is the "bond of perfectness," Paul tells us, in Colossians iii. 14, which throws its golden charm around all. We are so apt in securing one truth, to let go another kindred one. "Him that is *weak* in the faith receive ye," etc., does not conflict with "Beloved, follow not that which is evil" (3 John 11).

I add no further. To see these two things combined, steady faithfulness against evil, on the one hand, and yet frank, confiding, upright, and hearty love, where it is fairly warranted, surely this were happy for us. It would lead one to say, "The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are *ended*." Our Lord himself is coming; happy indeed to be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless!

G.

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 1 CORINTHIANS, XIII.

THOUGH I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

## THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

The moral history of the Seven Churches appears to me to be simple. It is another and most solemn testimony to man's failure under all circumstances. That which was called as the bride of Christ,<sup>a</sup> has become Babylon, mystery, not only a harlot herself, but the *mother* of harlots, and abominations of the earth. In the Seven Churches we get, I think, the rise of this awful "mystery."

Ephesus is the first and most solemn witness. Ephesus had been, if I may so speak, the metropolis of the Spirit; at Ephesus Paul "continued by the space of two years: so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks." Paul wrought special miracles. Satan was mightily confounded. "So mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed." The Ephesian Church, too, we find was highest in its character. Paul in addressing them, puts the Church at once in its true position, "Blest with all spiritual blessings *in heavenly places* in Christ Jesus." In everything, then, it is presented to us as highest. And so it is looked upon, I think, here. It is taken up, I judge, as a pre-eminently fair specimen of the whole Church; and it is found *failing* when tested by the *Son of Man*. He walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks with the long foot-robe, which, therefore, would meet with any defilement, if the place be unclean. He holds the seven stars. The seven stars teach them, I think, that they have a responsibility to maintain before God *in heaven*, even as the seven golden candlesticks owe a light *to earth*. The Lord knows their works, their labour: "they cannot bear them which are evil:" they had not yet come to that. A high tone of spiritual understanding was yet preserved: and oh! let saints mark this, how

<sup>a</sup> It must be understood that I speak here dispensationally, meaning that the Church, which is the Bride of Christ, has not *maintained* that character before the world, but rather from its apostasy has arisen what the Spirit designates as Babylon, in the Revelation. The peculiarity of the Church's responsibility is, that it has to maintain on earth the character which it really has before God in heaven (See 1 Cor. v. 7).

consistent these things may be with apostasy begun, in principle, before God.<sup>b</sup> They had *tried* even them which said they were *apostles*, and had found them liars. They had been told (Eph. iv.) of true apostles given by Christ to the Church, and they had spiritual understanding to detect these false ones. But then comes out the principle of all apostasy, "they had left their *first love*" The germ of the dead Sardis, the lukewarm and nauseous Laodicea, and the judged harlot, Babylon, was in this:— they had left their first love. That was all. But what is that to Christ? Everything. "Jealousy is cruel as the grave: if a man would give all the substance of his house for *love* (Cant. vii. 8), it would be utterly *contemned*." Blessed Lord! That our love could ever be of so much consequence to Him. Again we find evidence that practical evil as yet could find no lodgement: they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes. The Lord, therefore, counsels them to do their first works, in other words, to renew their *first love*, which was just what He wanted. Otherwise their candlestick is threatened. It is required of *stewards*, that they be found *faithful*. At Smyrna we get another, and an interesting scene. We get no condemnation there. Their circumstances, I judge, would be favourable to their spiritual health; their poverty (which I take to be literal) and their tribulation. These were quickening them, and preserving them from the general decay. Yet I would not take this as necessarily an exception from the general rule of the decay of the Church. These things were quickening them. And even if there were anything of failure, that was not the time for the blessed Jesus to plead with them, but rather to support them in present faithful suffering for His name. We remark, accordingly, that He does not present Himself in His Church, or official character, but in His *personal* one: the great First-last, that was dead, and is alive again, who overcame death for himself, and

<sup>b</sup> I may note again, that, in speaking of *apostasy* here, I do not speak of final apostasy as to salvation, from which saints are preserved; but rather that *dispensational* apostasy from truth committed to him, which has always marked man's history in every trial God has made of him. The saint is equally in danger, too, of departing from that full communion with Christ and His truth, to which God has called him.

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will do so for them: the same *character* which revived the fainting John, and which we should remember too. It is remarkable that, in the case of this lowly one, as of Philadelphia, the only other commended church, they are suffering under false church pretensions from without (Gal. iv. 17).

At Pergamos we get sad evidence that the tide of corruption has gone on. The practical evil which could not be tolerated at Ephesus, "the deeds of the Nicolaitanes," can be tolerated here. The Lord's address shows, I think, clearly, that He held all responsible. "I will come to thee quickly, and fight against *them* with the sword of my mouth." He addresses Pergamos consequently, not as trying their *spiritual* state, as at Ephesus, but as judging their moral evil, "having the sharp two-edged sword."

We come now to Thyatira. There seems to have been in her personal state something even better than the preceding "the last works were more than the first." But *nothing* can palliate evil in the eyes of the Son of God. He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. And the evil appears now to have been deeper in its character. There were not only those who held the doctrine, but there was an actual prophetess, an emissary of Satan, seducing his servants with a professed commission from God. This was a deeper phase of the evil—a greater depth of Satan. [I may observe, that allowing for the different standard of morality *now* and *then*, the combining of the love and pleasures of the world with the profession of Christ, is the same doctrine, in principle, as the one spoken of in these Churches].

The Lord, then, denounces His judgment against the guilty. And then He seems to "rest from His fury." He sees, perhaps, that it is vain to expect anything else from man: the torrent is set in so strong: His people are back-slidden from him with a perpetual back-sliding: and so as in the history of Israel in Kings, mercy comes in (2 Kings xiv. 26, Gen. viii. 21); and so in grace He says to the rest, "I will put upon you no other burden. But that which ye have, hold until I come." And then He proposes a high reward.

Two—three warnings had been given, and now Sardis was dead—*entirely* dead. He seems to test her by the power of life, “the Spirits of God,” and he finds her dead. She does not answer to it. There is a correspondence between this address and that of Ephesus.

Philadelphia opens to us a little revival in the time of the end. A little revival, I say. She has a little strength—not the strength; not the large place of Ephesus, but still a little strength. And let me say, beloved brethren, that that is our great power, that what we have should be *real*, held *with God*. It may not be as I said, the full compass of Ephesus, but yet it is real, *her own*, and that the Lord always honours. “A smoking flax He will not quench.” She has a little strength, keeps His word, and does not deny His name. She is suffering under false church pretensions, as a remnant always does at the close of an apostate dispensation (Is. lxxvi. 5; Malachi iii. 15, 16); but the Lord will make all manifest.

She keeps the word of his patience, when she *can*, comparatively and humanly speaking, and the Lord keeps her when the hour of temptation is such around, that none otherwise could. This hour of temptation here spoken of, and the promise, “Behold, I come *quickly*,” first addressed to her, identify it with the time of the end (Compare ii. 25). An open door is set before her.

Laodicea closes the scene. Neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm, nauseous to the Lord of love, He casts her out of His mouth. Her superior light to Sardis makes her superiorly responsible to Him. This state of things is around us. The Gospel not denied as in a Sardis state, but acknowledged, yet acknowledged without power, corrupted by political pursuit, worldliness, education, and science, substituted for Christian and alone saving or sanctifying light; does not this bear every feature of Laodicea?

The cry of increased light, what is it? “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art poor, and blind, and miserable, and naked. I counsel thee,”

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etc. The last state of the Church seems come down upon us, and that at mid-day!

How true it is (Is. xxix. 11), "The vision of all is become as a sealed book," and for the same reason (verse 13), "their fear is taught by the precept of men." The Church in great measure deceiving the world, joining it in its cry of "Peace and safety!" deceiving and being deceived; whereas sudden destruction comes.

We have thus traced the downward course of the Church. Throughout it all there is no command to separate—not even at Sardis, or Laodicea. Why? For one thing, I judge, *love is best tested where there is no positive command.*<sup>c</sup> How many, doubtless, in different systems are waiting for a *command* to separate; while the evil may be pressing upon their consciences *without a remedy*. What are we to do then? Float down on the open stream, till we get into the wide gulf of Romanism in the eighteenth chapter? No! Whenever matters come to a test, whenever it comes to a question between adherence to a body on one hand, and, on the other, the *deliberate* giving up, and rejection of God's principles of truth, and holiness for His own house, then let the saints know what to choose. I see no other way of preservation from the "*great house*," which Satan is now forming, and which he is ever seeking to draw around us.

May the Lord bless all that is of truth in these observations! "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly, Amen!" G.

<sup>c</sup> I strongly think there was this element in our Lord's refraining from giving positive command to separate. In the first place, the question with the seven churches was one of responsibility ("I know thy works"), and therefore the Lord lets that responsibility *shew itself out*, without interfering by positive command. Further, that responsibility was a responsibility of love, and that love was found at first trial, viz., Ephesus, decaying. What was wanting, therefore, mainly, was a renewal of first love, ("do thy *first works*"), without which a call to separate would have come without the power to do it *aright*, and you might say useless when done. Neither has it been the Lord's way to *forestall* (though His word *regulates*) any movement of the Spirit, which He might bring about in the future course of the Church. Yet I believe we should notice, that constantly, if not always, any remarkable revival of the Spirit in the corrupted Church, has been with separation. Witness the Reformation, the *Methodist* revival (Wesley, Whitfield, etc.) in the last century, and His revival of truth to ourselves. The faithful found that the truth, *by necessity*, led them out. True wisdom is at such times not to dictate to, but to *follow* God.

## No. XIV.

DIVINE WARNING AND ENCOURAGEMENT  
FOR "THE LAST DAYS."

(Epistle of Jude).

IN the first propagation of Christianity and earliest history of the church, there were markedly displayed two master-forms of evil, against which it had to contend. There was the self-righteousness of the Jew built upon his religion of heaven-appointed ordinances—the "shadows of things to come, [while] the body is of Christ;"—and the atheistic wisdom of the Greek; a wisdom tenaciously clung to by the whole civilised, and as it is called, "Christian world"; which modifies their philosophy, ethics, and divinity, and has stamped its features on the whole range of their literature; and by which they would *now* correct and mould the precious revelation of God! Though the voice of inspiration declares concerning it, "the world by *wisdom* knew not God."

Accordingly, the preaching of Christ crucified was "unto the Jews a *stumbling-block*, and unto the Greeks *foolishness*"; but where faith overcame these obstacles, it is added, "unto them who are called, both *Jews* and *Greeks*, Christ the *power* of God and the *wisdom* of God." And in vain is *God's* power and *God's* wisdom, henceforth sought in dissociation from the cross. There alone is its illustration and display, in the person and work of Him who "was crucified through weakness, yet liveth by the power of God."

But before the canon of the New Testament is closed, the spirit of revelation is found in conflict with evil of altogether another type.

The elements of Judaism, and the principles of gentile philosophy, working separately or coalescing in the church of God, may have produced the primary features of this evil; but the evil itself has a generic character; marked

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as “*the mystery of iniquity;*”—“*a falling away,*” or apostasy; a “*departing from the faith,*” through “giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons.” And it is to be remarked, that in order to forewarn and arm the faithful against this corruption of Christianity, the stream of revelation, in the latter epistles of the New Testament, leaves its accustomed channel, and flows entirely in another course. A single glance at the epistle of Jude is sufficient to show that the subject it treats of has no counterpart in the earlier portions of the New Testament. It is not occupied with the unfolding of divine doctrine, nor the enforcement of the details of practice, nor even with arming the believer against the common unbelief and wickedness of the world; but its entire instruction turns upon the characteristic evil, the course and issue of which it describes:—briefly giving this reason for its character, in the fourth verse “For there are certain men *crept in* unawares, who were before of old ordained unto this condemnation: ungodly men turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God and our *Lord Jesus Christ.*”

It may be no pleasant task to ponder this character of the epistle of Jude, and of other scriptures which present a concurrent testimony, that in the very bosom of Christianity there should arise a defined and progressive system of evil—commencing in apostolic days—which no revival in the church ever sets aside, and no reformation ever eradicates; but which works on until the ripened iniquity brings the Lord himself in judgment upon the dispensation of Christianity, as surely as the corruption of the old world brought upon it the judgment of the flood; or the apostasy of Israel brought their overthrow in the wilderness. Yet this corruption, which has for its seed-bed the very bosom of the church, is most necessary to be noted by the saints of God, if they would have God’s estimate of the scene through which they must have their course; or if they would possess the only torch of guidance through the darkened labyrinth. It is necessary to follow the Spirit’s course when it ceases to treat of “the common salvation,” because of the necessity of contending for the “faith once delivered to the saints.”



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The terms *church* and *world*, in the New Testament, are characteristically opposed; and are in their proper application as distinct as light and darkness: but alas! in practical Christianity this distinctiveness no longer exists. It is not within the limits of a boundary line that truth and error are now confined—though “the foundation of God abideth sure.” But it is not now as once it was—the Jew, *outside* the profession of Christianity, “ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish his own righteousness, and not submitting to the righteousness of God;” nor is it the Gentile, *apart*, scoffing in proud derision at the preaching of “Jesus and the resurrection,” or persecuting and imprisoning those who bore his name; but it is *within* the limits of a professed Christianity, that the mystery of iniquity works; and therefore the need of the precious exhortation on the one hand, and, on the other, “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.”

There was *one* who could say “I have kept the faith!” But through what contests had he to carry the sacred deposit, and by what incessant wiles was he tempted to betray his trust? The Lord give to his people courage “earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints;” and grace to “keep themselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life!” For then, the onward progress of corruption, instead of staggering the soul, will give but additional confirmation to the truth, as its lamp brightens amidst the increasing gloom. It is in the darkness of the *night* that the beacon-fire flashes most brightly, and warns of hidden dangers; and it is in the night that the light of the prophetic word, whether to direct or to warn, has its most special use. “We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a *dark place* until *the day dawn*, and the day-star arise in your hearts.”

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The peculiarity of the epistle of Jude is, that it deals with the general and comprehensive principles of *all apostasy*, or departure from God, instead of dwelling exclusively on any particular feature of evil by which it may be characterised. And solemn indeed is the reflection that *all* these principles will find their field of action in that sphere where *grace* at first recorded its triumphs, and which should have been consecrated to holiness and to God! “If the *light* that is in thee become darkness how great is that darkness!” There is no middle position between being espoused to Christ, as “a chaste virgin”—the true character of the church—and being allied to “the great whore” of Christendom’s corruptions, “the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.”

Hence, in giving the moral characteristics of the “men who had crept in unawares,” he says, with a “*woe unto them*,” they have “gone in the way of *Cain*, and run greedily after the error of *Balaam* for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of *Core*”! Thus associating their principles with every form of corruption which God will judge. For in *Cain* is presented the first apostate amongst men, in the way of infidelity and hatred of righteousness. *Balaam* is the selected example of corruption in religion for reward. *Core* is the head of revolt.

But, though *Cain* stands as the illustration of the infidel heart and ways of man, under the evil spirit of infidelity, and necessary hatred of righteousness, yet, as may be clearly seen in the example, these may consist with the self-chosen forms of a religion that excludes the recognition of sin in the presence of God, and reliance for acceptance on the blood of atonement.

*Balaam* stands in scripture in bad pre-eminence, as a man who used his character as a prophet to gain the rewards of the powers of the world, and against the true people of God. He would have used the revelations of God to this end, if they could have been brought into such subserviency; but, in the failure of this, his heart, set upon “the wages of unrighteousness,” directly uses, for the ends of corruption, the light he had in the ways of God. Memorable and instructive are the words to the Church in Pergamos—“thou hast there them that

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hold the doctrine of *Balaam*, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."

"The error of Balaam for reward"—"having men's persons in admiration because of advantage"—and, "through covetousness shall they, with feigned words, make merchandise of you"—are exponents of evil that need no eye of a seer to give them their application.

As to "the gainsaying of Core," it will be seen, in the history, that it is no intrusion into ecclesiastical functions, by one who had no ostensible call to them, as it is often viewed by those who are prone to see all scripture through the medium of an established order; for Corah was a Levite—of the very tribe and order set apart to sacred offices.

Corah alone is mentioned in this gainsaying; but "Dathan and Abiram, with two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, and men of renown," were joined in this rebellion against Moses and Aaron, of which Corah was the instigator.

And thus will it be found, at last, that the corrupt ecclesiastical power, as "the false prophet," will be the evil adviser and instigator of the beast and his armies, in the final rebellion against the kingly and priestly authority of Christ; of which, the rebellion and judgment of Corah is given as a type. "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords and King of kings" (Rev. xvii. 14). "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse and his army. And the beast was taken, and with him *the false prophet*, that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev. xix. 19, 20).

This is the result, when the issue is joined at last, between Him who "shall sit as a priest upon his throne," and the last daring usurper of his rights, in the person of him who "has said in his heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God:

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I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the North: I will ascend above the height of the clouds: I will be like the Most High."

But spiritual blindness, by whatever cause induced, can alone hinder the perception of this character of evil, as pervading, in a greater or less degree, the entireness of the ecclesiastical arrangements of Christendom. The intrusion into the prerogatives of Christ, by the assumption of a sacerdotal character and lordship over the conscience in the papal usurpation, asks no comment. Corah, dissatisfied with his Levitical service, seeks to invade the office of Aaron, who was "the priest of the Lord," and to be equal with "Moses, who was king in Jeshurun."

But, in the Church of England, while its accredited *doctrines* are in entire antagonism with the horrid dogmas of Rome, can it be concealed or denied, that the sin of Corah covertly lurks in its priestly assumption, and in its royal headship? Nay, further, wherever simple and evangelic *ministry* puts on the form, or asserts the prerogative, of *priestly* authority, "lording it over God's heritage," there is the incipient working of Corah's sin.

In correspondence with this general character of the epistle, is the association of "these dreamers, who defile the flesh," with Israel's destruction in the wilderness, after the people had been saved out of the land of Egypt (ver. 5); with the apostasy of the angels—the characteristic of which is given in the expressive words—"who kept not their first estate" (ver. 6); and, also, with the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the judgment that followed their natural apostasy, in the corruption of the flesh (ver. 7). With such beacons has the Spirit of the Lord planted the downward course of the apostasy of the present dispensation. Reasons for "contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," and warnings against the danger of the Church's not keeping "her first estate," are thus drawn from every range that apostasy has ever taken; while heaven, earth, and the realms of darkness, are cited as witnesses of the true judgment of God that must follow in its wake.

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The immediate moral features that are dwelt on, and expanded in their action through the epistle, are given in the fourth verse—"turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness"—unholiness of practice with a profession of grace—and denying (not as a point of doctrine, but practically), the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Master or Lord.<sup>a</sup>

From these principles flow, legitimately, insubjection to all constituted authority; for grace, and subjection to the authority of Christ, are the only curb to the wantonness of man's self-will. And if men fancy, and would teach, that, by "despising dominion [or authority], and speaking evil of dignities," they exalt themselves, the Christian is taught how to estimate these things, by the spirit in which an "archangel" owns the authority of his Lord.

"These are spots *in your feasts of charity*, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear; clouds without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, *twice dead* [dead naturally, and dead after a profession of life], plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." "Spots in your feasts of charity," alas! tells us where this evil began. And when it is said, "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of *these*," we learn, that in the very place where the evil arose there its judgment will fall. Nor is the 19th verse any exception to this—"these be they which separate themselves, sensual, not having the spirit." For it should be observed, that the words do not indicate the action of schismatics; nor even, as it is said in the Epistle of John, "they went out from us." The general condition of the Church was now so low, that they could remain, and "mark themselves off, or distinguish themselves," as the expression is. But, with this assumption of separation, and claim to superior sanctity, they are declared to be "*natural men*, not having the Spirit;" in contrast to that which characterises the true

<sup>a</sup> τὸν μόνον δεσπότην.

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saint, who is a “*spiritual man* ;” and in contrast with the only spring of holiness, as beautifully presented in the 20th verse—“ But, ye beloved, building up yourselves ~~in~~ *in* your most holy faith, praying in the *Holy Ghost*, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of OUR *Lord Jesus Christ* unto eternal life.”

But I now turn to the blessed encouragements, amidst the evil, presented in the commencement and the close of the epistle. Nothing can exceed their preciousness. The address of the epistle (ver. 1) is, “ to them that are *sanctified* by God the Father, and *preserved* in Jesus Christ, *called*.” Thus presenting God’s *calling* and power in connexion with their association with Christ, as the true and abiding and only ground of their security ; while, at the same moment, it places them (ver. 2) in connexion with the very spring-head, of mercy, peace, and love.

In verses 14 and 15, Enoch’s prophecy is given, not more as a token of warning against the evil on which he predicts that judgment will fall, than as a stay to the faithful, in the certain knowledge, that, as the evil is seen rising to its flood-mark, so certainly will the power of Christ’s judgment be interposed to put it down.

Verses 17 and 18 recall the minds of the faithful—the “ beloved ”—to the concurrent testimony of “ the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,” concerning these days of evil, for a confirmation of their faith ; than which nothing can be more gracious, as showing that nothing is occurring unforeseen.

But, besides this, the characteristics of the evil would by no means be complete, without this concurrent testimony ; consequently, the warnings and encouragements for “ the last days ” would be incomplete, if confined to the features of this epistle.

The second of Thessalonians presents, amongst other delineations, “ the mystery of iniquity,” and “ the man of sin ;” from whose delusions, and “ the deceivableness of unrighteousness,” there is no escape, but in “ receiving THE LOVE of the truth.”

The second of Timothy gives the moral characteristics of “ the last days ” and the “ perilous times,” in the

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self-love, and boasting, and spirit of fierce democracy, which still have their place amongst those who have “the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof”; and preservation to the “man of God” is pointed out in the exhortation, “but continue thou in the things which thou hast learned”; and in the assertion of the inspiration of all scripture, and its perfectness, “that [thus] the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

The second of Peter goes over the same subject, as to its main features, as the Epistle of Jude, with the same result in judgment upon the evil. But there is this characteristic difference, that it dwells on the comparison between “the false prophets” of a former dispensation — the leaders in Israel’s apostasy — and the “false teachers,” who are presented as the active instruments of the more fearful evil in this. But, whilst these “false teachers” are leading the van in corruption, and the “scoffers” are saying, “Where is the promise of his coming?” the saint is called to listen to the words, “ye, therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware, lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*”

The first of John predicts “the coming of antichrist,” and gives, as his ecclesiastical or religious character, that he will deny the Father and the Son. But, that it might not be imagined that the springs of this evil were altogether future, it is added, “even *now* there are many antichrists; whereby we know that it is *the last time.*” Here, again, the place of security is marked in the most simple and perfect way — “If *that which ye have heard from the beginning* shall remain in you, *ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father.*” Neither “antichrist,” nor the “many antichrists,” could harm them there.

The epistles to the seven churches, in the Revelation, in their moral bearing, evidently present the same general progress of decay, while the prophetic part opens into a wider scene; and in them blessing, and safeguard,

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and overcoming, are connected with an "ear to hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches"—and, *if it might be*, a recovery of "*first love*."

But there are yet to be noticed one or two points in the beautiful closing verses of Jude. Verses 21 and 22 present the practical every-day business of a saint; and the more so as the evil day comes on. "Ye beloved, building up yourselves on your *most holy* faith" (that is, its character, in contrast with "turning the grace of our God into licentiousness"), "praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life." Like Enoch, the prophet of the epistle, "walking with God," in the quiet and holy intimacy of one who had the attestation that "he pleased God;" though, for a while, in the midst of all the evil, whose coming judgment he predicted, but waiting for his own translation to a sphere alike above the evil and the judgment, which the coming of the Lord with ten thousands of his saints would execute.

Verses 22 and 23 give the blessed and necessary action of grace, which, not satisfied with self-preservation, seeks, to the end, the rescue of others. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." And they also add, "Let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."

But there is also this beautiful character in grace, that, while it compassionates the entangled and lingering, as the angels did Lot, it maintains the most uncompromising separation from the evil—"hating even the *garment spotted* by the flesh." In Christ are the two presented in their perfectness; a compassion that knows no limits to the sinner, combined with infinite separation from the sin.

How divinely perfect is the word of God! And how increasingly precious to the saint, as the night of error and corruption is darkening every ray of light around!

One is not sent to the happiest saint of God, to learn, from the testimony of *his experience*, what are the privileges and hopes to which he is called by the grace of



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God. These are alone learned in their perfectness from the scriptures of truth, illustrated in the blessed person of Christ, and revealed in living power to the soul by the Holy Ghost.

Neither is it necessary to go to the men who are wise in the affairs of the world—for the *world* it is still, despite of its formal adoption of the name of Christ—to learn its character and course. The true reflections of things in heaven and on earth are alone to be found in the divine mirror of the word. The saint, apart from the world, with the Bible in his hand, as one shut up in a camera obscura, sees brought beneath his gaze every movement and figure in the busy complicated scene around him, with a clearness that none of its actors can discern. Thus, and thus only, is it safe to know the world. “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

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\* \* \* Death and Resurrection are the two great principles of Divine Grace: but, antagonistically, Human Energy and Combination are those in which Human Nature, since its fall, delights.

By the Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus, Life, peace, and hope, were found for our souls; by practical fellowship therewith, through the spirit, our life and service are moulded and sustained;—while it is the realising this which maintains our recognition of God, as the End and object of our Being—“whose service is perfect freedom.”

Human Energy and Combination have no power to emancipate from Satan—neither can they even raise to the level of divine thoughts;—*of* the nature which fell in Eden, they will constantly be found to be roots of bitterness to the people of God—and, through Satan, subjects of pride to fallen man, his great implements in the last scenes of the coming apostasy against God and his Christ.

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

## THE SON OF GOD.

“The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father.”

## No. I.

I AM sure that I dread *reasonings* where *affections* should animate us, and the withdrawing from the place of living power into any thing like a region of notions or theories. But the mysteries of God are all of the highest practical value, in either strengthening for service, comforting under trial, or enlarging the soul's communion.

The Apostle speaks of himself and others as “ministers of Christ,” and also as “stewards of the mysteries of God.” And so all of us, in our measure. We are to be “ministers” i. e. servants in all practical personal readiness and devotedness; patient, diligent, and serviceable in labours; in all of which, some of us may know how little we are in comparison with others. But we are also to be “stewards,” and that, too, of “mysteries,” keeping uncorrupt and inviolate the peculiarities of divine revelation. Reasoning men may not receive them. The cross was foolishness to such, and “the princes of this world,” the men of philosophy who professed themselves to be wise, knew not “the wisdom of God in a mystery.” But that mystery is not to be surrendered to them in any wise. Our stewardship is of such—and it is required of stewards, that a man be found faithful (see 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2).

The guardianship and witness of the personal glory of the Son of God, is a chief part of this high and holy stewardship. I observe St. John guarding that glory with a jealousy quite of its own kind. There are, for instance, measures and methods recommended, when Judaizing corruptions or the like are to be dealt with. In the Epistle to the Galatians, where the simplicity of the Gospel is vindicated, there is a *pleading* and a *yearning* in the midst of earnest and urgent *reasoning*. But in John's epistles, *all* is peremptory. There is a summary forcing out, or keeping out, all that is not of that unction of the Holy

Priest, although he had already grown to manhood in the wilderness. How patiently God dealt with this people, delivering them when they had so quickly fallen into sin, and into such depths of sin.

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ABBA, FATHER.

“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, *Father*” (Gal. iv. 6).

*Father!* by that dear name my heart is stirred,  
 And child-like homage renders at the word ;  
 No other name can give such sweet repose,  
 So full a solace for our many woes.  
 With joy unspeakable I hear Thy voice,  
 Which says, “ At *all* times in My love rejoice.”  
 I need not bring Thee words—“ My son, thy heart,”  
 Is Thy demand. And often, when apart  
 In sorrow, brooding o’er some heavy care,  
 ’Tis soothing and relief to feel Thee near ;  
 And though in broken tones my utterance be,  
*Father!* I call, and Thou dost answer me.

Draw me! I will run after Thee, will seek  
 To hear obediently what Thou wilt speak ;  
 And step by step the blessed path would trace  
 Of Thy beloved—full of truth and grace.  
 Thou hast but One who ever pleas’d Thee well,  
 Of Him we love to hear, and Thou to tell.  
 Our deep desire, our highest aim to grow  
 Into His likeness—all His grace to know.  
 The grace that brought Him from Thy bosom, where  
 The Fount of Life is, and all pleasures are,  
 To gain a name, our hearts adoring own  
 The name of *Jesus*—and a royal crown.  
 His and *our* Father! O the depth and height,  
 The love surpassing knowledge, ’tis too bright.  
 Faith nearly staggers at the mystery—  
 The mystery of love : yet though o’erpower’d,  
 Our trembling hearts can trust Thy faithful word,  
 The Spirit with our spirits witnesses,  
 Children we are, and He our Fatheris!                      PERSONNE.

N<sup>o</sup>. XVII.

## RUTH.

THE Book of Ruth tells us also of the days of the Judges, when there was no king in Israel ; but it shows us the fair side of those days, in the operations of the grace of God, who, blessed be His name ! never failed to work in the midst of the evil, as, also, in the steady progress of events towards the fulfilment of his promises in the Messiah, whatever may have been the simultaneous progress of the general evil.

Ruth, a stranger, seeking shelter by faith under the wings of the God of Israel, is received in grace, and the genealogy of David, king over Israel according to grace, is linked with her. It is the genealogy of the Lord Jesus himself, after the flesh.

This book appears to me to set before us, in type, the reception in grace of the remnant of Israel in the last days ; their Redeemer (the kinsman, who has the right of redemption), having taken their cause in hand.

Eli-Melech (which signifies God the King) being dead, Naomi (my delight, my pleasure), becomes a widow, and eventually loses her children also. She typifies the Jewish nation, who, having lost her God, is like a widow, and has no heir. Yet there shall be a remnant, destitute of all right to the promises (and, therefore, prefigured historically by a stranger), who will be received in grace—similarly to the Gentiles and the Church—who will faithfully and heartily identify itself with desolate Israel. God will own this remnant, which, poor and afflicted itself, will in heart obey the commands given to the people.

Naomi, who, in her destitution, is a type of the nation, acknowledges her condition ; she calls herself Mara (bitterness).

He who was nearest of kin, who would willingly have redeemed the inheritance, refuses to do so, if Ruth must be taken with it. The law was never able (nor the Church either) to re-establish Israel in their inheritance, nor to raise up, in grace, the name of the dead.

Boaz (in him is strength), upon whom the remnant had no direct claim, (and who typifies Christ risen, in whom are the sure mercies of David), undertakes to raise up the name of the dead, and to re-establish the heritage of Israel. Acting in grace and in kindness, and encouraging the patient, humble faith of the remnant, the meek of the earth, he shows himself faithful to fulfil the purposes and the will of God, with respect to this poor desolate family. Nothing can be more touching and exquisite than the details given here. The character of Ruth, this poor woman of the Gentiles, has great beauty. "Naomi took the child that was born to her, and laid it in her bosom ;" and they said, " There is a son born to Naomi." In fact, the heir of the promises will be born unto Israel, as a nation, although the fulfilment of the promise affects the remnant only, which, fully identifying itself with the interests of God's people, has sought neither the rich nor the poor ; but, in faith and obedience has kept the testimony of God amongst the people, in the path appointed by him.

Thus, if on one side, the Book of Judges shows us the falling away of the people of Israel, and their failure under responsibility, even when God was their helper ; on the other side, this touching and precious book sets before us, as the dawn of better things, grace acting in the midst of difficulties, securing the fulfilment of promise, and embellishing this scene of misery and sin by lovely and beautiful instances of faith, precious fruits of grace, whether in weakness and devotedness, or in strength and kindness, and always in accordance with the perfect will of God.

In the succeeding books, we shall see prophecy, and the history of God's dealings, developing the body of events which tended to the fulfilment of His designs, the first principles, the elements of which are laid down in that which will be shown us in him. For Ruth furnishes a kind of intermediate link between the fall of Israel under God's immediate government, and the future fulfilment of His purposes.

Prophecy, which unfolds these purposes, and gives moral proof of this fall, begins with Samuel : we learn

this from the lips of Jesus, who is himself the object of prophecy.

Eli, the last judge and priest, departs, his family is to be cut off, the Ark of the Covenant is taken by the Philistines, and Samuel, consecrated to God in a new and extraordinary manner, comes in with the special testimony of the Lord.

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## BIBLICAL RESEARCHES :

OR OCCASIONAL CRITICISMS UPON VARIOUS SUBJECTS, TEXTS,  
WORDS, ETC., IN SCRIPTURE.

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### INTRODUCTION.

“Familiar acquaintance” and “thorough knowledge,” though akin, are different; they may sometimes even be contrasted the one to the other. Thus, few persons have a *thorough knowledge* of their native tongue or language, although they have, of course, familiar acquaintance with it.

As to the Hebrew, Chaldee, and Greek languages, I pretend not to either “familiar acquaintance” or to “thorough knowledge”—properly so called. Yet, having long felt that it was a needless dishonour to myself, when God had put into my hand a revelation, from and of Himself, written therein, not to know these tongues at all, I have sought with some diligence, and at least much labour, to use the Scriptures in my private reading *as* they were written.

The Lord, who confounded the language of men, that they should not understand one another’s speech,—when the iniquity of the post-diluvian age was ripe enough to combine in independency of Him, has condescended to make his revelation in three languages, vouchsafing also a very good translation of the whole in our mother tongue, and more or less correct translations into the languages current in the various countries of Christendom. I could not be satisfied, where intercourse was frequent, to speak to my brethren in the Lord, or even to men, merely through the medium of an interpreter; much less could I be satisfied to allow a translation of the Bible into my own tongue to stand between me and the Bible as it was written. I thought (and do think still) that a child of God

might plead with Him for help to read HIS WORD as He wrote it; and so, at least, be ready to estimate aright any suggested emendation, and acquire competency to see through the many false glosses, of which ignorance and self-sufficiency are the parents; at all events, enough to detect the want of kindredship between "improvements" and "alterations"; for while every needless alteration, as such, is to be deprecated, doubtless *faith* and *humility* may find defects, and, therefore, room for improvement in every *translation* made by uninspired men.

In pursuing this course, one could not divest one's own mind of its previous knowledge of the English authorised version; but then one gained the power to examine its value, and to mark and guard against any bias it might contain. The result has been an increased sense:—1st, Of individual ignorance; 2ndly, of the difficulty of making a good translation of *any*, but especially of *such*, a book as the Bible; and, 3rdly, of the value of our English authorised version.

In cultivating wisdom—that wisdom which, while it dwells in us and is practical in our walk, consists in the appropriation of Heavenly light by the renewed affections—we ought not either to refuse to weigh a criticism; or, when assured of its value, refuse to communicate it to others. With what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again. That good measure pressed down and running over, may be measured into my own bosom is my desire. I would, therefore, give freely, yet with *reverence*, before God, as seeking not to handle the word of God lightly or deceitfully. If I desire that those to whom I write should, by the word and by the testimony, "prove all things," and hold fast that only which is truth,—I trust, also, that God may vouchsafe so much of light as to produce, on both writer and reader, the feeling of "Who is sufficient for these things?" as contrasted with that feeling of empty conceit which a little light sometimes produces.

My object is not display but edification; he who can only read English will find (if God prospers my effort) that which will help him in the Scriptures; and they that have the balances of the sanctuary—the Truth—with them, and know how to use them, may return, in some other form of blessing, that which they read; for there is *unity* in Scripture; and thus the elucidation of *a very little point* will often open *a very large portion* to us; even as, also, ignorance of or misunderstanding of *large portions* of Scripture grows out of error in some *small detail*.

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

## 1 SAMUEL.

WE have seen that the book of Ruth occupies an intermediate place between the end of the period in which Israel was governed by God himself, who interposed from time to time by means of judges, and the setting up of the king whom He selected for them. This period, alas! came to an end through the people's failure, and their inability to make a right use by faith, of their privileges.

The books of Samuel contain the cessation of Israel's original relationship with God, the setting up of the king whom God Himself had prepared, and the circumstances which preceded this event. It is not merely that Israel failed under the government of God: they rejected it.

Placed under the priesthood, they drew nigh to God, in the enjoyment of privileges which were granted them as a people acknowledged by the Lord. We shall see the ark—which, as it was the first, so was it the most precious link in the chain between the Lord God and the people—fall into the hands of the enemy. What could a priest do, when that which gave his priesthood all its importance, was in the enemy's hands, and when the place where he drew near to the Most High, the throne of God in the midst of Israel, was no more there? It was no longer mere unfaithfulness in the circumstances in which God had placed them. The circumstances themselves were entirely changed through God's judgment upon Israel. The outward link of God's connection with the people was broken; the ark of the covenant, centre and basis of their relationship with Him, had been given up by the wrath of God into the hands of their enemies. Priesthood was the natural and normal means of maintaining the relationship between God and the people. *How could it now be used for this purpose?*

Nevertheless, God, acting in sovereignty, could put Himself in communication with His people, by virtue of His grace and immutable faithfulness, according to which,



any other. The plague breaks out; but, in the midst of judgment the Lord remembers mercy, and commands the destroying angel, when he had reached Jerusalem, to stay his hand. It is Jerusalem, the city of His affections, that attracts His attention. God chooses it for the place where His altar shall be built, and His grace shown forth; His appointed mercy-seat. It is there that His wrath, justly kindled against Israel, ceases; and sin gives occasion to the establishment of the place, and of the work, in which He and His people shall meet, according to that grace which has put away the sin. This will characterise the cross of Christ—this will stay the plague in Israel, and introduce the reign of the *true* Prince of Peace. David stands in the breach to deliver his people, and at his own cost (verse 17), and according to the counsels of God, he offers the sacrifice of appeasement.

The Thoughts on the First Book of Chronicles will contain a fuller examination into this latter part of David's history.

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ACROSTIC PSALMS.

3.—Ps. cxix.

*Each of the verses from 17—24, begins with a Gimel.*

<b>G</b> rant favour unto thy servant, That I may live and keep Thy Word;	ver. 17
<b>G</b> ive the opening of the eyes that I may behold— Wonderful things out of Thy law;	ver. 18
<b>G</b> reatly am I estranged from the world; Hide not Thy commandments from me;	ver. 19
<b>G</b> rievously my soul breaks— For the longing it hath for Thy judgments at all times;	ver. 20
<b>G</b> oing astray from Thy commandments— The proud are cursed and rebuked by Thee;	ver. 21
<b>G</b> rant that reproach and contempt may be removed— For I have kept Thy testimonies;	ver. 22
<b>G</b> reat men (lit. princes) did set and speak against me; But Thy servant did meditate in Thy statutes;	ver. 23
<b>G</b> reatly delightful and instructive Are Thy testimonies.	ver. 24

## No. XIX.

## THE MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

THE substance and verification of all blessing from God is to be found, now, and will be found hereafter in the sustainment of those offices by the Lord Jesus Christ, in which man has either failed, or has stood merely as the type, or shadow of "Him who was to come."

The brightness of both earth's and heaven's hope stands in this, that in the counsels of God, all power in heaven and in earth shall be *administratively*, in the hands of the once humbled Son of Man; and that, in fact as well as of right, He shall apply that divine power for the creature's highest good and the Creator's glory, in the wide sphere of heaven and earth.

Many and precious will be the fruits of that dispensation; precious to the church, to Israel, and to the world. For then will come the time of Satan's casting down from his seat of power—of Israel's regathering in peace and joy—of the deliverance of creation from its bondage of corruption and its groans, and above all, the manifestation of Christ in glory, and His church's exaltation and companionship with Him in His throne.

Connected with this bright scene of happiness and glory, is the subject of this paper. For, whatever may be the intermediate importance of the Melchizedek Priesthood of Christ, it looks on for its full display to the time when "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." Thus is the record of Scripture which first presents this subject to our minds:—"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he *was* the priest of the Most High God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed *be* Abram of the Most High God, Possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all" (Gen. xiv. vers. 17—20).

In his Melchizedek character the Lord Jesus Christ

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stands not so much "the high priest of our profession" as in Hebrews (as he does "the priest of THE MOST HIGH GOD); and that under *the asserted power* of him whose special title to praise and glory, as well as dominion, is, that he is "*Possessor of heaven and earth.*" Most interesting is it thus to see in this earliest type of Christ's official glory, as God's royal priest, the most perfect presentation of that character in which he will finally stand, and fill heaven and earth with blessing and praise. In this we have an example, which is common in Scripture, as the expression of the Divine counsels, of that which is *first* in the order of *revelation* being the *last* in the order of *accomplishment*. This is manifest even in *the first promise* of mercy to man; in the terms of which are indicated the *last* exertion of Christ's power:—"He shall bruise thine head." For every part of Scripture is the word of Him who "sees the end from the beginning;" and who cannot rest short of the full accomplishment of His purpose and counsel.

The priesthood of Aaron historically may come in, *after* its exhibition in the hands of Melchizedek, and so shadow forth an essential part of the work of Christ, previously to the display of his royal priestly glory; still, overpassing the entire of these heaven-appointed types, the Spirit of God, by David, reverts to the brief expression of this glory, before us, saying "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent," Thou art a priest for ever after *the order of Melchizedec* (Psalm cx).

It is but a brief expression; but we find that after all has been accomplished, in the intermediate period, connected with sacrifice and intercession, of which the elaborated types and service of the tabernacle and Levitical priesthood are the expression; necessary indeed, most necessary, as the grounds of the sustainment before God of an erring and imperfect people—all reverts to the original and simple type in which is presented more prominently the exercise of this priesthood according to the dignity of him who bears it, also to the glory of him who confers it, as well as according to the purposed blessing of that double sphere to which its exercise extends.

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In speaking of this bright and blessed aspect of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, so fraught with blessing from heaven's eternal stores of blessing, and introducing a scene so in contrast with the corruption and misery of the present, and therefore so knit-up with the longing of our hearts for the reign of righteousness; it may be well to advert, by way of illustration, to the general subject of priesthood as it is presented in the Scriptures.

All are familiar with the exhibition of the Levitical priesthood, and with the use that is made of these types in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as illustrating the present position and ministrations of Christ for His people.

But there were priests before the giving of the law, and before the setting apart of the tribe of Levi.

What may be characterised as the *priesthood of worship*, is the first that is presented in the order of God's revelations; as illustrated in the example of Abel. "The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering." "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." *Faith*, not formal constitution, made him a priest, and directed him in the choice of his offering; and gained for him acceptance with God.

Subsequently, this priesthood is seen in the heads of the patriarchal families, as Noah, Job, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: not to mention "Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, [who] took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God."

Sacrifice, or the worship of the altar, was connected with all these instances; and sweet was the savour of their burnt offerings, though the formal title of priest was not assumed by any.

Melchizedek is the *first* historical person in Scripture bearing the title of priest; and in this king and priest is presented the true and perfected glory of the priesthood of Christ. *Now* he stands for his people in the "holiest," in intercessional grace; but *then* he will be presented in glory on earth; "and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne."

The Levitical priesthood it will be the less necessary, at this point, to speak of, as it is so interwoven with

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our present subject, in its treatment in the Epistle to the Hebrews. I merely notice, therefore, that its ruling characteristic is that of *atonement and intercession*; and in this respect it is in *contrast* with the Melchizedek priesthood, which is emphatically that of *power and blessing*.

No doubt the sacrifice and intercession of Christ are the necessary basis of this, because it is the blessing and glory of mediation in which man is brought nigh to God; still it is not in sacrifice and intercession, but in power and blessing that the peculiar character and glory of the Melchizedek priesthood are displayed.

The action of Melchizedek is alone expressed in *blessing*. For though it is said, "*He brought forth bread and wine; and he was the priest of the Most High God;*" these are in no sense *sacrificial*, nor are they, here, *expressive* of that which is sacrificial, but are the appropriate symbols of strength and joy, ministered to those who had just emerged from scenes of conflict and weariness; and needing thus to be cheered. Melchizedek, the King of Righteousness, thus coming forth from the city of *peace*, to meet the victors, stands appropriately as the figure of Him who, in anticipation of the full glory of the kingdom, has said, "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, *and will come forth and serve them.*" Wondrous grace, that shall thus cheer poor wearied hearts in alliance with Himself, amidst the bright scenes of glory!

Thus is the blessing of Abram by Melchizedec; he said, "Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be the Most High God, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand."

The peculiar title attributed to Jehovah, of "the Most High God," and the intimation of the sphere of His power, "Possessor of heaven and earth," lead forward to a period in God's counsels regarding this world beyond the present dispensation of His grace, when His supremacy will be universally asserted and acknowledged. It may be observed that this title, "Possessor of heaven and earth,"

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expresses far more than the claim of God to universal rule and governance, or His unchangeable supremacy. It is designed to indicate a dispensational display of Divine power, which will issue in the expulsion of all the powers of active and regnant evil, from the two spheres of heaven and earth, in order to the bringing in of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the first-begotten again into the world, in the beneficence of His reign of righteousness and the full display of His official glory.

In the conclusion of the 83rd Psalm, we find the acknowledgment of this title as regards the earth, presented as the result of the execution of God's judgments upon the confederated enemies of Israel, of which the destruction of Sisera and Jabin, of Oreb and Zeeb, and of Zebah and Zalmunnah, are but types. These enemies are thus pleaded against in the Psalm: "Lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee." It concludes, "Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish: that men may know that Thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art **THE MOST HIGH** over all the earth."

Entirely in accordance with this, though the subject is looked at from another point, is the language of Psalm cx. The first verse, as is well known, presents the Lord at the right hand of God, "expecting till His enemies be made His footstool." In the second and third, "the rod of His strength" is sent out of Zion, and He is seen ruling in the midst of His enemies, and acknowledged by His willing people in the day of His power; while the issue of the whole is given in the accomplishment of the oath, "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." The judgment that falls upon His enemies, and the blessing of His willing people, have their issue in the bringing out of the full character of this Priest upon His throne.

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These and other Scriptures, and especially the way the subject is introduced in the Epistle to the Hebrews, necessarily throw the mind on the typical character of the scene in which Melchizedek first appears. So far as the abstract idea of Melchizedek's priesthood is concerned, any other point in Abraham's history might have served: but it is emphatically introduced thus: "This Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abram *returning from the slaughter of the kings*, blessed him" But I know not that it is necessary to argue this. The 14th chapter of Genesis presents the first recorded battle in the Scriptures, and there is the surest warrant to view it as typical of the last.

The titles of God in this chapter; the detailed history of the ravages of the confederated kings; their overthrow by Abram, who is in connexion with "the Most High God;" the introduction of the royal priest at this point, with his titles and action; mark thus, in early type, the outlines of a scene of which the details of later prophecies are but the filling up. Happy is it to look on to that scene, which is thus portrayed, in the language of Israel's hope; "Surely His salvation is nigh them that fear Him; that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before Him; and shall set us in the way of His steps" (Ps. lxxxv. 9—13). And again in Isaiah xxx. 31, 32, "Through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod; and in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the Lord shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps."

Thus, though we know that a gloomy history, as to this world, must run to its close, in which "nation shall rise against nation," and woe after woe is pronounced against the dwellers upon earth, yet do we here see that joy and triumph—"tabrets and harps"—shall follow the course of this *last* conflict, in the day of the setting aside of the enemies of the Lord, and of the destruction of those who have destroyed the earth.

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The titles of God in Scripture are always important and expressive, since they are His own peculiar attributions in His revelation of Himself and of His ways to us. This is perhaps too little noticed, and hence restrictedness of thought in regard to God and His blessed counsels.

This title of "the Most High God" is in contrast with the "gods many and lords many," which, through the power and craft of Satan, came to be acknowledged after the flood. But when this title of God is vindicated, all this power of the adversary must be set aside. For "the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day, and the idols he shall utterly abolish."

Hence, in reference to Israel's redemption out of *Egypt*—the cradle and fountain of idolatry—Jethro says, "Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly He was above them" (Ex. xviii. 11). As it is also said in the 12th chapter, "And against all *the gods* of Egypt will I execute judgment: I am the Lord." And it was afterwards given in commandment to the whole people, "Make no mention of the name of *other gods*, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth."

It was to this truth of the sole supremacy of Jehovah that Israel were called to be witnesses, and in them finally, through their connexion with the Messiah, this testimony will be established. "Ye are my witnesses saith the Lord. . . . I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God." But the possession of heaven and earth by the Most High God necessarily involves the dethronement and setting aside of Satan, from his seat of power, as "the god of this world," and "the prince of the power of the air;" as well as the resumption, into the hands of the Lord, of all delegated power on earth, which has been abused by man. Of this latter the 82nd Psalm gives the example; concluding with the words, "Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations."

It is greatly to be questioned, whether the importance of this is generally felt; and whether this further step of



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Satan's power and craft, in the introduction of idolatry into the world, and man's consequent further debasement and alienation from God, is at all appreciated.

In the current thoughts of men, idolatry is either associated with the ignorance and barbarity of modern times, or is connected with all the fascination of the past, in the history and genius, the subtle intellect and creations of the fancy, the philosophy and eloquence, of the more polished nations of the world. In either case its real evil is but little seen. The debasement of man only appears in the one, and excites pride by a comparison; and in the other the iniquity is so glossed and hidden by the meretricious dress in which it is disguised, that its deformity is effectually concealed.

But whether it be the hideous and mis-shapen gods of the South Sea Islanders, or the statue of Apollo or Jupiter, before which their votaries bow; behind either, Satan is the God that crouches to receive the homage of enslaved and deluded man. "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to devils [Gr. demons] and not to God."

It is man taking the devil to be his god, liar and murderer as he is, and worshipping him instead of "the Most High God." Exclude this power of Satan from idolatry; and no reason can be given for the absolute dominion of false religions over the mind.

Nor must this power of the adversary against the claims of God be restricted to the men who make an idol from the stock of a tree. It is, alas! seen in that system of abominations which lays claim to the title of the only true Church. And, O what mockery must it afford to Satan, that he should become again enthroned, after the external subversion of idolatry in the Roman Empire by means of the corruption of that very power, of which one characteristic exercise was to "*cast out devils!*"

There is nothing more remarkable nor solemn than the way in which "seducing spirits and doctrines of demons" are spoken of, in relation to the Christian body, in 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines

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of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."

There has been a ready application of this passage to the corruptions of Popery—and justly so, as its leading terms sufficiently indicate—but the connexions of the passage show that a door may be opened for "seducing spirits and doctrines of demons," where nothing so gross, in the perversion of Christianity, as Popery is in question. In the last verse of the 3rd chapter, the whole blessed ground-work of faith is presented in "the mystery of godliness:" "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." And the next thing stated is, that "in the latter times some shall depart from the faith," etc. The connexion of the two is striking enough, and full of warning, if the division of the chapters is disregarded.

But in the establishment of that kingdom to which the Melchizedek priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ looks forward, not only will the Church be delivered from Satan's power in conflict in heavenly places, as now, but Satan himself will be cast down from his position, and no longer be allowed to control the springs of power on high, as "the prince of the power of the air," and, with his emissaries, as "the rulers of the darkness of this world."

That which the Melchizedek priesthood especially sets aside, is apostate power on earth, and Satanic power, or "wicked spirits in the heavenlies." The one illustrated in Nebuchadnezzar, the first head of Gentile universal empire, and the first of whom we read, who used that power for the compulsory establishment of false religion; but more fully disclosed in the destruction of the fourth beast on account of the blasphemies of "the little horn," which makes way for the setting up of the kingdom given to the "Son of Man" by "the ancient of days." Of this kingdom it is said (Dan. vii. 27), "The kingdom

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and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." The other, viz., the setting aside of Satanic power in the heavens, is marked in the declaration, "the Lord shall punish *the host of the high ones that are on high* [as well as] the kings of the earth upon the earth." And the same thing is more fully seen in the casting of Satan and his angels down, so that "their place is not found any more in heaven;" and in his subsequent binding and being cast into the bottomless pit.\* Rev. xii. 7—9, compared with xix. 19. to xx. 3.

Until then, the display of heavenly dominion must of necessity be circumscribed, and the channels of heavenly blessing be impeded. For "while Satan has the power, and while those hold the possession, subject to his power, sorrow, discord, and death, are the sad and unwelcome companions of man's voyage; he is seduced to every folly; he is but as the convict in the ship, its guidance and its power are in other hands." But when "the Most High God" is known as "possessor of heaven and earth," where shall be the tempter then? "Not in heaven: the Most High possesses that: not on earth; the Most High reaches in His possession to that; and the very ends of the earth shall feel the blessing of His pervading comprehensive blessedness."

When this wide sphere of heaven and earth shall be thus cleared—whether of "the gods many and lords many," that have held sway therein, or of those that have destroyed the earth—and, as in Solomon's kingdom, "there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent," this blessed priest of the Most High God will come forth in the full display of His Melchizedek glory, "King of Righteousness," and "King of Peace," the supreme and universal minister of blessing in heaven and earth.

It is not that power had not been in the hands of Him who is to be known as King of Righteousness and King of Peace, before He comes upon the scene as the Priest of

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\* For a fuller illustration of this and some other points of interest, which are but slightly touched here, I refer to a paper of the same title in the first volume of the "Christian Witness."

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the Most High God; but it is at this point that He comes forth as Melchizedek in the exercise of His priestly glory, based upon His kingly rule. As in Hebrews it is argued He was *first*, as His name imports, "King of Righteousness," and *after that* also, "King of Salem, which is King of Peace."

In the same way, the glory of the first resurrection is seen in Rev. xx., in the thrones and those that sat on them, and their living and reigning with Christ. It is not the *act* of resurrection which is thus presented, but the sphere of glory which belongs to it, and belongs to the epoch which it marks. "The first resurrection" has its result in this glory on the part of those who are partakers of it. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be *priests* of God and of Christ, and shall *reign* with Him a thousand years."

From this and from other Scriptures, it appears that believers will not until then, in association with Christ, be known in their full priestly character and glory. "He hath made us *kings* and *priests* unto His God and Father" (Rev. i. ver. 6). And again, "Thou hast made us unto our God *kings* and *priests*; and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. v. 10). And also "Ye are a chosen generation, *a royal priesthood*" (1 Pet. ii. 9).

No doubt in the sense of worshippers all believers are priests now; having in the sacrifice and intercession of the High Priest of their profession the full and perfected ground of free access to God; but their royal priesthood will not be seen until the Lord Jesus himself "shall sit and rule *upon His throne*, and He shall be *a priest upon His throne*."

This is but in accordance with the Lord's own position. For though He is a priest of no other order than that of Melchizedek, it is equally certain that His present service in the sanctuary is according to the pattern of Aaron's service and not of Melchizedek at all.

It is not sufficiently observed, that the Epistle to the Hebrews, merely asserts the *order* of the Lord Jesus Christ's priesthood to be after Melchizedek, and not after Aaron. This fact is reasoned upon in its bearing upon

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the dispensation that was now passing away; and it is shown that "the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law;" but the subject is not pursued in its prospective bearing. That which is pursued is the bloodshedding of our Lord Jesus Christ, as giving Him a title "to enter into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us;" and where His present service is typified, by the position of Aaron on the great day of atonement, when he had entered within the veil with the blood of the sin offering.

The especial bearing of the Epistle to the Hebrews is upon the subject of worship; showing that a transfer has been made of all its grounds and elements from earth to heaven. And, therefore, it does not present the cross of Christ down here, as the display of the enormity of man's sin, and the infinite depth of God's love to sinners; but it rather insists on the efficacy of the sacrifice of the cross in heaven, as giving a place before God to Him who hung upon it, in atoning mercy, by which He can bring nigh to God, and sustain in that nearness, notwithstanding their being surrounded by infirmities and imperfections, "all that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

And most comforting is it to the heart of a saint, under the daily consciousness of imperfections and shortcomings, to see the whole force and efficacy of Christ's work on earth thus brought to bear upon his acceptance before God in his daily access and worship. Who can sufficiently estimate, in a day like this, the rest of soul afforded by the perception that all the typical value of "sacrifice, and offering, and burnt offerings, and offering for sin," is concentrated in the one accomplished sacrifice of Him who said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!" and that all the sanctifying efficacy of the washings and cleansings of the Tabernacle have their issue in that word of encouragement, "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water; let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering!"

It is indeed no light thing for the people of God to

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find themselves thus recognised by God as duly anointed and cleansed as priests for his sanctuary; and to know that the full answer of all which was accomplished in type for Israel, in the High Priest's entrance into the holiest of all, with the blood of the sin-offering sprinkled seven times before the mercy-seat and upon the mercy-seat, is found in that one simple declaration. "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

It may seem hardly necessary for those to whom this paper will possess any interest, to notice that an air of mystery has been thrown around the person of Melchizedek, and much argument has been thrown away in attempting to prove him to have been a mystical and not a real person. This has arisen from a misapprehension of the terms employed in relation to Melchizedek in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and also from the desire to be "wise above that which is written." In Heb. vii. 3, he is said to be "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God abideth a priest continually." But this language is evidently used merely to indicate the way in which he is introduced upon the scene—being in perfect contrast with that which marked the priesthood of Aaron. There is no genealogy, no descent, no intimation of his induction to the priesthood, nor any point in which he quits it; none preceded him in its exercise, none succeeds him in it. He stands in perfect isolation as to his history in the divine record, and is thus the fitting *type* of him, who, "because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood."

But the whole force of the terms in question is clearly indicated in Heb. vii. 6, "He whose descent is not counted from them," etc., *i. e.*, *his ancestry, or pedigree, is not deduced from this source.*

And there is no more ground to question whether he was a real person than there is about Abram himself, or any others whose names occur in this historical scene. Nor is there any greater difficulty connected with his

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priesthood, than with that of Jethro, who is priest in the presence of both Moses and Aaron.

On the general subject of the priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ, some Christians have felt a difficulty in the assertion that its sphere is in the heavens, and that it was not entered upon until after His resurrection from the dead, and His ascension into the heavens. The objection springs from a jealousy which confounds the proper dignity of our Lord's person, with the work He accomplished and the offices to which the dignity of His person gives effect. But the Scripture is plain, "If He were on *earth*, He should not be a priest" (Heb. viii. 4). And again, "We have a great High Priest that is *passed into the heavens*" (iv.14). And still further, "Christ glorified not Himself to be made a high priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" (v. 5). That is, His call to the Melchizedek priesthood (referring to Ps. cx.) is declared to be in resurrection; as it of necessity must be, to be "after the power of an endless life."

But even the Aaronic part could only be in resurrection, and in the heavens, as the whole argument of the Hebrews is designed to show. Christ and His Church are indeed typically represented by Aaron and his sons; but then it is not in Christ on earth that the type finds its answer, but in Christ and His Church in their true position in the heavens—in the holiest of all—in the blessed presence of God, where there is now no veil to hide His presence, or to obscure for a moment the sight of Him who is "the High Priest of our profession"—and who is ever there for us.

But nothing of this marks the exercise of Christ's Melchizedek priesthood, except its continuity; for, whatever its display, His entire priesthood is "not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." As Melchizedek, there is the necessity, as we have already seen, of kingly rule; and the subjugation of enemies, and the possession of heaven and earth, *in fact* as well as by title, by the Most High God; and lastly, of universal blessing.

With all this, the communion of the Church will be

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most perfect and full. Associated with Him in union and life, who bears this glory and exercises this priesthood, what joy will it be to witness that scene which in there will be a full accomplishment of that word, "I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn and the wine and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel"—the seed of God!

But who can picture the joy of that scene, when the enemy shall be expelled from the higher sphere of Jehovah's praise, and every hostile banner that has been erected on earth shall be overthrown; when the bondage of creation shall be exchanged for "the glorious liberty of the sons of God;" when in the height of heaven, and to the uttermost parts of the earth, blessing shall be poured forth in tides, according to the measure of the desire of his heart, who to the death was obedient, that God might be glorified, and that He might in this joy see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied!

Precious is it to look forward, with the earnestness of a certain hope, to that day when He "whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things," shall come forth, and become the minister of blessing which will make heaven rejoice and the earth be glad: and when He will not only minister, but will "drink the new wine of the kingdom" with His saints! Poor, indeed, is man's best happiness and glory, in comparison with this! And poor and feeble are these thoughts, as the expression of that bright scene of joy which shall crown the counsels of grace and glory of our God; and of which Jesus, as the conqueror of sin and death and Satan, will be the centre and the spring!

It is not always in the most lengthened descriptions and minute details, that we find the fullest subjects of heavenly truth; as the succinctness of Melchizedek's history, in contrast with the book of Leviticus, and other histories of the sacred Word may show. But every ray of Christ's glory is precious, though it may not reach the central lustre which in certain portions bursts upon the soul. Every name which attaches to the Lord Jesus, and every office which He sustains—every perfection of His



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nature—and every glory in which He will be revealed, should be the meditation of our hearts; and the more it is so, the more will the blessed force of that Word be understood, “Let him that glorieth glory in the Lord.”

This is given to us of our God, to be the staple of our joy; and while the soul dwells on this, the world becomes dim, and all earthly hopes vanish, while the Word of promise is echoed back, “Even so, come Lord Jesus! come quickly!”

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SUGGESTIVE.—If we attend carefully to the “words” of the 10th chapter of the Book of Revelation, we may be kept clear of much of the perplexity and confusion which prevail in the Church of God with respect to this momentous and deeply-interesting portion of God’s Holy Word. Chap. x., “The mighty angel (verse 1) sware (verse 6) by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: but (verse 7) in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall *begin* to sound, the mystery of God should be *finished*, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.”

In chap. xi. ver. 15, to the end we have the fulfilment of this oath-confirmed prophecy. “And (verse 15) the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world *are* become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come, because Thou *hast* taken to Thee Thy great power, and *hast* reigned.” “And (verse 18) the nations were angry, and Thy wrath *is* come, and the *time of the dead, that they should be judged*, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.” “And (verse 19) the temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament: and there were lightnings and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.” My object is to call attention to the thought, that the 18th and 19th verses of this 11th chapter contain a complete *general* account of the finished mystery of God. That, in fact, the Book of Revelation has AN end here.

That which follows consists of circumstantial scenes or detailed pictures, which compose the eventful history so wonderfully generalized and condensed as to be comprised in the last two verses of the 11th chapter. M.

Worcester.

N<sup>o</sup>. XX.

## REMARKS AS TO ISRAEL;

ON THE CHANGES INCIDENTAL TO THE RECOGNITION OF A KING; AND ON THE TERM "LO AMMI."<sup>a</sup>

I DESIRE to make a few remarks upon the Priesthood—as centre of unity to Israel,—and upon the change which took place at the time of the establishment of Royalty. That a remarkable change then took place cannot be questioned. Ichabod had been written upon Israel, and every ordinary relationship with God had been broken, for the Ark of the Covenant had been taken. Hannah, in the song in which she celebrates, before this disaster, the goodness of God toward herself, had proclaimed that He would give power to His king, and would exalt the horn of His anointed.

The kingly rule is established, but, at first, not such as was according to the will of God, but, in truth, by the great sin of the people, who, in making a king, rejected God, who was their King. And from that time the Ark was never restored to its place in the Tabernacle, but David removed it to the Mount Sion; and having established all the order of the house of God upon a new footing, he had to leave to his successor (Solomon) the execution of all that which he had received by inspiration, as well as the instalment of the Priests in the temple. The order established by David was communicated to him by revelation, just as much as that of the Tabernacle had been to Moses. Everything was arranged afresh, although there were elements common to both. It was, then, the epoch of a great change, when grace, acting by means of David, placed the blessing of the people upon a new footing, at a time when all had been lost. The prophet comes in between the two states referred to, it is true, as a sort of mediator, in the person

<sup>a</sup> This translation from the French has been corrected by the author.

Zion. And the distinction was so lost at that time, that (in Acts xxvi.) the expression of the twelve tribes is a neuter in the singular (το δωδεκαφυλον). So, in citing the passage which speaks of "Lo Ammi," Paul applies it to the state of the Jews, before being called by the revelation of Jesus as Saviour without distinguishing "Lo Ruhamah" and "Lo Ammi." Peter is still more positive in his manner of expressing himself, and tells us in just so many words, that the term "Lo Ammi" applies to the state of the people before the Revelation of Christ, while those who received him quitted that position. I say "people," for it is without controversy that the expression "strangers scattered abroad" (παρεπιδημοις διασπορâς) belongs to Israel, while at the same time it restricts itself to such among them as believed. So that we have a direct revelation that the state of the people, after Babylon, was the state of "Lo Ammi" (see 1 Peter ii. 10).

I believed it might be useful to present this point clearly for brethren who are interested in it. It treats not of the question of the Church, save so far as all truths are linked together; but it treats of an epoch, singularly important, as to the government of God, because God ceased to dwell upon the throne of the earth between the Cherubim, and entrusted sovereign power to a chief raised up among the Gentiles—a state of things which is to continue under one form or other until the judgment of the world.

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"BEHOLD, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."—Jeremiah xxxi. 31—34.

## No. XXI.

## ON WORSHIP.

*Introductory Remarks.*

THE habits of a vast number of Christians, and the moral atmosphere in which they are placed, have tended to produce the very vague notions they have as to worship. Having passed from formalism and superstitious views (which left the care of their religion to others) under the influence of the feeling of the need in which they stood of the truth, they have found in the recognition of the truth, in owning and hearing it—the sum total of their ordinary religious exercises. But, surely, heaven should have some place in our religion while here below. In heaven, doubtless, the truth will be known in all its perfectness; but truth formerly received into the heart will be actually realised there in the glory of God and of the Saviour, about whom this truth treats. There will be no longer any need to hear the truth, nor to recognise it,—we shall live in it. The power of it in our hearts will be expressed in adoration. Such is the characteristic of heaven. But, surely, this should be realised, in some measure, while on earth, among those at least who have received the truth, and who, by it, have the knowledge of the God who has communicated it to us—of the Saviour who came to accomplish his work of love and of righteousness on our behalf;—among those who have received not only the truth, but even the very Spirit who gave to the truth its place in their hearts, and to them the desire of glorifying Him whom it has revealed to them. When the Holy Spirit communicates heavenly truth to the renewed heart, it always re-ascends in thanksgiving and praise. True worship is but the return to God which is made by the heart, when filled with the deep feeling of that which has been communicated from on high. The Holy Spirit, who makes the communication to us, causes the feelings

produced by the revelation of God—of His love in Jesus—of His glory, and of all the blessings wherewith He loadeth us (“our cup runneth over”) to re-ascend to God in adoration. And, surely, the heart which is penetrated with the grace of God will feel the need of returning back to Him the homage of its adoration and of its gratitude, for all the blessings which are so many proofs of the infinite and eternal love which God has had, and which He has had for us.

Let us, then, examine this subject according to the Scriptural ground which the Spirit has given us.

What, then, is worship?

“It is the honor and adoration which are rendered to God by reason of that which He *is*, and of that which He is for those who render it.”

It is the employment of heaven; blessed and precious privilege for us upon earth, if the enjoyment of it be vouchsafed to us. One might, indeed, add to this definition “rendered in common.” So to speak would not contain the denial of the possibility of worship from an isolated individual.<sup>a</sup> If Adam had continued innocent he would, doubtless, as an individual have adored God.<sup>b</sup>

But it is not, therefore, the less true, that in point of fact, worship is a homage rendered in common; because, in fact, God has blessed many and many together; be it angels or men; and hence *communion* in adoration is of

<sup>a</sup> I doubt, however, whether, in point of fact, it is possible for an adequate worship to be rendered to God by any one alone. An innocent man might bless God for His goodness; but for such worship as should rise to the height of that which God is, to be rendered by a solitary being, would suppose a capacity to apprehend the motives of worship in God, such as would put him who rendered the worship almost upon a level with Him to whom he rendered it. God would not be in the place proper to him for worship—for who alone could glorify God suitably, if himself the sole object of His favour. Here the intervention of Christ is of great importance for the foundation of worship—because God is so glorified, as that worship can be rendered to Him and those who adore Him, do so by virtue of that which He is for them in this intervention of Christ; the worship is based upon the fact that God is fully glorified, and we adore Him in acknowledging Him as thus glorified.

<sup>b</sup> Nevertheless, for man himself, God said, that it was not good that he should be alone.

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the essence of the act, because the blessing is one in common, and the joy which I have in the blessing of others is part of my own individual blessing. Their blessing forms part of *the grace* to which my heart responds; and love (which is the source and spring of it all) is defective if I enjoy not their blessing. If I bless not God for it, I am myself incapable of worship; for to bless God supposes that I am sensible of His love, and that I love.

We may, then, say, since God was not pleased that we should be alone, but that our blessing should be in communion, that worship is the honour and adoration rendered to God in common, by virtue of that which He is, and which He is in behalf of those who render it.

But it is not to an abstract definition that I desire to confine myself; quite the contrary. But it is well to know what the subject is on which we speak.

No work of God towards man is worship. Nor is any testimony rendered as to Him and His grace worship. Preaching the gospel—testimony (of infinite value) to His grace—has nought in common with worship. It may produce it, as being the means of communicating the knowledge of God in grace, which awakens the spirit of adoration in the heart; but no preaching (how blessed soever it may be) is worship rendered to God.<sup>c</sup>

It is a testimony rendered on God's part to man. This does not derogate from the value of such preaching; without it no Christian worship could exist, for the gospel makes known the God who ought to be adored, and, acting by grace, leads the soul into the state in which it is able to render true homage to God, even that which is in spirit and in truth. But it is not, therefore, the less true that no sort of testimony addressed to man from God, is worship rendered to God by man. A sermon has nothing in common with worship. It may be the means of producing it. The ministry of the word is a distinctive characteristic of the Christian economy. The

<sup>c</sup> The more one is in the spirit of worship, however, the better will one know how to render testimony—for it is clear that it is in intimacy of communion with God that one will know how to render testimony as to Him in love.

Jewish people were counted to be already in relationship with God; externally they were so. There was no question about bringing them to God; they were already His people, and God dwelt in the midst of this people, as a people whom He had redeemed; but now the kingdom of heaven and the grace of salvation are proclaimed to sinners, and there is a ministry of the gospel for the calling of souls, and to invite them to enter into relationship with God, as in Israel there had been a priesthood for the maintenance of the relationship already formed.

Neither are prayers, addressed to God in order to obtain that of which we stand in need, worship, properly so called. They more immediately connect themselves with it, because they suppose the existence of the knowledge of God and of confidence in Him, and that we draw near to Him by virtue of that which He is, and which He is for him who presents his prayers to Him. But supplications addressed to God (while founded upon confidence in Him, and thus intimately allied to adoration), have not the characteristic proper to adoration itself. Praises and thanksgivings, adoration, the making mention of the attributes of God and of His acts—whether of power or in grace—in the form of adoration, and of adoration, too, addressed to Himself, constitute that which is, properly speaking, worship. In it we draw near to God and address ourselves *to Him*. To make mention of His praises, not in an address to Himself, is undoubtedly connected with worship, and the heart refers them to Him; but such mention of his praises has not the form proper to worship, although it may enter into it subordinately, as also the prayers which adoration itself suggests. And this distinction must not be thought to be of little importance. Sweet is it to record, the one to the other, the excellencies of Him whom we love, but the redeemed delight to have God Himself in their thoughts—delight to address themselves to Him, to speak to Him, to adore Him personally, to converse with Him, to open the heart to Him, to tell Him that we love Him. To the redeemed it is a delight that these things pass between God personally and themselves, and to testify to Him the feeling they have of His greatness

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and of His goodness, because God Himself is in it. In this case the communion is between ourselves and God; and God is more precious to us than are even our brethren. Such is the feeling of our brethren also. God is the portion of all in common. In short, in the cases first supposed, we speak to ourselves, or to one another, to say for ourselves how worthy God is to be praised; in the second, we address ourselves to God personally. It is plain, to him at least who knows God, that the latter is the more excellent, that it has a charm, an excellency, which the other possesses not. The spiritual affections are evidently of a higher tone, the communion is more complete.

Having presented these general thoughts as to the nature of worship, or rather having distinguished that which, as all are agreed, is properly meant by this word *worship* from other acts which are mixed up with it in the mind by reason of the actual practice of Christians, I will now examine: What is Christian worship according to the Word? I remarked, by the way, that there is a ministry in the Christian economy as there was a priesthood in that of the Jews. I turn back to this remark, in order to develop my subject, strengthened by the recollection that the Lord connects that which He says concerning the worship which the Father seeks, with that which formerly existed at Jerusalem.

The worship of Israel, as a whole, supposed, it is true, that the people were in relationship with God, and even that God had come to dwell in the midst of them; but, in all the circumstances which characterise that worship, He made it plain, that the people themselves could not draw near to God. Moreover, this was a thought which was essential to all the relationships which existed between God and the people. God had redeemed them out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, had borne them as upon eagles' wings, and had brought them even to Himself. He had given them, as a token of their deliverance, the promise that they should worship him upon mount Sinai, to the foot of which He in truth conducted them—with proofs innumerable of His patience and of His goodness. There God shows



himself; but it is amid thunders and fire and the voice of a trumpet, which made even Moses (already familiar with the wondrous manifestations attendant upon the presence of God) to tremble. In harmony with such a revelation of his glory, the Lord commands bounds to be set around the mountain, and that if even a beast approach unto it, it should be stoned or thrust through with a dart. He spake, indeed, directly to the people, but in such a way as made the people ask that He should speak unto them no more: and God Himself approved the request. The ordinary worship of the people in the tabernacle and in the temple, while wearing an appearance which was more gentle and calm, and less terrific towards the worshipper, contained in its basis the same character. If God did not shake the earth with His voice, if His presence did not cast terror amid the people—this was because He was hid behind the veil which concealed Him from their sight. He made Himself known but by His acts of blessing and of judgment alone, and revealed not Himself to the hearts of the people. The consequence of this was natural and evident. The people came to acknowledge His benefits and to humble themselves in the thought of His just judgments, while they drew near toward the Holy place; but to Himself within the veil they never drew near. They did not even enter into His house. Within the veil the high priest alone was wont to enter once every year, in order to carry in the blood of the ram and of the bullock, of propitiatory victims, in order to make reconciliation for the people with a God who could not endure iniquity, and thus to renew their relationships with Him who demanded that His abode also should be purified from the defilements of the people among whom he vouchsafed to dwell. Doubtless, if dwelling between the cherubim, He judged from His throne that which was evil; He also heaped up blessings upon the people whom He had redeemed, with the assurance that, if they were faithful, they should be protected from all the attacks of their enemies. The people sought His protection and worshipped Him for the benefits He had conferred. The faith of the individual seized perhaps more immediately

the glory of the Lord, but did not go, and could not, beyond the revelation which He had given of Himself in the government of Israel. The institution of the priesthood was the natural consequence of such a state of things; but the priests themselves fulfilled their service outside the veil which hid from them the God they adored. The way into the Holy place, says the apostle, was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was yet standing. Here, then, we see the character of Jewish worship as God established it. But all is changed now. Christian worship is founded upon principles which are in direct contrast<sup>d</sup> with all that about which we have just spoken. There was a shadow as to persons and circumstances in connection with which worship is now occupied, but the principles of its exercise, at that time, were in perfect opposition to those upon which Christian worship is based.

The honour and adoration rendered to God by virtue of that which He is, and of that which He is for us, depend necessarily upon the revelation which He makes of Himself. God changes not; but no one draws near to Him in the light to which no man can approach. It is when He reveals Himself that our relationships with Him begin—be they partial or be they perfect. Now God, under the law, manifested Himself as requiring of man that which man ought to be, and, having placed him, by Divine power, in a position in which he ought to have brought forth fruit to the glory of Him who had made Israel to be His own vine, He blessed man if he was faithful to his duty, and He judged him if he was not so. Under such circumstances, God could not fully reveal Himself. Man was capable of bearing neither the brightness of His majesty nor the light of His holiness. His sovereign love, as Saviour, agreed not with the peremptory demand for services under pain of a curse—a just demand, nevertheless, which served to manifest the need in which man was placed of that love and of that grace which brings salvation. God might act, bless, and

<sup>d</sup> It will be found, consequently, on examination, that the Epistle to the Hebrews, throughout, bears the character of a contrast rather than a comparison.

punish; but, if He revealed Himself fully, it must needs be in order to be found in relationship with what perfectly responds to that which He Himself is. Otherwise it would be to endure iniquity (and that would not be Himself) or to drive it absolutely from before His face; in which case love would not have its place—and God is love. The immediate revelation of Himself such as He is to man is impossible.

God putting Himself in relationship with man as a sinner yet responsible, acted, and concealed Himself.

Now Christianity is based upon an altogether new interposition of God; an interposition arranged in His counsels before the world was, but which waited for its accomplishment, not only the act of sin in man, but that sin should come to its full height, and should have taken the form (which was nothing else than its essential character) of enmity against God, and against God in the most perfect manifestation which was possible of His goodness and of His authority, and of His authority to be exercised in grace over man. Christ appeared, and man crucified Him!

What relationship then was possible between man and God? All is judgment, or all is grace. The former, (which will surely be exercised against all iniquity, and specially against those who have despised grace,) is not, (I thank God), our present subject. It forms only the dark and solemn background of the picture, and throws into relief the perfection, necessity, and brilliancy of grace.

It is with the latter (blessing God therefore), that we have to be occupied. Now, if man crowned his iniquity in rejecting, in the person of Jesus, not only the authority, but also the goodness of God, the same act which perfected the manifestation of the sin which was in the heart of man, and gave its full development to the positive evil which flowed thence—accomplished at the same time all that which the justice of God required with regard to that sin, and manifested His perfect love. Man is there fully made manifest: God also has there acted in all the full plenitude of His holy justice against sin. In Christ He was perfectly glorified in that respect. The

affections and the majesty of God have no longer aught to claim from him who comes to God by Jesus Christ. His love is free to bless. The holiness of God is an infinite delight to those who can draw near to Him; for there is no longer any question about guilt between the worshipper and God. Christ has abolished it by the sacrifice of Himself. Entirely cleansed according to the efficacy of the work of Christ Himself, we draw nigh to that place where there is no guilt, to enjoy all that God can heap upon us of blessing; there, where His love has free course, without the hindrance which sin puts in its way, whether we consider His affections or His justice. Passing over it all we come to enjoy Himself. We are in relationship with God, without guilt in His sight, for the enjoyment of that which He is, having been led to the knowledge of Him by means of that which He has been for us in that glorious work by which He has reconciled us unto Himself, and has introduced us into His presence in the light—Christ, having accomplished the work which glorifies God as to sin, has appeared in His presence for us. And further, a necessary consequence, or rather striking expression of these truths, the veil (which was the sign that no one could draw nigh to God), has been rent from the top to the bottom. We have full liberty of entrance into the most holy place; God Himself is perfectly and fully manifested. The stroke which rent the veil and made manifest the God of holiness who cannot endure iniquity; who must needs smite the very Son of His love when He took upon Himself our sin—that same stroke removed the guilt which would have barred our approach to Him thus unveiled, because it could not have appeared in His sight. The light of that presence shines upon us cleansed from all guilt; and that which manifests all the holiness of His justice, which throws out into prominence all its vastness—has rendered us able to abide in the presence of that holiness without spot, and in joy.

All that God is has been manifested in that which He has been for us; and we can enjoy Him as our portion, according to His infinite love in Christ. Such is the basis of worship. That which the angels desire to look

into is the daily aliment of all our precious relationships with God; and no one recognises as he should the glory of the work of Christ, or of the love of his God, to which he is debtor for everything, who takes not up this place for himself. No one can render worship worthy of God upon any other footing. Indeed, no one has recognised himself to be a sinner aright who pretends to offer worship to God otherwise than in this liberty; for who would dare to present himself before God, if *all guilt* had not been removed? Who would dare to place himself in His presence without a veil; he cannot do it otherwise, for the veil is rent. God will not, cannot any longer, now that He has manifested Himself; now that the true light shines—endure any sin, in any manner, in His presence. Who is free from sin out of Christ? On whom, of those who are in Christ, does it rest? No: in Him it is ours no longer in the presence of God, since He has cleansed us from it; cleansed us by a work which could not possibly be done a second time, the efficacy of which is at once eternal and perfect. And this alone gives freedom to the spiritual affections. For us God is perfect love, and introduces us into the light as He is in the light. But who can fully enjoy that love if there be a bad conscience? Attracted he may be—but find enjoyment he cannot. His affections cannot have free play if his conscience reproaches him with offences against Him who loves Him—if it produces fear in his soul. The heart must be free, if the affections are to be in exercise. But the work of Christ cleanses the conscience, and sets the heart free by the thought of the perfect love of God which is known by the perfect love which He has had for us, of which Christ is the proof and fulness. The light of His holiness is the joy of our souls. It is in that light that we see all that we love. This relationship, which exceeds all our thoughts, is presented to us in the most striking manner in the title “God of our Lord Jesus Christ.” When God calls himself the God *of* any one, he alludes to a tie of intimacy formed between that person and Him who bears his name superadded to His own—a relationship which has for its basis that which God is for the one, whose God

he is, and which implies the purpose to bless and honour according to the relationship, to which God cannot be unfaithful, and which is the subject of enjoyment, in God, by faith, of him whose name is added to the name of God; at least, that which he has the right to appropriate as pertaining to himself on the part of God. Thus, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, besides being specially their God as the objects of distinctive blessing, is that which God was for these patriarchs, according to the revelation which He had made to them of Himself—that upon which their faith could count in their relationships with Him;—that which they were called to realise. He placed Himself in relationship according to that which His name expressed. Their spiritual privileges had this name for their character and measure. Thus God, in relation to us, is that which is expressed in the title, “God of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is thus that He reveals Himself to us in order that we may be in relationship with him according to the import of this title.

When this is understood, we can comprehend what a glorious position we have in drawing near to God by virtue of this title, “God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory.” For, here, Christ is as a man, as being at the head of a new family, ascended to his God and our God. This God, to whom we draw near, is, for us, all that He is for Christ entered into His presence, as having perfectly glorified Him upon earth; His beloved Son, in whom He is always well pleased. This truth stands out in full prominency in chapters i. and ii. of the Epistle to the Ephesians. The Apostle in chapter i. prays that the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, we may know what is the hope of the calling of God, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints (ver. 18). Then he unites us with Christ in that which he shows to be the true import of that glory—and what is the exceeding greatness of His power *toward us who believe*, according to the mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from among the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, etc. And

you [says he] who were dead in trespasses and sins, He hath quickened together with Him—raised up together, and made sit together in heavenly places in Christ,—in order that He might show, in the ages to come, what are the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us by Jesus Christ. And what are the relationships which God has with Jesus Christ? What is there that belongs to Him, on God's part, in justice, in love, even as a man? Who can sound the love of God toward Christ? What are His claims upon the affection of His Father? See, then, in what a wondrous place we are when we come into the presence of God! The glory, even, which God has given unto Him, He has given unto us, in order that the world may know that we are loved even as He is loved. The words of the Lord will be remembered. "I ascend unto my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God."

The two prayers, that of chapter i. of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and that of chapter iii. will be seen to be respectively based upon these two titles. The prayer of chapter i. is founded upon the second title, viz., that of "God;" chapter iii. upon the former, viz., that of "Father:" the first in view of *glory*, and the second in view of *communion in love*. The passage just cited from John xvii., shows that the communication of the glory, all wondrous as it is, is, after all, but the proof that we are loved even as Jesus is loved. What simplicity in this truth, but what love, and what Divine depth even in the proportions of its very simplicity! "I was" as the first Adam; "I am" as the second Adam; I have borne the image of the first, "shall" bear the image of the second. Yes, it is simple; but who would have thought of it but God? It is Himself whom we know therein. The names of the tribes of Israel borne upon the breast of the high priest, as was also their judgment according to the light and perfection of God, were, after all, but a shadow (as says the Apostle) of such blessings. Therefore God, in speaking of the true circumcision (Phil. iii.), says, "we worship God in spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." All that puts us out of

this position, and supposes the need of anything as a means of our drawing near to God—all that suggests that there needs something intermediate, inasmuch as we are *in* Christ, puts us out of Him, and places us in Judaism which has, as a system, been nailed to the cross, and which, since the cross, is no better than any heathen ordinance (see Gal. iv.) We are in Christ, or we are out of Christ; one with Him, or separate from Him. If we are separate from Him—the distance matters not—we are not in union with the fountain of life. The body separated from the head by a space more minute than the imagination of man can conceive; the body having between it and the head anything, thinner than the beaten leaf of gold, is a body without life. In Christ we are the objects of God's delight in Him, and we are as He is. Out of Christ, we are but objects of His judgment. What should we be before the God of our Lord Jesus Christ—our God? Therefore we are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; but to follow out the glorious consequences of our position would lead us away from our subject.

But there is yet another thing which is connected with the work of Christ, and on which worship necessarily hangs. Not only has Christ borne away our sin, cleansing us for the presence of God, whose love is manifest in the unspeakable gift of His Son; but in order that we may enjoy this, He has gained for us, at the same time, the gift of the Holy Spirit. Not only do we receive a new nature, which is holy and capable of sentiments suitable to the position in which grace has placed us as before God, but we receive the Holy Spirit, who communicates to us the things which are in the Divine presence, and inspires sentiments such as they should awaken. We are strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man, in order that being rooted and grounded in love, Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, and that we may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the length, and breadth, and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is



given unto us. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us, and all that the Father hath is Christ's. That which eye hath not seen, which ear hath not heard, which came not into the heart of man—the things which God has prepared for him whom He loves—God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

The Holy Spirit is the unction which we receive of God, by the which we know the things which are freely given to us of God; by the which we know all things. He is the seal which God has put upon us unto the day of redemption: God has marked for that day of glory those who believe. He is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. He gives us the full assurance of the efficacy of the work of Christ, the knowledge of the position in which we are placed, cleansed by the blood of the Saviour, in the sight of God—without spot in the light. By Him the love which was ready to undertake, and which has accomplished all these things, and which has brought us to the enjoyment of such great blessing, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. He is the originator in us of all the thoughts and of all the affections which are the response to it, even as He communicates all that produces them. But He does more, He is more than all this for us. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. This is not merely an imagination, a feeling, but is a fact; the same Spirit, whose fulness is in Christ, abides in us, and we are united to Christ, members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. By One Spirit we have all been baptized, that we might be one body. Not only is He the power, the link of this union, but He gives us the consciousness of it. "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." The Holy Spirit, then, gives us, first of all, the assurance of our redemption. Where the Spirit is, there there is liberty. He reveals to us the glory of Christ, as to Stephen, who, full of the Holy Ghost, beheld the glory of God, and the Son of Man at the right hand of God. Moreover, He gives us the consciousness of our union with Christ on high. We know that we are quickened

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together with Him, raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ. Besides all this—and which is its spring and fountain of joy while we think of it—He sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. All this also turns into rivers of joy and of love overflowing toward this poor world and toward Christians; but I enter not into this precious consequence and blessed privilege, because our subject is worship.

Another truth, of minor importance, but very precious in its place, depends upon this presence of the Holy Spirit: we are of the same body, and thus members one of the other. If Christ is the Head of the body, each Christian is a member of it, and consequently united by the Holy Spirit (who forms the bond of the whole) to every other member. The same Spirit dwells in each Christian; his body is His temple, and having thus united them together, the whole is also His temple. God dwells there by His Spirit, in a manner less palpable, but far more excellent, than in the temple of Jerusalem.

Now, it is in this position, according to this glorious revelation of God, which His love has made to us, and by this Spirit which He has given that we might enjoy it, that true Christian worship is offered to God.

It is thus we know what He is, and what He is for us who offer it to Him. Beholding Him, without a veil, according to the perfection of His Being, of His love, and of His holiness—rendered capable of abiding in the light, as He Himself is in the light, by the selfsame work by which He has revealed it—and thus according to the same perfectness; the objects of that love which spared not His well-beloved Son, in order that we might be in it; having received His Spirit in order that we might comprehend this love, and thus be enabled to adore Him according to His heart's desire, we offer our worship to Him according to that which He has manifested Himself to be in heart toward us, in those things which angels desire to look into, and by the which He will make known in the ages to come the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us in Jesus, yet whom we already know by the Spirit.

But there remains yet another element of our intelligent

service—the character of the Father. God must be worshipped in spirit and in truth, for He is a Spirit: but then again, the Father seeketh such to worship Him.

To worship in spirit, is the powerful energy of communion which the Spirit of God gives (in contrast with the forms and ceremonies—with all the religion of which the flesh is capable)—and in the true nature of Him whom we worship (comp. Phil. iii.)

To worship God in truth—that is, to worship Him according to the revelation which He has given of Himself.

The Samaritans worshipped God neither in spirit nor in truth. The Jews worshipped God in truth, so far as that can be said of a revelation which was imperfect; for the truth came not but by Jesus Christ (the darkness, says the apostle, is past, and the true light now shineth); but they worshipped Him in no respect *in spirit*. Now, to worship God, both are needful: the true revelation of Himself, in order that we may worship Him in truth; and to do so according to His nature, that is in spirit.

Yet this is not all that is presented to us in this passage; another precious element is found there: The Father seeks such worshippers. It is grace which makes such now. Grace desires *such*, but it desires them. It is not a responsibility imposed by the flames of mount Sinai, which, in the very act of demanding worship, in the name of the holy majesty of the Lord, placed, by the very requirement, a barrier which no one could pass under penalty of death: Majesty so terrific that it closed the way of access to God by the very act of requiring that we should draw near to Him—leaving the worshipper far off from God, trembling under the sense of responsibility although encouraged by the benefits he received from Him whom he dared not approach. No. Love seeks worshippers under the gentle name of Father. It places them in a position of freedom before Him as the children whom He loves; the Spirit who acts in them to produce worship is the spirit of adoption which cries Abba! Father! It is not that God has lost His Majesty, but that He whose majesty is far better known bears this

tender character of Father towards us. The Spirit who makes us worship the Father, gives us to perceive all the love of God, who has led us to worship Him there as His children.

The sense of this, God be thanked, belongs to the most simple and the most ignorant among Christians. The Christian, when once he has understood grace and has received the spirit of adoption, possesses it without any reasoning, as a child knows his father before he can give any account of that which he enjoys. I have written these things unto you, says St. John, addressing himself to the little children, in Christ, because you have known the Father. The feeblest Christian is, therefore, perfectly competent for worship. At the same time, it is sweet to be able to account to oneself for, and the more one thinks, the more one examines the word on this subject, the more will one see the import, the deep blessedness of, this relationship with God. The simple fact that God is our Father, and that we possess the enjoyment of such a relationship with Him by the Spirit, is in itself an immense privilege for creatures such as we are. Every child of God has this privilege in unquestioned right; but it is in Christ that we possess it, and with Christ. He is the first-born among many brethren. He is gone to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God. What a precious relationship, what a family is that into which we are introduced; and how are we to learn, we, who were formerly strangers to these affections and to this love, how do we learn these things? How learn what the Father is, the knowledge of whom gives birth to these things in our hearts? It is the only begotten son, the first-born in this new relationship, who reveals Him unto us, who reveals Him as he himself has known Him. Eternal son of the Father, enjoying the infinite love of Him in whose bosom he dwelt. Become man upon this earth, Jesus ceased not to be the object of the same affection,—affection which, when challenged, could not retain silence—This is my beloved son (said the voice of the Father), in whom I am well pleased. Nor did He in anything put Himself at a distance from it. Upon earth Christ was the object of this love, and He revealed Him

in whom it was found. No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who IS in the bosom of the Father, he has revealed Him. Jesus, a man, the Son, in the enjoyment of the fulness of this affection, dwells, being upon earth, in the bosom of the Father, to originate here below, as being the object of it, all the beauty, all the force of that affection. Himself also He loved his disciples even as the Father loved him. As man, He was the object of this love, in order that we might understand it in its application to men. So He associates us with Himself in the joy of this love, and He reveals it to us as he himself knows it. How could He reveal it save as he knew it himself? But what grace and what a position for us! How does Jesus himself, who, by his sufferings, by his devotedness, has placed us therein, become for us an object of love and of adoration, of devotedness of heart. The very glory which we possess is presented to us by the Saviour as a proof of this love. "The glory," said He, in chap. xvii. of John, "which thou hast given unto me I have given unto them, that the world may know that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." He loves us enough to make him desire that we may enjoy this, so he renders us capable of it. "I have declared," says he, in the same chapter, "thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world, and I will declare it, in order that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them." Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus. This fellowship expresses itself in adoration towards Him who is revealed and towards him who reveals.

It will be easily seen how the work of Christ is at the foundation of all this, whether in order to present us without spot and without fear in the presence of the God whom we adore in the light, or in order to place us in the relationship of children toward the Father. It was after his resurrection that Christ could say, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." Then it was that He could say, "Go to my brethren." Now the Spirit which He gives from on high, answers to this blessing: He is the Spirit of adoption, as He is the Spirit of liberty, because we are accepted in the Beloved, and

have the enjoyment of a redemption which has made us the righteousness of God in him, placing us in God's presence without spot.

Thus we have, in principle, at least, the great foundation truths of Christian worship. Perfect in Christ; united to him; objects of the same love, in the presence of God, whose love and holiness are manifest without a veil, and constitute the infinite joy of our hearts; children beloved of the Father with Christ the first-born; we worship together according to the power, affections, and energy which the Spirit, who has been given to us inspires; the God of glory, whose presence is the stay instead of being the terror of our souls; the God of love, whose will was to lead us thither, in order to render us perfectly happy in Him; that He Himself might enjoy our perfect happiness, Himself finding more happiness in our blessedness than even we ourselves; love, nevertheless, which we recognise while we love; we adore our Father with endearing confidence in His kindness,—kindness which blesses us with all spiritual blessings, and counts the very hairs of our heads while thoughtful of all our needs. We adore Him for that which he is; we adore Him for that which He is for us, the children of His house for eternity. We act thus in the consciousness that we are His beloved children, we present ourselves before the same Father—our common Father; so that the affections of brethren are developed, the joy of the blessing of each is reciprocally the joy of all, and praises multiplied ascend to God; for a joy full of love, and which is renewed by the blessing of another, by a common blessing, is far more powerful than the joy which flows merely from one's own peculiar blessing: it has more *of God* in it. Hence we see in the New Testament, that, while indeed the consciousness of this relationship must necessarily be individual in order for us to enjoy it together, and must be maintained in personal relationship with God and upon individual responsibility; yet at the same time the Spirit constantly uses the word *Us* when speaking of Christian affections and feelings. The Holy Spirit shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts, it could not be otherwise.

But the effect of the presence of this one Spirit goes yet much further. Not only does He give us the consciousness of being in Christ, perfect before God, presented according to the efficacy of the redemption which He has accomplished, the consciousness of being children with the Father who loves them, and who has introduced them into His house, but He gives us also the consciousness of being but one body, the body of Christ, and members one of another. The Church which God has created—that one new man—the redeemed who have been all baptised into one body—not offering worship save by the Spirit, they necessarily offer it as but one body, and that with all the redeemed—they are the tabernacle of God through the Spirit, and that Spirit uniting them all in the unity of the body of Christ, the adoration goes up on high toward the God who formed them to be but one new man in Christ. If Israel was, as a whole, represented by the priests who officiated in the tabernacle, the faithful who render direct worship to God, do it in the unity in which they are all one body in Christ. There is more than brotherhood, there is unity, not of nation, and not only of family, but of the members of one body by one Spirit. It is the Church's portion, which alone is baptised in order to be one body in Christ, the Head being ascended up on high, in order that she may do it freely and with joy before God by that unction which descends from Him.

Let us state some of the practical effects which flow hence:—

First: it is evident that worship is the privilege only of the children of God—being to be offered in spirit and in truth—to be offered to Him who cannot admit sin into His presence. He who is washed in the blood of the Lamb and who has received the Spirit, and such only, can draw near to God to adore Him. That a man who is not converted should render worship to God, is simply what is impossible. God can bless such a one in temporal things. The man may, perhaps, ask such a blessing, and be heard: God may have tender compassion for him, as for a poor sinner, but as yet he knows not God, as yet he has not the Spirit, he is not as yet washed in the

blood of Christ. That he thinks to draw nigh to God, is but the proof that he is ignorant of that which he is in himself, and of that which the God, whom he thinks to serve, is. Who else can enter into the sanctuary save he who is sanctified?—who address himself to a Father, as such, save a child? Moreover, the fact of the unity of the body of Christ, and that the worship is offered by the Spirit which has formed this unity and dwells in the body as in a temple, excludes, by the fact itself that the worship is offered, him who is not of the body. It is to deny its existence, to suppose that a person who has not the Spirit can be of it; it is to deny its end and its nature; for if a man not converted can enter and worship the God who is served there, there is no need that there should be either such a body or the redemption which is the basis of it. Why should there be the redeemed, if the worldling can serve God in his presence? Wherefore a body of Christ, if the worldling forms a part of it? Wherefore adore God by the Spirit, if he who has not the Spirit can adore just as well? Worship in common, supposes that I can say *We*, in sincerity, when addressing God; it supposes persons united in one body by the same Spirit. A hypocrite may be there—he will be a hindrance in the worship; but its validity will not be thereby destroyed when the worshipper says *Us*, in truth, in the name of all. It is believers who worship God.

To render true worship to God, supposes that a soul is set at liberty. That is to say, that such a one finds himself free to draw near to God in virtue of the efficacy of the work of Christ. If I see a soul ever so timid which loves God, and which has no other hope than the work of Christ, clearly my part is to encourage such a one; but if such a one has no real knowledge of the efficacy of the work of Christ, he will be ill at ease even in drawing near to God, because His presence will communicate to it rather the conscience of its sin, than of the joy which that presence inspires to him who enjoys it in the peace which is by Christ. Nevertheless, in such cases, right affections often precede the being set free, and are more correct than the reasoning of the soul which is still trembling; but this state is not the normal state of



worship. Before God, in the light, purified from all sin by the blood of Christ, such is the position of the true worshipper. The believer *is* always thus. In order to worship truly, he must know himself to be so. Sometimes the bad teaching one has had neutralises in the mind the liberty, though the soul, all the while in solitude with God, cries Abba, Father! As a principle, whatever be the allowance made by charity for these cases of ignorance, true worship offered to God supposes that we can draw near to Him without fear; but this is a necessary and absolute effect of the blood and of the work of Christ, of which every true believer has the benefit. It is the presence of the Spirit who gives the enjoyment of it.

What joy, to be able thus to adore God! What a source of joy is He whom we adore! How great the blessedness of finding oneself in His presence, no cloud between, and without fear, being the righteousness of God in Christ—that presence being but an inexhaustible spring of joy for the nature which He has given us, and which is capable of finding its enjoyment in Him! What joy, to be able to express one's acknowledgments, to render to Him one's thanksgivings, knowing that they are acceptable to Him! What a blessing to have His very Spirit, the Spirit of freedom and of adoption, as our power of acting thus, inspirer of praise and of the feeling of confidence and of adoration! What joy to act thus in unity, as members of the same family and of the same body, sensible that the joy is one common to all; sensible that those whom we love are perfectly acceptable to the Lord, and that they all find their pleasure in praising Him, who is worthy and who has loved us,—the God who is the source of our happiness and the object of our adoration—the Lord who gave Himself in order that He might be our portion!

The perfection of all this will be in heaven. But Christian worship is the realisation here below, in weakness, without doubt, of that which will form our eternal blessedness and our life. We have the privilege of feeling ourselves for a little while delivered from the world, withdrawn even from the work of faith, in order

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to enjoy the state of things in which Christ will see all the travail of His soul and be satisfied. I repeat it is in weakness, but in truth, through the Spirit. Also, the worship being offered by the Spirit, is offered in the unity of the whole body; it may be there are but two or three present; but He who is the centre and bond of all the members, is found there; and also by His Spirit we are necessarily and in love bound up with all the other members of His body, which is but one. "We comprehend with all saints [be the number of those uniting together what it may] the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." The truth abides in undiminished force, that life is cultivated in private; but it is exercised before God in all the common joy of the Church. I believe there will be in heaven itself an individual joy and communion, and which will be known but to him who enjoys it. This precious truth, I think, is taught in that which is said to the Church of Pergamos: "To him that overcometh will I give a white stone, and a name written thereon, which no one knoweth saving he that receiveth it." I add, that the ability actually to enjoy worship in communion depends upon the maintenance of the inward life; for how enjoy it, if God is not known in the soul? I add these few words lest any one should suppose that the joy of fellowship may lead to a neglect of the hidden walk with God individually. This is far from my thought; if the latter exist not, either the worship will be cold, or the joy will be carnal. But the true blessedness of worship depends upon the presence of the holy Spirit, and, therefore, upon the spiritual condition of those who are present, as taking part in it, save so far as the sovereign goodness of God interferes. This leads me to refer to a very important principle. Namely, that the holy Spirit is the energy, the sole-living source of all that takes place in worship, so far as it is genuine. Moreover, it is a principle, which is universally true—true of all the Christian life. We live by the Spirit; we walk by the Spirit; we worship in spirit and in truth. It is the Spirit who contends against the flesh; it is the affection of the Spirit which is the expression of the whole of the inward Christian life; but in Christian worship, the

members of Christ being united together, the Spirit acts in the body. All that which is real and blessed comes from Him. Sovereign in action, but acting according to the spiritual capacity of each; he makes use of this, in order to express the feelings which are suitable to the assembly before God, but He raises them up to Him, for God is there in order to nourish by His grace. That which takes place ought to be according to the spiritual capacity of the assembly, raising it up, however, causing it to draw nigh to God. It is thus that the holy Spirit acts, for he acts in man, but according to the energy and grace of God. When Christians are met together in companies, the members each acting in his place through the Spirit, the opportunity is presented for the exercise of the gifts of the members, which are used in view of the edification of the body. I say the members of the body, because evangelisation is necessarily addressed to the world. That is to say, an assembly which has worship for its primary object is the occasion, by its very nature, for the exercise of all the gifts which tend to the edification of the body, although such exercise be in no wise the object proposed by the meeting.<sup>e</sup>

This is clearly established by the fourteenth chapter of the 1st Corinthians, which speaks in the most express manner of the exercise of gifts when the assembly is together, and gives directions to regulate the order of such exercise. This is easily understood. The meeting, being formed as the body of Christ, and the Spirit acting by the members of this body, edifies itself by that which is furnished by each member according to the gift which is distributed to each; the Spirit guiding all, in order that it may be for edification, which is His object. But

<sup>e</sup> Worship is every whit as perfect without the exercise of any gift, and indeed, in itself, more so. If the gifts are habitually used in such a way as to falsify the character of the meeting, and to deprive it of its true character of worship we are always losers thereby. For, if the Spirit of God who acts, finds it meet to exhort and to teach the members of the body on such occasions, it still remains true that to be able to adore God, without having the need of being exhorted, is a more excellent state: one is, in this case, more simply, and more entirely, with God—in the enjoyment, by grace, of Himself.

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the principal matter is to draw near to God Himself; the exercise of gifts is but a means; the joy of love in the presence of God, in worshipping Him, the eternal aim. Gifts will cease in heaven, as also the ignorance which makes instruction needful, and the idleness which needs exhortation. Worship will, thank God, never cease. Under the law, the service of the priest was more excellent than that of the Levite; the Levite served; the Priest drew nigh to God, according to the unction which he had received. In the use of gifts we are Levites. In worship we are priests. Moreover, he, who through the Spirit takes part in the worship itself, does not use a gift,<sup>f</sup> which is in general a faculty given of God to act among men. At the same time, it is the measure of spirituality which gives the capability of being the organ of the assembly. The Spirit, then acting in spiritual men, in order to express the spiritual affections of the assembly—is the mode in which worship is rendered to God.

We have remarked, which, moreover, in every Christian soul, connects itself with the foundation of the truth, that the sacrifice of Christ is the necessary and fundamental basis of all Christian worship. We know that it is by means of this sacrifice alone that we can draw nigh to God, and that it is only in confiding in its efficacy that we can present ourselves before God, who has demanded all the holiness of it, all its perfect value; who, in his nature, could demand no less. But this is not all the relation which exists between worship and the sacrifice of Christ. Christ having opened to us this new and living way through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, we have full liberty to enter, through His blood, into the most holy place. But is that all? Do we forget the precious sacrifice when once we have entered by virtue of its worthiness? No. It is there that we recognise it, that we learn to appreciate its full value.

<sup>f</sup> It seems that the gift of tongues was used in prayer as much as in teaching. This is easily understood, the spiritual man being required to take part in an assembly, the language of which he understood not but by revelation. This only confirms the general idea as stated above.

Before entering thither, we might measure the value of the work of Christ, by the needs into which sin had plunged us. Now, happy, and in communion with God, tasting the sweetness of His love, instructed in his thoughts and feelings, we measure [what yet surpasses all measure], this work by the grace of God, which has been unfolded in it; we see in it that which God sees in it, instead of seeing only that which the sinner sees in it, all precious as such perception may be for us at the time in which it was vouchsafed to us. In the enjoyment of peace, being in heaven [spiritually speaking] by virtue of this sacrifice, we contemplate its value with the eyes of God; we are nourished with all its perfectness according to God's thoughts. For these thoughts, and this vision are given to us by the Spirit to sanctify us, to bring our hearts into harmony with that which is in heaven. We see also in the offering He made of Himself what the love of Christ has been for us.

The death of Christ has such a value in God's sight, that the Lord who, only begotten Son of the Father, was all His delight before the world was, could say, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again." His devotedness to the glory of His Father, was in it, absolute. All that belonged to the moral development of that glory, was therein accomplished, at the cost of Him who suffered. All that mysterious evil, by means of which Satan had sway in this world, and misery, death and condemnation had entered, was turned to the manifestation of the glory of God. The righteousness of God, his majesty, his love, [impossible to reconcile together in the midst of sin] were thrown out in relief by sin itself, by means of Him who consented to be made sin for us. On the other hand, if we consider the personal perfection of Christ, His devotedness to the will of His Father, His love, obedience, submission, sacrifice of all, even to His life, in order that the Father might be glorified, and that those whom He loved might be saved. His perfect patience—the confidence in God which never failed, even when He was forsaken, all are found united in the cross. And when

one thinks who He was—when one thinks that it was for us that He did it, what a value ought His death to have in our sight. Add to all this, the power of Satan overcome; death destroyed—become even a gain for us; the veil removed from before the presence of God; a perfection beyond the possibility of a taint, introduced into the whole wide universe, which it fills with peace and light, and of which it has made us the heirs; and more than all, the perfect enjoyment of the love of God. What moral worth has that cross in our eyes, however feeble may be our ability to proclaim it—however feeble our hearts may be, as vessels, to contain the sentiments it inspires. Our adoration necessarily links itself with the cross, the God whom we adore was there glorified, and could not be suitably so without it; there it is that we have learnt that which He is.

But is it a glory which is far from us, which dazzles us, and which forces us to a distance by its very greatness? Quite the contrary. Christ hung upon the cross for us, in our stead, as the very lowest from among the children of men; His visage marred more than any man's. His cross is the expression of tender affection toward us, stronger than death. He loved us even unto the end. He took upon Himself to render us happy in the presence of the Father; able to enjoy His presence—He counted nothing too dear to Him that He might accomplish this. And His heart, perfect in love, is attached to those whose cause he has undertaken. He has associated them with himself. He who had need of nought, had need of *us*. I go to prepare a place for you, said he, and if I go and prepare a place, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also. Whom seek ye, said he, in the garden of Gethsemane; if ye seek me, let these go their way, that his word might be accomplished. Of those whom thou gavest me I have lost none. He gave himself for us. With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you, said He, before I suffer, for I will no more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. As the Passover was the memorial of the deliverance out of Egypt for Israel, so the Supper is the memorial, not only of our deliverance

but moreover, of the love of Him who has delivered us. If Jesus attaches value to our remembrance, if he puts Himself thus near us with so much tenderness—it is a love, at the same time, which produces the very deepest affections; affections which are connected with what is most exalted in the grace of God, and which express themselves in the adoration of the heart. We can understand, then, that although worship is offered in various ways, by hymns, by thanksgivings, in the form of prayers, in praise, etc., we can understand, I say, that the Supper, as representing that which forms the basis of all worship, is the centre of its exercise, around which the other elements that compose it are grouped. The worshipper is reminded of that which is the most precious of all things in the sight of God, the death of his beloved Son. He recalls the act in which the Saviour testifies his love to himself in the most powerful way. Other considerations add their weight to those which we have just presented with regard to the Supper. One is at table in the house of God. One eats, as the priests, of the things with which expiation has been made; one enters with spiritual affection into the perfection of that expiation, and of that which Christ has been in the accomplishment of it; he that eats my flesh and drinks my blood, dwells in me and I in him. I apply not this exclusively to the supper; though it is the most vivid expression of it.

The peace offering presents, with the passover, the most lively images of the true character of the supper. The former was a feast consequent upon a sacrifice, in the second Israel fed upon the sacrifice, the blood of which was their guarantee against judgment. In the former the partakers were, God, the priest who officiated, the priests, the worshipper, and those who were with him. The fat burnt upon the altar was called the food of God. This is the full satisfaction of God in the sweet odour of the work of Christ. The priest who offered the blood had his part. This is Christ, who has enjoyment in the joy of those that are His, produced by the efficacy of His death—of the fruit of the travail of His soul: the other priests eat another part—they represent

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Christians in general; lastly, the guests of Him who makes the sacrifice represent united worshippers. God himself has His part in the joy, so has Christ, the Church in general, and lastly, the assembly which participates therein. This figure of the peace offering is found, again, in a manner more precious in the supper. We feed on, and are nourished, through faith, by that holy victim, already offered, the sweet savour of which ascends to God. Christ has His joy in our joy, we share in it with all the Church. Already in heaven, in spirit, we bethink ourselves of what has given us the right to enter there, of that which will be precious above all to our souls when we are there. As Joshua celebrated the passover in Canaan before the walls of Jericho—separated from the world, and united in one body, we shew forth the death of Jesus, which is the foundation of our salvation, until he come, and we are for ever with Him on high, where remembrance will be useless because we shall be with Himself. Praises, the devotion of our adoration, our thanksgivings are necessarily linked up with the acceptance by our God, in heaven, of the sacrifice of Christ. This is ever true as to the heart; but it is this which makes the supper to form a part of the worship, if that is, so to speak, perfect. In the Old Testament this truth was expressed in figure in a remarkable manner. In the peace-offering, if any one eat the flesh of the victim on a day which was too far removed from the moment when the fat was burnt upon the altar as a sacrifice to God—it was, instead of being communion, a sin. In the case of thanksgivings, a man might eat of the flesh only on the same day. In the case of a voluntary offering, on the morrow also. The joy of the worshipper must be in immediate connection with the offering made to God; otherwise it was profane. Greater energy of piety gave more force to this association, so that in the latter case, the repast on the morrow was not really separate from the sacrifice.

The importance of the Lord's supper in worship, whether in connection with the sacrifice offered to God, foundation of all our relationships with him, or in connection with the affection and the devotedness of Christ



for us (which are the two things which form the sphere of the spiritual affections in exercise in worship), will be clear enough when we reflect upon the truths of which we have just spoken. But there is another point also connected with it.

We have seen that the Holy Spirit being the source, force, and conductor of all true Christian worship offered to God, the unity of the body formed by him and in which he acts, is found necessarily to hold a prominent place in the worship which he produces in its members united together. Love, which is the soul of it, is defective in one of its most perfect forms, if the conscience of this unity is wanting. The presence of the Holy Spirit produces the consciousness of this unity, of which he is the author and the bond. Now, considered in one aspect, the supper is the expression of this unity. We are all but one body, inasmuch as we partake of but one loaf. If the bread broken represents, on the one hand, the broken body of Christ, the unity of the bread represents, on the other, the unity of his spiritual body. When I knew (said the Apostle) "your love unto *all Saints*," comprehending with *all Saints* what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and what is the love of Christ which passes knowledge, in order that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power which worketh in us to Him be glory in the Church.

How sweet to find oneself united to all Saints, wherever they may be, in the unity of the body of Christ, as together members of that body, according to all the privileges which attach to it by reason of the love of Him who nourishes and cherishes it as a man does his own flesh; to feel, by means of the Spirit, one's union with all that is united to Christ, and to feel it with the thought, full of deep joy, that all those who are infinitely dear to us, as pertaining to Him, have the privilege of the care (which can never fail) of his love. What joy, by faith, to apply to them all that love of which, while worshipping, we have the consciousness—a faith, moreover, which never fails in its aim. Thus it is that

intercession connects itself so intimately with worship, properly so-called, being inspired by the affections which are in exercise in virtue of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The requests for grace for themselves, made by those who worship, are scarcely further removed from it, because the feeling of what we owe to God, which is expressed in worship, necessarily produces the desire of glorifying him, and the need of the grace which alone can render us capable of doing so.

With regard to the supper, we find, indeed, that not only it forms the prominent feature of the religious exercises of the faithful; but that it was, with this end in view, that they were wont to unite in the irregular and solemn assemblies—and “they continued with one consent in the temple and breaking bread” at home—that is, in their private houses in contrast with the temple. “They continued steadfast in the doctrine and fellowship of the Apostles, and in the breaking of bread and in prayer.”—Acts ii. and iv.

It appears, then, that they partook of the supper even daily, and that, being still Jews, as we know, in many respects, they diligently frequented the temple; but then they had, in their houses, in remembrance of Christ this special service, as to which he had said, “Do this in remembrance of me.”

In the twentieth chapter of the Acts we are told, that on the first day of the week (now called Sunday), when the disciples were gathered together to break bread—that is to say, this act, though others might accompany it, was the object of their meeting.

It has been supposed that breaking of bread might apply to something besides the supper, since there is proof that they made a meal at the same time. There is no doubt as to the meal. Christ instituted the supper at the time of His own last evening’s repast; and, at first, there was a supper at the same time that they broke bread; but the breaking of bread had a character proper and distinctive to itself even as it had its formal appointment. Not to perceive this when it is celebrated, is what the apostle calls “not discerning the body of the

Lord," and, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, he corrects this abuse, by appointing that the repast which previously had accompanied the Lord's Supper, should be separated from it. The passage shows that they came together to eat, but alas! their feast had at Corinth set aside the spiritual service, and some came to take their surfeit in eating and drinking, and left the poor in want. The supper was not observed in their private abodes, but in a building common to all, and every one brought his own supper, and the service had entirely lost its character as the Lord's Supper. The passage plainly shows that they came together in order to eat, and that they supped together in the public building, but that the Supper of the Lord was the avowed object of the meeting. To maintain this last institution in all its importance, the apostle ordained that the supper should be separate, and that each should eat his own supper at home; that so they might come together in the spirit of devotion, and not bring down upon themselves chastisement.<sup>g</sup>

The two grand elements of the ordinary worship of Christians, are the presence of the Holy Spirit and the remembrance of the sacrifice of Christ, which is commemorated in the supper. We have seen that it was with the latter of these in view, that Christians assembled themselves together, according to that which is said in the Bible.

But in this worship, the affections, which are connected with all our relationships with God, are developed. God, in His Majesty, is adored; the gifts even of His providence are recognised; He who is a spirit is worshipped in spirit and in truth. We present to our Father—the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—the expression of holy affections which He has produced in us, for He sought us when we were afar off from Him, and has placed us near

<sup>g</sup> The apostle does not suggest the idea of examining themselves whether or not they should partake, but in order that they may partake aright, that is to say, not do it with levity. The supper being the expression of the unity of the body, not to partake of it is to excommunicate oneself. No one had an idea that a Christian would do such a thing with regard to himself.

to himself, as his beloved children, in the spirit of adoption—associating us (wondrous grace!) with His well-beloved Son.

We adore the Saviour God, being in His presence without spot; His holiness and His perfect righteousness being a joy for us which passes not away, for we are in the light, through the perfect work of Christ, as He Himself is in the light. It is the Holy Spirit Himself who reveals to us these heavenly things and the glory to come, and acts in us so as to produce feelings and affections suitable to such a blessing, to such relationships with God. He it is who is the bond of union between the heart and these things. But He does it by making us feel that we are children of the same family and members of the same body. Uniting us in this worship by means of mutual affections and feelings, common to all, towards Him who is the object of the worship which together we render. In short, the worship is exercised in connection with the very sweetest recollection of the love of Christ, whether we regard His work or whether we recall the thought of his tender affection for us. He desires our remembrance of Him. Sweet and precious thought for the heart. Oh! how precious to our souls, and yet at the same time how solemn ought such worship to be! What sort of life should we be careful to lead in order to render it? with what ardour ought we to seek the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in order to render it suitably? Yet it should be very simple, for true affection is always simple—at the same time, devout, for such interests give devoutness. The majesty and the greatness of the love of Him whom we adore, gives solemnity to every act by which we draw near to Him. With what deep affections and thankfulness should we also think of the Saviour, at such times, when we can, by Him, abide in the presence of God, far removed from all evil, in the foretaste of our eternal blessing, and where we recall all His love for us. These two great subjects, about which Christian worship is occupied, viz., the love of God our Father and that of the Lord in His work and as head of His body the Church, afford slight changes in the character of the worship, according to the state of

those who render it. There are times in which Jesus will be more present to the thoughts, others in which the Father will be more before the mind. The Holy Spirit alone can guide us in this; but, as our thoughts ought to be true, this will depend upon the state of those who compose the assembly. Effort in such things has no place. He who is the channel of worship (let me say it here) should not present that which is proper and peculiar to himself, but that which is truly the exercise through the Spirit of the hearts of those who compose the assembly. This will make us feel our entire dependance upon the Comforter for truthful service to God in communion. Nothing, however, is more simple or more evident, than the truth that the worship rendered should be that of all.

Another observation we may make here is, how much the worship will be affected by all that grieves the Holy Spirit; every impediment, even in one person, will make itself felt (at least if there be spirituality), for we are there as but one body. It is of the utmost importance that this delicacy of spiritual feeling should be maintained, that we should not habituate ourselves to the having the presence of God but little felt in worship, the action of the Holy Spirit little known. If there is true spirituality, if the Holy Spirit fills the assembly with His presence, evil of every kind is quickly discovered. For God is a jealous God, and He is faithful. A single Achan was discovered at the commencement of the history of Israel—a single lie in Ananias in the beginning of the Church's history. Alas! what things occurred afterwards in Israel! what things took place afterwards in the Church without any one having even the feeling that evil was present! May God make us humble, watchful, and true, and enable us to bear in mind that His Spirit always abides with us, in order that we may be able to render, by the action of that Spirit in us, spiritual worship! For it is the lovely and powerful testimony to the efficacy of the work of Christ, by the which we can abide in the presence of God, without blame and full of joy, to present to Him worship which, rising from hearts which find in His presence the source of their happiness, render testimony

before the angels of heaven to His perfect love, and present to God Himself the most acceptable proof of the efficacy of that work which takes from us all fear in His presence, and renders the full and perfect exercise of that love, in which He finds His delight, possible to God.

The privilege of being able to render worship to God is granted to two or three gathered together in the name of Jesus: that is to say, when His name has gathered them together, as the tie among them, by its power common to them all, and known of all, and recognized among them as the principle of their assembly. Jesus is there as the joy and strength of their common service. The Lord said to Israel, "In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee" (Exodus xx. 24). Further on it is said (Deut. xii.), that they should offer their offerings in the place which He would choose to set His name there; which had its definitive accomplishment at Jerusalem (1 Kings viii. 25).

But now, in Jesus, God sets His name there where two or three are gathered together in that name, with a promise (similar to that of Exodus xx. 24), that there Jesus Himself would be in the midst of them; precious encouragement for the feebleness of His people, if there were thousands of disciples. How great soever the encouragement given by such an action of the Spirit, the presence of Jesus Himself (the most precious of all things) is vouchsafed to two or three of the least of those that are His, if it is truly in His name that they are met. Let it be only His name in which it is done; the fleshly pride which loves to make much of a gift, and would appropriate a flock as its own—human arrangement which would seek to avoid that which is painful to the flesh or the world—the narrowness which would welcome some upon the ground of a peculiar view—none of these is the name of Christ. Those who unite in the name of Christ embrace in heart and mind all those who are His, all the members of His body; they embrace them in the principle upon which they are met; otherwise it would not be in His name that they were united: for one cannot exclude from the power of His name those that are His;

His heart embraces them. We are not united according to His heart, if, in principle, our assembly does not embrace them. Clearly His name does not embrace the world, nor sin, nor that which denies the truth which that name reveals.

His name unites in one those that are His. He that gathers not with Him scatters abroad.

Christians are bound to maintain holiness and truth, and to make constant progress towards the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. If any would hinder this, would seek to fashion souls according to the mould of particular views, his action tends towards the destruction of practical unity.

Nothing but spirituality, subject to the Word and regulated by grace, (in a word, the action of the Spirit of God), can, in certain cases, discern between that which is a step forward, and that which is the insisting upon some private view of one's own. For the spirit of the world, which loves not progress nor that which presents more of Christ, will stamp with the name of "particular views" all that which tends to make our responsibility to Christ deeper and more felt: and a spirit of narrowness will treat as progress all that makes much of its own notions. Moreover, if an assembly of worshippers is truly founded upon the basis of the unity of the Church of God—if the mass of the assembly is not in a state to bear that which would be a true step in advance—it is useless to insist upon it; to do so would tend to division rather than to progress. Such was the case of the Corinthians. The Apostle had to nourish them with milk. They were not able to bear anything else, even when he wrote to them.

On the contrary, when it is a return to a Jewish spirit, which would compromise the Gospel, the Apostle refuses to stop (Heb. v. 12, 14; vi. 1, 4). The energetic wisdom of the Spirit of God is needed by the Church. It is not the intention of God that she should be able to do without it, or be exempt from dependance upon Him who gives it. I have added these few practical words which only concern things which are accessory to my subject, because they refer to difficulties which are constantly occurring.

in the Christian's path when assembling for worship, or which are presented as such to prevent their walking in this path. I take it for granted all along, that the meeting is upon the eternal foundation of the unity of the Church of God; if that is compromised, there is no ground for any union at all, the meeting itself is not according to God. One must first of all be perfectly clear upon this point.

But I desire that our souls may be brought back to the foundation of the subject which I treat. That which I have said is connected with the assembling of the children of God for worship. Sweet and precious privilege, to anticipate that which will be our eternal employ in heaven! There our worship will be perfect. There, all the Church, come to its full perfection, will be assembled to render worship in the midst of the general assembly on high; without distraction, and without fear of change in its joy, it will enjoy it eternally in the perfect favour of God. What a privilege, even here below, to close the door for a moment upon all the distractions of this nether world, and by the Spirit to satisfy the desire of the heart by rendering to God the thanksgiving which He is worthy to receive, and which He has, in His bounty, breathed into our hearts!

I will notice yet a few passages which may help individuals to seize the spirit of worship. The first passage which I will notice is Phil. iii.—“We serve God in spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” We may remark, that there is here no question about sin, in the ordinary sense, of the flesh, but of confidence in the flesh. That is its religion, altogether as evil as its lusts; for, after all, it is but one of them, though covered up with the veil of works and of holiness. The touchstone is, that it does not tend to the glory of Jesus, or yet better, that it does not glory only in Jesus. The religion of the flesh can be occupied much in good works, be without reproach as to conduct, have much of self-denial, much of piety, plenty of humility, be much occupied with the love of God; but while pretending, perhaps, to found it upon His love (which is infinite), it will be that love of God which is in the heart—our love to Him.



One may ask, But if all these things can exist in a person, and be nothing but the flesh, how can we discern the true circumcision? It rejoices in Jesus Christ. Nothing is easier than to judge these things, if Christ is our all. The fact that He is so, makes us feel, without hesitancy, that all this is flesh, and yields its help to that which destroys Christianity from its foundations. Is there another mark desired, by which one can judge this religion of the flesh with all its pretensions? It does not hold the *Head*; that is to say, he who is in this state never has the consciousness of his own union with Christ, so as to be placed, as raised up together with Him, in the heavenly places: bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, one spirit with the Lord, a member of His body. Such an one will, perhaps, recognise this as true for the Church, in an abstract manner (for the religion of the flesh can be orthodox), but not that oneself is there. Now faith is an individual thing, and places him who possesses it in the enjoyment—or personally under the effects—of the object which it regards. Col. ii., as well as the chapter cited above, judges all this fair but specious appearance. The Lord, in His addresses to the Scribes and Pharisees, judged it in its grosser forms. Another thing which marks carnal religion is, that however apparently elevated be its piety, it accords with things which are not of heaven, and seeks not, in every respect, the things which are on high, which is the sentiment of one who is dead and raised up together with Christ. The religion which is of the Spirit, true worship, serves God in Spirit, and has no confidence in the flesh; it knows not the religion of its forefathers, even though it may have been true. Of one's forefathers one inherits but a sinful nature. It confides not either in its zeal or in any devoutness which it can offer to God, nor in its love to Him. It does not rejoice save in Jesus Christ alone before God. The soul has learnt that it was dead in its sins, and the precious Saviour having come down even to the point of being made sin for us, as dead and raised up together with Him—for it is lost if it lives according to the natural life—it knows in God's sight but one sole thing, which it puts forward, in which it rejoices, in which it glories

before Him, on which it knows that God has placed all his delight; it rejoices in Jesus Christ. One cannot fail to observe how this practical description of circumcision, *i. e.*, of the true people set apart for God, and as to the flesh, dead—connects itself with the grand foundations upon which we have already seen the true Christian placed in the service which he renders to God. Let us bear in mind also, that it will profit nothing to mingle carnal religion with that of the Spirit. The flesh of the Christian finds in such a course its aliment. The effort of the adversary, at the commencement of the Church, was not to *substitute* circumcision in the flesh, and the law in place of Christ, but to add them. But the Apostle saw clearly, by the Spirit, that in admitting this, *all* was lost. The Christian is one with the Head, which is Christ; the least thing between them, and the body is nought more than a corpse. The work of Christ is not sufficient if anything is to be added. And, not only so, but all the Christian position was swept away. For instead of being in Christ, happy in God's presence, by virtue of one work already accomplished by the glorious Saviour alone, "rendered complete in Him," "accepted in the beloved," man has still to seek means of rendering himself acceptable to God, to find the way by which he may present himself before Him. One is fallen from grace. The nature of Christianity is changed; it is denied, though not in word. The truth of the Gospel no longer remains.

May God grant us to have no confidence in the flesh, but to rejoice in Christ Jesus!

One may ask oneself, But is it not possible to maintain these truths in all their height, and still to be carnal? I answer, doubtless: yet the flesh then takes the form of licentiousness, its real character, and not that of religiousness. It is very pious when it acts the pious, for it always desires to rejoice in itself.

I will cite another passage to show the spirit of worship, although it formally applies, of necessity, to things on earth. I refer to Deut. xxvi.. In type, Canaan represents heaven. Now, Israel arrived in Canaan,

enjoyed the effect of the promise. Read now Deut. xxvi. The worshipper, already come to a good land which God had given to him as an heritage, presents himself with the fruits of the land. This is that which we have to offer to God, the joy of heavenly love—all that is found for our hearts—in the possession of heaven, whither we are entered in spirit—in Christ, who fills it with His glory and His perfections—in the love of God Himself, who has introduced us thither. Holiness and love characterise the land, are the fruits which grow there spontaneously, as are the thanksgivings in the hearts of those who find themselves there.

The worshipper professed aloud that his God had accomplished all; it was thus that he presented himself. This was due to God, since Israel was indeed there through His faithful grace, and there would have been failure as to the only true feeling of his position if he had not come thus. Is it then that he forgot his own wretchedness? No. But he was in it no longer; it served only to exalt the thought of his deliverance. “And thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became a nation, great, mighty, and populous: And the Egyptians evil entreated us and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: And when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression: And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders: And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, *even* a land that floweth with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first fruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God, and worship before the Lord thy God.”

The Christian was the slave of Satan, and in himself miserable; but God delivered him by Christ, therefore He adores. Not only so, the Lord had given Israel this

good land, full of that which makes the glory of every land, He brought the fruit of it, in testimony, with thanksgiving.

If we are seated in peace in the heavenly places, have our hearts nought there to offer? Has the country produced nothing which we can offer to God in testimony of the value of His gifts, of the feeling which we have of His goodness? Further, the worshipper addressed God directly, rendering the worship to Him which was due; the fruit of a heart happy in His bounty.

Thus the spirit of grace and of love was shed abroad in his heart, and he enjoyed all in simplicity and with gladness of heart; causing others also to enjoy with Him, rendering the desolate and the stranger happy.

“And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you. When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled; then thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them.” Pure in walk, carefully preserving the holiness of God, and that which was hallowed for Him, from being profaned, he could, from his heart, implore a blessing upon all the people of his God, and ask that it might rest on the whole state of things in which God had placed them. It was the memorial of a tie between God and His people.

In examining also chapter xvi. of Deut. we shall find, in the directions given for the feasts of the Lord, an unfolding of what the spirit was in which Israel should have observed them, and in a measure, an instructive contrast between the state of soul which they respectively inspired.

At the passover, *i.e.* when they celebrated the fact of their having being spared, the joy of the other feasts was not found. Doubtless, they recognised the deliverance accomplished, but the unleavened bread, type of purity and simplicity of heart, is called the bread of affliction; they had gone out of the land of Egypt in haste to save themselves.

Holiness was an imperative requirement. Would they perish in the territory of Satan, prince of darkness? But every one turned in the morning, and went to his own tent. Yes, it is grace to be delivered, but, so long as it is, barely that there is the consciousness of deliverance but from ruin, from slavery, still present to the heart as that from which we have been delivered; that holiness is a requirement; we see the purity of Christ, as demanding that the leaven of sin be entirely put away—we are, no doubt, in a true position of heart; deliverance was needful for such slaves; holiness is obligatory; without holiness no one shall see the Lord; we have a solemn feeling of the grace which has saved us—of the truth—of the profound reality and need of that sacrifice, the blood of which has stayed at our threshold, the sword of the holiness of God—but it is not joy; it is not communion. Every one retires apart by himself.

In the feast of Pentecost, prefiguring the gift of the Holy Spirit, there was joy; they offered a voluntary offering to God, *according* to the blessing which the Lord had vouchsafed. There was joy in communion; they raised up the downcast heart of the widow, of the orphan, of the Levite, and of the stranger; they rejoiced before the Lord their God, in His presence, where He had set His name.

They recalled the thought that they had been slaves, but it was while enjoying their freedom, before God, who had shed abroad His blessing upon the people whom He had set free. Here we find, again, the true spirit of worship. It will be noticed that they offered *according to the blessing* of the Lord.

The feast of Tabernacles went a little further; they rejoiced in like manner, and the joy diffused itself over the others, whose heart God would lift up. The spirit of joy

and of peace still characterized the worshippers gathered together in the presence of their God; characterised the communion which is the effect of that presence, and of the drawing near to him of His people. But the feast, the spirit of the feast, had to be kept up during all the seven days, and "thou shalt rejoice," it is said; for now they are in the full consciousness of the rest of God. The ingathering of the corn-floor, and of the wine-press was ended. In full and abundant enjoyment of all the fruits of the land, in the rest of God; they celebrated the bounty of *Him* who had given them these things; not according to the blessing he had given them, but because the Lord their God had blessed them in all the works of their hands.

Doubtless, for us, the accomplishment of this feast (typical of the rest which Israel shall enjoy from all their toils in the age to come) will be in heaven. But, in so far as we realise our portion, we anticipate that joy; and we bless God according to the sentiments which we have as to him by the Spirit.

I will next direct my readers' attention to chapters iv. and v. of the Revelation.

In Revelation iv. 8, we find the four living creatures ascribe to the Lord God Almighty the glory of all that which He is in His holy and eternal majesty.

The celebration of this glory leads those who represent the saints in glory, in their character of kings and priests, to strip themselves of their crowns and to leave their thrones—falling down and worshipping him that liveth for ever and ever—more exalted in morally appreciating and recognising the glory of Him to whom all majesty belongs, than by being clothed with the insignia of their own glory; in sufficiently seizing, as the object of adoration, the supreme glory of God, so as to employ the measure of glory which had been vouchsafed to them, only to exalt His, while casting the insignia of it before Him—than in bearing them before the armies of Heaven or the inhabitants of the earth. That in which we draw near to God is more excellent than that which distinguishes us from His creatures.

To esteem their glory, although it was true as being

given of God, as nought save as an offering, because they understood the glory of Him who had loved them, and who was placed far above them, was, to a certainty, a position more exalted than highly to appreciate it, and to clothe themselves with it in sight of those who were beneath them. I repeat their glory was real because it was conferred of God; but it was vouchsafed to them to recognize a glory infinitely more excellent, to enjoy it, to see it, to delight that He to whom alone it belonged should possess it and should manifest it, should alone be glorified. The object was more excellent, the spirit more exalted, for they thought no longer about themselves. They were really exalted God-ward, while thinking only of him—although he alone was glorified. It is the perfection of the state and of the position of the creature in that respect. Another element, however, enters here in order to make it complete; an element, the existence of which is pre-supposed in that which I have just said, and which is plainly presented in this passage (lovely and precious privilege for us); it is, that there is in these twenty-four elders, representatives, as I have said, of the saints, kings and priests—the understanding of what it is which makes the Lord worthy of praise: “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”

He is the source and final end of all that exists. That which he is, and that he is worthy to receive all glory, because of the manifestation which He has made of Himself, is what we see to be the subject of the homage rendered by the saints to the Creator God.

Chapter v. has redemption as its subject. The Lamb that was slain is worthy to take the book of the ways of God in government, because he has redeemed. Here again the understanding of his work, of the glory which will thence result in the relationship with God of those who were the objects of it, and in the dominion confided to them, is found recited in the praises addressed to the Lamb by the heavenly saints. We may also remark that praises are addressed to Him who is the object of them.

The prayers of saints accompany them. The praises

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(in this case of angels), not directly addressed to the Lamb, are excited by the adoration of the saints. Lastly, all that inhabits the universal creation of God—together celebrates, in chorus, the glory of God most high, and of the Lamb, with the “Amen” of the living creatures; direct adoration of the Lord being the part proper to the twenty-four elders, kings and priests. We may observe here, that these passages do not present to us the character of Father—it is God, the ruler and sovereign. This is the character of the book. It will be remarked that adoration is the characteristic, par excellence, of the twenty-four elders: as is also intelligence as to the foundation of the glory of God, as manifested in his acts of power and of grace. I cite these various passages, not as giving us the precise revelation of that which is Christian worship, but as furnishing many precious elements to enable us to seize the thought of worship in general. The Psalms furnish other examples, only we must bear in mind that God is there also, presented as Governor of the earth, and not as Father of His beloved children, who participate in His nature of love. Our position is to adore the Father in spirit and in truth, in the sweet confidence of being the children whom He loves, without His losing in our eyes any part of His majesty.

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“JESUS saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.”—John *iv.* 21—26.



## OBSERVATIONS ON THE PERUSAL OF THE PSALMS.

IF we would read the Psalms intelligently, or even understand the piety which is unfolded there, we must see in them the Spirit of Christ identifying itself with the circumstances, trials, thoughts, feelings, and position of the faithful in Israel in the latter day. They give a divine, and consequently perfect, expression to that which may be working by grace in their hearts, but which, in their hearts, mixed up with many other feelings, might, without this expression, which, in giving them in their perfectness, puts a divine sanction on them, have left their souls in uncertainty and misery. Whereas, through this blessed revelation, God comes into the grief, and gives also an answer to it.

Hence, in the very outset, we have the character of the righteous man placed among the ungodly, and the consequences under the government of God; and in the second the firm counsel of God, as to Christ, in spite of all the efforts of the heathen, whose kings and judges are called to submit themselves to the Son of God. In Psalm viii. His glory as Son of man is unfolded consequent on his rejection as Messiah. Thus, in general, we have everything past, present, and to come, which could touch the heart of a Jew renewed in the spirit of his mind by grace, expressed in connection with the feelings it gives rise to. Hence also the sufferings of Christ are given historically, the great centre of everything that Israel could rightly feel, and which forms the sole ground on which He could enter in spirit into the sorrows of the sinner.

N<sup>o</sup>. XXIII.

## 1 KINGS.

THE Books of Kings show us the kingly power established in all its glory, its fall, and God's testimony in the midst of the ruin, with details concerning Judah after the rejection of Israel, until Lo-ammi had been pronounced upon the whole nation. In a word, it is the trial of kingly power, placed in the hands of men, as there had been a trial of the people set in relationship with God, by means of priesthood. Out of Christ, nothing stands.

Although the kingly power had been placed under the responsibility of its faithfulness to the Lord; and although it had to be smitten and punished whenever it failed in this, it was yet, at that time, established by the counsels and the will of God. It was neither a David, type of Christ in his patience, who, through difficulties, obstacles, and sufferings, made himself a way to the throne; nor a king who, although exalted to the throne, and always victorious, had to be a man of war to the end of his life, a type in this, I doubt not, of what Christ will be in the midst of the Jews at His return, when He will commence the coming age by subjecting the gentiles to Himself, having been already delivered from the strivings of the people (Ps. xviii. 43, 44); it was the king according to the promises and the counsels of God, the king established in peace, head over God's people to rule them in righteousness, son of David according to the promise, and type of that true son of David, who shall be a priest upon His throne, who shall build the temple of Jehovah, and between whom and Jehovah there shall be the counsel of peace (Zech. vi. 13).

Let us examine a little the position of this kingly power according to the Word; for responsibility and

the empire his own; he sought to exalt himself that he might rule over the trees of the forest. Judah, brought out in former days with a high hand by the power of God from Pharaoh's country, is subject to him. But, whatever Pharaoh's pretensions may be, this is not the purpose of God. If God writes "Lo Ammi" on His people, it is Babylon who is to begin the times of the Gentiles.<sup>x</sup> Pharaoh returns into his own country, and Jehoiakim, powerless and without God, comes under the dominion of Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>y</sup> We need not go into the details. His son, as wicked as himself, rebels against Nebuchadnezzar; for Judah, the son of the Most High, was little used to bondage; but this heifer also must bend its neck to the yoke (Hos. xii.), and Jehoiachim is carried captive to Babylon. The kingdom and the temple still exist; but Zedekiah having broken the oath which he had made in the name of the Lord,<sup>z</sup> and allowing himself to be governed by the princes, persists in his rebellion, and is taken prisoner. His sons having been slain before his eyes, and himself deprived of sight, he is carried away to Babylon. The temple is burnt; the walls of Jerusalem are broken down; the seat of the Lord's throne is trodden under foot of the Gentiles. Sorrowful result of His having entrusted His glory to the men among whom He had placed His throne! Sorrowful,

<sup>x</sup> As a figure, this is an important principle; for Egypt is the state of nature, out of which the Church is brought: Babylon is the corruption and worldliness into which she falls.

<sup>y</sup> How sorrowful is this part of the history, in which the only question is, whether Egypt or Babylon is to possess the land of God's people, the land of promise; it being no longer a doubtful point whether Israel shall continue to possess it, it must become a prey to one or the other of these hostile and unbelieving powers. Alas! Israel was unbelieving, with more light than the others, who did but take advantage of the position and the strength which the unbelief of Israel gave them, and acknowledged in them.

<sup>z</sup> This filled up the measure of sin! We shall draw the reader's attention to this when considering the prophecy of Ezekiel, who dwells upon it. By making use of an oath in the Lord's name, in the hope of preventing revolt, Nebuchadnezzar shewed more respect for that name than Zedekiah did, who despised such an oath. God permitted this final evidence of iniquity.

thrice sorrowful conduct of man—of that generation whom God had so honoured! On the other hand, God will take occasion from it to manifest that infinite goodness, which, in sovereign grace, will re-establish the very thing that man has cast under foot to the profane.

The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel must be read, to have the complete history and the internal history of the spirit of the people and that of the king; the history at once of the condition which drew down the judgment, and of the patience of God, who, even until the very taking of the city, continued to send them most affecting calls to repentance. Alas! in vain; and the times of the Gentiles began.

The reader who would thoroughly understand the events of all this history, the marvellous patience of God, and the way in which He raised up faithful kings, in order that He might bless, should read the prophets Hosea, Amos, Jeremiah, and certain chapters of Isaiah, which speak to the people in the name of the Lord, and tell them of their true condition.

## FRAGMENT.

THERE are no truths more frequently overlooked than the existence of a Church upon earth; and the responsibility, thence arising, to Christians, for the state in which we are found, or in which that Church is found, truths, nevertheless, of the utmost importance. I would desire to press upon Christians the unity of the Church of God and the responsibility of its members for the state in which that assembly is found. I assert, distinctly, that we are responsible for that state, or, to speak more accurately, for the glory of God being so manifested as it ought to be in the Church upon earth.

Is the existence of the Church recognised? of the Church upon earth? For question there can be none as to the existence and unity of the Church in Glory. But if there be such a Church upon earth and if it has a unity, are our consciences alive as to the responsibility in which we are involved by what has been done in that Church?

If we do but remember that at first the Church and the Kingdom were composed of the same persons, that is to say of true Christians, or of those who seemed to be such; that the Church and the Kingdom were presented in one and the same body; even supposing we do not say that it was Christians in the Churches or in the Kingdom who introduced the corruption, and not the Church which corrupted itself—still we find ourselves, by means of the unity, involved in the guilt of other Christians, as though it were our own. Little matters it whether this was accomplished in the Kingdom or in the Church; it is true, it was members of Christ or those who appear such that did it. But through the unity of the body we have a common responsibility, and the sins of the body are our sins. Oh that clearly as the light of the sun after rain, these things might be seen!—The Church's common responsibility by reason of its unity; and the responsibility of the Church according to this common responsibility; for certainly those who have wrought evil and introduced corruption into the Kingdom are responsible for it—and we may regard their sin as our own. To what humiliation (profitable to self) would one, if fighting under the banner of God, gladly submit, if the truth might but triumph.

N<sup>o</sup> XXIV.

## PHILADELPHIA.

Rev. iii.

WE cannot but admire the supreme wisdom of the Spirit of God, in the way in which He has given to us the word of his Truth. The way in which things were given, (which, of course, would have their application to the things then addressed; but which would gain an increased light, because increased applicability, in consequence of further development of the same principles) is, amongst others, strongly marked, I believe, in the passage now before us, in the 3rd chapter of Revelations. Let us seek, looking to the Lord, to dwell upon it for a little.

The address is, like all the others, characteristic, in keeping with the thing addressed. At Ephesus he addresses the church there, according to the full responsibility, which the church, or any constituted witness for God, has, according to that, which the Son of Man walking in the midst of the candlesticks requires, as maintaining, and sustaining in holiness and grace the rights of our God. In Pergamos and Thyatira, according to the demands which the evils there allowed made for the sword of His holy judgment. Let us now consider that to Philadelphia.

These things, saith He that is holy, He that is true. It is the *holiness* and *truth*, which grace gives, and then requires, which he here seeks, and happily finds. It is important too, I think, to notice the connection in which Philadelphia occurs. It is between Sardis and Laodicea. To take an illustration historically; there has been a period in this country, when the state of things was completely dead, like Sardis; Evangelical truth not even professed—all dead. It is not so now; Evangelical truth has been *in some measure* revived, and extensively professed, though it is now not only verging, but verged into Laodicea; I believe, indeed, distinctly lapsed into that lukewarm and apostate state.

Meanwhile comes in Philadelphia. God has, as a matter of fact, revived, in a portion of his vineyard, truths which

*Philadelphia.*

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have slumbered since the Apostles' days. I suppose the revival of the hope of the Lord's coming has mainly contributed to this. The virgins had slumbered, *wise* and foolish together, until midnight; but *at midnight*, the cry arises, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh!" and the wise trim their lamps. So whilst at Thyatira, he says to the faithful, "What thou hast, hold fast, till I come;" at Philadelphia, he says, "Behold, I come *quickly*." It is clearly in the time of the end.

Remark, further, when at Smyrna, they are suffering for his name's sake, He reveals himself simply in his personal character, "He that died, and is alive again," exactly the character to suit their need. Here where it is a question of *spiritual strength*, and ability to serve God in the last days of apostasy, finding a door whereby they may serve God rightly on true ground, he reveals himself as having the key of David, opening, and no man shutteth; shutting, and none openeth. How blessedly, thus, does the Lord Jesus meet our every need! Yes; every key is laid on the shoulders of the Lord Jesus. The eternal keys of death and hell are there, (chapter i. 18); he has shut the kingdom of hell to the believer, he has opened the kingdom of God. Do we want power in the church, amidst weakness, declension, and corruption, power to serve acceptably? He opens and none shuts. Do we want revival? He has the seven spirits of God. "Only speak the word, and my servant shall be healed." When he only sees good, he can easily revive the hearts of his saints (not that I take that to be the strict application of the passage, chap. iii. 1). And this is one great value of these addresses, and Revelations altogether, that it reveals to us the person and grace of the Lord Jesus, in such various and glorious ways.

He says then, "I know thy works." And let us remark what it is he so commends, as in it the Spirit seems to have struck the key-note of the position of a remnant in the latter day, "Thou hast a *little* strength." But it is true strength, held with God. As has been before remarked, it may not be the full compass of Ephesus; but, though little, it is true. They had kept His *word*, and not denied his name. *Obedience*, deference

to the word of God, not saying, "There is no hope, therefore we will walk in our own ways;" but believing that God is able to help, and enable *in any time*, those who turn away from all the evil ways of the professing church, "Trembling at his word,"—this is what characterizes a faithful remnant. There is a trial, too, of moral strength. "Thou hast kept the word of my patience." Patient continuance in well-doing. It is easy, when we are carried on with the full tide of success, to serve God, and rejoice in him; but when the tide ebbs, when we are brought ourselves, perhaps, into more solemn and quiet discipline from God, "for whom he loves," in such a time, "he rebukes and chastens;" when there is failure and breaking up around, "many stumble and fall, and are broken;" when we may not have the joy and comfort from association that we once had then, to keep our own standing, as Peter says, (2 Peter chap. iii. 17,) to go on quietly with God, by patient continuance in well-doing to seek for honour, and glory, and immortal life—this is, indeed, the trial of patience, such as is here contemplated, and the Lord commends.

And I would remark here, a thing which much strikes me in reference to Philadelphia, and which is of the highest import to ourselves, is this—what the Lord finds at Philadelphia is a *positive* thing. It is not simply negative. It does not meet the Lord's mind merely to separate from evil, and to rest in that. He says, "Thou hast a little strength, and *hast kept* my word." Whilst then separating from evil, we must walk in all the truth. Any amount of truth, light, faithfulness, whatever it be, does not exempt us from walking in the common track, which has been ever open, and common to all the flock of God, "the footsteps of the flock." As the Apostle John says, "This is the commandment, that, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it" (2 John 5, 6). The inspired Apostle would still lay upon our hearts, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest ['to be revered' is nearer], whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these

things." These things will ever be the chief attractiveness of the members of Christ; and these things are dwelt on, because in days of trial and controversy, there is especial danger of their being overlooked. "A man may become famous, according as he has lifted up axes upon the thick trees" (Ps. lxxiv. 5). It cannot be too much impressed upon us that *mere* principles (however all-important in themselves, and there can be no true building without them) will fail us in the most important objects for which we need help. As it is said of the children of Israel (Ps. lxxviii. 9), "The children of Ephraim, *being armed*, and carrying bows, *turned back* in the day of battle." They had got all their arms right, and in proper order; but without "a heart right, and spirit steadfast;" without present communion with, and dependance on, God; and they failed. We want *present* communion with Christ, in order to use aright the whole armour of God, so readily provided for us. As Paul says, Eph. vi., having described the whole armour, "Praying always with all prayer, and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints, and for me," etc. Prayer is, indeed, "the Christian's vital breath," strengthening him to use the armour provided.

And so, when Paul is speaking to Timothy of the incoming corruption, he says, "Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the *grace* that is in Christ Jesus." This heart-question is, therefore, the deepest question of all—all-important, both as respects our communion towards God, and our happy united walk together, as still "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." And the neglect of these things may lead us back insensibly (such is the subtlety of the flesh and Satan), to the very things we have come out from and protested against, as the characteristic of the latter-days. "The form of godliness, without the power thereof, heady, high-minded." To resume. We have then pledged to such a remnant, an open door even to the last. Yes, there is ground for the faithful. "The church is the habitation of God by the Spirit." Let us but stand to that; let us keep the word of God; and the word of God will keep



us. "It is able," Paul says, "to build us up, and give us an inheritance amongst those that are sanctified."

To be brought into that position, which both Old and New Testament contemplate, "to be no more haughty because of God's holy mountain, but to be left in the midst a poor and afflicted people; yet, *trusting* in the name of the Lord"—to have, it may be, but a little strength and yet keep the word of his patience, and not deny His name. This will ensure to us, what the Lord says, "I have set before thee an open door."

And who that understands the value of having clean and sure ground for our feet, amidst all confusion, and "that our faith may stand not in the wisdom of men but in the power of God," who can estimate this blessing enough? And, surely, if we lay to heart the dishonour which has been done to the Lord Jesus throughout the church's course, we shall seek, in the little time that remains, so far as He shall enable us, to retrieve it, "*redeeming* the time because the days are evil."

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#### FRAGMENT.

THE corruption of what is around us began in the church, as well as in the kingdom; because it began with *the principles* of evil, and not with the apostasy of individuals; by principles of evil in true Christians who formed the church upon earth. One may say more; for that which was a source of corruption was Judaism. That which overthrew Christianity was found in true Christians. The Galatians were not only a church, but were true disciples. Those who came down from Jerusalem to Antioch, are recognised by the Apostles as being of their body, although not authorised by them. The Pharisees, who blamed Peter for having eaten with the Gentiles, were believers; there are many other similar examples. So that we find that the machinations of Satan, among true Christians, were the first and principal source of the evil. That that may have been the occasion of the introduction of false brethren, I admit; but the corruption originated *in* the church.

N<sup>o</sup> XXV.

SUPERSTITION IS NOT FAITH ; OR, THE  
TRUE CHARACTER OF ROMANISM.

SUPERSTITION is the subjection of the mind of man, in the things of God, to that, for subjection to which, there is no warrant in divine testimony.

The objects of this superstitious reverence or fear may be such, as being mere creatures, were themselves subject to man's power, or at least to his mind ; or they may be the creatures of his own imagination ; or such as exercise a real and evil malignant influence over him, as Satan and the evil demons ; or, they may be creatures good and excellent in themselves, and even such as are in a position superior to man, and instruments of divine power or testimony, but for subjection to which, or for any kind of worship rendered to which, or for employing which in religious service on our behalf, there is no warrant in divine testimony.

Of the first class of superstitious reverence, the worship of animals, as among the Egyptians, or of the sun, moon, and stars, one of the earliest forms of idolatry, are examples.

Of the second, a vast mass of the religion of the Greeks is an example, as fauns, satyrs, Pan, etc ; whence even it is called mythology, or the doctrine of myths or fables.

Of the third class is serpent-worship, and the worship of the powers of evil, found in many countries of Africa ; and, in a general way, the whole of heathen idolatry, as the Apostle testifies (1 Cor. x. 20), alluding to Deut. xxxii. 17. "The things which the Gentiles offer, they offer to devils or demons, and not to God."

In the last class we have that of which the Apostle speaks in Col. ii. "a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels." So the Apostle John was himself tempted to fall down to worship before the feet of the angel who had been God's servant in the communication of the

apocalyptic visions. The angel replying: "See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow servant." So setting the saints above in heaven, in the place of mediation, in which God has not set them, or even men on the earth, in virtue of their office, as if they were priests, that is, really mediators, having another kind of prevailing power with God, than other men.

All these, though differing in character, have this in common. They are the subjection of the mind of man, in the things of God to that, for subjection to which, there is no warrant from divine testimony. This is superstition. Faith, on the contrary, is the reception of a divine testimony into the soul, so that God Himself is believed.<sup>1</sup>

The consequence of either of these, consequences as opposite as the nature of that from which they respectively flow, is sufficiently evident. The object of our superstitious reverence gets between our souls and God, and in practice supplants Him and takes His place. God is, indeed, never entirely forgotten. Even among the idolatrous heathen, there was a vague idea of one supreme God, shewn, as Tertullian has remarked, by their habitual exclamations; and some of the philosophers insisted and enlarged on this, though without any true knowledge of Him.

Still the whole practical condition of men depended on the character of the superstition with which their hearts were immediately in connection. The Athenians might rear an altar to the unknown God, but they did not rise morally by this ignorance. Their state was what the state of those must have been who worshipped a Jupiter, a Minerva, and a Venus, or who were in daily association with their altars. This introduction of the one true God may be in a greater or less degree; but it remains always

<sup>1</sup> In speaking of religious subjects, I have not thought it necessary to speak of the belief of mere human testimony. No one, of course, denies that there is such a thing as the belief of human testimony. The only thing important to remark here, is, that really to believe the testimony of a person, I must receive what he says because he has said it. If I require something to confirm it, I so far discredit his testimony.

true, that in general where any object intervenes between us and God, He is so far hidden, and the effect upon men is, that they are lowered to the standard of what they reverence. God's presence, whatever their fears, does not act immediately upon their consciences as *light*, nor elevate their hearts to Himself as *love*.

Now, though this power over the imagination, of things which divine testimony does not authorize our reverence of, is often called faith (though it be merely connecting the religious element of man's nature with what is not God, and is no real revelation of God), it is really the opposite of faith. Faith brings God present to the soul. Faith is, as we have seen, the reception into the soul of a divine testimony. Now, the grand object of this, especially in Christianity, is the revelation of God Himself (in every case a divine testimony carries direct divine authority, and is, so far, a revelation of God). The consequence is, faith brings the soul into God's own presence; and hence, everything is judged in the light itself, for God is light. All a man's works, all that is in man is brought into the light, the man's conscience having His perfect light for a measure, by which to judge himself. But as God has in Christ revealed Himself in love, Faith, which embraces His revelation, produces a sweet and blessed confidence in God Himself, known as love, as a Saviour who had given His own son, who has by Himself purged our sins. Thus, while all is judged by the believer's conscience, in the light of God's own presence, it is all put away according to the demand of that holiness; and we are at peace with God, and can walk with Him in newness of life.

So that faith puts into *immediate* connection with God, a connection founded on His own testimony, which is received by the operation of Divine power in the soul, and hence also has its practical existence in real confidence in God Himself. The soul is reconciled with Him; and God becomes, by the revelation of Himself in the testimony He has given, the moral measure of right and wrong to the soul, which is elevated to connection with Himself, through Jesus. Hence it is exactly opposite to superstition, though this latter assumes its name

and forms, and may be connected, as it ever is, more or less, with the idea of the true God.

This last circumstance leads us to another important remark, that, while the superstition hides the true God, and wholly falsifies our notions of Him, this connection in the mind, of the superstitious object of reverence, with the idea of the true God, attaches the authority of His name and supreme power to the object of our superstition, and sanctions, by that authority, all the moral degradation involved in our connection with it, save in so far as natural conscience revolts and tells a truer tale of God than the superstition. But then, alas! the tendency of this last is to exalt man above what he has made religion, and to produce infidelity, and even atheism, if atheism were possible to man's mind, which I do not believe; but it tends at least to make men reason as atheists against the superstition which revolts their conscience, and which they know is contrary to what even conscience would know of God. Human will is always atheistical, for it is not subject to God's will, and will seek to reason against the existence of that it does not like; but God, has a testimony in conscience, which, after all, the will can never get over. Where men have reduced what bears the name of God below the standard of natural conscience and feeling, the mind will use this, if it dare, to throw off the authority of the God it dislikes.

An objection may present itself before going further—that, what I say of immediate association with God by the reception of Divine testimony, sets aside ministry. I answer, Not the least. Ministry of the word is a divine ordinance, for the purpose of bringing the testimony of God to the soul of man; but, if in real divine power, the effect is to bring, by the living word, God Himself in Christ present to the soul, so as to place it in the light, to bring it to have immediately to say to God. Priesthood does place itself between the soul and God: real ministry brings God, by the word, present to the soul. This is the essential difference between the true character of each.

It is evident that faith must be founded on the testimony of God, otherwise it is not God who is believed.

Further, it must be founded on His testimony alone. I must believe, because God Himself has spoken, or I do not believe God. "Whoso," says John Baptist, of the blessed Lord, "Whoso has received His Testimony, has set to his seal that *God is true.*" So "Abraham *believed God*, and it was counted to him for righteousness." God graciously added in the former case miracles to confirm the word, as it is written "Confirming the word by signs following." But faith was in the testimony of God. Indeed, if only founded on the miracles, it was without value. "Many believed in Him when they saw the miracles which he did; but Jesus did not commit Himself to them, for He knew what was in man."

Such, then, practically is faith. It is the soul's reception, by divine power, of the testimony of God, who is thus known by it, as He has revealed Himself, and in whose presence consequently it walks; God having graciously revealed Himself as a Saviour, so that it is in peace in the presence of the Holy One, and in communion with Him. I do not enter here into the way in which He has revealed Himself, blessed as this subject is above all; because it is not my subject now—the knowledge of, and communication with the Father, through the Son, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, as the portion of a soul which has found peace through the blood of the cross. Such is the Christian's portion; but I turn to a now needed and less happy subject.

I do not further pursue the subject of superstition, or attack the forms in which it now more particularly shows itself; but I shall show that the Romanist system is not founded on faith, but the contrary. I have introduced what I have said of superstition, to show that things may be received as true, connected with the worship of God, or our religious habits, which are the opposite of faith, and, as far as they go, destructive of it.

A person may be sincere in his convictions, may fancy God has taught them to others; but he does not believe them himself on God's testimony—it is not faith; it is not believing God. Now I shall show, in the following brief remarks, that Romanism is *really*, in its main doctrines and practices, infidel (not avowedly perhaps,

but really) in all that concerns the ground of our soul's fellowship with God. I pray my reader's quiet and attentive consideration of my remarks, before he rejects this judgment of it. Christianity is the revelation, not merely of God's law, or God's will, but of God himself; and God is love. Hence, we find in it the perfect revelation of His love in the gift of His blessed Son; so that the believing soul, however poor and guilty, should know God as such, and as such toward itself, sin being perfectly and for ever put away for the believer, that he may approach God without fear; for such fear has torment, and love would take away torment for that it loves. Yet God cannot bear sin in His presence, nor indeed can the renewed and repentant soul bear it either; hence the God of love has put it away through Christ, in order to admit us to His presence. Thus God has reconciled us to Himself, to enjoy His perfect and gracious love; the same love supplying all the grace needed for us to maintain our fellowship with God in our weakness here, so that even this weakness itself should become the means of our mercifully knowing all His goodness, and the interest He shows in blessing us. Hence the Apostle John thus speaks of the Christian: "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." Christian faith, then, believes in this love. And every thing that is put in between us and God, who exercises it immediately towards us, or tends to show that it is not so free and perfect, or to militate against that entire, perfect putting away of sin by the Blessed Saviour, which makes God's perfect love consistent with His absolute holiness, all such inventions are denials so far of the revelations of Christianity—of what God really is towards us. They are so far infidelity. There *is* one between us sinners and God: that is, Christ. But He is the revelation of this love, and the Accomplisher of that, which, by putting away sin, would enable us to enjoy it, and the Intercessor through whom we obtain daily needed grace to do so. It is in Him, who, while the lowliest, most gracious, most accessible man, was God manifest in the flesh—God blessed for evermore, it is in Him, I say, we know God.

All that obscures God's love, or the perfect efficacy of

Christ's work, is infidel, as to God's only full display of Himself.

Between the Romanist and the Christian who believes that the system which the Romanist maintains is not the truth of God, but a vast system of apostate error, two questions are at issue. One of these questions is, Are the doctrines which the Romanist system teaches true? the other is, What is the authority in which man can confide, in order to know that he possesses the truth? In both the Romanist system is really *infidel*. I say the system; because I do not deny that some poor ignorant soul may believe in spite of the system, though its faith be all but overwhelmed by its errors. A man's constitution may, through mercy, resist poison; but that does not say that the drug, from whose effect he has escaped with that constitution ruined, is not poison.

If the Scriptures be taken, as having the authority of God's word, as being inspired by Him, as every true Christian acknowledges, the Romanist system of doctrine cannot be maintained for a moment; but my object now is to notice not the errors, but only the infidelity found in it.

I proceed to the proofs of this. The Scriptures teach that Christ, having by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified, there is now no more offering for sin (Heb. x. 14). The whole Romanist system is based on, and identical with, the doctrine that there is in the mass an offering for the sins of the living and the dead. The Scripture teaches us the only ground on which we can stand in the presence of God—is that the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin. The Romanist believes that there is a purgatory needed to complete this cleansing, unless for some rare soul in an unusual state of sanctity. Now, these two Romanist doctrines are really infidel as to what God has taught for our peace.

God has said that Christ's offering of himself was a work so perfect and so efficacious, that it needed not to be repeated, and, indeed, that it could not be repeated, because, in order to such efficacy, Christ must *suffer*. He has declared that without shedding of blood there is no remission; and hence that if the offering of Christ had



to be repeated, Christ must needs have suffered often, but that the efficacy of His one offering of Himself, was such that it needed not to be repeated. Now if I pretend to offer this sacrifice again, and declare that such offering is necessary and right, I deny the efficacy of Christ's one offering of Himself on the cross—that is, I am infidel or unbelieving as to the efficacy of the one offering accomplished by Christ on the cross once for all. And this is the more clear and decisive, because the Apostle, in the passage of the Epistle to the Hebrews, to which I refer, is contrasting the repetition of the Jewish sacrifices because of their inefficacy to make the conscience perfect, with Christ being offered once—and once for all, because His sacrifice made perfect for ever those that were sanctified. See Heb. x. 11—18.

And further, in accepting the Romanist doctrine as to the sacrifice of the mass, I am infidel as regards the authority of God's word, which declares that there is consequently no more offering for sin. For the Romanist pretends that there is still an offering for sin. For he pretends to have one in the sacrifice of the mass. That is, he is an infidel as to that which is the foundation of Christianity, namely, the offering of Christ on the cross. I am well aware that he teaches that the mass is an unbloody sacrifice. But this excuse is of no avail, for the declaration of Scripture is that there is *no more* offering for sin. But it is not only of no avail, but it makes the matter worse; for the Romanist doctrine declares that this unbloody sacrifice is efficacious for the remission of sins—and the Scripture declares that without shedding of blood there is no remission (Heb. ix. 22), so that the Romanist doctrine contradicts Scripture expressly. And note, that this doctrine of an unbloody sacrifice is infidel, as to the nature of sin. God declares the nature of sin to be such, that nothing less than the sufferings of Christ could expiate it; they pretend that an unbloody sacrifice, in which Christ does not suffer, can put it away.

Again the word of God teaches that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses from all sin." Blessed truth! just what our conscience needs, in order to have boldness to go before God, and enter into His presence, as knowing Him to be a gracious and loving Father.

Now the doctrine of purgatory teaches me that the blood of Jesus does not thus purge me; that I must go and suffer in some fire, of which they themselves can give very little account, in order to be purged before I can appear in God's presence; and remark here, this purging fire is for the faithful, for those who have profited by all that which what they call the Church has at its disposal for the good of souls. A good Catholic, as they call him, who has confessed to a priest, received absolution and the viaticum, and extreme unction, everything that can be done for him by what they declare to be the Church, goes to purgatory after all, and (in every case he can) will have masses said for the repose of his soul, though the Church has done its best for him while living. This is the more strange, because their authentic doctrine declares that extreme unction wipes away the remains of sin, "*abstergit peccati reliquias.*" It is strange that after absolution, and the viaticum, and extreme unction, *each* of which is alleged to be efficacious to clear a man from sin, he should go into the torment of purgatory after all. Is this all the efficacy which belongs to the Church's acts—that after she has done all she can, in order to their being cleansed, she lets the souls go into a place of fire, whose efficacy does not flow from her at all? And remark here, that she then offers the mass to get the soul out of the purgatory which God, they say, has sent it into, out of which she was not able to keep it by all she did for it when in the body. Are these the Lord's ways, or like the Lord's power? But this only in passing. I can understand that a conscience troubled by sin and fearing wrath, will fly to anything to get relief, where the true efficacy of Christ's precious blood to cleanse it, and give it peace, is not known.

But why all these efforts and means to relieve and quiet the uneasy soul—the doctrine of purgatorial fire to cleanse and fit the soul for God's presence? Because the great and precious truth, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin, is not believed. If it does so, why go to purgatory (that is, a place of cleansing, for such is the meaning of the word) to get it cleansed? That is, the Romish system is infidelity as to this great

and precious truth also, of God's word. But there is infidelity too in it, as to something more than the truth. There is infidelity as to God's love. What is the text constantly quoted to lay a ground for purgatory?—"Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison; verily I say unto thee, thou shalt not come out thence till thou hast paid the last farthing." Is it thus God has met us in the Gospel? That the unrepenting sinner will meet with the just wrath due to his sins, every true Christian owns. But such a use of this text is really denying the efficacy of Christ's work. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." And that we might be forgiven, Christ has died upon the cross. But this doctrine of purgatory teaches that we must pay to the very last farthing—that God will exact it of us. It is infidelity as to that grace which has given Jesus to *bear our sins* in his own body on the tree, so that every repentant sinner should know that God loved him, so as not to spare His own son, but gave him as a propitiation for his sins—and that Christ has, by the sacrifice of himself, put away the sin that justly alarmed his conscience, or, as the Scripture expresses it, "He has by HIMSELF purged our sins" (Heb. i. 3). This doctrine of purgatory is really infidelity as to the efficacy of Christ's blood; for, if that has cleansed the true Christian from all sin, he does not want purgatory to effect his cleansing. It is infidelity as to the authority of God's word, which declares that his blood does cleanse us from all sin,—that Christ, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; and it is infidelity as to the precious love of God, who gave His son to do it, that we might have peace in our souls through his name.

Again,—the doctrine of the mediation of the Virgin Mary and the saints, is also really infidelity. The Scripture declares there is one mediator between God and man—the man Christ Jesus; and what does it teach us

as to this doctrine of Christ's intercession? It teaches us that that divine and gracious Person, the Son—who is one with the Father; who is God over all, blessed for evermore—came down so low and in such grace, that the poorest and vilest sinner, whose heart grace drew to Him found free access to Him, was never cast out. If it was a woman in the city that was a sinner, if Jesus was in the house, she was emboldened to go in, and count upon that tender goodness which inspired confidence to the heart, while it awakened the conscience in the deepest way, and gave a horror of sin. That is, we are taught that such grace—such tenderness was in Jesus—in that Holy One, who had become like unto his brethren in all things, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest, that He condescended to all our infirmities, and sympathised with all our sorrows, entering into them as none other could, with a heart, such as none other had. We are taught that He suffered, being tempted, that He might be able to succour them that are tempted; that He was tempted in all things like unto us without sin; so that we have a merciful and faithful high priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and hence can come boldly to a throne of grace; that He ever liveth to make intercession for us. This is what my heart learns of the blessed Jesus in the Scriptures, that He who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, now lives to make intercession for us.

But what does the Romanist doctrine teach me? That I cannot thus go to him; that I cannot count upon his tenderness; that He is too high, too far off; that Mary has a tenderer heart as being a woman; and that I must go to Him, through her, as I should in the case of some king or great man, who would be too much above me to allow me to approach Him; or I must go to the saints. Have they then tenderer, more condescending hearts than He who came to this earth on purpose to assure us of his love? Did Mary, however blessed, come down from heaven to seek me in my sorrow and in my misery? or is Christ changed, and become hard-hearted, since he ascended up on high? No; the doctrine of many mediators, and of the Virgin Mary, as the one through whose

heart I am to approach Jesus's, is infidelity as to the grace of Christ, denies his glory as a compassionate High Priest. He came down and suffered in this world, that we might know we could go to God by Him; inasmuch as He could feel for all our infirmities *Himself*, and would be touched with them. The Romanist doctrine tells me, I cannot dare to do it,—that I must get nearer, tenderer hearts, to go to Him for me. Ah! I prefer his own, I have seen and learnt what it was in his life down here—I can count upon it, more than on any, be they what they may. It is the only heart that has shed its life-blood for me. I trust its kindness, more than that of all the Marys, and of all the saints that ever were, blessed as they may be in their place. This again, while seeming only to add, is infidelity as to another precious doctrine of the word of God of Christianity itself.

I refer to these as examples of the way in which the doctrines of Romanism, while seeming only to add various doctrines on the authority of what is called the Church, is really undermining the truth, taking away all the value of what is true, is really infidelity as to the most precious truths of the gospel. It calls you to believe other things not in Scripture; but in doing so, it makes you disbelieve what is the truth of God herein revealed. And here note—It is not open infidelity as to the historical facts of Christianity, nor as to the doctrines which embrace the great truths on which Christianity is founded.

There are two things with which faith is concerned, in order to the peace of a soul.

First,—The great doctrinal facts revealed; and

Secondly,—The value of these facts for the soul, and the application of this value to it.

If these last be taken away, the soul has no more benefit from them than if they were not true at all.

If the riches of the world were heaped up before me, and I could not have them—if they were not available to me for my debts, there might as well be none, as far as I am concerned.

Now Romanism does not deny facts, but their availability to my peace; it does not deny the expiation for

sin made at the cross—it does not deny the Trinity, it does not deny the incarnation, nor the divinity of Christ—these truths it holds, so that it would not be suspected at first sight of infidelity. It is in the actual value and application of them to the sinner that it has destroyed the truth, and taken away the way of peace to the soul thereby.

God says, that by one offering, Christ has perfected for ever those that are sanctified (Heb. x. 14).

Romanism says, He is to be offered often, and that the believer is *not* perfected by that one offering of Christ on the cross. It denies, not the offering, but the value and sufficiency for the believer's peace.

God says, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin; that He has by Himself purified our sins (1 John i. 7; Heb. i. 3).

Romanism says, He has *not*; that people have to be purified in purgatory.

God says, that Christ is a merciful high-priest, who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Heb. iv. 15).

Romanism says, that we shall find more suitable persons to go to, more accessible, more tender hearted, in the Saints and the Virgin Mary.

It denies not the fact of Christ's priesthood, but its real value for me. In vain then is it orthodox as to the facts of Christianity. It makes them useless to the soul, and substitutes others in their place, for the souls' use and greater advantage.

These are examples of the real infidelity of Romanism as to those truths of the gospel, which are most precious for the peace of the soul.

But as regards the second point I referred to in commencing, that is the authority on which our souls can rest in order to be assured that we possess the truth, the infidelity is still more glaring. I have supposed in what precedes, that the authority of the inspired word of God is admitted, as every true believer does admit it.

But the Romanist will not consent to this.

Now mark well. Not to consent to it is infidelity.

He who does not admit the authority of God's inspired word *is* an infidel.

It will be said: many souls have been saved without knowing of the existence of the Bible. I admit it fully. If the truth has been preached to them, or brought to their knowledge in any other way, the Spirit of God may have brought it savingly home to their souls. In the first ages, thousands were brought to salvation by the preaching of the Apostles and others, before the New Testament existed. So since it has been written, many were converted before they were informed of its existence, as heathens, into whose language it was not yet translated. But that is not our case. We do know it exists, and *then* to deny, or question, its authority, is infidelity as to it. Now this is the ground the Romanist *always* takes; he tells me, I cannot know it is the Bible or the word of God, without the authority of the Church. Now mark that. For, if God has written a book, and addressed it to men in general, or to those called Christians, His doing so puts them under the responsibility of receiving and submitting to what He has so addressed. What God has so addressed to them obliges their conscience. If not, He has failed in the object He proposed. He was not able to put those he addressed under the responsibility of receiving what He had said; if the Romanist says the ordinary Christian cannot know that it is the word of God, and that he is not able to receive it as such. Of two things one—either he who says so denies it himself to be the revealed word, or he asserts that God's word is not by itself binding on those to whom it is sent; that God has failed in so writing it as to render it obligatory on the conscience of the reader to receive it as such. Now either of these is infidelity, and the common ground taken by infidels;—and the latter is really a blasphemous kind of infidelity. Yet this is the ground always taken by the Romanist, and it is clearly infidel ground. If the authority of the Church is requisite in order to a man's believing the Scripture and receiving it as God's word, then God has not spoken so as to bind the conscience and make faith obligatory, without some one adding to his authority so as to make it to be received. What kind of Church it can be, which can give to God's word an authority over the conscience, and oblige men to believe it, which that word had not

though God spoke it, I leave a man who reverences God to consider. It must be more competent, its authority more obligatory than that of God Himself, for it says such a book *is* God's word, and you must receive it as such; and yet, though it be God's word, it could not have that authority over the conscience before.

I am not speaking of a greater competency to instruct, a greater knowledge of its meaning where all own it as divine, but what gives it a divine authority over the soul. It has it not (though it be God's word), according to the Romanist, without receiving it from the testimony of the Church.

The Church, that is, certain men (supposing even they were inspired), have told me certain things, and I am bound to believe them. Peter, Paul, John, Matthew, and others, that is, the Apostles and other writers of the New Testament, have told me certain things as inspired men, and I cannot tell whether I am to believe them or not. If so, then these Apostles have not the same claim over my conscience and faith as the former. It is in vain to tell me the former compose the Church, and that it has God's authority. Had not the inspired Apostles God's authority? Did not what they say bind the saints' conscience? It is not a question of interpreting. The question is, Has what they say authority over my conscience, so that I am bound to receive it as God's word and believe it? St. Paul writes an Epistle to the Church—say at Corinth—Were they bound to receive it as God's word? If so, am I? If I am not, they were not; and note, they *were* the Church; that is, the Church has to receive the word of the Apostle, not to pronounce on it. Woe be to them if they did not. Woe be to me if I do not.

This, then, is the simple, yet solemn assertion of the believer in the truth and wisdom and glory of God—that if God gives a testimony of Himself, man is bound to believe it. If not, he is guilty of despising the testimony of God; and the day of judgment will surely show that it is not God who has failed in giving the testimony, so as to bind the conscience and oblige to faith, but that the man's sinful heart has deceived him.



Look at the creation. There is a testimony God has given of Himself. Man is *guilty*, if he does not see God in it. There are many difficulties, many things he cannot explain; but the testimony is sufficient to condemn those who do not believe in God the Creator.

When the blessed Lord appeared, many cavils might be, and were raised, by infidel hearts; but he could say, If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.

So St. John, as to the testimony of God of the Gospel in general—He that believeth not God, hath made Him a liar; because he has not believed the testimony that God gave concerning His son: such an one was guilty, guilty of infidelity. So in the word, God has given a testimony, and man is bound to believe it. Doubts and cavils and difficulties may be raised by infidel minds; but God's testimony of Himself is in every case adequate to bind men to believe it, and to bring his conscience under it.

If he do not believe it, he has, to use the Apostle's solemn expression, made God a liar, because he has not believed His testimony concerning His son. He is really an infidel, at least his principles are, whatever system of religious rites he may have bowed to.

Now, what does the Romanist say? He says: You cannot believe in the Scriptures, without the authority of the Church to accredit them; that is, that God's testimony does not bind the conscience, does not oblige to faith, without something *else* to accredit. Now this is infidelity, and a horrible dishonour done to God. It is declaring that God's testimony is not sufficient, not competent in itself to bind man to oblige man to believe and bow to it.

God has given an inefficient thing as a testimony; so that if I do not bow to it, that is, if I remain an infidel, I am justified in so remaining. This is high treason against God and His truth. They dare not say, it is not God's word, for then they would be avowed infidels themselves. But they do dare to say, consequently, that *though it be God's word*, it does not bind the conscience of a man, and that something else is necessary to give it

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authority to his conscience. No matter what it is: they may call it the Church, or the Pope, or a general council, which represents the Church. It is something *besides* the word, without which God's own word is not binding on the conscience.

That is, their principles are infidel before God. Their cleverness in puzzling the mind as to the word, their demanding proofs, showing how impossible it is for man to know it is God's word, though the object be to throw them into the arms of what they call the Church, is merely infidel reasoning, and reasoning which is found employed in fact by infidels. They will tell you that laws require a judge; but laws *bind* every one, whether he be a judge or no; and further, we are not to judge God's word. *It will judge us.* "The words that I have spoken unto you," says the Lord, "the same shall *judge you* in that day."

The word of God is a testimony to man's conscience, which bears God's authority with itself.

If a man do not bow to it when sent in grace as a testimony to save, he will be obliged to bow to it, when it will be executed in judgment. In a word—Romanism declares that without what it calls the Church's authority, God's word is not such as obliges me to believe it.

This doctrine is infidelity, as to the proper authority of God's word. And mark further. If I do not believe what God's word says without the authority of the Church, I do not believe *God* at all. It is not faith in God; there may be faith in the Church, but there is not faith in God. For when I had only what God said, I did not believe it; when the Church tells me to believe it, I do. But this is faith in the Church; and I do not believe God, I decline doing it, unless I have something else to accredit his word.

Now the only true faith is believing God, believing God himself. This is the real return of the soul to God. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to Him for righteousness; he had no Church to accredit what God had said. He believed, because God had Himself said the thing. It was believing *God*. He who does not, until the Church adds its authority, does not believe God

at all. There is no true faith at all where a man believes, because the Church has accredited anything. I have refused or failed to believe when God has spoken, when there was only his authority.

Now believing when there is only God's authority, is believing God—nothing else is.

To require the Church's testimony to accredit God's, is dishonouring Him—disbelieving Him. The Romanist, as such, has no true faith at all, for he does not believe God on his own authority, but on the Church's. As the word is sometimes read by them, or heard, God may give individuals among them faith, in spite of the infidel doctrine of their Church.

Remember that true faith, is faith in what God has said, because God has said it. If you require the Church's sanction of it, you have not faith *in God*. You do not bow to *His* word, unless it is sanctioned by some one else. Credulity, as to superstitions taught by men, is not faith *in God*. Faith in God believes in His word, without any other authority than His word itself.

If you say, How am I to know it is? This is merely saying His word is not in itself sufficient to bind your conscience. That is just what an infidel says. It is infidelity. Your belief depends on the Church's authority, not on God's word.

That is, Romanism is infidelity, as to the most precious and fundamental truths of Christianity; and it is infidelity, as to the authority of God's own word itself.

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#### FRAGMENT.

THERE are last that shall be first, and first that shall be last; for such is the good pleasure of the Father. But the last, as the first, are constrained to forward, in one way or another, the truth, for such is the good pleasure of God, who will not, in these last times, allow his church to sleep. If any one desires to be among the last when God acts, he has no one to blame but himself. Must God stay his hand in blessing, because a man will not go forward? May God, in his goodness, not permit it to be so!

N<sup>o</sup> XXVI.  
THE SONG OF SONGS.

[According to the authorised version, with an attempt to distinguish the persons of the speakers.]

The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.

*Bride.*—Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine. Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore the virgins love thee. Draw me, we will run after thee. The King has brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee; we will remember thy love more than wine; the upright love thee. I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun has looked upon me, my mother's children were angry with me; they made me keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept. Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?

*Bridegroom.*—If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents. I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots. Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold. We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver.

*Bride.*—While the king *sitteth* at his table, my spike-nard sendeth forth the smell thereof. A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts. My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi.

*Bridegroom.*—Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes.

*Bride.*—Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea pleasant, also our bed is green. The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir. (Cap. ii.) I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.

*Bridegroom.*—As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.

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*Bride.*—As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love. Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me. I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please. The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, showing himself through the lattice. My beloved spake and said unto me,

*Bridegroom.*—Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone: the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret *places* of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely. Take (ye) for us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.

*Bride.*—My beloved is mine, and I am his, he feedeth among the lilies. Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved; and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether. (Cap. iii.) By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. I will rise now and go about the city; in the streets and in the broad ways, I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. The watchmen that go about the city found me; to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that

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conceived me. I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love till he please. Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant? Behold his bed which is Solomon's; threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel. They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night. King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple; the midst thereof being paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem. Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.

*Bridegroom.*—(Cap. iv.). Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Mount Gilead. Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one beareth twins, and none is barren among them. Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely: thy temples are like a piece of pomegranate within thy locks. Thy neck is like the tower of David, builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men. Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies. Until the day break and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense. Thou art all fair, my love, *there is* no spot in thee. Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards. Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices! Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under thy

tongue: and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon. A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard, spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices; a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon. Awake, O north wind, and come thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.

*Bride.*—Let my beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits.

*Bridegroom.*—(Cap. v.). I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey: I have drunk my wine with my milk; eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

*Bride.*—I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying:

*Bridegroom.*—Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.

*Bride.*—I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? My beloved put in his hand by the hole of *the door*, and my bowels were moved for him. I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet-smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake; I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer. The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him that I am sick of love.

*Chorus.*—What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?

*Bride.* My beloved is white and ruddy; the chiefest

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among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy and black as a raven. His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk and fitly set. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers; his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh; His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl; his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires: His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold; his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars: His mouth is most sweet; yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

*Chorus.*—(Cap. vi.). Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? Whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee.

*Bride.*—My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies. I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.

*Bridegroom.*—Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah; comely as Jerusalem; terrible as an army with banners. Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me; thine hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead. Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and there is not one barren among them. As a piece of a pomegranate are thy temples within thy locks. There are threescore queens and fourscore concubines and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled, is but one: she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her: The daughters saw her and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines and they praised her.

*Chorus.*—Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?

*Bridegroom.*—I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished and the pomegranates budded. Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Ammi-nadib.



*The Song of Songs.*

*Chorus.*—Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return; that we may look upon thee.

*Other Virgins.*—What will ye see in the Shulamite?

*Chorus.*—As it were the company of two armies.

*Bridegroom.*—(Cap. vii.) How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter, the joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman. Thy navel is like a round goblet which wanteth not liquor; thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies. Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins. Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim; thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon, which looketh toward Damascus. Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple: the king is held in the galleries. How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights! This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes. I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples: And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.

*Bride.*—I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards: let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth; there will I give thee my loves. The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, *which* I have laid up for thee, O my beloved. (Cap. viii.) O that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother; when I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised. I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me: I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate. His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love till he please.

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*Chorus.*—Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?

*Bridegroom.*—I raised thee up under the apple-tree; there thy mother brought thee forth; there she brought thee forth that bare thee.

*Bride.*—Set me as a seal upon thine heart; as a seal upon thine arm; for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.

*Chorus.*—We have a little sister and she hath no breasts, what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for? If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver; and if she be a door, we will inclose her with boards of cedar.

*Bride.*—I am a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found favour. Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver. My vineyard which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.

*Bridegroom.*—Thou [bride] that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice, cause me to hear it.

*Bride.*—Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart, upon the mountains of spices.

☞ The Author of the above arrangement has expressed his idea thus:—  
“It is a veritable *attempt* and nothing more. The Hebrew language makes a distinction of gender which the English does not. Therefore an English reader may be helped by the distinction of the *dramatis personæ*, as far as the Hebrew helps us.”

But there are two difficulties in the way of doing this completely.

1. There are sentences where the sex of the speaker no more appears in the Hebrew than in the English, and perhaps not that of the person addressed.

2. When we see clearly that the person spoken to is male (or female) there is nothing to show whether the speaker is the remaining one of the two, or one of a party of virgins. These latter remarks apply chiefly to the close of the book, from chap. viii. 5, to the end; which makes that part of the arrangement more conjectural.—ED.

N<sup>o</sup>. XXVII.

## LEAVEN.

THERE is a tendency in all our minds "to savour the things of man," so as to draw human conclusions from the direct revelation of God. The affection of Peter, as well as his understanding, forbade the thought that "the Son of the living God" should suffer. It is well for us to profit by the Lord's rebuke to Peter. The thoughts of God are not as our thoughts. And that which has originally been matter of direct revelation from God, is only really apprehended by revelation. The Holy Ghost, "the Spirit of truth," is "the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation;" and his direct teaching is needed by us to perceive the bearing of that which He himself has inspired others to write. Now the way of man is to regard that which God has revealed in the inspired writings, as subject-matter for him to speculate on, and from which he may safely draw his own inferences. Hence he stumbles at the very threshold, and instead "of obeying the truth," he makes truth subject to his own understanding. But God is pleased "to hide from the wise and prudent that which he reveals to babes." They having an unction from the Holy One, depend on the teaching of that anointing, and which is the truth, even in Him, who is the truth, Jesus Christ the true God and eternal life. But in those who have the unction, the savouring of the things of man in the things of God, is often found. Christians have tried to make out an orderly narrative from the four gospels, by harmonising them, and thus the varied aspects in which the Holy Ghost presents Jesus to our souls is reduced to the level of human biography. But it is not the way of the Holy Ghost to present scenes to us after the manner of man's history, his way is not as our way, neither his thoughts as our thoughts. The object He has to hold up to us cannot be so touched, without disparagement to the person and glory of the Lord Jesus, and His way is not to gratify a prying curiosity, and to satisfy the mind with a readily received theory; but so to exhibit Jesus in the

glory of His person and the depth of His grace, that whether it be our wants as sinners or the desires of the renewed heart, they may be fully met in Him in whom is centred the manifold wisdom and manifold grace of God. The attempt at an orderly biography entirely hinders this.

That there is precision and accuracy in the terms used by the Holy Ghost dare not be questioned. But it is *His* precision and accuracy, and not according to man's thoughts; and the attempt at human accuracy in that which God has revealed will hinder instead of helping our instruction. We make definitions of the terms used by the Spirit of God, instead of leaving it to Himself to define those terms. "The things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." The Scripture is emphatically the word of God; and if it be received as the word of God, it will ever be in the character of little children, in dependence on the immediate and direct teaching of the Holy Ghost Himself. Many Christians who apprehend doctrinally, as well as by experience their own vileness, so as to find the need of habitual living on Christ as their sanctification, do not so readily acknowledge their own ignorance, as to lead to habitual dependence on the Spirit of Truth to guide them into all truth. Systematic theology often leads real Christians into a measure of self-complacency, and tends to make them measure the knowledge of others by their own. The teaching of the Spirit ever humbles; and in this line also we find the apparent paradox that growth in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ is accompanied with a deeper sense of our own ignorance. But so it must be when we really study Him who is the wisdom of God.

The foregoing thoughts have arisen in reflecting on the bearing of the word "leaven," as used by the Holy Ghost. In the law, that teaching-shadow of good things to come, leaven was forbidden. "Thou shalt not offer

the blood of my sacrifice with leaven" (Ex. xxxiv. 25). Again, "No meat-offering, which ye shall bring unto the Lord shall be made with leaven: for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the Lord made by fire." Both these are shadows, of which the substance and reality is Christ Himself. In the blood of His sacrifice there was only to be found His own singular perfectness; even the very rendering it was the perfection of obedience; and, while it was a sacrifice of bloodshedding, it was, at the same time, an offering of a sweet-smelling savour unto God. And so of the meat-offering, the expression of that perfection of character in which God Himself could take complacency; it was singular; nothing could be added to it; nothing taken from it; whilst, even in "His own" (John xiii.), as to character, how much is wanting, how many flaws need to be removed.

But there are two remarkable exceptions in the law, in favour of leaven. Thus, we read: "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete; even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the Lord. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals; they shall be of fine flour; *they shall be baken with leaven*; they are the first-fruits unto the Lord" (Lev. xxiii. 15—17). The body of this shadow, the reality of this feast, was manifested when the Day of Pentecost was fully come; and the Church was *formally* set up on earth by the coming down of the Holy Ghost from heaven. This is the real new meat-offering unto the Lord; even those who have the "first-fruits of the Spirit," and are, thereby, "a kind of first-fruits of His creatures." Whilst our hearts rejoice in the knowledge of what the Church is as presented in Christ and through Christ "holy and unblameable, and unrebukable" before God in heaven; we know, also, full well what it actually is; but even as it is actually with the divine recognition of *leaven* in it, it is a new meat-offering unto the Lord. In the world, though it be sorely

tempted and tried as it is, mourning over its own declension, ashamed and confounded and self-loathing, it is still the Church, the gift of the Father to the Son; the object of the Son's perfect love, and inhabited by the Holy Ghost. It is regarded here, whilst the leaven is in it, with the same love as that with which it is regarded in heaven, where it is only seen in virtue of Christ's sacrifice in the unleavened perfectness of Christ. Soul-cheering truth in such a day as this, "brethren beloved of God"! It is the one object on the earth of present divine complacency, because it is "accepted in the beloved;" and, regarded in this light, "rebuke, discipline, and chastening," are only proofs of divine love.

The law of the peace-offering is remarkable. "This is the law of the sacrifice of peace-offerings, which he shall offer unto the Lord. If he offer it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving *unleavened* cakes mingled with oil, and cakes mingled with oil, of fine flour, fried. Besides the cakes he shall offer for his offering *leavened* bread, with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace-offerings" (Lev. vii. 11, 12). "Christ is our peace;" the joy of a believer is in Him, from Him, and through Him. In its highest aspect it is unaccompanied with leaven, "in whom, though now ye see Him not, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." But there are many occasions in which, although Christ be the source of our joy, natural susceptibilities may enter. Such might have been raised in the bosom of the Apostle, when he says to the Philippians, "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again."

When the tear trickles down the cheek on witnessing any manifestation of the grace of God in converting a soul—in answering prayer—or sending an unexpected deliverance—there is frequently found the leaven of the peace-offering. In many cases, too, when anguish of spirit has brought on bodily malady, and the soul is set at liberty through the reception of the truth, so that joy and thanksgiving take the place of mourning and depression, it can hardly be denied that the feelings of nature

enter into the expression of gladness for deliverance. The source and cause of the joy is unleavened; it is Christ Himself; but there is that which accompanies the joy, partaking of the character of leaven, because natural feelings almost necessarily find their entrance. There is danger of only regarding natural emotion; and that danger has been so manifest in the downward road of the great professing body, that Christians, in avoiding that path, almost seem to forget that they have any peace-offerings. Even in the days of allowed shadows, the very shadow was perverted. The harlot can say (too faithful picture of the corrupt Church), "I have peace-offerings to-day; this day have I paid my vows. Therefore came I forth to meet thee" (Prov. vii. 6—23). It is thus, too, in later days, that the prophet rebukes Israel: "Come to Bethel and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes after three years; and offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving *with leaven*, and proclaim and publish the free offerings; *for this liketh* you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord God" (Amos iv. 4, 5). There lacked the liking for such ordinances in which the worshipper took no part himself, but which was either wholly rendered to God or the portion of the priest. But where the chief part belonged to the worshipper, there they liked to seem religious. And so, in the history of the Church, the great realities centred in the precious work and offices of Christ. The food of the quickened soul, and the ground of its joy, have been passed over, to make way for a form of godliness into which nature can readily enter, such as in the christening and wedding. Here it liketh men well to be religious; the leaven so entirely predominates, that there is no remembrance of "the unleavened cakes with oil;" no spiritual thought whatever relative to Christ; so that persons who despise Christ's work, and hate the doctrines of grace, would be grievously scandalised if they were not married, or their children baptized, after a Christian fashion. The popular meaning of the word "holiday" most significantly proves that God's permission of leaven, in the peace-offerings, has been perverted by men into the denial of the doctrine of the cross of Christ.

But this abuse ought not to hinder real Christians from having their peace-offerings. The word still remains "Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, in every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." There is and there ought to be, a holy jealousy in our souls lest we only like "sacrifices with leaven;" but we have to watch against a morbid feeling arising from this very jealousy. It is "the oil of gladness" with which Jesus anoints his fellows. There is joy in the Holy Ghost, joy from above brought into the sorrow here below; and whilst one who loves the Lord Jesus Christ cannot but be sorrowful at witnessing the joy of the world, so soon to be turned into sorrow, he is still to be "as always rejoicing," whether he look *back* to the cross, *at present* circumstances, or *onward* to the future, or *upward* to God. The Holy Ghost glorifies Jesus, and taking of his things and shewing them unto us, turns everything to profit. And if "fearfully and wonderfully made," we find it hard to distinguish between the flesh and the spirit, Jesus above can separate the precious from the vile, and we must not deprive ourselves of the sober, holy joy of the Holy Ghost, because we cannot exactly analyse our feelings. There was leaven in the peace offerings. The characteristic of real Christian joy would be equable cheerfulness, so distinct from mere temporary excitement often followed by depression. Hence the word, "Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be ye filled with the Spirit."

When we turn to the teaching of the Lord Jesus and his Apostles, we find very interesting instruction from the use of the word leaven; whether used figuratively of doctrine or practice, or as representing the process of the *little* leaven which leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Cor. v. 6: Gal. v. 9); or as embracing both these thoughts.

It is first used by our Lord in the remarkable series of Parables in Matt. xiii. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." It is *the process* of leavening which is prominent here—result-



ing in a leavened mass. The Lord had previously given the reason of His teaching in this way. "Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand." The truth concealed under the parable will alone be elicited by the spiritual, and conclusions of the most opposite moral bearing will be drawn from the same parable by the acuteness of intellect, and by the spiritual mind. The same parable is like the pillar of the cloud in the night time, darkness to the Egyptians and light to Israel; it blinds the acutest intellect, but it gives deep instruction to the humble, who depend upon the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Before our eyes Christendom stands out as a leavened mass, the leavening process has gone on and is still proceeding; a result has been produced, and that result is by common consent called Christianity. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened." There are two principal modes of corruption traceable both in the history of Israel and that of the Church; but both involving the same principle, the loss of their separateness, which was in fact their glory and their strength. Israel would be as the nations; when "to dwell alone and not be reckoned among the nations" was their real glory. Israel leaned on an arm of flesh, on Egypt or Assyria, their house of bondage or prison-house, when the arm of the Lord was their strength and salvation. Thus also Israel "changed their glory for that which doth not profit," adopting the idolatry of the nations into the worship of the true God. "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed *two* evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

It may be difficult practically to separate the *two* evils one from the other, either in the case of Israel, or the Church. But with respect to the Church, there is an intended distinction in the figure of the woman putting leaven in the mass, and "the harlot with the golden cup in her hands, full of abominations and filthiness of her

fornication." It is the difference between what the woman does with that which is committed to her charge, and what the woman receives for the favours she bestows; "for they give gifts to all whores" (Ezek. xvi. 33). Both the household woman and the harlot help on to the rearing of Babylon, but in different ways; and the quiet plausible way of the housekeeper is less suspected, but not less dangerous, than the barefacedness of the harlot. In plain words, the gradual way in which the Church has insinuated itself into the world, is by no means so *transparent* an evil, as the open manner in which the Church has received the world into itself. Men are sharp-sighted enough as to the latter, and constantly inveigh against ecclesiastical cupidity, because they have, almost by common consent, made the Church to consist of ecclesiastics, and feel themselves justified in doing, for their own selfish ends, that which they condemn in an accredited ecclesiastic. Men judge their clergy by a higher standard than that by which they measure themselves; and there is but retributive justice in this, for, if *the position claimed by clergy, be entirely opposed to the whole tone of Christ's teaching and that of His apostles*—if they are in principle a usurpation of Christ's prerogatives—they necessarily lay themselves open to such a partial judgment; for they have deluded men into the notion that they are a distinct class. But whilst no eye is so discerning as that of the men of the world, as to the inconsistencies of even real Christians, especially in their pursuit of the honours of the world, they themselves are glorying in the leavened mass which they call Christianity. They speak of the Christian world with commendation; they regard such Christianity, not as a corrupt system prophetically announced, but as though it were the proper fruit of the Gospel of the grace of God. Ignorant of what the Church of the living God is, they believe the outward likeness of the kingdom of heaven to be that reality, which is the Church of the living God. The manner of the leavening process is to be discovered by attending to the teaching of the Lord Jesus Himself. If we once receive the truth, that separateness unto God is the real

blessing of the true Church; we can readily conceive how that the attempt to incorporate its privileges with the world (whatever might be its influence on the world) would mar that separateness. The result produced would be something spurious, in the midst of which the real Church would be hidden; but the effect would be, that to the eyes of men the real Church would be overlooked, and the corrupt mass become invested with its privileges. When we read the solemn admonition of the Lord, spoken to His disciples in the audience of the multitude, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you;" we get at once a clue to the mode of the leavening process, which has produced that anomaly a Christian world. If we cannot state exactly the commencement, we know that the mystery of iniquity was at work in the Apostle's days, and that the germ of every false doctrine had then its rise in the Church. This also we know, that it is by the power of the Holy Ghost alone accompanying the preaching of the pure word of God that souls can really be converted to God, and become living stones of the temple of God. Now to such a power the Church could not openly pretend; and therefore it became necessary for the Church to make a way of investing men with all her privileges, by leading them to the external observance of things which real Christians did, but which they did because they knew the power of redemption in their own souls. It was in the power of man to change one outward form for another; and his own native powers of mind might be convinced of the folly of idolatry. He might be turned from idols without being turned to God; he might observe Christian ordinances without any spiritual understanding. He might worship with those who worshipped God in the spirit, and yet himself not know what he worshipped. And where does the responsibility rest? Surely with those who had given that which was holy to the dogs, for the "dogs" are those "without." It was the mistaken way of doing good by those who would try to persuade themselves that they were conferring a benefit, when

they knew, after all, that there was no reality in it. At best it was a pious fraud. And now when men are told that they are only Christians in name, and that their profession only enhances their responsibility, and will issue in more awful condemnation, they turn on them who thus speak the truth and "rend" them. Their very profession is the greatest possible hindrance to the preaching of the Gospel. And with respect to the precious pearls, all the doctrines of grace, and privileges of true believers, they are trodden under foot as worthless. What is the death and resurrection of Christ but mere history to the mind of the great professing body? what the privileges of sonship—so marvellous in the eyes of a believer, but a mere unmeaning name to one who has been taught it by rote in his childhood, so that he would scoff at its avowal? Esau, the profane one, is the just type of the great professing body, desiring to inherit the blessing, and yet despising the birthright. The Lord further teaches by two homely yet remarkable figures. "No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles, else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish; but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved." Here we are taught that the attempt at uniting new and old will end in disaster. The "new" may be good, intrinsically good in itself, which is the case here supposed, but it will neither fit in nor amalgamate with the old. The attempt to add on Christ to John the Baptist, instead of regarding their missions and ministries as in direct contrast the one with the other—in other words, the attempt to apply the way of grace as exhibited in Christ to the way of righteousness as exhibited by John, would end in thorough disregard of the righteousness and holiness of God, and fritter away the Gospel into the notion of a remedial law. The popular idea of the Gospel too plainly illustrates the result of putting the new piece to the old garment. The immutable justice and holiness of God—the effectual finished work of Christ in atonement for everlasting

salvation—the total depravity of man, and the necessity of his being born again by the quickening power of the Holy Ghost are alike neutralised by the attempt at putting the new piece to the old garment. “The rent is worse.” There is “a form [or outline] of knowledge and truth in the law.” It tended to show man the inapproachableness of God, and his distance from God; it tended to produce a fear of God, although a slavish one. But when the breach of the law was attempted to be healed by making grace supplementary to the law, thus virtually casting contempt upon the riches of God’s grace, both law and grace perished together; and the result is that conventional righteousness which makes the will of man and not the will of God to be the arbiter of right and wrong. The other attempt at forcing men who know not Christ to act on the principles of Christ, being necessarily modified by the desire to produce a present result, has issued in that anomaly—a Christian World—the wine lost because the reality and power of Christian principle is entirely lost—“the bottles perish,” for the world is ignorant of its condemnation by the very fact of its being recognised as Christian. How entirely the mass is leavened, has ever been forced on the conscience of those, who, in their endeavour to maintain “a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men,” have, through this strange entanglement, found fealty to Christ regarded as turbulence to the state or society, and obedience to constituted authority implicating them with falsehood and superstition. Religious acts have been enforced by civil authority and civil acts, the most foreign to the Spirit of Christ, stamped with his name. The end of all this confusion is fearful judgment; as it is written, that thou “shouldest destroy them which destroy or corrupt the earth.”

We find another force of the word *leaven* (Matthew xvi. 6). In this passage it is that which leavens, rather than the process of leavening, which appears most prominent. “Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.” The ignorance of the disciples has furnished us with the sense in which the word *leaven* is here

used. "Then understood they how he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." This doctrine is at the root of all false religion. It is the demand of man's mind to subject God to his mind, by asking other credentials of himself, than those he is pleased at the time to give. Thus Jesus Himself, the actual "sign" so long since predicted, even Immanuel, proving his mission by the most astounding miracles, is asked for a sign from heaven. The Pharisaic formalist and intellectual Sadducee alike agree in this, to have a God according to their own thoughts—a God who shall uphold them in their good opinion of themselves. The Lord draws not the line between them, but classes both under the phrase, "a wicked and adulterous generation," to whom no further sign should be given than that of Jonas the prophet, the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Himself. "He left them and departed." But the leaven is still the same, working in persons apparently the most opposite—it is the grand prevalent doctrine of unbelief, that the will of man, and not the will of God, is to decide what God is and what God ought to do, even when it is a question of the salvation of a sinner.

"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" is applied to morals (in 1 Cor. v.) and to doctrine (Gal. v. 9); and solemn is the warning. In a congregation of Christians there can be hardly such a thing as the sin of an individual only affecting himself. "Looking diligently, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby *many* be defiled." And so of false doctrine—all are liable to mistakes and errors, and even to intellectual difficulties; but these will not amount to false doctrine, until, in the pride of his mind, a person thinks he is going to set others right, or in the spirit of party, seeks to draw away disciples after him, then "their word doth eat as a canker."

The passage, 1 Cor. v. 6—8, is of instructive interest; because it so fully recognises the two aspects of the Church—its unleavened aspect—"as ye are unleavened"; in its presentation in Christ before God, and its actual aspect, as that wherein leaven is recognised as being—

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump.” In the one aspect, it can ever be said, “God hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel”; in the other, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” To the understanding of man it appears a strange thing, that perfect acceptance with God should be compatible with the idea of the Lord Himself trying the heart and searching the reins. But it is all plain to faith—and the righteous live only by faith—of what Christ is, and what he is in Christ. In Christ he sees the Church as “unleavened,” and the holy discipline of God is ever unto this one object—that the actual condition of believers may more correspond to their true condition as accepted in the beloved. “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened; for even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

There is such a thing as Christian attainment, but it is not the attainment of a standing before God; *that* is *given* to us in Christ Jesus. “By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.” But there is attainment in the soul’s progress in conformity to this standing so wondrously given to us. This attainment was the desire of the Apostle (Phil. chap. iii.), and in this his language must ever have been so long as he was in the flesh—“not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect”—for nothing would satisfy the cravings of his soul until he *actually* was in that perfect conformity to Christ, for which he had been apprehended of Christ. In this respect, the way of God is so different from our way, and so pre-eminently above it. It is objective. He holds out to us what He by his grace has already made us to be in Christ; and whilst thus comely in the comeliness which He has put upon us, there is ever the danger of our trusting in our beauty, as though we had anything out of Christ. In his infinite wisdom, whilst perfectly knowing the inward craving of the soul

after that perfectness which is ours in Christ He Himself, by the searching probe of His word, discovers to us all that we are in ourselves—our folly, vileness and ignorance. In doing this, he makes us, in peaceful calmness, increasingly value the word, “as ye are unleavened”—at the very time he addresses to us the word, “Purge out, therefore, the old leaven.”—PRESBUTES.

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#### A SOLEMN THOUGHT.

IF the hour of our translation be not soon, there will be a generation arise of much *hardier, flinty*, material, than I and many others, are; a band of martyr-men, who surrender the world and face the power of it, with decided hearts. We wonder at some of the qualities which marked the generation that went before us. We wonder, for instance, that George Whitfield could have remained in the establishment, and that *Church-truth* and *prophetic or Jewish* truth was not better discerned than it was; that confusion and uncleanness were so sanctioned. But a generation may come after us, who will wonder that, with the heavenly truths we know (and in which they will agree) hardness was not better endured, and vigour and zeal were not more put forth.

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#### FRAGMENTS.

THE life which we lead here below is full of changes; one must live very close to God if one is to preserve the equilibrium in one's soul, and to rejoice in those things which pain, as a man, one's heart, as seeing them in the light of the will of God our Father.

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THE state of many persons, at the present time, recalls to mind the malediction pronounced upon him that staid himself upon an arm of flesh Jer. xvi. He shall not see when good cometh.



N<sup>o</sup> XXVIII.

## ROMANS XI. 1—22.

THE question here is this—Has God rejected *His people?*

That He has not, is proved—

1st. Because there is an election, as in the days of the prophet: the rest are blinded.

2ndly. Because, if they have stumbled, it was not that they might fall, but that salvation might be accorded to the Gentiles. Observe, the Apostle does not say to *some* Gentiles, but to the Gentiles; and that the Gentiles, and not *some* Gentiles, are put in contrast with the Jews. Certainly it is not some elect Gentiles in contrast with some elect Jews; but the Gentiles in contrast with the Jews. Therefore, the Apostle says, that the rejection of these last is the reconciliation of *the world*. So that the Apostle tells us that the Gentiles and the world have been placed, since the fall of the Jews, in a new relationship God-ward to that in which they were previously. It is not the question whether they were all made effectually partakers of the benefits of that relationship; but the thing itself had taken place.

The third proof is that, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be come in, then all Israel, Israel as a nation, shall be saved, and that at the return of Christ. When Paul speaks “to you Gentiles,” he does not say, To you, Gentile believers; for he adds “Inasmuch as I am Apostle of the Gentiles.” Was he Apostle to the Gentile believers? Clearly not; he was Apostle of the Gentiles in the sense of Gentiles in contrast with Jews, with the circumcision of which Peter was the Apostle. Moreover, verse 13 precedes verse 25, where he says “My brethren.” In the 13th and following verses, he is occupied with salvation granted to the Gentiles, and with the reconciliation of the world as a doctrine, and not with a warning to his brethren.

The more one examines the passage, the more is it evident that the interpretation which applies it to the existing economy, considered in the light of the call of the Gentiles, and which makes it to be a warning to the

Gentiles, as to their responsibility, is the only correct interpretation. As to Abraham, I consider him as the root, but looked at as the personification of the three principles—of election, of calling, and of promise.

I press distinctly, that there are privileges besides, outside of vital union with Christ, and privileges for which the Gentiles will be responsible, as the Jews were for theirs. See 1 Cor. x. Those who have enjoyed these privileges will be punished with more stripes, if they have not profited from them; while those who have not possessed them, will be beaten with few stripes. It was a privilege to be servant in the house, to have received one talent; but such persons, or class of persons, were not united to Christ in a vital manner. The seed sown in the stony ground was a privilege; but there was no root, no vital union.

As to any attack made upon the position I hold, let those who make it take care that they mistake not its difficulties and my weakness for the position itself. To answer such attacks, would be either to justify oneself, or to accuse others. According to the blessing found in the position, God will draw to it those whom he means to bless. If there be no blessing in it, one cannot wish God to draw his children to it.

Moreover, some little experience in these things shows their value. They turn aside those who have not sufficient faith to walk according to conviction; they stop for a time simple souls, and these exercise the faith of the faithful; but then, the reaction is all the stronger; and all this turns to blessing, and leads souls into a freer and more blessed position. Moreover, it is good, if defamed, to entreat, and in patience to submit oneself to the will of God in well-doing.

That the principle, “that all have a right to speak,” may have produced a necessity in the minds of some to be the sole speakers, or to take the directive of worship, one can well understand. That these two evils render simplicity of obedience more difficult, one can also comprehend; but the evils of a system, which I believe bad, ought not to form the rule of conduct for those, at least, *who wait on God.*

## MIXED PRINCIPLES.

THERE is a difference between those characters in Scripture which are formed by what have been termed "Mixed Principles;" and those persons who occasionally were led to act upon such principles. The character and life, for instance, of Lot and of Jonathan were formed by mixed principles. Lot, though associated with the call of Abraham, was a man of the earth all through—and Jonathan, though witnessing the sorrows and the wrongs of David, continued in Saul's court all through. Their character and their life were formed by associations which were untrue to the energy of the Spirit at the time.

But take such men as Jacob and as Jehoshaphat, and in them you find another generation. Jacob was a cautious man, who had his worldly fears, and schemes, and calculations, such as greatly disfigure and alloy many of the passages of his life. His building a house at Succoth, and purchasing a field at Shechem, were things untrue to the pilgrim life, the tent-life to which the call of God had called him. But I could not put him with Lot. His life was not ruled by these things. He was still a stranger with God in the earth—and, indeed, in the closing scene of his journey, when in Egypt, there is many a beautiful witness of full moral recovery. So Jehoshaphat. Vanity betrayed him, as worldly cautiousness and the schemes and calculatings of worldly fear sadly betray Jacob. Jehoshaphat joined affinity with Ahab. Jehoshaphat put on the royal attire. He acted in terrible inconsistency with the sanctity and separateness of the house of David. He was untrue to the testimony which became Judah against the revolt and the idols of the Ten Tribes. He was unlike Abijah, the son of Rehoboam, in the day of the battle.

But though this was so, we could not put Jehoshaphat in company with men of mixed principles; at least I judge so. His life, generally, was the life of a true son of David, and king in Jerusalem. Very dear affections breathe through his spirit towards the God of the temple there. Very noble deeds were done by his hand, and the God of his father owned him all through. But like Jacob and to a very sad extent, if you please, he was betrayed into ways which made his testimony a mixed and imperfect thing—so that in him, as in Jacob, it was not only nature prevailing to do evil; but it was nature prevailing to lead him for awhile, and that, too, again and again into the ways and the connections against which the call of God would have had him testify.

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END OF VOL. III.