

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

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לא בחיל ולא בכח כי אִם־ברוחי

Zechariah iv. 6.

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VOL. IX.

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# THE PRESENT TESTIMONY.

ETC., ETC.

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N<sup>o</sup> I.

ROMANS.

IN the epistles we find the exposition of the result of that glorious work of grace by which man is placed on entirely new ground with God, in reconciliation with Him; as well as the development of the counsels of God in Christ, according to which this new world is established and ordered. In giving this exposition of the ways of God, in connection with the work which is their basis, the perfect efficacy of the work itself, and the order of our relations with God, are plainly set forth; so that the whole system, the whole plan of God, and the way in which it was put in execution, are presented. And in doing this, that which man is, that which God is, that which eternal life is, are clearly put before us.

The death and resurrection of Christ, as well as His exaltation to the right hand of God, form the centre of all this instruction.

There are three great divisions in this instruction, which are connected in general with the instrument used of God in the communication of each part. 1st. The counsels of God, which are developed by Paul in connection with the revelation of true righteousness before God, the ground on which a man can be truly righteous before God. 2nd. The life of God, eternal life, manifested and imparted. This is John's epistle. 3rd. Christian life on the earth, in following a risen Christ. This we find in the epistles of Peter, in connection with God's government of the world, as such: the Christian is a pilgrim. There are also James and Jude.

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N<sup>o</sup>. III.

## PEACE WITH GOD.

GOD'S ways are not as our ways, nor God's thoughts as our thoughts! How entirely is this seen in the Gospel of the grace of God as we have it. The very highest and brightest glory of God made at once to shine out just where man's failure gives occasion to God to shew Himself more brightly than He could in the fields of creation or of providence. The highest glory of God and the ruin of the creature in himself — both shewn by one work and in one person.

I do not find Christians established, as they should be, in grace. I do not find Christians understanding, as they should do, themselves discovered and saved in the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.

I am but a poor sinner in myself, but I do desire that those that are the Lord's should, with me, know more of what the blessedness of being hidden in God's light, in Christ in God, is. I would say a few words hereon, according to what I have in conscience myself found to be true before God.

There is a Man in Heaven. There is a Man — the seed of the woman — the Son of Man — upon the throne of God — even He is there who was rejected and murdered here below — Jesus Christ. In Him the Lamb that was slain, but is alive again for evermore, God finds there is the perfect expression of all His own glory.

To know that that Jesus whom we crucified is at the right hand of God, made Lord and Christ, — if our knowledge goes no further — cannot give peace. It discovers to us the contrast between us and God. We, down here on earth, murdered Him. Who that knows Him, but what will say, "I should have done it, had I been there and been left to myself." God raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory. We and God stand

in contrast in our actings towards Christ. This is all true — and it is well to be taught it, well to have the conscience ploughed up by it. But, let it be remarked that, such conviction of conscience is a judgment which, however just, supposes man to be *standing upon the ground of what HE HIMSELF IS* as a rebellious creature before God. He measures what he has done; — he sees what God has done: and his sentence is, “*I act in contrast to God, and the consequence must be, that He, acting in power according to what I am, I am ruined.*”

Righteousness, apart from mercy and grace, is in question, on God’s part; and works on our own parts, works which never can in us be perfect; we are unlike what Christ was — we acted otherwise towards Him than we should have done — God would have had us receive Him whom we murdered: — and now God has shewn Himself opposed to what we did, and has raised Him from the dead.

So entirely is this judgment formed upon the assumed ground that we are to be treated as we deserve, perhaps, even with the thought that other ground for us to stand upon than that of our own doings there is none, that often when the heart has been warmed towards the Lord in His beauty and loveliness by grace, and the light thus breaks in, the very fact of God having raised from the dead, and given glory to Him whom our sins crucified is felt to be our utter ruin. This is, as we shall see, not true, according to God and His grace, and His acting in giving us light; but is still most true as to *what we deserve*, if we are to be treated according to our deserts as men, as inhabitants of the earth, as parts of the human race, as according to what we, in principle, are as such — and according to what we should have done if we had been in Jerusalem when Christ was crucified, and had been left to ourselves. It is most true, if we are to be treated *as we deserve*: that is, if we stand upon our own responsibility for blessing as individuals, or as parts of the human race.

It is just here, when occupied with Jesus Christ raised from the dead and gone into Heaven, that the soul (however, through grace, attracted towards and appreciating His beauty) learns the contrast between itself and God. But

there is another lesson it has to learn, and that is, not the contrast between man's actings towards Christ and God's — but the contrast between God's estimate of Christ Himself and His work and man's. Conscience, man's conscience, can see how it is guilty, and Christ is vindicated; but it has to learn how God makes that Christ the centre of a new system, and that new system one in which ruined sinners, who have no standing from their own merits and deserts, find a present and a perfect rest, because this Jesus Christ is reckoned of God worthy to be the Saviour of *the lost*. Such a thought clearly changes everything. The question no longer is, what am I to expect if treated according to my deserts? What shall I, who murdered God's Son on earth, find at His hand standing upon the ground of my own responsibility and obedience? But is it indeed true, that God delights to save the lost, and counts His Son worthy to be the Saviour of the lost, and that the work accomplished contains perfect salvation in it? Yes, this is the question, not what do *I* deserve? But what does God say that He delights to do for lost sinners, as shewing out the deserts and worthiness of Christ. The whole ground is changed. God takes the place in my conscience, which "I" had; and "Christ Jesus in Heaven" takes the place which my deservings held.

I believe the power of the blood, and the worth of the righteousness, are not so much in question now, — that they have been studied and learned — and that the failure rather is just where conscience is in question. I shall not, therefore, speak of them, of how nothing but the fact that Christ bore the full judgment upon the cross due to me, to my sin and to my sins, ever could set me free from guilt; of how nothing but the fact that, being an integral member through the spirit of that body of which Christ is the Head, God looks upon me as He looks upon His Son, and loves me as He loves Him, could suffice to give full liberty of conscience, *heart and spirit* in God's presence. Believing that the hitch — to conscience — rather lies elsewhere, I would say a few words on *How do I know* that the work done is done for me, that it is mine.

Now conscience enlightened by the word pleads (when

hard beset, too, by Satan, the world and the flesh), “there is the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.” I cannot say He is not there. I cannot say but that all divine glory is there. *How came I to know it?* It was not by superior wisdom, or by innate skill. No, “God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts.” God brought the light into me — God made me see the Gospel — and not only does he thus arrogate to Himself the in-shining of the light to my soul, but also he gives double weight to the statement, by explaining the solemn fact of the darkness of the many.

“If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is in the image of God, should shine unto them.”

Now, here I get something more than conscience reasoning about a Christ seen before it—something more even than renewed affections finding repose in the Lamb slain alive again for evermore—something more than the effect of pungent despair saying, amid accusations from Satan, in the sense of its low estate, and stand in a vapour that rises from within—The Lord Jesus, and not I, is Judge of quick and dead; the Lord Jesus, and not Satan, is the Judge; “Thou, Lord Jesus, shalt answer for me.” For we have the plain word of God laying it down to faith, that as God caused the light first to shine in creation, so the light of grace shined into us by His power.

You cannot know Christ and not be quickened by Him, for He is a quickening Spirit. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. Have I that light of Him who was “life, light, and love in one.” And how shall I separate in Him the light and love (which I see) from the eternal life. I never find a man can do it in God’s presence, nor in the presence of God’s word.

Here, then, is my rest. I cannot say Christ is not the glory of God. I cannot say I know him not — it would be a lie. His light shines in its lovely beauty.

Well (God says), where it shines there is life—eterna life.

N<sup>o</sup>. IV.THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD'S PURPOSE IN  
THE APOCALYPSE.

BETTER gospel than can be gleaned from the Apocalypse I know not.

It is the book of the actings of God *in power*; in power for and by His Christ, in spite of man's and Satan's wickedness. The world, the flesh, and the Devil, with all his wiles, get ejected to make way for God (even the Father), for the Christ (who is the Son of the Father), and for the blessed Spirit (our Present Comforter). First. Christ comes in to look after the candlesticks he had set up in the Churches to give light for God. Satan had again succeeded upon earth to shew how little trustworthy man was; but Christ, in the midst of judgment remembers mercy, and separates each one that hath an ear to hear. No refuse fare is theirs; but stores as goodly as is their Saviour's own portion.

Then John, caught up into heaven, finds that notwithstanding all man's failure below, there is an all above that is secure, and the secret of the security is this; the Lamb upon the throne has power and title before the Lord God Almighty, to all that He reserves to Himself on the one hand, and on the other hand, he has a heart and a mind to use all for his own, the poor broken people whose trust is in Him. The reserved book is taken by Him from the right hand of Him who sat upon the throne, and opened to John, — to John, for us.

The first four seals tell of the state of earth and man upon it — judgments reveal it. The fifth shews the housed-security of those who have suffered on it, and their now unhindered sympathy with the righteousness of God's judgments, and the graciousness of the sympathy to them as of the patience, for the sake of others, of Him

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who governs all. The sixth seal shews the moral state of man on earth. The injurious and blasphemers of God are ever dark enough in their suspicions of Him, to read Him according to what they themselves are to Him-ward.

A parenthesis, deep with meaning, follows. The Church was housed already—that Church which Israel never dreamed of, for it was the secret and the mystery of God. If she be housed—what next remains of the three great objects, “the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God,” but the Jews and the Gentiles? These are for earth, she was for heaven. True, and yet it is the Lord's prerogative to act as He wills—and here He shews how deeply He delights in mercy and in grace. Resurrection and heaven seem to go together. But the risen and ascended Lord has to rule on earth too. He will separate for resurrection from the earth whom He will. He will call a remnant. 144,000 Jews—of the earthly kingdom 144,000—sealed that they may go unscathed through the judgments. He will call likewise, and have an innumerable company out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. The ektromatal Church (born out of season) may be the Bride, and these posthumous children may not be of it, but they shall be in resurrection to behold, and themselves to be witnesses of the heavenly divine grace of Him who is Head of His body, the Church, King of Israel, and the Covenant of the Gentiles. And not till these have been shewn in the seventh chapter, do we find the censer by which prayer had mounted up to heaven filled with fire and cast down *to the earth*, as the sign of judgments to begin upon earth.

What follows can hardly be justly appreciated without recalling the state of things when Christ left the earth, and thereupon set up a new witness. The Jews were under judgment, and had to ask leave of the representative of the Head of the image of Daniel—the Gentile dynasty—to murder the Messiah. This leave was freely given (by that which had a beast's heart), and even Herod and Pontius Pilate struck hands in friendship, making up an old quarrel in the murder of the Prince of life.

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That Prince of life, from heaven, sent down the Holy Ghost—power to sustain the testimony of His weak servants—to Jew or Gentile. The body in service is found, however, judged in the churches (chap. ii. and iii. of this book), and, as we know, went on from bad to worse. Let any one that wishes to see the prophetic picture of it compare the sins of profession with the sins of the pagans. “ This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as their's also was” (2 Tim. iii. 1—9). “ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: who

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changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the women, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Rom. i. 18—32).

Now, it is upon the three-ply knot of wickedness that God has to act, when judgment does begin. A Gordian knot in which Jewish iniquity, Gentile godlessness, and religious ungodliness are all found.

And even the maze is greater, for the two and the ten tribes are found to have different positions and different experiences in the last day; and, as to the Gentiles, not only does the image find its place and judgment, but also nations external to the *prophetic* earth (Gog and Magog, Tubal and Meshech and Rosh) come into question; while at the same time the religious corruption will not be merely what it ever has been, but Satan-inspired, and man worshipping. Now, what would man do with such a mass, but reject it all in the lump; not so Christ: in the midst of judgment he for the churches remembers mercy, and in mercy he for others remembers judgment. To cut off the wicked from among the godly, and to take forth the precious from among the vile, are two acts which, though differing, both tell of mercy as of judgment.

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So when a cup of iniquity has been allowed to fill itself in a place that is consecrated, and the iniquity becomes so full that there is now no room for Christ, no answer from within to his name, heaven-sent judgments, in such a case, have still mercy in prospect. Now, such is the state of things and circumstances, supposed in these eighth and ninth chapters, Jews, Gentiles, and religious profession, are each of them upon territory in a place which Christ is to fill. None of them, at the time supposed, have room for Him, nor an ear to listen to Him. Heaven-sent judgments tell — not only God's estimate of the state — but, in this case, a claim over the place; and are the prelude to the introduction of Christ.

It is a great truth, little thought of, that if God meets any one, or comes into any place, He ever is what he is; that which comes under various circumstances out from God, to the parties or place, takes its form according to what the state of that place or party may be, and according to God's thoughts and plans about it.

In the eighth and ninth chapters we get judgments of a peculiar character. They are not the mere disciplinary acting of God in His moral government; these actings, as in the book of Esther, so assuming the routine character of the world's course, that it needed a simple faith to see God *hidden* in the course of events. Nor are they, again, as those judgments of the first four seals, in the sixth chapter, the chastening rod of God in plagues, kept in His own hand as the sword, famine, and the pestilence. Nor are they the desolating, all-destroying blasts of His wrath, against what is being cast out from before Him as judged. They are awful judgments, telling that there is a righteous God who judges, judgments which turn the tide and current of man's wickedness, to accomplish the Lord's own purposes. And be it remembered, that man's forgetfulness of God, and of any titles in God, blots not out either God or His titles. He lives still, and He acts in spite of man's forgetfulness of Him as the Creator, as the God of Providence, God of Heaven, and of the whole earth, etc.; and, when He will, He shews that He still holds man responsible; and He exercises

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judgment, upon a Nineveh, or upon an Egypt, upon all, as He wills.

In chapter ten, God's claim to the land of promise is put in by the wonderful messenger there revealed—who is evidently the Lord Himself. That claim having once been put in, Jerusalem comes into question; and its strange moral state, and the strange moral state of the Gentiles, are brought to light in the eleventh chapter.

The chapter of the power and testimony of the two witnesses, evidently is not according to Paul and Peter's time and position, but according to that of Moses and Elias.

Precious, to the heart that loves Christ, the rejected man of sorrow; precious to the heart, that for His sake is willing to be rejected here below, is the plain evidence of this eleventh chapter, viz., that the very scenes of the suffering of Christ are remembered by God; and that, therefore, a time will come when on this earth, and in that part of it, an irresistible testimony shall be raised for Him who, if Lord of Heaven, is also Lord of Earth too.

That which seems to me to be emphatically the Gospel of the tenth and of the eleventh chapters, is this; that however wicked the nation Israel might be, and however much Satan might have been permitted, on account of Israel's sins, to get the land into his possession, and (their sins having separated between themselves and God) even to fill the land (which should have been full of God's displays and testimonies for Himself, amid a feeble but dependant and obedient people) with all sorts of wickedness;—still, notwithstanding all this, the rightful Heir had the title to the land. And, if Israel knew not how to hold their land and welcome their King to it, their King was recognised on high, as worthy to take the land—and to judge His enemies in it, in order that He might gather back, in grace, the very nation that rejected Him, to the very land where they rejected Him. The title deed, and the counsel about the land, and about Jerusalem, had Christ Himself as their object, and, primarily, Him alone, who though God, would dwell with men.

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This peculiar place of the seed of the woman in the divine mind, plans, and counsels — this way that a title stands good in Him for Himself and for those whom grace may take out from among the rebellious; this germinating of power to the establishing and making good of Christ's titles and claims, in spite of everything, is of the very essence of the Gospel, is the very Gospel of God's power itself — “The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.”

And to any soul that knows the murderous, lying, cruel character of Satan — the fretting, vexing character of sin in itself — and the awfulness of being in opposition to God — the truth that God does mean to prepare scenes in which His own power and name will have full sway — and all that cannot yield subjection or amalgamate therewith, be for ever excluded — is good tidings of great joy, and as a pleasant land of rest, though seen in the distance, from the midst of a roaring tumultuous ocean.

Well, this is seen, and the machinery connected with it, in the eleventh chapter. Jerusalem on earth is claimed by the Lord, as a place of testimony for Himself, claimed against all the powers of darkness; and the testimony made good: for who can withstand God. The testimony closes in death, however, and in the partial triumph of the adversary. But Death and Resurrection are God's *way* of acting; and the witnesses, raised, ascend up into heaven — their enemies beholding — and a judgment from God follows.

The kingdoms of this world are about to become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ — the joy of heaven sounds out (and well it may), and the security of all blessing is shewn — the ark of the covenant is shewn in heaven. All is secure then in the highest. God and His Christ are there — the purpose to bless is sure in the temple in heaven — and the time is come!

But if the spring is full of living water — if the full power of God's delight in His anointed Son is ready to shew itself forth in a kingdom and glory — what of the channels through which this glory is to flow? What of the places into which it is to flow? On earth all is evil, because Satan has power, but the power of Satan is that

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he has a place in the heavenlies above the earthly range of things. The heavenlies are cleared out in the twelfth chapter — and principalities and powers of evil shall never again hold them in possession. And is there no good news, no joy, in the thought, that this citadel of the adversary's power shall be cleared out by Him who is above the adversary, and who is our Lord and our God, and that he shall take possession of the place with us?

This twelfth chapter is the explanation of many a sorrow, and many a difficulty now,—for it shews us where the adversary is, and what he is doing. But this same chapter gives us the power to rejoice, for it shews more clearly than any other portion of the coming doom and downfall of him that opposes us.

Cast out from heaven, his wrath is all the hotter upon earth — but all his rage works TOGETHER with the all things, to shew how God acts, and how He can turn even the adversaries' rage to His own glory.

Evil may be hurried on, with fearful rapidity, by Satan — but God uses all the sorrow to work out Israel's repentance; and, even before that is accomplished, he works out, from the ranks of Satan, a mass of Jews and a mass of Gentiles — forced out by the very pressure of evil — but forced out to find God! Oh His ways are perfect, and He works from Himself!

There are those of all kindreds, tongues, and nations, who suffer for Him, chap. xiii. 7—10, and xx. 4.

And there are on the Mount Sion (chap. xiv.) 144,000 with the Lamb, having his Father's name written upon their foreheads. How touchingly is the joy in heaven here described! verses 2, 3. And have not our hearts the foretaste of the blessing?

Verse 6, The everlasting Gospel.

Verse 8, The announcement Babylon is fallen.

Verse 9, The warning to separateness from the beast, his image and mark.

Verse 13, The blessedness of the dead.

Verse 14, The Son of Man come for the harvest.

And verse 17, *Another* angel for the vintage.

Triumph over evil must be *divine* to be real. If the

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flesh or fleshly energy attempt it in any of us — success there cannot be. But who is in the Spirit and cannot see how the destruction of evil is God's glory, and how His grace shines out in His giving man to participate with Him. The seven angels with the seven last plagues, which fill up the wrath of God are seen; but at the same time (all joy in the thought!), those that had gotten the victory over the beast and his image and his mark. Faith is victorious 'ere God in judgment removes the evil with which faith had to contend. These victors stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God; and they praise and magnify the Lord God Almighty. Who more fit to do so than those who through Him and His grace had overcome the evil? They have judged and overcome the evil before God sweeps it away. They have vindicated God in what He does. The full connection of these plagues with God is shewn (xv. 5—8), and the judgments roll on through chap. xvi. on the circumstances and places of evil.

And are our hearts and souls so possessed by the power of God, that we overcome daily and practically all that which God is about to judge? Happy He who can *thus* say, "To me to live is Christ."

Babylon's iniquity as the great whore, and her judgment (chap. xvii.), and Babylon as a city (chap. xviii.), both the abomination of God, are shewn and judged. And is it not joy to know that all the nets by which Satan has ensnared souls, all deceitful appearances, all the confusion of flesh with spirit, all the spiritual wickednesses shall be openly judged of God, and that the world and the flesh shall come shortly into judgment here below, God will then and thus justify, not only Himself, but every faithful act of the weakest saint, who may have had to take forth the precious from the vile, and been counted a fool for not living in Sodom. Surely there is joy both in the thought of God's destroying all Satan's network, and the very traps with which he now catches souls. With those at least to whom the snare is broken, and who are escaped, with them there can be no desire that God should deal gently with that which they have judged. And when Babylon the whore, Babylon the city, is judged, where shall we be the while?

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Chap. xix. Heaven thrills with joy when the news is heard on high. "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And He saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And He saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. And I fell at His feet to worship Him. And He said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. xix. 6—10). Such fruition of joy lies before us!

But all is not yet done. For if the nests of iniquity are destroyed—if the framework, religious and civil, of evil is destroyed, the heads still remain and the root too.

The King of kings, and Lord of lords comes forth. The armies of earth are gathered against Him. The beast is taken and the false prophet; and both are cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant are slain. The heads and body of evil are thus set aside. How feeble is man, even when set on and backed by Satan, when he comes into collision with God.

Chap. xx. The ROOT of the evil, Satan, is then seized and bound for a thousand years. Then follows the display of God's spoils taken from Satan. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. xx. 4).

This is the first resurrection. Those who in the time of God's patience had, through grace and by faith and

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the Spirit overcome the evil, must be set forth as reigning with Christ a thousand years.

But the earth, which will witness their glory—and the men of it (though evil be banished all around during its continuance) will not be perfect. The creature, if left to itself, is but a creature still. Divine wisdom appoints a last trial of man. Satan is let loose for a little season, and there are those that take part with him.

Blessings and good government will not change man:—it is peace to our hearts to know that our springs lie higher up than in any creature-ground—even in God Himself. The fallibility of man, in the best circumstances, is never more forcibly shewn out than in that which closes the millennium—nowhere more powerfully taught the blessedness of being able to say, “All our springs are in Thee.”

The general resurrection leads to the judgment of man's doings—as the first resurrection had been the just judgment of God as to the worthiness of Christ, a display of the fruits of God's redeeming love acting from itself for men through Christ.

The post-millennial blessing, chap. xxi. 1—8, and the detailed blessedness of the millennial glory chap. xxi. 8.—xxii. 6, need no comment.

The close, chap. xxii. 7—21, is solemn but blessed.

No portion of the word more thoroughly shews the value of our all being, “from,” “through,” and “to” God, and God alone—none more calculated to strike confusion upon the thought of self holding the place of spring, channel, or end (which is the religion of fallen humanity); none better fitted to act as a purge on the soul where a mixture of God and man may still be found.

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FRAGMENT.

GAL. ii. 2.—“Lest by any means I should run, or had run, *in vain.*”

By the wisdom of God—the conference at Jerusalem (Acts xv.) was the alliance, *by the Jewish apostles*, of Paul's doctrine with Noah's four laws—the *law of Moses* being left out.

N<sup>o</sup> V.REMARKS ON THE CHURCH.<sup>a</sup>

THE first place in Scripture in which we find the word "CHURCH," is in Matthew xvi., "And Simon Peter said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock *I will build my Church*; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (verses 16—19). Remark here, 1st. The doctrine about *the Church* is nowhere found in the former volume of Scripture; the doctrine is, here, first found in the second volume—in the more recently given Scriptures. Search the whole of what is vulgarly called the Old Testament, and you will not once find it. Those, therefore, who only had that book, could not have guessed what the Master was here speaking about. It was to them an altogether new subject.

2ndly. As here, first found, it is not spoken of as something then, *already*, existing, but as something still future, and he says not, "*is*," or "*has been built*"; but, "*I will build*"—thus describing a *future* action. There was an action to come,—the which, or the aim of which, was not only not known to the apostles, at that time, but was not understood even by Peter himself, after the death and resurrection of the Lord; as may be seen at the beginning of Acts i. He and the rest of the apostles clave, so long as they could, to Jewish hopes.

3rdly. Peter's confession to Christ is, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." On this the Lord

<sup>a</sup> See *The Present Testimony*, Vol. VII. p. 181, No. IX., a paper on the same subject.

remarks, that this was a direct revelation to Peter from God. And He adds from Himself, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church," — and goes on, — "And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it:" "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 19). And what follows the announcement about this new thing, the Church? Not promises of earthly ease and blessing; but, 1stly. A plain announcement of His coming sufferings. 2ndly. The transfiguration. 3rdly. The preparation of His people to be as a heavenly people upon earth.

1stly. His sufferings. "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and Chief Priests and Scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (Matt. xvi. 21—28).

2ndly. The transfiguration, "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with

Him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles: one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead. And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the Scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist (Matt. xvii. 1—13).

3rdly. The power of Him who was of heaven (shewn in the Lord's healing of the lunatic, verses 14—18), and of those who have faith in Him, verses 21 and 22. His and their freedom of God from tribute, and yet subjection for peace's sake thereto; and lastly, the character and rules of the kingdom of heaven (chap. xviii.).

It is here we find (in what is vulgarly or commonly called, the Scriptures of the New Testament) the second occurrence of the mention of the Church. "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" (Matt. xviii. 17). It is a most remarkable commandment, and must have sounded strangely in Jewish ears. No longer was a man to have an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; and the magistrate present to judge, in God's name, between Jew and Jew; but in some *new* body that was spoken of, as if about to be built, a private wrong was done to an individual, he had a first and second step marked out for him to take so as to gain his brother; and, if these failed, he left

the matter with *the Church*, and, if its appeal failed, the man became unto him as a heathen man and a publican.

Our minds are so habituated to the thoughts in which we were educated, that we quite forget that while the Church is no new name in our ears, it was quite otherwise to those in our Lord's day. No new term of any recently developed science is more strange to us than this term of Church must have been to Jewish ears as thus announced.<sup>b</sup>

In the commencement of the Acts, we find our Lord preparing his disciples for a new testimony which was to be given upon earth. Himself risen from the dead — He was not about to become king in Sion — but to leave the earth and go on high. His disciples, whose understandings he had opened, that they might understand the Scriptures (see Luke xxiv. 45), were to await the promise of the Father and power from on high. That power was given, as we read at the commencement of Acts ii.; and one of its effects was a bold testimony gathering unto those to whom the Holy Ghost had come down, and by His power a people; these are called in v. 47 *the Church*.

The Lord added to the Church daily the escaped. Observe here, the Holy Ghost had come down from Heaven from God, even the Father and from the Lord Jesus, as Son of Man ascended up on high, and He has taken up His dwelling-place in and with the company that clave to the name of Jesus. The truth given in John xv. 26, and xvi. 7—14, had been acted upon, and that which the Lord saw and spoke of to be true of His disciples, as contrasted with the Jewish people, as such in John xvii, was now outwardly and manifestly seen to be true—yea, had become a testimony to all the Jews. Pertaining to the Father—given to the Son—receiving His word—not of the world as He was not of the world. The Lord's love stretched, indeed, beyond Jerusalem. He bade (Acts i. 8,) the testimony to go out to all Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth.

<sup>b</sup> The assembly which was in the wilderness evidently was not the Church which Christ said "I will build," nor did the two at all correspond in character.

Faith might falter in men. Though chosen of God the Jews might not yet have stoned Stephen as they had crucified Messiah—but the company now called the Church was a company apart, and not only had its own character, ways, hopes, and power, but was the residence of the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven in witness of the perfect acceptance on high of the man Christ Jesus. We read that fear came upon *all the Church* (v. 11) when God showed in the awful yet just judgment of Ananias and Sapphira, that the Holy Ghost Himself was in the Church. “But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own; and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart; thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.” (Acts v. 3, 4.)

It is not too much to say, that the Church was at the time here spoken of, evidently a habitation of God through the Spirit. The doctrine of Paul, as given to us in the Epistle to the Ephesians, was *not* known. It pleased God first to present, while still pleading with Jews and Jerusalem, the truth of the Church as a habitation of God through the Spirit. When they had rejected the testimony, variously turned as it was to them ward—when Samaria had heard the word and received it—when a persecution, raised on the death of Stephen, had spread the word (where faith and faithfulness had not, in heavenly energy, carried it). Stephen stoned—and Paul chief sinner and persecutor converted,—the way was open, according to divine thoughts, for the Son of God to be preached, as we find Paul doing it immediately upon his conversion, and in process of time for the doctrine of the Church in the Heavenly side of it to be unfolded,—the doctrine of the Church, not merely as a habitation down here upon earth of the Spirit, (who will also fill it when 'tis a habitation for God on high) but of the Church as the *body of Christ*. This was not known at Pentecost.

Adam the first, in the garden of Eden, was not only the centre of a system, but he was also the head of a race; for all men came from him, and he was *also* the source of that race; for Eve herself, who was the

mother of all, was taken out of his side. The blessed second Adam is the centre of a heavenly and divine system, and is Head and Source to the Church. It seems (to me at least) that there are two figures in Ephesians, one (as in the close of chap. i. and in chap. iv.) in which he is the Head of a body,—the Head as contrasted with the complement of the members, all of whom stand in him (see also Rom. v.) and the second, as in Ephesians v. in which He is the second Adam, in whom the Church is, as Eve was in Adam.

I need not say, that there was no collision between the doctrine of the Church as a habitation<sup>e</sup> for God by the Spirit, and the doctrine of the Church as the body and bride of Christ. Both are found in Ephesians, and both are found in the new Jerusalem,—realisation of our hopes yet to come. Yet while the one is in no way inconsistent or incompatible with the other;—the one was revealed *before* the other,—the one first revealed is often known where the second is not known; and more than this, not only might the revelation of the second most blessed truth have been needful, as the full expression of what God had to communicate by the word, but as the means of giving *power* under the then circumstances for testimony. It will, I believe, be found that the separation of these two truths is connected largely with the errors of the day.

We have noticed first, the mention of the Church by the Lord, when its very name, as introduced by the Lord, must have been as an enigma or riddle to those around Him. Secondly, the formation of the Church at Jerusalem by the descent of the Holy Ghost, when (as all acquainted with the subject are aware) the hopes in the minds of preachers and hearers did not go beyond the then place of testimony. Christ, as able to bless Israel (the gospel beginning at Jerusalem) is the subject of Acts ii.—vii. And thirdly, that view of the Church in which it is presented in Ephesians, as the body of Christ. Has the gap which took place between the formation of

<sup>e</sup> If we speak of the Church, as in Acts ii. 6, as a habitation of God through the Spirit, which it was, for the Holy Ghost dwelt in it down here—the doctrine of Ephesians ii. goes much further, for it looks at the Church in the council and plan of God, as His habitation through the Spirit.

the Church at Jerusalem (in which it became as on earth a habitation for God through the Spirit) and the revelation, through Paul, of the doctrine of the Church as the body of Christ been sufficiently noticed? We think not.

The testimony at Jerusalem and the work there, was mainly by Peter: to him, among men naturally, that work attaches, and the Petrean phase of the Church was what God gave him as his honour. The Pauline phase did not clash with the Petrean, though distinguishable from it. The former was more connected with man upon earth than the latter; the latter more connected with the grace of a risen and ascended and glorified Head of a body, part of which was down here, than was the former; more heavenly, too, but neither of them exhausted the topic of blessing; for if Peter and the eleven, as witnesses of the resurrection, set up the Church here below, and if Paul showed how a heavenly, earth-rejected Messiah had a body down here, every member of which was necessary to, and vitally one with, the Head, there still remained the individual believer dwelt in by the life of God, to be treated of;—for *how* the individual believer should be placed together with others, as a habitation for God on earth at Jerusalem, when all were in one place; and how this truth had a higher import connected with believers in the risen Jesus in every place,—themselves also the members of a body, the heavenly head of which is Christ in heaven. Neither of these truths unfold the doctrine of the individual believer as possessor of Divine life. This was reserved specially for John as a work, and presents truth of the most precious and enduring nature—truth in which the soul individually has to do with God in the highest; and truth which abides, whether there be a body of believers upon earth or not, or, after the Petrean mould, whether there be, after the Pauline, a second member whom one can recognize as a fellow-member in the heavenly body. At Patmos, John realised the full savour of the Johannic phase of the Church—a soul, it might be, in solitude as to men, but possessed of divine life, and visited as such by the Lord in Patmos—and the doctrine of divine life in the soul, with all its bearings, is John's peculiar subject in his epistle. \*

It does not require much wisdom to see that without our Lord's sojourn and mission on the earth, neither could God have shown out all the riches of His grace before or to man—for none but the Lord Himself was that all—nor could man have been fully and completely convicted: but now, man in rebellion visited by God Himself in grace, and, as Son of man, presenting all the divine grace according to the mind and wants of man in ruin, has been personally rejected, insulted, and, so far as the human race could do it, murdered and sent out of the world. And not only the wickedness of Israel and of the gentiles (that is, of the world) has fully shown itself, but also the entire weakness of His people, for they all forsook Him and fled. This outrageousness of wickedness and extreme of weakness was man's answer to the testimony of Grace given by Jesus upon earth.

Risen from the dead, we find Him, in Acts i., speaking of the kingdom of God (ver. 3); but as to the testimony He was about to raise, marking it thus: "And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me" (ver. 4); and marking its range, again, thus: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (ver. 8). Then we read: "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight" (ver. 9). But the hope of His return shines forth in the moment of His departure, for, "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (ver. 10, 11).

Nothing is said about this new testimony being the *body* of Christ; nor is there, in chap. ii., where we have the account of the descent of the Holy Ghost and its effects, a word thereupon. Indeed, a company, a people

*Remarks on the Church.*

of God upon earth, was rather what is described as the result: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved" (ii. 41—47).

I know it has been said: This was not the Church; been said so directly and indirectly; positively and by implication. And said so, so frequently, that a word of answer may not be amiss.

1. Then I answer: The Holy Ghost writes, Acts ii. 47, of this very company, "the Lord added to the *Church* daily," etc.; and again, "fear came upon *all the Church*" (v. 11). Though this would suffice, I remark:—

2. That the very Paul whose doctrine, *par excellence*, the objectors profess to follow, and an error as to whose doctrine has led them into the denial they make, is against them—as a comparison of Acts viii. 3, 1 Cor. xv. 9, Phil. iii. 6, and Gal. i. 13, proves. The gravamen of his, Paul's, sin, according to his own account, is thus given: "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God" (1 Cor. xv. 9); "Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Phil. iii. 6). I set this first that Paul's own thought may stop objections which might be raised as to Acts viii. 3: "As for Saul, he made havoc of the Church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison." These are the words, as are those above, of the Holy Ghost. No one who owns Him would set them aside; but, lest it should be thought,

“the Church,” in Acts viii. 3, was merely “the Church which was at Jerusalem,”<sup>d</sup> we find Paul’s havoe of this very Church was the gravamen of his sin. It was, as to him, whose views of the Church—special revelation to himself—are given in the Epistle to the Ephesians: it was to him “*the Church of God.*”

3. In writing to the *Churches* of Galatia, of which he very much stood in doubt lest they, by Judaising, had left the gospel of Christ for another which was not another, etc., he says: “For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God and wasted it” (Gal. i. 13). The same idea is confirmed in ver. 22, 23: “And was unknown by face unto the Churches of Judæa which were in Christ: but they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.” This may suffice to prove that Paul hesitated not to call the witness formed and raised up at Pentecost “the Church of God,” though the doctrine of its being the body of Christ was not known until his own preaching and writing.

4. Two more verses may be cited. They are of peculiar interest as connected with the uniting of Jerusalem and Antioch together. “Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the Church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. . . . And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the Church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.” See also xii. 1, 5, compared with xiii. 1; xiv. 27; and remark that if the Church has “which is at Jerusalem” added in Acts viii. 1, the same is spoken of as *the Church* in xii. 1: “To vex certain of the Church”; *ibid.* 5, “Prayer was made of the Church unto God.” And again, we find the place Antioch marked in xiii. 1: “There were in the Church that was in Antioch”; xiv. 27, and being returned to Antioch they “gathered the Church together,” etc. Of Paul and Barnabas also it is said: “And being brought on their

<sup>d</sup> That is, “a Church,” and not the Church.

way by the Church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the Church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them" (xiv. 3, 4).

"Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole Church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren."

Three more passages from Acts and we have done. "And when he [Paul] had landed at Cæsarea, and gone up, and saluted the Church, he went down to Antioch" (xviii. 22). "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the Church" (xx. 17). "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood" (ibid. 28).

The new action on God's part as predicted by Christ in chap. i., clearly lays the wide world under a new responsibility, viz. that He, the earthly Messiah, being gone on high, the Holy Ghost should come down to those there that were His; and raise a testimony which if it began at Jerusalem was also for "the uttermost part of the earth" (ver. 8). And here is seen, quite independently of any light afterwards given to Paul, the basis of the responsibility of Christendom.

I cannot doubt but that this community of responsibility is not commonly seen. Indeed it is distinctly *denied* by the church of Rome, by Protestantism, and by Nonconformity severally. Rome cuts itself off from, and carefully makes it known, that it is separate from all testimony which is not subject to it, and owns no identity in any sense—no community with Protestantism. And yet both have the scriptures of truth, both have the light of revelation, both stand in that light, and where the Spirit is, and both are giving true or false witness for Christ and will be judged accordingly, and neither of them can get away from the evil which has been wrought

in Christ's name, in a failed economy, and not yet been judged of God. Protestantism professes to separate itself from Rome, from the wide channel of God's testimony, but will not thereby escape God's judgment on this account. What should she have done? Certainly not have denied the common responsibility of Christendom as though she had nothing to do with it, as though a protest against Rome washed the hands of all responsibility before God. Each individual who saw it, should have owned the common failure, taken up the confession of it as his own burden, and without pretending to be, as to responsibility, free before God from it, have separated himself, body, soul, and spirit, from all the evil. To separate oneself from evil individually, to lay aside the evil and to take of the good, is a very different thing from raising a body to protest against an evil, or to satisfy oneself because one is of such a protesting body. I do not say that the reformers began by Protestantism; they did not, but their work has lapsed into it. So with Nonconformity; whatever godly power may have first led individuals to deplore the evil of Protestantism as such, and to endeavour to seek out God's paths to walk in, Nonconformity as it now is, *boasts* of its separation, not only from Romanism, but from Protestant nationalism: and that which is common to Nonconformity, Protestantism, and Romanism, is not felt and owned, and mourned over. There is no sense of the common failure of all professions. Whereas, to be Christians in very truth, those only get excepted by God from judgment who anticipate his act and take up the sin and bear it on their hearts before Him (Eze. ix.; 1 Cor. v. 2; xi. 31, 32).

For us to get away *from the place* which has failed (Rom. xi. 13—25) is impossible: to attempt, or rather pretend to do it, is to pretend to leave the place of testimony God has set and found us in, which is rebellion and self-will. To know where we are, and to be humbled for the common failure, and yet to endeavour to separate ourselves from every evil, and from all those that are evil, and take up every good, is of God and will bring blessing.

I say again, if I had not the epistles of Paul, if I

knew nothing about the Church as the body of Christ, I have, in the contrast between what the Church at Jerusalem as a people of God was and what she now is, and, I may add, between what she is and what the hope of her Lord's return makes meet—a responsibility laid upon me in common with all that bear the Lord's name upon earth before men, and I mourn for the failure before God and make confession of the sin.

That the doctrine of Paul, of the Church as the body of Christ, gave him power and energy, and has a special word to those among the people of the Lord whose hearts are awake to receive it, is clear. It may give *guidance*, too, in the midst of the people that bear the Lord's name—in the house here below—to think that I am a member in particular of that body of which Christ is the head, and may not do anything inconsistent therewith.

Rome, Greece, the reformed Churches of Europe—have they this hallowing light, this hallowed ambition, that if there are a people on earth to whom testimony has been committed, who can, who may, who *will*, as a channel of testimony be cut off (Rom. xi.), yet that in this channel are found those that are the members of Christ's body; that all must deplore the failure, each one separate himself from all evil, and from those that walk in evil, and only walk as a member of Christ's body?

Rome, the queen of the world—the Protestant Churches married to the state—own not this. They own not the *common* failure as resting upon all and each member; they own not the Church as dwelt in by the Spirit, and as thus the body of Christ; they own not separation from all evil; separation, in a great house, from all evil and all evil persons, unto God. Nonconformity was free to do it—did it to some extent; but, as one (himself an able Nonconformist) has remarked, “every trust-deed of a chapel, all church-property,” owns headship in Cæsar, and so denies the Church's pilgrim, widow character of dependance upon God; an absent Lord; and the Holy Ghost present.

As responsibility connects itself with the Church as a people down here, so power connects itself with the Church as the body of Christ who is in heaven. *Power*

not only for the crisis of Paul's day in establishing Churches and upholding what was falling, but power *also* for our day; power for detection of what we practically are not, in contrast with what we are spiritually and in Him; and power, I doubt not, somehow or the other, of so getting forth the precious from the vile in the midst of evil around us that He, if not we, may be content. Paul found it so to himself in the end of his career.

For one cannot read the New Testament with intelligence, without seeing how Paul's end was different from Paul's beginning. How different, for example, his position in the end of Acts from his position from chap. xvii.—xxi.: as different as the testimony of an individual before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel, is different from the setting up and being blessed among Churches. And in the Second Epistle of Timothy, for instance, he has got pretty much into John's doctrine: that if all has failed outside, he and Timothy can comfort one another.

It is not within the range of my present object to go into the detail of the doctrine of the Church, as the body of Christ, as so fully given us in Ephesians. Though I may remark that in that epistle there are two aspects of the Church, as it were—a heavenly and an earthly. A heavenly, in which the light of purpose and counsel from before the foundation of the world is seen, playing and shining in the person of the Lord Jesus in heaven, Head of His body the Church, and the chief Cornerstone of the edifice of God's habitation. The earthly aspect, if I may so call it, shows us the quarries whence the members were digged down here—Jews and Gentiles, alike under the power once of the world, the flesh, and the devil, but redeemed unto God.

Into the doctrine about the soul in its individuality of blessing, I enter not into detail; but I would call attention to the fact, that in many portions of the word the individual is looked at as such, and the appeal and doctrine made to it in that view. In some portions, the force of the text is entirely falsified, and in others its bearing is lost if the individuality of the address is not seen.

## No. VI.

## THE GOOD OF BEING UNDER GOD'S HAND.

“But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel” (Phil. i. 12).

IN the circumstances to which the apostle here alludes, we get the result of the overruling hand of God in His power and ways toward us in the Church. There is nothing so good for us as the hand of God coming in and leading us, as He did Paul, in a path altogether contrary to our will. But the flesh always tears away from the hand of God; and even *the renewed will* dislikes to be thus under it. There is nothing that we more shrink from than from the hand of God. When Paul wrote this epistle, it was exactly his case. For if the things which happened to him fell out for the furtherance of the Gospel (as he says), nothing at this time happened to him, according to his prayers; but there was the hand of God upon him, keeping him from his longed-for service. But this very thing is used of God to set the saint in Christ far above the service he is occupied in — precious in its place as that may be — and to give the greater blessedness of the enjoyment of Christ Himself. Paul, at Tarsus, for a while rested from service; afterwards he laboured more abundantly than they all. The early part of his course sent him into activity, and he “conferred not with flesh and blood”; but on he went in the power of the Spirit in him; but here we see him the subject of another process in his soul. In Romans we find him saying, “Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judæa” (Rom. xv. 30, 31). There he prayed to be delivered from ungodly men, yet they put his feet in the *stocks*. While there was *service to be done*, there was another matter with Paul. He was *idle* two

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whole years at Cæsarea from service. He was a prisoner; but as a prisoner was able to teach them all. All this time the hand of God was upon him. The Lord was meeting the remainder of *self-will* in his *servant*. The value of being with the Lord alone is, that he himself gets more thoroughly into the presence of God; and then he knows what the saints are before God, from being in the presence of God Himself. Paul advances in *the joy of being with the Lord*, that he might know the difference of the joy of being with the Lord, and in service here. He uses the joy of being here or there, as, "far better"; and so dwelt in God's love, that when he saw service to the Church, he says, "I know I shall stay here." Though in a strait, yet he had *no doubt*—because he knew what was in God. It was "far better to depart and be with him"; but—in seeing the other principle of God's *active love*—"to abide in the flesh is more needful for them." God is ever acting in love; therefore, we should never be disturbed at anything which can happen to us, as though some strange thing had happened to us. The *things* which happen to us, always happen of God, and are all perfect, being of God.

Never a time when God more deferred acting in Paul than the two years at Cæsarea. Paul was entirely and painfully set aside by these circumstances. If your soul is in communion with God, you will know God's mind about the saints. But you are not to be content unless "changed into the *same image*." That which is well pleasing to God, SHOULD BE WROUGHT IN US.

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 FRAGMENT.

JOHN i. 29.—When the Lord came into the world sin lay at the base of its *all*;—and even all the divine actings were framed upon this sad truth, that man was in rebellion,—in himself sinful and surrounded by sin. The Lord came: Himself the very expression of what God was and is—that His ways and His thoughts are not as man's ways and man's thoughts: the one, through whom and by whom, a new order was to be introduced—Himself, through His finished work, to be the base and centre of an entirely new state of things.

*The Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world.*—It is not said, "who took"—nor is it said, "the sins"—but, *taking away—the sin—of the world.*

THE ORIGINAL FORM OF THE WELL-KNOWN HYMN  
 “HARK! TEN THOUSAND VOICES CRYING.”

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- 1 O the joy of the salvation  
 We possess around the throne,  
 Countless thoughts of admiration  
 Mingling leave that joy but one.
- 2 Hark! ten thousand voices crying,  
 “Lamb of God!” with one accord;  
 Thousand thousand saints replying,  
 Bursts at once the echoing chord.
- 3 Long with free and glad devotion  
 Universal praise prevails,  
 Till, blest fruit of deep emotion,  
 Voice by voice in silence fails.
- 4 Now, in wondrous adoration,  
 Dwelling on His matchless love,  
 Sway'd with power of that salvation,  
 Silence fills the courts above.
- 5 Then their richest thoughts unfolding,  
 Each to each with joy divine,  
 Heavenly converse blissful holding,  
 Tells how bright His glories shine.
- 6 Some on God's high glories dwelling,  
 Brightly beaming in His face;  
 Some His First-born greatness telling,  
 Ordering all things in their place.
- 7 These of Godhead's counsels deep  
 Him th' Accomplisher proclaim;  
 These how Jesu's self could weep,  
 Of Godhead's love the Witness came.
- 8 All on love surpassing rest,  
 That clothed in flesh the great I AM:—  
 Till from a heart divinely prest  
 Bursts forth at length the loud exclaim,
- 9 “Praise the Lamb!”—at once awaking  
 The gather'd hosts, their voices throng;  
 Loud and wide each tongue partaking,  
 Rolls renew'd the endless song.

- 10 Grateful incense this, ascending  
Rises to the Father's throne;  
Every knee to Christ is bending,  
All the mind in heaven is one.
- 11 All the Father's counsels claiming  
Equal honours to the Son,  
All the Son's effulgence beaming  
Glory of His Father's throne.
- 12 By the Spirit all pervading  
Radiant hosts unnumber'd round,  
Breathing glory never fading,  
Echo back the blissful sound.
- 13 Joyful now the wide creation  
Rests in undisturb'd repose ;  
Blest in Jesu's full salvation,  
Sorrow now nor thraldom knows.
- 14 Rich the streams of bounty flowing,  
Common blessings from above,  
Life and holy joy bestowing,  
Tell of God's unwearied love.
- 15 Hark the heavenly notes again !  
Loudly swells the air-borne praise ;  
Throughout creation's vault, " Amen,  
" Amen!" responsive joy doth raise.

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FRAGMENT.

REV. xi. The book of the Acts of the Apostles gives us the account of the establishment of the Church, and its being called to be the witness for God. This involves the setting aside, from its place of standing before God, of Jerusalem. It was soon after broken up as a place. From that, onward, we have no recognition, on God's part, of any *places* upon earth, as such. Individual persons as forming parts of the church are recognized, and churches are recognized in the epistles ; but places, as such, are never owned as having, as mere places, any interest in the mind of God.

In this eleventh chapter of Revelation, however, we find a definite place on earth again recognized as the subject of special interest to the Divine mind; and in that *chosen* place, spite of all its evil, and spite of all the evil of the Gentiles, we find *a witness* is raised and marvellously maintained there.

## No. VII.

## I CORINTHIANS.

THE Epistle to the Corinthians presents very different subjects from those which occupied us in the one addressed to the Romans. We find in it moral details, and the interior order of a church, with regard to which the Spirit of God here displays His wisdom in a direct way. There is no mention of elders, nor of other functionaries of the Church. Through the labours of the Apostle, a numerous assembly had been formed (for God had much people in that city), in the midst of a very corrupt population, where riches and luxury were united with a moral disorder which had made the city a proverb. At the same time, here as elsewhere, false teachers (in general, Jews) sought to undermine the influence of the Apostle. The spirit of philosophy did not fail, also, to exercise its baneful influence, although Corinth was not, like Athens, its principal seat. Morality and the authority of the Apostle were compromised together; and the state of things was most critical. The epistle was written from Ephesus, where the tidings of the sad state of the flock at Corinth had reached the Apostle almost at the moment when he had determined to visit them on his way into Macedonia (instead of passing along the coast of Asia Minor as he did), then returning to pay them a second visit on his way back. These tidings prevented his doing so, and instead of visiting them to pour out his heart among them, he wrote this letter. The second epistle was written in Macedonia, when Titus had brought him word of the happy effect of the first.

The subjects of this first epistle are very easily divided into their natural order. In the first place, before he blames the Christians at Corinth, to whom he writes, the Apostle acknowledges all the grace which God had already bestowed on them, and would still impart (chap. i. 1 — 9). From ver. 10 to iv. 21, the subject

regard to which we have to form a judgment. The Holy Ghost furnishes some in a peculiar way with this wisdom, with a wisdom according to God, a perception of the true nature of things, and of their relationship to each other, and of conduct with regard to both, which coming from God, guides us through the difficulties of the way, and enables us to avoid that which would place us in a false position towards God and man.

*Knowledge* is intelligency in the mind of God as it is revealed to us. *Faith* is not here simple faith in the Gospel; that is, not a distinctive gift which one believer may possess and another not. This is evident. It is the faith, the energy, given by God, which overcomes difficulties, which rises above dangers, which confronts them without being alarmed by them. The *discerning of Spirits* is not that of a man's condition of soul — it has nothing to do with it. It is the knowing how to discern by the mighty energy of the Spirit of God the actings of evil spirits, and to bring them to light if necessary, in contrast with the action of the Spirit of God. The other gifts require no comment. We must now return to the unity of the Spirit, with which is connected that which the apostle says, after having spoken of the gifts. The Spirit was one, he had said, working diversely in the members, according to His will. The importance of His personality, and the immense import of His divinity (if we reflect that it is He who works in and by man) is very evident when we observe that He is the centre and the living power of the unity of the whole body, so that the individuals in the exercise of their gifts are but the members of one and the same body, divinely formed by the power and the presence of the Spirit. This point the apostle develops largely, in connection with the oneness of the body, the mutual dependence of the members, and the relationship of each one to the body as a whole.

The practical instructions are easily understood, but there are some important points in the general principles. The oneness of the body is produced by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and the connection of the members depends upon it. By one Spirit we have all been baptised to be one body. The Lord's Supper is the expression of this oneness: the Spirit is He who produces it, and who

1 *Corinthians.*

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is its strength. The distinctive character of Jew and Gentile, and all other distinction, was lost in the power of one Spirit common to all, who united them all as redeemed ones in one only body. The apostle in this 13th verse speaks of the baptism of the Holy Ghost; but this word suggests to him the Supper, the second ordinance of the Lord, and he speaks of drinking into one Spirit, so drinking as to receive one and the same Spirit. By participating in Christ, by coming unto Him to drink, they had been made partakers of this same Spirit.

The baptism of the Holy Ghost, then, is that which forms Christians into one only body, and they are all made partakers of, are animated individually by, one and the same Spirit. Thus there are many members but one only body, and a body composed of these members which are dependent the one on the other, and have need of each other. And even those gifts which were the most shining, were, comparatively, of the least value, even as a man clothes and ornaments the least honourable parts of his body, and leaves the more beautiful parts uncovered.

• Another point which the apostle marks, is the common interest that exists among them, in that they are members of one and the same body. If one suffers, all suffer, since there is but one body animated by one Spirit. If one is honoured, all rejoice. This also depends on the one self-same Spirit who unites and animates them. Moreover, this body is the body of Christ. "Ye are," says the apostle, "the body of Christ and members in particular."

*(Continued at page 181.)*

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THE OLD AND THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THROUGH several centuries, at the first, "The Gospels and Apostles" is said to have been the name in common use for what is now called the "New Testament." I cannot doubt but that many have felt the inconvenience of the names "The Old and the New Testament." 'Tis a name which, popular as it is, is very inaccurate. The New may, in a sense, be looked upon as a legacy left by Christ; but the Old, whose testament was it? And if it be said that "testament" means "covenant," it is a mistake; and though it avoids the difficulty of making the Old to be the testament of bulls and goats, by asserting that it is the covenant in their blood which is meant—it introduces the evil of putting the church under covenant. I see not why "The Old Scriptures," and "The New Scriptures"—"The Old and New Scriptures" should not be adopted as a conventional and, so far as I see, less objectionable name.

## No. VIII.

## THE MAN OF GOD.

WHO is on the Lord's side? Who? Who cares for the glory of God upon earth? Who for the honour of the Lord Jesus Christ down here? Who stands for the rights and for the interests of God the Holy Ghost upon earth:—as to the testimony of the word of life among men—and as to the walk of those who have received that word of life?

'Tis the man of God's place to answer, "I—I am the man you call;—the duties you describe are mine,—fruit of the calling wherewith I have been called. Other duty, other service or occupation here below have I none."

His answer may be with an "Alas! it is I," and with many tears, if His day be as Jeremiah's or himself as Timothy, but answer to the challenge He must and will, when it reaches Him. But the man of God has not to serve at his own cost, or to live upon his own resources;—he cannot count upon his own energy, plans, or will,—he may be weaker than was Timothy,—as little trustworthy, in himself, as was Peter, BUT there is *one thing* which he *has* to do, and there is but one thing for which he is here; namely, to be the man of God—the man for God—wholly for God, and for God alone.

Speaking *abstractedly* (that is, of things as they are in principle, and should be in practice, and not of things as they are), how true is it that, if "God is for me," then "I am for God."

His service is perfect freedom. To a creature, however high, what liberty is there, can there be,—but in the service of God? And what for a fallen creature—Where shall he find liberty? Where shall he find a land, a life of perfect freedom? Is this earth a land of perfect freedom to the sinner?—this earth, with all the tears, death, sorrow, crying, and pain which are its very

*The Man of God.*

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atmosphere? The very thought is folly — the teaching it is deception. To such an one is the life of self-will, and the pleasures of sin (which are but for a moment) a life of perfect freedom, leading as it does to death, and after that the judgment? They are better than hell-fire, — better than that life which shall have its worm that dieth not, and its fire that is not quenched — better, alas! to an unrenewed heart, than would be heaven (with no joys there but those of God and the Lamb) to it in its unrenewedness; but land of liberty — life of perfect freedom, must be looked for elsewhere. And where alone they can be found, there are they stored up, in rich provision, for the very *chiefest of sinners*.

'Tis sweet to think that He that challenges man to take his place with Him, does so as the God of mercy and of compassion — does so, too, as thus claiming of man that he too should honour the Son of God, and the wonderful work that He hath wrought, and thus be “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you” (1 Pet. i. 23).

And if God has indeed commended His love to us thus, “in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;” for us, “when yet without strength” — “ungodly” — “sinners” — “enemies” (Rom. v. 6—10); if He has used our state of rebellion and hatefulness as an occasion to set forth His bowels of mercy and of compassion, — to prove that He indeed, and He alone is God — [and 'tis a fact that “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved”] — who that knows Him, and His mercy, and His compassion, that would wish, or desire to shut out from his own soul, any claim, any challenge, which God might make upon it — God, who is Love, has said, My son, give me thy heart. And (oh,

He never gives up His place of being *the end*; the one for whom all things are created — and it is in His very greatness that He can condescend to lay claim to and to accept such little cups of cold water as we can give. The cup is His, and the water is His, from Him the will and the power to draw it, and from Him, too, the desire to offer it — and His also the grace to accept and to love the service of His saints. He is wonderful, and nowhere more so than as the living God walking with his people. To deny that He cares that I should live to Him and to Him alone, would be to deny my own honour and glory — just as much as I should deny my place and life of dependance, if I assumed that I had any power in myself to live to Him, and were not absolutely and hourly debtor to Him, and to Him alone, to counterwork the evil of my nature, and the power of the evil of my circumstances, and to give more grace. The humbled heart knows this, but if it knows in God's presence the suitability to itself of the two phrases, "Chiefest of sinners," etc., "less than the least of all saints:" it knows also, on the other hand, that it becomes God, is meet for God to think that Christ is worthy to fill every vessel with grace — worthy, by the Spirit, to reclaim and keep every poor saint living to God, and to God alone. To me to live is Christ, was Paul's word. And 'tis the veriest sweetness of life divine in the soul of a poor sinner to be serving the living and true God, while He waits for His Son from heaven who has delivered us from the wrath to come.

But while the doctrines of grace set all the children on one level as to the benefits of the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord — all partakers of one Spirit, one life, one hope, etc. — this, by no means, hinders God from separating some by office, or power, from the mass of them — and giving to them peculiar benefits for the sake of all the rest. Such I conceive to be the case with "the Man of God." God's man for a crisis, or a generation, will have a distinctive place, as had Timothy in his day; and when Paul wrote about "the Man of God," Timothy was the party before him. I do not think any one can read the portion in which the term

*The Man of God.*

“the Man of God” occurs, and not see that it was a champion of the warrior band of whom Paul was speaking. The principles to the champion and to the band might be common — but there was a distinctiveness of intelligence and of power to the champion for the sake of the band, which the band possessed not. Timothy has a crisis to meet, a generation to serve, and Paul was teaching him how to do it.

“But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. 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, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. iii. 10—17).

No one that fears God would dare to say that God has no right to raise up, and have on earth, here a man and there a man, with no other object save to recall to His people His claims over them. No one that has entered into the history of the development of redemption, but what must admit that there was a chain of such witnesses for God from the time that failure set in in Old Testament times onward. None that cares for the glory of God, the honour of Christ, the Holy Ghost as Comforter, and the flock of the Lord, and looks back from the present time to the days when the volume of inspired Scripture was perfected, but what must admit that grace has raised up, from time to time, men who were wise to know the signs of the times — men, whom God fitted to see and to know the bearing of His Scriptures upon the present phases of things. In olden times

new truth came forth through the prophets, but, since the book was perfected, God has raised up men of intelligence and power to see the bearing of the contents of the book upon the present phase of things.

To deliver the Truth of God, and to deliver it in a way worthy of the Revealer of it, must be every servant's aim. Of that there can be no doubt. There is a stern reality of Truth, and the bearings of it upon men in the wilderness have an awfulness connected with them. The Lord Jesus was perfect as the witness for God, as he was perfect in every other respect. He knew all the fulness of the divine glory, of the divine character, for He was God; and he knew the solemn, awful importance to man, for eternity, of time-relationships with the truth of God. Creation glory, glory in Providence, as well as the revelation of the glory of God in redemption, have a direct bearing upon every man, and also, upon every servant of God. When I consider how the Lord Jesus was the truth, and how, from His days upon earth, instead of truth being generally revealed (as in the apocalypse) by visions, it flowed through the thoughts and affections of the New Testament prophets, I feel how, in a peculiar way, responsibility rests upon us, the handlers and the holders of the Scriptures, as to the way in which we present truth to others. God knows how feeble we are, and how little we know how to commend the truth, and ourselves unto every man's conscience. But we do want our message to be read and to be received; and it is not enough for us to have left the letter at the door of the house. And when among the saints there is rebuke, or warning, or even more severe acts of zeal for God, have we not to say, "In many things we offend all." The work we have to do may seem to be within our range of power, and we may put forth our own strength, as did Moses, at first: or it may seem to lie altogether beyond our power, and we may, as did Moses afterwards, refuse to go in the strength of the Lord. And yet the heart and its affections, the mind and its desires, may be still set upon that on which God is set. This singleness of eye as to object, — this purpose of heart to seek that which is the Lord's, — and

it only is of great price. And it rises in value to one that loves what God loves, *in the very measure* in which an individual feels he himself fails in it. Certainly, if I love God, and love His glory and His people, and yet find, alas! but little practical singleness of eye, and but little full purpose of heart to subserve that which I love, I shall rejoice if I find that, just where I fail, there others who do not fail are present.

I speak now as it would be with a man whose whole heart, mind and soul were occupied with an object — who was plunged into a rough stream busy about a great work. “The work must be done; I am in to do it — may I be the happy doer of it: but, if I have failed, thank God that there are others who have not failed.” The flesh does not so speak, I know; nor would a half-hearted, or a double mind so speak. No: but if the work is in my heart and mind, and the doing of it is my business — then, if I fail, I thank God if others do not fail.

I have often, when feeling ready to find fault with others at work, had cause to stop and warn myself, thus: “If you are of the warrior band, take care, in finding fault with this other, you are not really proclaiming that yourself (the fault-finder) have leisure enough, at home and away from the work, to find fault with an ease-renouncing labourer in the field, your own Master’s servant: and the fault, in such case, I find, is oftener about *the way* of doing it, than about the thing sought to be done, or about the object and aim of the labourer. Luther and Calvin made great mistakes, no doubt of it; so did Whitfield and Wesley; but *they lived out their light for God*. On the other hand, men, as men (and alas! many half-hearted Christians, in the days of Luther and Calvin, agreed with them), do not conceive that God has the right to have here a man and there a man, with nothing whatever to do but to look after HIS interests upon earth. They do not understand any one, it may be a mere stranger to them, saying: “I, as God’s servant, must protest against this or against that, because it is against His mind — or because it is not for His glory.”

Now it is just this that I conceive "the man of God" has to do. So I judge as one who counts himself to be of the warrior band, though, practically, (it is my *confession*), more ready to look round to see who is on the Lord's side, than able to go forward in the Lord's might—a leader. Clearly, a guide ought to try to inspire the hatred of evil, and the dread of it; surely he should desire to inspire the love of good, and the choice of it: but, if he aims at being a voice for God upon earth, he will oft have to bring out (and that badly enough too), God's thoughts upon a given deed or a given action, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear. If he be, as was Peter, self-confident, he'll meet at the Lord's hand, correction; if he have a good opinion of himself, or seek, from man, admiration, the Lord will correct all this. There is no need for me to be zealous for the Lord to take the rod—it may fall upon myself first if I do so—I had better pray for myself. Weaknesses within, and difficulties outside may exist, but they do not change the work that we and the man of God have to do; He has to be God's man—a man for God after all. Every medal has two sides: if there be no cross on one side, there is no crown on the other. Every generation tests God's family and servants, and they test it too. If all speak well of us now, it is because they do not see the Master in us. If we showed more of Him, the generation would stone us, and then religiously build us tombs. But I fear if our mausoleums are to be built with the stones we get thrown upon us, they will be small indeed, after all. It was not so with Whitfield—with Wesley—with many a one who has trod the earth. Their own generation—the great mass of the religious of their own generation,—could not bear them; the survivors, however, spake well of them. The fiery ordeal is good; how few of us can boast of it as ours. It is good even to be left alone with God. Not pleasant, but good. And in looking at the Lord's course on earth—and at Paul's course as assimilated to it—I have been struck how Paul was left alone. There was a needs be, as to atonement to be made, that the Lord should be left alone—none in that could stand with

*Him.* There was no such needs be as to Paul; but in the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ, which were sufferings of testimony and service, Paul was left alone.

Far be it from us, in the energy of our own wills, to ask for such a place; but if the Lord gave us energy of faith, we should find ourselves there: when we come thither, may we be prepared to recognize that it is no strange place, fiery though it may be,—if all men forsake, yet will the Lord never forsake. The Epistles of Paul to Timothy were both of them the expressions of a heart which knew what it was, oft alone, to bear the heat and toil of the day. And, if the writer was lion-hearted as any free-born citizen of Rome, how gently, yet firmly, does he try to rouse the courage of his more timid and gentle fellow-servant to prove himself worthy—in all patience, and in all long-suffering, yet with full purpose of heart, readiness of mind, and personal self-surrender, to follow the Man of Sorrows right through to the end of the course here below.

Nothing can communicate the strength of the unchanging will and purpose of the Divine mind to the life, here below, in such feeble rushes as we are (in contrast with the eddying deluge of human will that surrounds us), but full fellowship in the patience and hopes of the Lord Jesus.

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FRAGMENT.

Rev. i. 10. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," *ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ.* *Query.* I was, in spirit, in the judgment pertaining to the Lord's view of things.

Such is the rendering which results from rendering *ἡμέρᾳ* "day," in the sense in which it is used in 1 Cor. iv. 3: "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self." The word *ἡμέρᾳ* is here rendered "judgment" in the text, and "day" in the margin. The day characterized by man is man's day,—the day characterised by the Lord is the Lord's day. But then again it may be well noted that "day" in 1 Cor. iv. 3, is not used in the sense of a period of light between sunrise and sunset, but in a moral sense, as *the estimate naturally connected with a given state of things*, just as we speak of deeds of darkness—things not fit for daylight—or of things fit for midnight, or for midday light. The word rendered "of the Lord" is an adjective—lordly, or pertaining to the Lord.—The comparison of 1 Rev. i. 10, and 1 Cor. iv. 3, has its value; see also 1 Cor. iii. 13.

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

HE WHICH TESTIFIETH THESE THINGS,  
SAITH, SURELY I COME QUICKLY. AMEN.  
EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS.—REV. xxii. 20.

“COME, Lord Jesus.” Meditating lately on this word, which is a bold word for mortal’s mouth, I was struck with the flow of truth which runs through this same book, and shows that which constitutes at once John’s liberty to say it, and made it meet and natural that he should do so; and that we also, who have like faith with him, should do so likewise.

I will briefly pass through some of the passages.

1. It was to this same Lord Jesus that he owed complete deliverance from guilt, and the certainty of glory. “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” (Rev. i. 5, 6.) To such an one, how well could John say, Come!

2. It was *in* this same Jesus, when displayed in glory, that John, in his weakness and feebleness, had found the fountain of sympathy and help.

The glory in which He showed Himself to John was great. “His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.” (verses 14—16). And the effect on John was overpowering. “And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead” (v. 17). But sympathy and aid were near, for they were in the Lord who was there. “And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth and was

dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (v. 17 and 18). What grace in this act, stooping to lay his right hand upon His prostrate servant! What graciousness in the words, "Fear not!" And mark how all about Him showed His competency to sympathise. Himself, personally, was the First and the Last; — His experience was thus marked. "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen." And the insignia he carried were the keys of hell and of death.

The glory of the person, His experiences, this emblem of His present power — how do they all suit the prostrate state of the feeble though true servant.

3. There were traits, too, shown by the Lord in the addresses to the Seven Churches, most attractive, as well as most glorious. Has He to take forth the precious from the midst of the vile? Zealous He must be, and is, for God and the glory of the services which rest upon Him; but how desirous to praise all in His servants which he can praise; and where there is no good in connection with them to praise, then, how does His own divine goodness show itself in His readiness to bring forth the rich stores of his own wealth for man's encouragement:—

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (ii. 7).

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life . . . He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (ii. 11).

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (ii. 17).

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star" (ii. 26—28).

“ He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels ” (iii. 5).

“ Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and my new name ” (iii. 12).

“ To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne ” (iii. 21).

Sweet to hear these words — sweet to record them for others — but sweeter still to the hearer’s and to the recorder’s mind the thought of their sweetness to the speaker of them. God is God — and divine fulness, and pleasure, and praise are natural to His presence, and are attractive to those that are His, just as emptiness, sorrow and discontentment are natural to fallen man and repulsive to the redeemed.

See, too, the rich uncovering which the Lord made of His titles and glories in these addresses to the heart that loved him (i. 5, 6, and 17, 18); these were precious in themselves, and the uncovering of them to faith was of the grace that made Himself to be loved.

“ These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks ” (ii. 1).

“ These things saith the First and the Last, which was dead, and is alive ” (ii. 8).

“ These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges ” (ii. 12).

“ These things saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass ” (ii. 18).

“ These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead ” (iii. 1).

“ These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth and

no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth” (iii.7).

“These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God” (iii.14).

All these titles show His own connection in grace with the churches which had failed, just as His large promises to the overcomer show His grace to provide for taking forth the precious from the vile. What a study, too, of His graciousness of ways and thoughts had those seven addresses opened and furnished to him that said, Come, Lord Jesus.

4. But the Lamb had His own place upon the throne of the Lord God Almighty. Blessings and privileges enjoyed by His people in the wilderness; His service to God in connection with them there, with all sympathy and large-hearted liberality, were surely true; but these were things connected with circumstances which could be shaken — He had His own place on the throne which could not be shaken, and there, Himself was the lover of His people — the securer for them of the knowledge of things to come.

The believer’s peace, amid trial, consists very much in his being able to trace that his path is according to God. “Ye shall *know*,” has a peculiar force in connection with the blessing of the people of God since Pentecost. Of what inestimable value, then, is the breaking of the seals of the book of futurity by the Lord — from how many sorrows does attention to the truth there found save us? If it were only the general truth that the church’s path through the desert has been looked over by the Lord, that would be sweet; but where the heart has been taught of God, there is, beside the general truth, many an individual one which, while it may draw the soul into watching, and occupy its energy with examinations of the word, forms in it both humility and dependence. And could not John say “Come” to Him whose grace had traced the path through the stormy ocean of man’s apostasy for that people of whom John was one? If they had to pass it apparently alone and without Him, how welcome the sight of Him whose love had given them the outline of their voyage and its sorrows.

5. There is in chap. viii. 2—5 another truth to be noticed:—“And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.”

In chap. v., the Lamb was the channel by which light divine flowed down from the throne of God to man on earth, about the contents of the sealed book. Here He, as an Angel, is the channel by which prayers and groans ascend to God. Yes, every sigh, every groan of His people in the wilderness will sooner or later reach God; and the same God who listens to the sighs of His prisoners, will vindicate their trust in Him, and will destroy their oppressors. It is the Lord Jesus to whom John says, chap. xxii., “Come, Lord Jesus,” who in the fixedness of His own glory as Mediator between God and man, at once hands up the prayers in this eighth chapter to God, and shows that His office of Mediator stays judicial acting from God towards the earth.

6. Let me turn now to chap. x.:—“And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, and he cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore 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 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. And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and on the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.”

There is in nature a foolishness of love which leads the heart and mind into movement whenever the object of affection passes before us. This is true in grace also, though here the wisdom is justified of its action, for He is worthy who is loved; more worthy than mind can think or heart can measure — and we love Him because He first loved us. He may have roused our attention, may have sought our love, may have shown and made good His love to us by solitary acts, and by innumerable benefits conferred; but it is Himself we love. The glory and the majesty of His person who is here present, employing and directing His servant what to retain and what to communicate of things shown to him; letting him into light, and giving him intimations of what the experiences that light would lead into is very attractive and very expressive of the personal love which the Lord bears to His servant.

7. When I read chaps. xi., xii., xiii., xiv. and xv., and contemplate in them the various scenes through which the Lord made His servant John to pass — Jerusalem remembered on the earth; its connection with heaven's plans about Messiah; the heavenly man purger of the

heavens for the Church; head of an outcast suffering race amid Jews and Gentiles — part of which should be concealed to become an earthly seed when the power of the world, the flesh and Satan, was put down, and another part of which should fall in testimony, but rise and reign with Christ: when I see also this vision of His own triumphs shown to and tasted by John, surely I say it must have had a kindling, stirring effect upon his affections towards his Master.

Just as, 8thly, chaps. xvi., xvii. and xviii., as containing the downfall of all the strength of that world from which John was at once separated and suffering, must have given, as from the Lord, the confirmation to his soul of the blessedness of the position into which Christ had brought him. That which oppressed him could and would be shaken; but he, as not being of it but in the secret of the Shaker of it all, knew and could anticipate the shaking with quietness.

9. Heaven's breathing forth of joy at the triumph of God now come — and the preparation for the marriage of the Lamb on high — had ushered the Lord into the earth as putter-down for a time of all adverse powers, in chap. xix.

10. And in chap. xx. John had seen the kingdom and the fellowship of it; and

11. How even that, in the wondrous height and depth of Divine grace, was but a means to a final end. All enemies put down; — God could be all in all. But who is the bringer-in of the eternal state, in which God's tabernacle shall be with men, who, save this same loved, and loving Lord Jesus?

12. But as though all this were not enough, we find the blessed Lord turning back from xxi. 9 to the Church as the bride, the Lamb's wife.

“Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. v. 25—27). Yes! He nourisheth and cherisheth the Church.

The way that we see in this wondrous description of the Church's millennial glory — the fulfilment of “Thou in me and I in them” of John xvii. is blessed. Expression of the Lord's own perfect beauty — sharer of the glory given to Him — the bride which He Himself will come to fetch — which He will present to Himself a Church in glory, “without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” These were the rich expressions which characterised the love of the Lord Jesus Christ — which led Him to say, “Surely I come quickly;” which were the liberty and the power of the heart of John to say in reply —

“EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS.”

\*.\* This paper shows how the heart finds sweetness in the Apocalypse, where the understanding (p. 92) has found light.

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#### FRAGMENT.

**THE FAILURE.**—How far does God choose for us work and a path beyond the measure of our present faith—*that we may grow up into it?* It was so in the case of Noah (with his ark and salvation by water);—with Abram, called to go forth to a city whose Builder and Maker is God;—to Saul, the persecutor, to become the apostle of the uncircumcision.

The question is important in the hour of failure, as to responsibility, because a man (like Lot) might say: “I have but taken outwardly before man the place which inwardly was mine before.” There is a great deal of this sort of thing now-a-days from the flesh. But God may say to such a one as Lot: “Consulter of thine own flesh, thou hast despised the way in which I allowed thee to be set, and preferring thine own way to mine, thou hast gotten thee to the city I will destroy, though I save thyself.”

Two men fail: one turns back to his old course in nature or religion; the other God leads on, a poor failed thing, going after God in a new line.

There is no hour in which it is more important, or more difficult, *not to consult one's own flesh, than in an hour of defeat.*

How much of our disappointment, one with the other, comes from mortified pride! I love, perhaps a Christian, and, instead of seeing him only in Christ, deck him according to my imagination with that which God never put in or upon him. The man is left—but my shadow is gone, when I get into the light of God's presence; or when we meet in the dark outside of His presence.

## No. X.

OF HIM, AND THROUGH HIM, AND TO HIM,  
ALL THINGS!

Rom. xi. 36.

SUCH, under the power of divine inspiration, was the language of a servant of God. He had been just made to run rapidly through the past, present, and future of the inhabitable earth; had seen its changing phases as connected with God, and His dealings through various economies; had been shown that the divine object in all those variations, so bewildering to man in his pride, had been *very simple*: God had so wrought as to include all in unbelief, that so He might have mercy upon all. It is not here Adam and Paradise, but man (Jew and Gentile) outside of Paradise. He speaks not *here* directly of how the creature had been allowed to break up the creatures' circumstances of finite blessing, so as that the ruin might fall into the hand of God, that He might do, *in mercy*, as might seem good to Him, with that which had failed as being an expression of His power and wisdom—and had failed when set upon its own responsibility: but He speaks rather of how all light and responsibility committed to the *failed* creature in the various economies or dispensations only more fully proved the creature to be a failed one, and brought him into the place in which mercy alone had a right to speak. Tried, in various ways, man ever proved himself a ruined rebel; but God had planned a wide-spread display of His own mercy, and when all the various parts of the inhabitable earth should have shown out what they were, God would show out, in these same places, what He was as the God of Mercy. He would have scope enough to do it in them; varieties of vessels too would be there; and the display would have its brightness enhanced by the contrast between the smallness of what had been and the

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greatness then to be present, and by the contrast between the mercy of God and the unrighteousness of the creature. "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all" (ver. 32). His whole soul is moved—and well it might be so—and filled with the glorious subject—it rolls forth the blessed anthem: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (ver. 33—36).

This last clause, "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things," is thus the reasonable solution of the whole vision of God's dealings with man upon earth, *in dispensation*. It is abstract enough, yet strikes a cord of praise in the apostle's heart, and he adds, "To whom be glory for ever. Amen."

This explanation of these ways of *the God of Mercy* in His long-suffering dealings with man in rebellion upon earth, traced (from chap. ix. to chap. xii.) through various economies, comes in after the explanation (from chap. i. to chap. viii.) of *the mercies of God*. Nothing but mercy could do for man, whether without revelation, or under the law, or without law: and mercy's path was already plain, for Christ had died, and risen, and ascended up on high, and God, the Holy Ghost, was come down to be at once the power, and seal, and sustainer of blessing to those that believed in Him from whom He was come down. These mercies of God (from chap. i.—viii.) so rich, so full, so heavenly, and so divine as they are set forth in chap. viii., magnified and confirmed by their connection with these ways of the God of mercy, through all His dealings with man upon earth, are brought to bear (chap. xii. to end) as the power of living *to* God. The origin or source of mercy is God; its power of endurance and success is God; it leads all whom it embraces to God: *of, through, and to* Him, in one sense or other, are all things, but most directly *of,*

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*through*, and *to Him* all those things of which Paul was here speaking.

And this truly is a great salvation—to see God as the end of our retrospect; God as the source to us of it, at least, *as a whole*; to know God to be more present in power than all else, whether it be self, Satan, the world, or the flesh—God overruling all—causing all things to work together for good to them that love Him; in the *present* purpose, too, of all that is there as to faith, God and God alone. And if He be alone in the purpose which is present, He surely must fill the future—of Him, through Him, to Him all things.

Our Gospel is divine as well as heavenly. As being heavenly, the grand purpose of it is shown in the family, as seen in the Father's house in John xiv., and in the Bride, the Lamb's wife, seen in glory in Rev. xxi. and xxii. In this respect, our glad tidings lead us up to heavenly spheres in contrast to Israel's glad tidings, which will place them in the centre of an earth which shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, even as the waters cover the sea. As divine, it gives us the power of known association, through grace, with the God of eternity in the past, the present, and that which is to come; in knowing the spring and source of our all to be the Eternal God; in knowing the way, 1st, of deliverance from evil and of entrance into blessedness—in all the wondrous works, sufferings, services, and offices of the blessed Lord Jesus; and, 2ndly, of the application of this, and the securing of it, immediately to us to be by the Holy Ghost; and all tending to God; but because tending in a *present purpose* of the soul, God is known as a present as well as a future end.

I desire to say a few words upon this in connection with the full liberty of the gospel of Christ in the soul and life of a believer. For I believe many have failed, and that there is danger to many of us of failing herein: to some, from not seeing the importance of this truth, *as a united whole*, viz., that our gospel, in its fulness, is this our full association with God—our being able to say with truth, “of Him, through Him, to Him, all things!” And to others there is danger from their not seeing the

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inseparableness of the three statements *of, through, and to Him, all things*. The subject is one of immense importance to the Christian, as to his own soul, as having to judge himself that He be not judged of the Lord; and it is one of pre-eminent interest to brotherly love, as affording the solution of, and the cure for, a great deal of ill-proportioned Christianity in those we love;—it gives, too, the explanation, I am fain to believe, of a great many of the differences that try brotherly love. May the meditation of it lead us to judge ourselves, that we may be better able to help others, to forbear toward the weak, and not to be stumbled by the strong.

I may add, that in a day like the present, when rush, hurry, and bustle characterize man in all his doings, quietness and calmness will be the fruit of this being hidden (oneself and all one's circumstances) in God. For what trouble can trouble His abode? What whirlwind can reach the soul that dwells in the secret of His presence?

Adam, in the fall, took *a new position* for himself. Creation was all of God, and through God, and to God; and so was himself, Adam, as part of it. His position and condition, as created, were in accordance one with another also. In the fall, he changed his condition and position too. Refusing to be subject to, to live to God, so far as the thoughts of his heart and the intentions of his mind were concerned, he, *in purpose*, set up for himself. He would be as God. That he could not thus take himself out of the Almighty's hands is clear. The unchangeableness of the living God's purpose, "that all should be to his own glory," stood fast. The creature that *would* not be so could not reverse that; he could only, in his puny littleness, set himself in opposition—and be broken. He did change his inward condition in changing his position before God, in ceasing to be subject, and in acting upon his power to be voluntarily dependent, he lost himself—he fell.

This departure from God was man's own act, though set on to it by Satan. It was man's own act; and he has reaped the fruits of it, and is under the consequences of it. It is a great moral disease, it is morally ruin, for a

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creature so to have sunk down into itself—to have become so surrounded and filled with itself, that self has taken the place of spring, and power, and end of everything to it. It knows, in sin, no God above it, that it can depend upon. God is to it a Being of power adverse to itself. Now the Gospel of God's grace meets man in all his selfishness—meets him just there where he feels that God ought to be against him, and brings in those parts of the divine character which man, so placed, can recognize, in order to give rest to his soul. Such a soul must own God to be above it, and not adverse to it either. And yet it may be very far from seeing how the whole salvation is of God, and the whole application of it through Him. But it is learning that there is a mighty God above, and something of His ways, and is getting unconsciously set in its right place before God—its right place of dependance. When light dawns more clearly into it it finds that, indeed, it is fully saved, and that the blessed work of its salvation, while it suits it, came forth not for its sake, but because of what God was and is in His own being. He is merciful, and delights in mercy—has delighted in doing mercy's work, and does delight in giving to man the full enjoyment of it. The discovery of this gives solid peace—we understand where mercy has set us. And this is most blessed. Yet I think it will be found that there is a something which precedes this, even the spirit of obedience;—the soul seeking, oft it knows not why, God and His presence, and entire surrender to him of everything. Now, this desire to do God's will,—this owning of “all to God”—and therefore that nothing can suffice oneself save to be be “wholly”—heart, mind, soul, and body—in principle and in practice to God, is a very important thing. In a creature it is nothing less than God's glory. It can never be given up if we are to be like Christ,—if God is to be God to us. I call attention to this point, because I am persuaded that in a clear understanding of it the safety of the whole flock of God, and of every soul individually is concerned. God must be the end, the sole end, where His power is. The Son of God, the perfect servant of God, knew no other end than God's will and

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God's glory. It was His glory to be here below, doing nothing but God's will, suffering nothing but God's pleasure. If any find any other state as one of blessedness here below for the disciple, they deceive their own selves, and are hearers only, and not doers of His will.

It is true the desire to be, to live, to God may in us, at first, be mixed up with other elements, which may have to be judged and removed. It may be, at first, little more than the revived sense of what we were made for as creatures, when conscience is acting in the presence of God. It may be mixed up, afterwards, with a sense of power in us to stand upon nature's foundation; — and as such power exists not, — the thought that one has it is a delusion; it may be legal, from one supposing that the law was given that we might live by it; it may have a thousand false colourings, — but when all is said and done, the truth remains, that if any one have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His; — and the Spirit of Christ was and is emphatically the spirit of holy gracious obedience to God. Spirit of discernment, without doubt, He is — to divide, nicely, between foundation and superstructure; between the duties of root and of branch; spirit of judgment too He is, owning Christ the Saviour in *His* place and service, and the believer as saved in his place and duties, too, — but always the spirit of obedience; always and ever in subjection to God and the word of His grace, and leading unto obedience. Let the difficulty of retaining the spirit of obedience unclouded be fully admitted, — but still, if saved, we are saved unto God, and the life of God in the soul, and he that touches that touches our all.

The Spirit of God has, as His unmixed purpose, to seek the glory of God and the honour of Christ. What else would you charge upon that Holy One as *His* purpose and work here below? Is it from a taste for the world in its present state, — is it from the pleasures of the treatment He has experienced from the flesh and from the devil, that He abides among and in us? Did He own us as His end, — when He sought us, — while He keeps us? Oh, no: merciful and long-suffering as He is to us ward, He is so because He links us up with a

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great purpose of God in Christ. And would I debase to the level of my thoughts and affections His actings in me? Nay, I am called upon to rise to His level rather. Now I do most solemnly believe, may I be wrong, that very many are in jeopardy just in not seeing how their perfect liberty in Christ supposes (what it gives) a perfect purpose to live, to be to God, and to God alone. And sure I am that it is impossible for two to walk together except they be agreed. Will God give up His object in order to walk with me, if I have an object at variance with His? Or must I give up my object to walk with Him, according to that which He seeks. And is it not here that one fruitful course of separation among disciples of Christ is found? namely, the various allowed measures of mixing up with God's sole object — which is His glory in the honour of Christ as Lord of all — portions of worldliness, fleshliness, and Satanic objects. I warn my brethren, the Church and the world cannot walk on together. God's spirit is onward, forward: — the face of every one that is led by Him is, as it were, set firmly for an onward, forward course. If men will walk according to the flesh, they cannot seek heaven, but the world; and then not the Holy Ghost, but the prince of the power of the air is He that worketh in them. I feel the moment to be one of crisis in this respect. If you are God's, — live to Him and go onward, — forward a little while further; how very little is the little while! and count the flesh to be already crucified with its affections, and lusts, and the world a wilderness. If you will not do this Satan will catch your flesh, and into the world sink you must.

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My salvation in Christ is perfect; but I am not perfect. How can a man that is not perfect in himself walk according to a perfect position if he is set in it? It is just here where the intercession of Christ, who is in Heaven, comes in. Having set us in the perfect liberty of the appreciation of His own work by God the Father — the Lord now on high is occupied in bringing us through the wilderness.

If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John ii. 1). From on high He sees our sin as he did Peter's (John xiii. 18), even before we sin; and as He said to Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke xxii. 31, 32).

Nothing but a living Christ on high could suffice to meet our needs, assure our hearts, and cultivate our affections.

N<sup>o</sup> XI.

## I CORINTHIANS.

*(Continued from page 155.)*

OBSERVE, also, here, that although that assembly at Corinth was only a part of the body of Christ, the apostle speaks of the whole body; for the assembly there was, according to the principle of its gathering, the body of Christ as assembled at Corinth. It is true, that at the beginning he speaks of all those who call on the name of the Lord Jesus; but, in fact, he addresses the Corinthian assembly; and the general expression shows, that in the walk of the Church, and in its general interests, a local assembly cannot be separated from the whole body of Christians on earth; and the language employed here shows that, as to their position before God, the Christians of one town were considered as representing the whole Church, as far as regarded that locality; not as independent of the rest, but, on the contrary, as inseparably united to the others, living and acting, with respect to that locality, as members of the body of Christ, and looked upon as such in it, because every Christian formed a part of that body, and they formed a part of it likewise. From the verses that follow, we see that the apostle, while looking upon the Christians there as the body of Christ, the members of which they were, has in his mind the whole Church as the assembly of God. In the New Testament there is no other membership than that of Christ, except that they are members of each other, as forming the entire body, but never members of *a* church, — the idea is different, it is the members of a body like that of man, as a figure, never the members of an assembly, — in the modern sense of the word. We are members of Christ, and, consequently, of the body of Christ; so were the Corinthians, as far as that body was manifested at Corinth.

those who manifest grace in a special way. They are not persons officially nominated and consecrated who are spoken of here. It is the conscience and the spiritual affection of Christians which acknowledges them according to their work; a principle valid at all times, which does not permit this respect to be demanded, but which requires it to be paid.

We may remark here, that this epistle, although entering into all the details of the interior conduct of a Church, does not speak of elders or of any formally established officers at all. It is certain, that in general there were such, but God has provided in the Word for the walk of an assembly at all times, and, as we see, principles which oblige us to acknowledge those who serve in it through personal devotedness without being officially appointed. General unfaithfulness, or the absence of such established officers, will not prevent those who obey the Word from following it in all that is needful for Christian order. We see, moreover, that whatever might be the disorder, the apostle recognises the members of the assembly as being all real Christians, he desires them to acknowledge one another by the kiss of love, the universal expression of brotherly affection. This is so entirely the case, that he pronounces a solemn anathema on every one who loved not the Lord Jesus. There might be such, but he would in no way recognise them. If there were any, let them be anathema. Is this an allowed mixture? He will not believe it, and he embraces them all in the bonds of Christian love (ver. 24).

The last point is important. The state of the assembly at Corinth might give room for some uncertainty as to the Christianity of certain members or persons in connection with them, although not dwelling at Corinth. He admonishes them; but, in fact, in cases of the most grievous sin, where the discipline of God was exercised or that of man was required, the guilty are looked upon as Christians (see chap. x. for the warning; chap. xi. 32 for the Lord's discipline; for that of man, v. 5 in this epistle; for the principle, 2 Cor. ii. 8). Besides, he denounces with an anathema those who do not love the

Lord Jesus. Discipline is exercised towards the wicked man who is called a brother. He who calls himself a Christian yet does not really love the Lord — for there may be such — is the subject of the most terrible anathema.

It is sweet to see, that after faithfully (although with anguish of heart) correcting every abuse, the spirit of the apostle returns by grace into the enjoyments of charity in his relationship with the Corinthians. The terrible ver. 22 was not felt to be inconsistent with the love that dictated the other verses. It was the same spirit, for Christ was the sole spring of his charity.

We may notice, ver. 21, that the apostle, as other passages testify, employed some one to write for him. The epistle to the Galatians is an exception. He verified his epistles to the assemblies by writing the salutation at the end with his own hand. His heart flows out, ver. 24, and he comforts himself in being able to acknowledge them all in love.

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#### FRAGMENT.

Worldliness and earthly-mindedness have blinded the minds and hardened the hearts of Christians, now-a-days, to an extent very few have any idea of. There are, I am persuaded, very few cases touching upon the safety, and well-being of the Church of God, which can be left to be judged by the mass of believers. On whom can one cast one's burden of responsibility as to the spirituality of the saint's walk and conduct. In cases innumerable which have occurred, I have found that the affections to the person of Christ have not been lively enough to make Christians indignant at open insults put upon Him—and they have had neither the heart nor the mind to stand apart from that which was the expression of indifferentism to Him.

## "GOD — I."

FAITH sets a man with God, and, as an individual, alone with God. Abel acted as an individual; Enoch walked alone with God; Noah found grace in His sight; Abram was called out from all, and was the friend of God. Joseph, and Moses, and Samuel, and David, and Daniel, and all the worthies of Faith's household, each found his springs to be in God—and his guidance to be from God.

How individual and solitary, too (not only on the ground of His being the only sinless, the only perfect One, but also in *the mode* of His walk), was the Blessed Lord! "Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God." "The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?" These were the mottoes of His life here below.

How beautifully, too, in the thief upon the cross, do we find his faith (divinely taught) setting Him *alone* with God—able to condemn, not only his own past course, but all that the religious of that day were doing; and able to give to Christ a title true of him *alone* from among men. "This man hath done nothing amiss." He adds, "Lord! remember me . . . in Thy kingdom!" And the Lord's word to Peter is to be noted: "If I will that he [John] tarry till I come, *what is that to thee?* FOLLOW THOU ME."

The secret of all practical holiness in a believer is found in this individual walk with God—a walk which, as it keeps him in the light, where Christ is at the right hand of God, keeps him in humble self-judgment, because he sees the contrasts between Christ and himself—yet in firmness, because he has to do with God, and acts *for* and *from* God.

Directly I can say, God's word proclaims a thing to be unholy, I am to cease from it *at once*. It is unholy *to me* at least, and to tamper with it would be defilement. Every godly soul (that knows even Rom. xiv.) would assent to this: every godly soul must say, "Obey God rather than man; obey God according to your light, and do not go beyond it."

I have been asked (alas for the askers!) when so acting, "Are *you* infallible? Are *you* going to lord it over the conscience of others?" My answer is simple: "I walk with God, and judge *myself*; not an inch for me on the road God's word seems to me to prohibit; right onward where the word enjoins me to go forward."

'Tis replied, "How do you know *you* are right?" I answer, "While walking in dependence upon God alone to lead me to see His mind, that I may do it—do you think He'll not be faithful to Himself? (John vii. 17). And, as to the consciences of others, I lord it over no soul. Let each walk with God; but only let each remember, that if my walk is with God, alas! for him whose walk is not in the same pathway: be he before me or behind."

There is no holiness in communion—no "communion of *saints*," apart from this solitary walk with God—of the *saints* as individuals.

The restless disquietude of many around, convinces me *they* are not walking with God.

## No. XII.

## ABRAHAM.

I HAVE been particularly interested latterly in the history of Abraham; and I send you a brief outline of what has struck me in this history as a picture of many interesting elements of the life of faith. There is a difference between public worship and personal communion brought out in this history, and the intimacy of the latter, and ground on which it is built, which have especially occupied me. But I can, on account of other occupations, only give the outline.

His life, in as far as it is presented to us as a life of faith, begins by his calling, when in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charan. The God of glory appeared to him, says Stephen. In a word, it was God's revelation of Himself to him, by which he was called into the path of life. Object of divine election, Jehovah's revelation of Himself to him calls him out of darkness and subjection to the power of Satan (for his family worshipped other gods beyond the flood out of the land of promise), and gives to him the promises, in connection with a faith which set out, on the simple word of God, to be led where God Himself should shew him his country and his home. He was to quit all for the word and promise of God. This is the first element and character of the life of faith. The Lord gives sufficient of the details of this history to shew that till Abram had fully broken with all God called upon him to leave, he could not, though he had left much, and might plead the best claims of nature for the rest, attain the end for which he had left all the rest. He had left Ur, come to Charan, and dwelt there. However, after Terah's death, he left Charan, as the Lord had said to him, and now comes to Canaan. This begins the second part of the life of faith: that which passes in the place of promise.

In that life we are called on to set out, trusting God

Jehovah will deal with Abraham as a man deals with his friend. He speaks with Abraham, not of what concerned himself, but the world. It is not Abraham's wants, or even Abraham's walk, but the intention of God which He would have him know, opening His thoughts and counsels to him (as in Eph. i. 10, 11). The two men go on towards Sodom; and Abraham and the Lord remain together. What a place of privilege and blessing. It is not worship. It is not a call to follow when the Lord led. That had all had its place. It is communion, personal intercourse with God about what concerns Himself and His ways; intercourse founded on God's revelation of Himself, and on personal acquaintance with His character. Grace working on the heart, and producing intercession. The whole scene is instructive. His son and heir is promised as a present thing. That is our own hope. It is a settled one, independent of all that happens to the world; our own peculiar hope. We are in communion with God, on the ground of His special revelation of Himself to us, and the expected heir is revealed as coming. God then deals with us in the intimacy of friends, and tells us His purposes and plans, awakening in us, by the grace He exercises towards us, and the confidence it imparts, the spirit of grace and intercession founded on what He is, on our knowledge of Him. Abraham does not ask anything for himself here; he pleads for others. Indeed, what could he ask, when enjoying converse with God, and the certain and present promises of the son. He is in the place of blessing, and walking in the spirit of communion, and of the God he now knows. This began with the revelation of Himself by God. Now that Abraham is alone with Him all is boldness, though reverence, with one well known. The very silence of Abraham when others were there, and Jehovah had hid Himself, belonged to a knowledge of Him which none else had. Jehovah surely had clearer judgment, and even surer ways of deliverance and mercy than even Abraham knew; but we speak of the terms on which Abraham was on with Him. It closed this wondrous conference; and when Abraham's words were exhausted, and the Lord had answered him to the end, He went His way, when He had done *communing* with

*Abraham.*

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Abraham. What a place for the child of faith to be in. And such is our place. God has revealed Himself, yet more fully and nearly. He tells us the good pleasure of His will, according to the good pleasure He has purposed in Himself. He tells us of the soon-coming Son. He tells us, though but as a part of His will and counsels, of the coming judgment of the world. Our place is in grace with Him who communes with us.

## FRAGMENTS.

When Satan is at work in power among men, the human mind will religiously believe any lie. It will act so as even nature and natural conscience left to themselves would condemn. He that killeth you will think that he doeth God service, was one instance of this: the strong delusion to believe a lie in the latter day is another. The human mind—nature—natural conscience left to itself—could hardly justify Saul's persecution of Stephen and the Church:—it never could justify man's treatment of the Lord's Christ—nor will it attempt to do so, when man stands in the light, and has to judge himself. Passion, lust, prejudice, will go a great way; but Satan will lead, will push, a great deal further.

It seems to me, that, on the subject of the holiness and catholicity of the Church, nature would give a judgment against a good deal which nature, when blinded by Satan, holds hereon. Doth not nature say, that if God be personally present, all that which is identified with Him must be *really* so, and be so in all its individual parts. It is unreasonable, contrary to common sense, unnatural—as men speak—to think, or to talk of association with God, of conduct the result of our being drawn after or led by Him,—without the presence of “reality,” and of individual surrender to Him, being, as it were, granted, presupposed. The thing said, “that I am led of God,” assumes that He really has appropriated me individually. Now, one of the things which is constantly meeting us, is talk about “holiness” and “catholicity,” where the conduct, where the thoughts of the speaker, give no token of the consciousness of the reality of God's presence, of individual personal walking with Him.

This is emphatically the case in Romanism, and wherever the conscience is morbidly at work, under the enemy, upon the notion of the Church.

True is it, also, that it is God only who can, by the Spirit and the faith, enable the conscience to act truly as to and in the things of God. Reason, common sense, nature, can detect inconsistencies; but they can neither shut out Satan nor bring in God or His wisdom.

## No. XIII.

[Taken from the French, and presented for examination].

THE PRESENT AGE, AND THE AGE WHICH  
IS TO COME.

“Who gave Himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father : To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.”—Gal. i. 4, 5.

THE Lord Jesus was born to be a King; for this end came He into the world, that He might render testimony to the truth. But when His own received Him not, He for a time gave up His reigning here below, and, withdrawn to the heavens, He there gathers a church down here, which is to be His bride, and share His inheritance with Him. This period of the absence of the Lord Jesus is, for us, *this present evil world* [or age]. The church being completed and gathered into His presence, He will come with her to make good His just claims, and, Himself the true Melchisedec, will subject to His sceptre of righteousness and peace the kingdoms under the wide heavens. Then will be the kingdom of God, or *the world* [or age] *to come*.<sup>1</sup>

“*The present age*,” and “*the age to come*,” give us concisely the subjects which it is proposed to consider in these pages; while we more especially seek to trace, throughout these two periods adverted to, the characteristics and destinies of the Church.

How can we, as members of the said Church, walk worthily of our *calling*, if we have not, as a preliminary, a clear and distinct conception of it? Let us then not despise the lamp of prophecy, which, in casting its light directly upon the glorious end of our pilgrimage, can enlighten all our path, guiding and making sure our passage across the dark places of the world which we traverse.

May the Lord, in His grace, deign to make these pages, in some measure, subservient to that end!

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, 271.

## I.—THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH.

The church is not the succession, or even the assemblage, of all the saints who have lived from the beginning of the world to its end. It is "the body of Christ,"<sup>a</sup> formed by His Spirit at Pentecost, and gathering from that time onwards, which personally will be with its Head, before He comes to judge the world, and to establish therein His reign. It is, moreover, *a mystery* which was not revealed in other ages.

So does the word of God teach us, and so also more

<sup>a</sup> It may help the reader to remark here, once for all, that there are two senses in which the term "*Church*" is frequently and commonly used.

The one in which "*the Church*" is meant, i.e., the body of believers, which has Christ in heaven at its head: here it is looked at as—according to what it *essentially* is, and as one whole,—a body.

The other, which is a popular use of the word, is when it is spoken of more as in contrast with other things down here: in which case, very often, *professing Christians, or heavenly saints*—believers in the Messiah whom Israel has rejected, etc., would more accurately present what is meant.

In the Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, etc., we have the doctrine of *the Church*. In Corinthians, Hebrews, Galatians, etc., we have doctrine, of all importance to individual believers, to Christians, who are members of *the Church* but not the doctrine of the Church, so much as the doctrine of the churches.

The noticing this is very helpful in the study of the Word, and will be so in the perusal of this article.

*The Church* did not exist, as such, until Pentecost; but the doctrine of the Church as *the body of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the Heavenly Head*, was not known until Paul. Christendom is not that *body*; the Churches so-called are not that body, but are the fruit—not yet judged (from which, therefore, no believer can get separate)—of man's separation of the testimony raised by God at Pentecost, upon earth, from the vital blessing. We are in the place where God has set His testimony, and cannot get out of it: to pretend to get out of it is to rebel against God, and to deny the responsibility which clings to us. What we have to do is to separate ourselves, in the power of the real blessing we have in Christ, from all the evil which surrounds: and so walk with God, and those that judge themselves in His presence. As man has separated the form of the Church from the power—so will God finally separate the essence of the evil man has introduced from the form, and judge it in Babylon. Babylon and Christendom are not the same thing.—ED.

particularly teaches Paul, — the minister of the doctrine of the Church, the medium chosen for the making known of the mystery.

“ For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, (if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward : How that 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) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit ; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel : whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ ; and to make all *men* see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ : to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord : In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him” (Eph. iii. 1—12).

“ For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church : and He is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject into Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it ; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh ; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church : for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery : but I speak concerning Christ and the Church” (*Ib.* v. 32).

“ And He is the head of the body, the Church : who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead ; that in all *things* He might have the preeminence. For it pleased *the Father* that in Him should all fulness dwell ; and, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself ; by Him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in

*your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in His sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church: whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; *even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints: to whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. i. 18—27).

We remark then, that—

§ 1st. *The Church is entirely distinct from Israel in times which are past, and from Israel and the nations in the age, or world to come.*

1. Israel was a people according to the flesh, separated in external things from all others, in a particular country which had been assigned to it as its abode.

The Church is a people drawn out of the midst of all others, although dwelling in the midst of them, dispersed over the whole earth, and in which all national characteristics are completely set aside.

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free: there is neither male nor female for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. iii. 26—29).

"Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in

one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 11—22).

"Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all" (Col. iii. 11).

2. Israel's nationality was according to the flesh. Every one who was born of Israelitish parents, circumcision on the eighth day being duly observed, was an Israelite.

The Church's unity is according to the Spirit. It is neither pedigree according to the flesh, nor any ceremonial which makes a man to be a Christian, but only faith, and the being born of the Spirit.

"But as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 12, 13).

3. And not only so — but "the Church is the habitation of God through the Spirit," — "the temple of God," — as is also each member of it (1 Cor. iii. 16; vi. 17; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. ii. 20—22; 1 Pet. ii. 5). It is the "body of Christ" in which, consequently, His Spirit dwells; as the spirit of a man dwells in his body (Eph. i. 22, 23; iv. 4, etc.). And, therefore, it is that our worship is characterized by these words: "in spirit and in truth" (John iv. 24), in contrast with the worship of Israel, which consisted "in shadows and carnal ordinances" (Col. ii. 17; Heb. ix. 1—10).

Israel had, indeed, a habitation of God connected with it — in the tabernacle and in the temple; but the temple being itself "of *this* creation," was but a shadow of good things in the heavens, and the sacrifices therein offered were in connection with the blessings promised to Israel, that is, still "of *this* creation";—of lambs, of fruits, of wine, of oil, etc., and not spiritual sacrifices, as with us.

4. The royalty and the priesthood in Israel, pertained of right to one family, and were thus privileges according to the flesh. Every son of Aaron was priest on attaining a certain age, whatsoever his private character might be (Ex. xxviii. 1; Lev. viii.; Numb. xviii. 1, 7—19). The Levites alone could serve in the temple and instruct the people (Deut. xxxiii. 10; 2 Chron. xxx. 22; xxxv. 3).

We, on the contrary, have but one only High Priest in the heavenly places, even Jesus, as the epistle to the Hebrews shews us. All the members of the church are kings and priests, through the Spirit who is in them (1 Peter ii. 5, 9). As to ministry, it is the privilege of no family; is connected with no position according to the flesh; but depends entirely upon the gifts which the Spirit distributes to every man severally as He will (Rom. xii. 3 — 8; 1 Cor. xii. 6 — 11; 1 Peter iv. 10 — 11).

5thly. In Israel, God would only be served in one place, there where He had placed His name (Deut. xii. 11; xvi. 5, 6).

In the church, no places are holy upon earth. There where two or three are gathered together in the name of the Lord, there is He in the midst of them (Mat. xviii. 20). There is another consequence of the dwelling of the Spirit in believers. The Spirit being in them, they are themselves the temple of God.

6thly. The covenant which was formerly made with Israel, at least, so far as they are considered as a people, was a covenant according to law and upon the condition of obedience (Lev. xviii. 5; Exod. xix. 5, 6; Deut. xxvii. 12 — 26; xxviii.)

The covenant, in connection with which, in some sense, the church stands, or we, who are of the church, stand, is a covenant of unconditional and free grace (John iii. 16, 17, 36; Eph. ii. 4 — 6, etc.)<sup>b</sup>

<sup>b</sup> The passages referred to here do not prove *the church* to be UNDER COVENANT, as some say; nor do they refer to covenant at all. They do refer to *free unconditional grace* (without law) which is the principle of the *second* covenant, under which alone Israel will get blessing (see Heb. viii. 8 — 13; and x. 16 — 18),

7thly. The blessings of the covenant formed with Israel were all earthly blessings in the land (Lev. xxvi. 3 — 12; Deut. vii. 12 — 15; viii. 7 — 18; xi. 8 — 15, 21; xxviii. 1 — 14).

The church is blessed, according to divine counsel and purpose, with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. (Eph. i. 3; Col. iii. 1 — 4; Phil. iii. 18 — 21). Upon earth she must needs expect afflictions and the cross (Mat. xvi. 24 — 26; Luke xiv. 26, 27; John xii. 25, 26; xv. 18 — 21; xvi. 1 — 4; 2 Tim. iii. 11 — 13).

8thly. Israel was called of God to make war with its

the principle, too, of our blessing. The author, perhaps, felt a difficulty, in common with many minds, on which a remark or two may well be made here; viz., on the exact place assigned by Paul to the second covenant, in connection with the ministry committed to him. The covenants with Israel display God in *government*. The church is a heavenly counsel — not for the earth — the rich counsel of God.

The blood of the covenant once shed upon the cross, and the Lord risen — all was ready, on God's part, for the administration and establishment of the second covenant in pure, full grace. The Jew, with whom it was to be formed, would have nothing to say to God in grace. The spiritual grace which had prepared a way for the forgiveness of sins, and thus for the writing of the law upon their hearts (so that they might have all earthly blessings in the land) was there. The blood had been shed, the Lord was risen: when they still turned away, these blessings of grace and forgiveness stood fast for all that believed; yet an ascended heavenly Christ communicated rather spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, and this to *whosoever* should call upon the name of the Lord, than earthly blessings in the land. This regards us as individually saved by grace, and gives a most simple explanation to Paul's statements in 2 Cor. iii. and iv.; and Heb. viii. and x., about the second covenant — without at all putting us, as individuals, or the church (which stands on counsel and purpose from the foundation of the world), under it.

Perhaps confusion has arisen, also, in some minds from a careless use of the term "church," and from want of attention as to the difference in the epistles, some of which present the church in its corporate character, and us, of course, in it, as Eph., and others speak of believers in their individual character, as Gal., Heb., Peter. It is of all importance, on the one hand, not to put the church under the second covenant, which Paul never does, and on the other, to give the full place, which he does, to the second covenant, in connection with the ministry committed to him.— ED.

enemies, and to exterminate them (Num. x. 9; Deut. vii. 12, 16 — 26).

But the weapons of our warfare are not carnal; no other sword should we know how to wield save that of the Spirit. And even if enemies of God are in question, the Christian must endure, as did once his Saviour (2 Cor. x. 4, 5; Eph. vi. 10 — 17; Mat. xiii. 30; Luke ix. 54, 55).

Two periods, the characteristic traits of which are so different, can they be but one and the same period? In other words, can the church possibly be but the continuation of Israel?

It will be said, perhaps, "The church, as it now exists, is an improved development of the church in the times of Israel, and the church of the last days (in which Israel, as a whole, shall be saved, and the earth shall be covered with the knowledge of the Lord) will still be an improved development of the church as it now is." But is it possible to use the term *improved development* as applicable to the substitution of one set of principles in the place of others which are often diametrically their opposite? And again, what becomes of the notion of one sole church, in progressive development throughout all periods of time, from the beginning, if the principal characteristics of the past economy re-appear in the economy which is to come? Now, this is precisely what the word of God teaches, with the exception of one or two points, in which there is a difference, even a contrast, between Israel of old and Israel in the last days. Thus:—

To begin with the differences: the covenant formed of old with Israel, at Sinai, was according to law, as we have already seen — the blessings being dependent upon obedience. The covenant which God will make with Israel in the last days will, on the contrary, be a covenant of grace — of unconditional and free grace. In this respect, it is *new*, by reference to the covenant of Sinai. And herein is found the reason of the continuance of the blessings of this covenant, so long as the heavens and the earth shall endure. Whereas, the blessings of the covenant of the law soon came to an end (Jer. xxxi. 31 — 37; xxxiii. 11 — 26; Ezek. xxxvii. 25 — 28).

Moreover, the covenant, according to unconditional

grace, is based upon the covenant already made with Abraham, four hundred and thirty years before the law; and this is the covenant to which the holy men of Israel,<sup>c</sup> when speaking of the final blessing, always make reference, in the presence of God, and not to the covenant of Sinai (Ps. cv. 8, etc.; Mic. vii. 18 — 20, see the whole chapter; Luke i. 72, 73). This may explain why the Lord Jesus is called "*Mediator of the new covenant*" (Heb. ix. 15), that is to Israel hereafter; and His blood "the blood of the new covenant" (Mat. xxvi. 28); and the cup of the supper, "the new covenant in the blood of the Lord" (Luke xxii. 20). This may also serve to explain the use of Jer. xxxi. 31 — 37, in Heb. viii. 8 — 12; x. 16, 17).<sup>d</sup>

Israel was the only people upon earth,<sup>e</sup> with whom

<sup>c</sup> It is interesting to trace, in the prophets, how, when they go back only to Moses, the case seems nearly hopeless to them (Ezra. ix.; Dan. ix. 9, 11, 13), and how, when they rise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and God's promises to them, there is always hope in the distance for Israel (Lev. xxvi. 42; Deut. xxx. 20). — ED.

<sup>d</sup> Here Paul is arguing with converted Hebrews, to guard them from, in any way, relapsing to the law and its ordinances, which had passed and made way for the free grace and gift which had been promised and predicted (even while the first covenant stood) as connected with the second covenant. Note, here, that forgiveness of sins, given to write the law upon the heart of the Jew, is not exactly the revelation of Christ, made to communicate the divine nature to us, as we have it. Both are of grace; but not identical. Christ seen risen from the dead, returned from heaven to earth, as Messiah; sin forgiven; *the law written* on the heart; God dwelling among them on earth, and every blessing theirs — according to the promise and covenant made to Abraham — is the Jewish portion. Ours is — Christ seen in heavenly glory, as Son of God; the divine nature communicated; God dwelling in and among us; and every spiritual blessing in heaven ours, according to the Father's counsel from before the foundation of the world. The *divine* nature communicated to us, involves and implies *much more* than the law written on the heart of a Jew. — ED.

<sup>e</sup> The covenant made in Noah's day, with the rainbow as its sign, was with all the creation of the present heavens and present earth, and not with a people. "A covenant" (in Hebrew) means "a creation or disposition in favour of some one"; God declares that something is to be to some one, and that is a covenant. Conditions to be kept on both sides is not the idea. In the covenant of salt there were none (Num. xviii. 19). — ED.

God entered into covenant. "Whose are the covenants" (Rom. ix. 4), [to them alone pertain the two covenants], and whose God He proclaimed Himself to be. So will it NOT be in *the age to come*; on the contrary, "Many nations . . . . people" (Zech. ii. 11). "Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar: for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people" (see Isa. lvi. 3, 6, 7). But then — and this brings us back to the connection between Israel of old and Israel in the last days —

1. To the daughter of Zion only, the Lord has said—

"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee. And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again" (Zech. ii. 10—12).

That is, among the nations, then all blessed, Israel will take its place of pre-eminence. Who can entertain a doubt of this, after reading, for instance, Is. xiv. 1, 2; xlix. 21—23; liv. 3; lx. 3—16, etc.

2. As formerly the saints in Israel were called to exterminate their enemies, so will it be yet again. Even at the time spoken of in the Psalms —

"Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand" (Ps. cxlix. 5, 6; see also Micah iv. 13; v. 8, 9; vii. 10).

The wicked shall "be trodden down as the mire of the streets."

3. As in the last dispensation, God chose but one place upon earth where to reveal His name and receive the worship of His saints; so will He do yet again, and the place will be the same Jerusalem, "the city of the great king," concerning which He has said —

"Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer *that is made* in this place. For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually" (2 Chron. vii. 15, 16; see also Is. ii. 2, 3; Jer. iii. 17; Mic. iv. 1, 2; Eze. xx. 40, 41; xliii. 7; Zech. viii. 1—3, 20—23; xiv. 16—21).

4. The worship of God will again assume, at least in several respects, the same characteristics of being earthly and for man as a creature upon earth, which it formerly had in Israel. Sacrifices and burnt offerings, and cakes and perfumes will again be offered, and again will the feast of tabernacles be kept (see the last citations and Jer. xxxiii. 17, 18).

5. As before the calling of the Church, the blessings wherewith God rewarded His saints were earthly blessings, so will it be again in the last times. (Is. lx; lxi. 4, 5, 6; lxxv. 11—25; Jer. xxxi. 12—14, 23—28; Eze. xxxvi. 24—30; Hos. ii. 18—22; Amos ix. 13—15).

I would now, again, ask, Is it possible to turn these characteristics of the saints of the last times into those of the saints of the Church, without turning upside down instruction, the most positive, which the word gives concerning the Church, and the calling of those who are members of it?

Can Christians ever lay hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, to go and seek God at Jerusalem, and there keep the feast of tabernacles,—Christians who have learned of their Master that in the Church, the Father is worshipped neither upon the mountain of Samaria, nor in Jerusalem, as such; but that God seeks those that can worship Him in spirit and in truth (see John iv. 21—24).

Can Christians ever take the sword to avenge themselves on their enemies,—Christians to whom it is said—

“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Mat. v. 44).

Christians—can they ever, without inconsistency, expect to have their blessings upon the earth,—they to whom it is said—

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col. iii. 1—4).

And are they, who, in the Church, have been taught

that there is “neither Jew nor Greek” (Col. iii. 11), once again to become men servants and maid servants to Israel — the labourers, vine-dressers, and rebuilders of the walls in ruins, etc.

Nor is this all. The Lord has said —

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father” (Rev. ii. 26, 27).

And we see the fulfilment of this promise (Rev. xx.) in that the members of the Church, after having formed the retinue of the Lord when He comes to destroy the wicked one, live and reign with Him a thousand years, over those nations which Satan has not seduced. These nations, sheltered from the seductions of Satan, comprise, evidently, the saints of those blessed times when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord. But if these saints are only a continuation of the Church — if they are, moreover, the Church itself, as some indeed say — what would be the result? Why, that a part of the Church would reign in heaven over another part of the Church upon earth. Can we admit this? Is this the unity of the body, as taught us by the apostle, when he says —

“*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling*” (Eph. iv. 4).

A single truth, once admitted, removes all these impossible incongruities, and scatters all these contradictions. The Church is the body<sup>f</sup> of Christ, gathered by

<sup>f</sup> Man was placed in Eden, upon his own responsibility, “to stand in obedience and to continue in blessing,” or, “to disobey and to die.” He disobeyed and fell. When fallen, *the law* was given to the Jew — it recognised man’s responsibility, and proposed to him “to obey God and live.” This was the principle of the first covenant. But man had no power. Responsibility in a ruined creature may be recognised, not only thus, in a demand enforced by a curse, but by a free *pardon* and blessing, which is the principle of the second covenant. The first covenant was set up, established, at Sinai — and never had any preaching or publication connected with it — it was in truth given to an already failed people. The second covenant was promised in

His Spirit, since the day of Pentecost, and which, when once completed, will be united to its Head in heaven, before ~~that~~ He will come to judge the world, and therein establish His kingdom. His Church once removed from the world, God resumes His long interrupted relationships with Israel, and, after having judged it, He, in grace, makes good all the promises He had given to Abraham and to the fathers. And that is the reason why, in the last days, we again find Israel in a position and with traits, in many respects, similar to those which it formerly had. Only formerly, when under a covenant of law, it could not but soon lose the blessings which had been set before it; in the last days, under the covenant of grace made with Abraham, it cannot any more lose the blessings of which it will have become the subject.

But we will return to this again. For the present, let us continue our study of the nature of the Church.

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Old Testament times; and, when all the essentials of it were ready, it was proffered to Israel, as by the apostles at Pentecost and Stephen afterwards. But they would not, as a people, bow to the God of grace, and it (the second covenant) was not established with Israel. Is it established with us? No. Paul had to speak about it, as something *yet to come*, to testify of it as yet a future thing. His very ministry about it proved it was not set up or established, for when set up and established, it will be acted upon by God in power and not be predicted as it was by Paul. The creature's ruin does not neutralize the Creator's claim; and thus, though the Gentiles were not under *the law*, sense of responsibility, according to man's original position, and according, alas! also to our sense of not honouring God, works upon our consciences, apart from *the law* of Moses. It is well to remember this, and that our responsibility, and our need, and our want of power, which have no answer in ourselves, have a perfect answer in the grace of God through Jesus Christ. We get, of free grace, individual blessing; and the fellowship of the mystery of the earth-rejected Christ, heaven-honoured in resurrection and ascension glory. The thoughts which naturally connect themselves with a Messiah upon earth, are those of a people blessed spiritually and physically on the earth as His kingdom. But the earth-rejected, heaven-honoured Christ, what has he? What thoughts connect themselves with Him? He is Head of the body—and the members of that body are looked at in all the favour and blessing which rests on the Head—earth-rejected, they are heaven-honoured.—Ed.

§ 2nd. *The Church, a mystery — hidden from all ages — is not found in the Old Testament, save in shadows and figures.*

The church is “the mystery of Christ.” “Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.” . . . “And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Eph. iii. 4, 5, 6, 9). “*Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. i. 26, 27).

It may be asked — Is not the object of this mystery simply the call of the Gentiles? No; the simple fact of the Gentiles being called to the knowledge of God upon earth, is not a mystery concealed in the Old Testament; for at every turn one finds declarations similar to this. “And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth” (Is. xlix. 6). “All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom *is* the Lord’s: and he *is* the governor among the nations” (Ps. xxii. 27, 28).<sup>g</sup>

A fact thus clearly revealed is not a hidden mystery. But the call of certain elect ones from among the

<sup>g</sup> Again, “In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. xii. 3). “A father of many nations have I made thee” (Gen. xvii. 5). “Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people” (Deut. xxxii. 43). — ED.

Gentiles, to be, together with some from among the Jews, “fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise *in* Christ in heaven, by the gospel” (Eph. iii. 6): — Of this it may well be said — “*Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. i. 26, 27, see also Col. iii. 10, 11). Such, of a truth, is the mystery, never known to saint or seer in the Old Testament. And, indeed, if we study attentively that which they have said of the call of the Gentiles, we shall see, among other things, that they always speak of whole nations, of nations as nations, with their princes and their kings; we shall see, too, that while fully recognizing God, and participating in the blessings He gives, these nations, nevertheless, have a place distinct from Israel; it is, too, as the result of terrible judgments poured out upon them by the Lord, that these nations are converted; none of which things could be said of us.<sup>h</sup> We have also already remarked that the worship of these nations, when converted, differs from the worship of believers now. It was not then properly and specially of the call of the Gentiles in the church that the prophets spake, for that was to them a hidden mystery.

Why, then, do the apostles, in their teaching, use passages from the Old Testament prophets which speak of the call of the Gentiles? It may be because the special call of certain Gentiles to form, together with certain Jews, one and the same body, the body of Christ animated by His Spirit, is a particular fact included in the general fact of the call of the nations; just as the

<sup>h</sup> God — dealing with man according to what man is — lets and makes man seek ere he find. “All day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.” “I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation will I anger you.” God — dealing with man according to, and in order to shew, what He (God) is — acts otherwise, “I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me” (See Rom. x. 16 — 21). — ED.

first-fruits were included in the harvest (Deut. 26). For if there are earthly first-fruits (Rev. xiv. 1 — 4), we are the heavenly first-fruits, “even we who first trusted in Christ (Eph. i. 12; James i. 18).

We are, in some sort, like that handful of corn, that basket of fruit, which the pious Israelite went to gather in his field to offer to God in the temple. Israel and the nations, converted in the latter days, are the harvest. That which was said of the harvest might be said, also, in many respects, of the first-fruits. Both the one and the other grew in the same soil, shared the same rain and the same sun; but in other respects there was a great difference; thus the first-fruits were gathered before the harvest, and belonged to God; the harvest, on the contrary, belonged to the people. Just so that which is said of Israel and of the Gentiles, converted in the latter days, can also be said, in some respects, of the saints now. They are the same sort of sinners, saved by the same name, for “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts iv. 12). They are cleansed by the same blood, sanctified by the same word (Zech. xii. 10 — 14, and xiii. 1; 1 John i. 7; Eph. v. 26).

Lastly, we are saved now, as Israel and the nations will be saved hereafter, by virtue of the purest, freest grace, and a work wrought by God, according to which — God will not remember sin but pardon iniquity; and this *not* by virtue of our works, nor as having ourselves found strength to fulfil our responsibilities according to the covenant of Sinai, which never any one did — but all of divine free grace. There are these correspondences, but there are, also, as we have already seen, points of difference; for instance, the church will be taken away before the conversion of Israel and of the nations; the church is blessed with spiritual and heavenly blessings — Israel and the nations with earthly blessings.

In each of these respects, one could not say of us that which is said of Israel and the nations. Moreover, let any one read, in the very writings of the prophets, the passages cited by the apostles, in connection with what precedes and what follows, and he will ordi-

narily find details which absolutely *cannot* be applied to us; the passages have only one side on which they are applicable; by this side it is that the apostles look at them, it is on account of it that they cite them.

For instance, in Rom. xv., Paul applies to us passages relative to the call of the nations, because the work, in his day, was, in a sense, a pledge and a commencement of that calling. The calling might be seen in it, just as in the first-fruits brought to the temple, the inhabitant of Jerusalem saw the pledge of the year's ingathering (See Lev. xxiii.)

When the apostle, in writing to the Hebrews (chap. viii.), cites Jer. xxxi. 31—34, his object is to show that the covenant of works of Sinai, being insufficient to make anything perfect, was certainly to be replaced by another covenant, that of unconditional grace. Now, the covenant<sup>i</sup> in the age to come with Israel being such, the apostle, in writing to the Hebrews, could avail himself, under his then circumstances, of the words of the prophet.

When the apostle repeats his quotation (Heb. x) it is in order to show that, an absolute pardon having been announced and promised, it was necessary that a great and perfect sacrifice,—such as that of Jesus,—should once for all have cleared the way for pardon. Now, as we have already seen, that is equally true of the Church's relationship with God, and also of the covenant with Israel in the last days. Yet it needs but to peruse the very words of Jeremiah, with the contexts, in order to see that they do not relate properly and directly to the Church. Thus, God said, “I will *make* a new covenant *with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah*” (ver. 31). Now, we are neither of Israel nor of Judah. “Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to

<sup>i</sup> Any one who can, by faith, place himself in millennial glory, according to the scriptural description of it, and grasp the whole in one view will see, in the relationships between Christ and the Church, and between Christ and the earth, that which will help him. Moses' wife, the wife of the mediator of the old covenant, had a place peculiar to herself. So had Pharaoh's daughter, the wife of Solomon.—ED.

*and the Age which is to come.*

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bring them out of the land of Egypt" (ver. 32). God never brought *our* fathers out of Egypt, nor made a covenant with them,—for we are sinners from among the Gentiles, concerning whom, on the contrary, it is said—"Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. ii. 11, 12). Again, in that covenant, God promises that Jerusalem shall be rebuilt (Jer. xxxi. 38) "from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate towards the east, shall be holy unto the Lord; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever" (vers. 39, 40). What is the application of all this to the Church or to ourselves?

Let us now, in following up our subject, take as specimens some of those passages in the prophets where there would be most reason to expect to find the Church spoken of,—and let us see if she is really to be found there, or if the passages themselves confirm what Paul says, that the Church is a mystery not revealed in other ages to the children of men.

The promise of God to Abraham, that all the families of the earth should be blessed in his seed (Gen. xii. 3, xxii. 18, xxviii. 14), is, in a certain sense, quoted in connection with Christians in Gal. iii. 8, etc. But there is a restriction in the application. The application is not, in a sense, positive and absolute—as if the blessing of believers in Christ was exactly that which was promised—but the quotation applies in the extent in which believers in Christ form the first fruits of the conversion of the world. In the Church, it is one family out of a hundred, or out of a thousand, which has been blessed in the seed of Abraham, and not *all the*

*families of the earth*: nor will they be so any more than they are now, seeing that, on the contrary, man goes on in his wickedness, growing worse and worse, seducing and being seduced, until the apostasy comes, and the man of sin also, whom the Lord will destroy at His coming (2 Tim. iii. 13, 2 Thes. ii. 3—8). But, when God says *all the families of the earth*, He means ALL the families, and not a small number from among them. This promise, then, has not its perfect accomplishment in the Church, but it will have it after the rapture of the Church, when the wicked one having been destroyed, “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Is. xi. 4—9).

And when the Lord said that Abraham saw his day and was glad (John viii. 56) it was not of the Lord’s first coming in humiliation that he spake. For how could the Father of the Faithful have been glad to see his Lord rejected and crucified by his own posterity in their unbelief; and to see that posterity, just chastisement of their unbelief, rejected of God and dispersed over the whole earth; their land under a curse and desolate? Yet such is the destiny of Israel during the Church’s sojourn here below. But the day of Christ, which Abraham and all the patriarchs and the prophets saw from afar and hailed with joy, is that which the Word of God invariably calls by that name (2 Cor. i. 14, 2 Thes. ii. 1), and that is the time of His glorious reign. In that day, not only shall all the nations of the earth be blessed in the seed of Abraham (Zech. viii. 13, 20—23, Ps. lxxii. 17), but that seed itself shall be multiplied as the stars of heaven and as the sand of the sea shore (Is. xxvii. 6; Jer. xxxi. 27; xxxiii. 22; Eze. xxxvi. 9—11, 37, 38). It shall possess the gate of its enemies (Gen. xxii. 17). The last chapter of Micah from ver. 8 gives a splendid picture of that which the Holy Spirit Himself declares to be the realisation of the truthfulness of God to Jacob, and of His free gifts promised to Abraham and to the fathers of olden time.

When Jacob spake prophetically upon his death-bed, “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and

unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. xlix. 10). "the gathering" of which he speaks is not of the Church, but of the nations against Jerusalem in the last days of the age, in the thought and with the intention of destroying it, but, in truth, themselves there to be judged of the Lord ere they are blessed;—'tis one of the grand scenes constantly in view in prophecy (see Is. lxvi. 18, 19; Joel iii. 2, 11; Zeph. iii. 8, 9; Zech. xiv. 2; Mic. iv. 11—13; Mat. xxv. 31, 32, etc.; Rev. xix. 17—21).

It is, indeed, to this gathering and to this judgment of the nations that Mat. xxv. 31 refers;— where it is a mistake to introduce the Church, as if the Church already justified, risen and seated in heavenly places, had to appear in judgment with the wicked, to hear the sentence pronounced of its condemnation or of its acquittal, whereas it is said, that it shall never come into judgment. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24). Neither is this gathering that of the last judgment as described in Rev. xx. 11, 12. (Compare especially Mat. xxv. 31, 32, with Joel iii. 12 and Jer. iii. 17).

Then, when the nations shall have been gathered against Jerusalem, Judah shall devour as a lion on the right hand and on the left (Mic. v. 8, Zech. xii. 1—8). Then, also, a little later, will be realised the pictures of temporal prosperity found in Gen. xlix. 11, 12; Joel iii. 16—18; Amos ix. 13. And these were the hopes of the patriarchs, even the glorious day of the coming of their Lord to redeem his people, the children of Jacob and the posterity of Israel.

Analogous remarks might be made upon the prophecies of Balaam, Num. xxiii. 7—10, 17—24; xxiv. 5—9, 17—19: on the songs of Moses, Deut. xxxii: of Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. 1—11: of David, 2 Sam. xxii. and xxiii: and in short upon the greater part of the songs of the Old Testament, to which we may add those of Mary and Zacharias in the New Testament (Luke i. 46—55;

68—79). These songs, which were given as suited to the particular circumstances of those who pronounced them, and which apply in measure to those circumstances, ordinarily stretch onward to the second coming of the Lord and to the establishment of His glorious reign upon earth, without stopping at the Lord Jesus as heavenly Head of His body the Church.

The second Psalm gives us a striking instance of this absence of the Church in the revelations of the Old Testament. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" (ver. 1).

Of a truth, as said Peter, "Who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together. For to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts iv. 25—28). These words have then already had, at least, a first accomplishment in the rejection of the Lord. According to this, we might have expected to find that this Psalm spoke to us of the Church and its destinies; such would have been according to the natural order of events: but is it so?

Assuredly not. In the administration of the Church, Jesus is not King in Sion: so far from it, this is the time in which Sion is without a king, widowed and desolate. In the Church, God does not speak to the nations in wrath, and His Son does not break them in pieces with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter. On the contrary, Israel, having rejected its king, and being itself, on this account, set aside, God postpones His wrath, which, if it took its course according to this prophecy, would bring in the immediate judgment of the earth. He introduces a time of patience and of grace, during which He invites all men, without any distinction, to repentance, and faith unto salvation. The Son, so far as he is concerned, casts out none that come unto Him. 'Tis the time of the forming of the Church, passed over in the

most perfect silence in the Psalm; and it is when these Christianized nations,—themselves trampling under foot the long-suffering of God,—will again be in league, under the direction of the Antichrist against the Lord; —'tis then, I say, that the prophecy of this second Psalm will again resume its testimony, and will have its perfect fulfilment. God will then speak in His wrath; will set His King upon Sion, and will give him all the kingdoms of the world as an inheritance (Rev. xi. 15; xix. 11, etc.; ii. 26, 27).

The Psalm cx. is open to similar remarks. Eighteen hundred years have rolled on since the first word of this Psalm found its accomplishment in the ascension of the Lord Jesus, and His sitting down at the right hand of God. The rest waits still for its accomplishment. Without question Jesus is, from the moment named, the Great High Priest; but the blood of the victim was offered behind the veil, within the holy place; there He is invisible, and He is not come forth to bless the people. Recognised by God as the true Melchisedec, Priest and King, originator of righteousness and peace for the earth, He has been, and *is*; openly manifested as such He is *not*. Ere that he must first fulfil these words: “He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill *the places* with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries” (ver. 6); as it is said, “I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; *and that* with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy” (Deut. xxxii. 42). He must, in short, destroy those who destroy the earth, which is by no means that which He does under the administration of the Church, in which He invites of sinners the very chiefest to come to Him that they may have life. Thus the prophet passes from the ascension of the Saviour, directly to His return in glory to establish His kingdom upon earth, and says nothing about the Church which fills up the interval between these two events.

The eighth Psalm has also had the beginning of a fulfilment, when the multitudes who followed Jesus and the children of Jerusalem, cried: “Hosanna to the Son of

David" (Matt. xxi. 8—16). Events were then in progress toward the fulfilment, but the rulers having suppressed this homage, having even stirred up the people to demand the death of Him who was among them as King, meek and lowly; the kingdom was postponed for a time yet to come.

"We see not yet all things put under Him," says the apostle to the Hebrews (ii. 8). That will not be fulfilled until the Lord Jesus, made manifest from heaven, will have renewed the world at His coming in glory; it is "the world to come," or the inhabitable earth to come (Heb. ii. 5), described by the Psalmist, in which also all creation, delivered from the bondage of corruption, will praise the Lord (Rom. viii. 20; Ps. cxlviii). But as to the Church which came in between the ascension of the Saviour and the establishment of the world to come, the Psalmist says not a word.

Isaiah xi. The first two verses evidently describe the Saviour in His first coming. Then, onward to the fifth verse, He is represented as the just and faithful Judge, which is His character at the time of His second coming (Rev. xix. 11). "He shall reprove with equity for the meek of the earth" (Is. xi. 3). Such is not His conduct in the Church, to which He promises persecutions and afflictions, with no other defence than that of faith, and the patient hope of His coming: but, once returned, "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thes. ii. 8). Then, because He will have avenged His "elect which cry unto Him day and night" (Luke xviii. 7), it may be said, "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he *was* not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found" (Ps. xxxvii. 35, 36). Then, in short, the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea, and the material creation will be renewed. Here then, again, it is the first coming of the Lord, knit up with the second coming to judge and establish His reign; the Church which fills up the interval between these two comings not being noticed.

Let us examine Dan. ix. 24—27, without stopping at the beginning of the prophecy, on which we all are happily agreed:—

“Seventy weeks are determined upon Thy people and upon Thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the over-spreading of abominations, he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

After sixty and nine weeks of years, Messiah (or the Prince) shall be cut off, but not for Himself [or, and He shall have nothing]. Compare this with, “Then I said, 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. And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb *to be* His servant, to bring Jacob again to Him, though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength” (Is. xlix. 4, 5). That He has been cut off, we know. Well, then we read Dan. ix. 26: “And the people of the prince that shall come [the people of the fourth monarchy, out of which the prince or leader (that is Antichrist) is to come] shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.” That also has had its accomplishment in the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. Now, is it possible to place the seventieth week immediately after the sixtieth? The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, mentioned after the sixty-ninth week, although it came about forty years after the death of the Saviour, has already put an interval between these two weeks. Then, if one could, in

any sense, say that during the three years and a half which followed the death of Christ, the covenant of grace was confirmed with many, what is the sacrifice and what the oblation which then ceased? If it be said, 'the Jewish sacrifices'; in the thoughts of God they ceased at the death of the Saviour, which rendered them useless, as was signified by the rending the veil of the temple in twain; in point of *fact*, they ceased with the destruction of the temple, which rendered them impossible; but in neither case was it three and a half years after the death of the Saviour. "By the overspreading of abominations He shall make it desolate" [rendered in the margin, "Upon the battlements shall be the idols of the desolator"], is generally understood an idol set in the temple. But that could not be said of the army of Titus, for then the temple was burnt contrary to his will, and before it could be defiled by any idol; and then, again, that did not take place in the seventieth week. In short, what is said of this seventieth week remains inexplicable if it is made to follow immediately after the sixty-ninth. But if between the two is placed the whole time of the Church, as we have seen must be done in several other passages, then many of the difficulties disappear. After the sixty-ninth week the Christ was rejected, and that time which should have been blessing to Israel was, on the contrary, the time of its rejection. Thence onward, also, Israel not being any more recognised as the people of God upon earth, *time CEASES TO BE COUNTED* as to it,—“And the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined” (ver. 26): this is the destruction of Jerusalem, the desolations which followed, and will not end but with the war, the controversy which the Lord will have with His people. These are the “many days” during which they are “without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and *without* teraphim” (Hos. iii. 4). This is precisely the time of the Church here below. But when once the Church is gathered into the heavens, God enters again into relationship with the people of the earth, first to judge, and then to bless

them. *Time*, then, AGAIN BEGINS TO BE RECKONED for the *earthly* people. It is the seventieth week, or the time of Antichrist; for, inasmuch as they did not receive Jesus, who came in the name of His Father, there shall come another in his own name, and him they will receive. During the first half of that week (i.e. during three and a half years), he enters into covenant with many in Israel, whom he will gain by flattery. But in the second half, laying aside the mask, and wishing to be adored as God, he will make the daily sacrifice (the re-establishment of which he had sanctioned) to cease; and in the very temple where God ought to be served, he places the image of the beast, abomination which is the cause of desolation, since all those that refuse to worship it are put to death, until "that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" [or, rather "upon the desolator," as in margin]. That is, Antichrist shall fall smitten of the Lord Himself. Then are to be accomplished on "the people" and "the holy city" of Daniel, all the blessings spoken of in ver. 24. If we accept the translation proposed by some, "in order that criminality may be consummated, and the measure of iniquity filled up" (for to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sin), it changes not the course of thought, because the measure of iniquity filled up brings in the judgment upon the wicked oppressor, and consequently the deliverance of the oppressed. This is the end of the indignation of the Lord upon Israel. The two halves of that last week are, then, the epochs which have so prominent a place in the prophecy, the time, times, and the dividing of time, the 1260 days and the 42 months (Dan. vii.25; xii.7; Rev. xi.3; xii.6, 14; xiii.5).<sup>2</sup>

As to Joel ii. 28, 32, quoted in Acts ii. 16 — 21, the perusal of the words suffices to shew that they had not at Pentecost their entire accomplishment. If there was, then, an outpouring of the spirit, prophecy, and so a partial accomplishment, so that Peter could say, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel," there were neither wonders in the heaven above nor signs in the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke, the sun turned into darkness, and the moon into blood;

and certainly there was not that great and terrible day of the Lord. What conclusion must we draw then? but that this prophecy, in strictness, referring to the setting up of the kingdom of Messiah, had, in the times of Peter, but a beginning of fulfilment, because the kingdom, then offered to Israel and soon rejected by it, made way for the church; and not until the return of the Lord will this prophecy resume its course of accomplishment, and have, as the kingdom itself, its perfect fulfilment. Then, in very deed, will there be signs in the heaven and upon the earth — the great and terrible day of the Lord, and an outpouring of the Spirit, which will be for Israel as the rain of the latter-day, as Pentecost was the former rain (Is. xiii. 6 — 13; xxviii. 6; Hos. vi. 3; Zech. xii. 10, etc.) And then will be found the fulfilment of Mat. xxiv. and Rev. vi.—xx.

In proof that, Israel restored in the latter days, and the church, are but one and the same, we often hear Amos. ix. 11, 12, cited in connection with Acts xv. 15 — 17. But in reading the end of that passage in the prophet, we see that, in such case, the church should be the conqueror of the nations, and of Edom in particular. We may remark, too, the words of James, “How God *at the first* did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name.” But, then, when referring to the prophet, instead of quoting (ver. 11) “*In that day* will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen,” etc., he says (Acts xv. 16) “*After this will I return* and will build again the tabernacle of David,” for “*in that day*” he substitutes, “after this will I return.” Evidently James, speaking by the Spirit, does not apply the words of Amos to the church, but to the re-establishment of Israel. Indeed, he says, “God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name.” Here we have the church plainly announced and defined; but it is James, and not the prophet, who thus announces it. Then, “after this” (after this economy of the church) “God will build again the tabernacle of David.” This is Israel’s restoration. “That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this,” says

Amos (ix. 12). "That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things," says James (Acts xv. 17); the latter, doubtless, not wishing to arrest the thoughts upon the warlike exploits of Israel in the last days, clearly revealed fact as it was; but rather upon the conversion of the nations by the instrumentality of Israel. The conquest and the conversion of the nations come last.

No; the church, the body of Christ, is not in the Old Testament; at least, she is not there, save as in Christ, in whom she is shut in and hidden, as Eve was hidden in Adam, before that God drew her forth thence. The church is to be seen there but in shadows and figures; now is the time for the taking of Eve out of the pierced side of Him to whom she is espoused, while He rests upon His Father's throne; that Bride that He shall present unto Himself a glorious church not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing — that she may reign with Him over the creation then already blessed of God. She is again shadowed forth in Enoch, who, by faith, walked here below with God, whom God took before that the deluge of His wrath fell upon a world overwhelmed in sin. She may be seen in Rebecca, whom a heavenly steward, sent by the Father, is come to affianced to the well-beloved Son, whom he cheers with rich presents, and guides across the desert towards the abode of her Lord, who comes forth to meet her. But the heavenly mystery contained in these touching pictures, remained concealed, even from those who formed the chief actors in the history. That which the prophets of Israel announce clearly and without mystery, is *the sufferings of Christ and the glories which should follow afterwards* (1 Peter i. 11). It is the kingdom which the Son of Man will establish at His coming in glory (Dan. ii. 44; vii. 13, 14, 27), in which, also, all the kingdoms of the earth shall be subjected to Him, and shall serve Him: *kingdom of God*, because then the Lord will be king in all the earth (Zech. xiv. 9); *kingdom of heaven*, because it is from heaven He comes who establishes it (Dan. vii. 13; Mat. xxvi. 64). Then, too, will He manifest His glory

in the highest of the heavens, in heavenly saints, as well as in those who are upon the earth. *Kingdom of Israel* (Acts i. 6), because, then, Israel will hold the first place upon the earth, its sons being princes over the whole earth (Mic. iv. 8, 9), and pre-eminently because He who will then reign, is He who has, in grace, manifested Himself to the world as Son of David, and who then still bears the name of King of Israel (Is. xxxiii. 20 — 22; Zeph. iii. 14, 15).

§ 3rd. *The first Mention of the Church in the New Testament, and its Formation by the Holy Spirit.*

If we now turn to the New Testament, we find therein that the *first* mention of the church is in the teaching of the Lord in connection with His rejection by Israel. Afterwards we find it — formed by the Holy Spirit upon the foundation of Jesus, slain but risen from the dead — taking the place of Israel and of its kingdom, postponed from that moment to a later period.

It is, indeed, the King of this kingdom, and not the Head of the church, that the angel announces to Mary, when he says — “And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 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: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke i. 31 — 33).

Never was the Lord, in the church, found sitting upon the throne of David; neither has He reigned over the house of Jacob, which, on the contrary, has been rejected and without a king. But such was the promise to Israel (2 Sam. vii. 12 — 16; Is. ix. 6, 7, etc.; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; xxxiii. 15 — 17, etc.)

That which John the Baptist preached was the kingdom (Mat. iii. 2); and all that followed in his preaching was in harmony with this beginning. He presents himself as the voice spoken of by Isaiah xl. 3, etc. “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His path straight,” and according

to the prophet himself, "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see *it* together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken *it*," etc. Is that the church period? To answer "Yes" would be to set John in direct opposition with Paul, who calls the church period the time of travail and groaning of the whole creation, and not only of the creation, but of us also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, and he gives no other end to these groanings than that of the redemption of our bodies; that is to say, our change to glory at the coming of the Lord (Rom. viii. 19 — 23). Ah! the time when every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; when the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; when the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, is in strong contrast with what we now see — in contrast with the time of creation's groaning — for it is the time of refreshing that is to come from the presence of the Lord — the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began (Acts iii. 19 — 21). Then will the day of the Lord of hosts be "upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up" (Is. ii. 14, etc.) Then will He fill the earth with the knowledge of Himself and of His glory (Is. xi. 9; Hab. ii. 14), just according to John Baptist's announcement. So, again, when He says, "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable" (Luke iii. 17). These words carry us forwards to the time of harvesting; for in the east the winnowing of the wheat and the purging of the floor come immediately after the harvest, and form part of it; in no case could they possibly precede it. Now, "the harvest is the end of the age" (Mat. xiii. 39; read from 37 — 43). It is then the judgment exercised by the Lord at the end of the present age, when He will destroy those that corrupt the earth, and will establish therein His kingdom; John announced not the church in this place. At the time he spake of, it will have finished its course here below, and will be with the Lord.

When, also, He cried, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29); this, in a certain sense, includes the church, because the church is included in the world; but it will not have its full accomplishment save in the world to come; when the world, as a whole, will partake of the benefits of the sacrifice of Jesus. Now, He is the propitiation for our sins — for the sins of us who are members of the church. Then He will be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John ii. 2). This was doubtlessly given to John to see in prospect.

Thus John, like all the ancient prophets, looking upon the earthly people of the Lord, saw, through the Holy Ghost, the great and splendid things which the Lord would accomplish on the earth, when He should establish His kingdom; but the Church, in that which is distinctively peculiar to her, her calling, walk here below, her rapture, etc., was still for John a mystery hidden, Jesus alone, who came down from heaven, could reveal these things. Such, I doubt not, is the force of that word of John himself. "He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all" (John iii. 31). And here, also, it may be remarked, that not only did John *not* present himself as the Bridegroom or the Messiah; but that he also did not claim to be the bride or part of it; he calls himself *the Friend of the Bridegroom* (read John iii. 28—32).

John summoned Israel to repentance, in order to prepare the way for the glorious kingdom of the Lord which he proclaimed; but the rulers, in rejecting the baptism of John, "rejected the counsel of God" against themselves (Luke viii. 30). And, doubtless, it was a sore trial to John not to be able to understand that the kingdom which he had announced was interrupted by the rejection of Jesus, even as Elijah could not bear that his testimony should remain without effect as to the conversion of Ahab and Israel (1 Kings xix. 3—15; Luke vii. 19—28).

Jesus himself began His preaching, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mat. iv. 17).

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand” (Mark i. 15). And in truth the seventieth week of Daniel was there. The time of the kingdom and of all the blessings was come. In order that Israel might enter upon possession, it was only needful to obey the call of the Lord; “to repent and believe the gospel,” “the gospel of the kingdom of God” (ver. 14).

Let us follow the Lord in the synagogue of Nazareth on the sabbath day. He opens the book of the prophet Isaiah and reads, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke iv. 18, 19).

Well, if we now read Is. lxi., we shall see that it clearly proclaims the return of the favour of the Lord upon Israel, and all the blessings which pertain to the sabbatical year and the jubilee; the forgiveness of debts, the liberty of the captive, the rest and blessing of the earth (Ex. xxiii. 10, 11; Lev. xxv.; Deut. xv). It was then the true jubilee, that is to say, the kingdom with all its blessings which Jesus proposed to Israel in applying the words of Is. lxi. 1, 2. John Baptist and Jesus Himself had, in a sense, preached the day of atonement, in saying, Repent ye, etc. (Lev. xxv. 9, 10; xxiii.; xxvii.) It is, then, after the atonement of the jubilee, that is to say, after the humiliation of repentance, the kingdom with all the blessings which Jesus brings to it in announcing, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”

But why does the Lord stop, closing the book, before these words, “And the day of vengeance of our God.” Just because He brought not vengeance but the blessing. If Israel had received Him then, the promises made through the prophets might have been fulfilled; but we know what reception he met with under those very circumstances. Wrath quickly supplanting, in the inhabitants of Nazareth, the passing feeling of admiration, they sought to cast him down from the height on which their

city was built. Thus, as Israel, not knowing the day of its visitation, has rejected its king, who came to it meek, not breaking the bruised reed, nor quenching the smoking flax; it must see Him coming to it preceded by great and terrible signs—"men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth" (Luke xxi. 26, read the chapter). "For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled" (Luke xxi. 22; Is. xxxiv. 8; lxiii. 4). That will be "the great and the terrible day of the Lord" (Joel ii. 31; Mal. iv. 5); and then only will it be that the children of Israel having kept the day of atonement (Zech. xii. 10—xiii. 1), the true jubilee will come. "And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in" (Is. lviii. 12). "But ye shall be named the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves" (Is. lxi. 6).

In the meanwhile, it is the Church which, having taken the place of the kingdom rejected by Israel, enjoys spiritual blessings in heavenly places.

That which Jesus preached at Nazareth, He preached also from place to place. "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people" (Mat. ix. 35). When He chose the twelve, He gave them power over the unclean spirits to drive them out, and to heal all sorts of sickness and infirmities, power even to raise the dead,—then He bade them not to go unto the Gentiles, nor to enter into any city of the Samaritans, but to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and to say to them, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mat. x. 7). A similar commission is given to the seventy, and when they were not received in any city, going out into the streets they were to say, "Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you:

notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Luke x. 11).

But as Israel had rejected the forerunner of its King, so it rejected its King Himself and His apostles. "But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me" (Ps. lxxxii. 11). And Jesus had to say—

"But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of Publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children" (Mat. xi. 16—19).

And it is only after this, be it remarked, that Jesus begins to speak of the Church.

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mat. xvi. 13—18).

Peter had found grace before God to recognize Jesus, not only as the Son of David or the Messiah of Israel, but also as the Son of the living God, and having confessed Him as such, Jesus answers that confession by a new revelation, almost as if He had said: It is so true that I am the Son of the living God, that not only the gates of Hades (the unseen world, where are the spirits of men after death, Is. xxxviii. 11), shall not withstand me; not only after having descended thither, I shall come forth conqueror, but I shall cause my Church also to come forth thence; "For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (John v. 26); "For as the Father raiseth up

the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will" (John v. 21); "because I live, ye shall live also" (John xiv. 19).

Thus we have here, the first notice of the Church and of its participation in the life of its Head, slain, but raised again from the dead. It is very nearly the same truth as the Lord a little later recalls to mind for the consolation and encouragement of His beloved disciple. "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. i. 17, 18). And notice, the Lord does not say, "I *have built*," but "I *will build* my Church." Would the Lord have spoken thus if the Church had existed already from the commencement of the world? No: and more than that, at that hour, even the foundation of the Church was not laid, for that foundation is Jesus rejected, crucified, raised from the dead, and received up into glory. Also, "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (Mat. xvi. 21). Thus knitting up the truth of his rejection, death and resurrection inseparably with the Church.

And a little further on:—

"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Here, in declaring that "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (ver. 20), the Lord lays down a fundamental principle

of the church, which may help us to comprehend its nature; and on which we are happy to be able to lean, in the midst of the wreck of the present day.

True is it, that a little later, Israel seemed for a moment ready to receive its king. The multitude, learning that Jesus was come to the feast, went forth before Him, crying "Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" (Mat. xxi. 9). And the children cry in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David" (ver. 15). And when certain Greeks, among them that came up to worship at the feast, desire to see Him, a voice from heaven comes from on high and bears witness to Him (John xii. 20, 21, 28). All seems in progress towards His manifestation. But the leaders of the people again succeed in stifling the convictions and suppressing the movement, and thus they hinder the deliverance of Israel and the world. They even call the Lord in question, as to His authority. Then, too, the Lord openly proclaims their rejection. In the parable of the vineyard and husbandmen in Mat. xxi. 33 — 46, He makes them pronounce judgment on themselves. "They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out *his* vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons" (ver. 41). Then "Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them" (Mat xxi. 42 — 45).

Thus the stone is first upon the earth. Whosoever shall fall on it shall be broken. This evidently is the Lord Himself, according to the doctrine of His first coming, which was a scandal and a stumbling-block to Israel, and is so still to the world. As Peter speaks,

“Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts iv. 10 — 12). But afterwards the stone falls; it has then been lifted up on high, and on whomsoever it falls it grinds him to powder. This is the Lord, according to the doctrine of His coming back in glory to set up His kingdom by the destruction of His enemies; it is the stone “cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth” (Dan. ii. 34, 35).

For “in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure” (Dan. ii. 44, 45). The church is that which is built upon the stone during the time of its rejection; the church, “a spiritual house” built upon the living stone, “disallowed, indeed, of men, but chosen of God and precious” (1 Peter ii. 5, 4).

“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. . . . From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem,

and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (Mat. xvi. 18, 21). "To whom coming, *as unto* a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, *and* precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: which in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (1 Peter ii. 4 — 10).

The kingdom is that which will be built upon the stone, when come down from heaven and having destroyed its enemies. "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste" (Is. xxviii. 16). Psalm cxviii. is a song for that kingdom; how fitting too.

"I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone *which* the builders refused is become the head *stone* of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This *is* the day *which* the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord" (Psalm cxviii. 21 — 22).

Similar truth may be seen in Luke xix. 11 — 27, in the parable of the nobleman who went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return — instruction which the Lord gave, "because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear" (ver. 11).

After having pronounced the woe of the blind leaders of the blind, Jesus takes sorrowful leave of Jerusalem. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often

would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Mat. xxiii. 37 — 39).

But it is clear it was not a final farewell for ever, for "Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (ver. 39). As the Lord had said by the prophet, "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early" (Hos. v. 15). The time, then, will come wherein Israel will return again to its king and its God, and seeing Him again coming to it, will hail Him again with the cry, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Ps. cxviii. 26).

"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and *without* teraphim: afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days" (Hos. iii. 4, 5). The kingdom is postponed until then, and the church now holds its place, being, in one aspect of it, the kingdom in mystery.

We know what Israel did to its king; it delivered Him into the hands of the Gentiles to put Him to death, crying, "Crucify him, crucify him." When Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "we have no king but Cæsar." Instead of a diadem they gave Him a crown of thorns; instead of a sceptre, a reed; and instead of a throne, a cross; but on that cross the shame of his enemies was plainly set forth in Greek, in Latin, and in Hebrew, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews"; as if to proclaim to the wide world that if thence onward Israel was without a king, it was not the King who had failed His people, but the people who had rejected and crucified its King.

Israel had come, like its forefathers, in Numbers xiii., xiv., though in another sense, to the borders of the

land of promise. The kingdom of heaven was at hand, had been offered to it; but by its unbelief, it hindered, as its forefathers had, the fulfilment of the promise, and now, before it can be fulfilled, "the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and *without* teraphim" (Hos. iii. 4). "And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face" (Eze. xx. 35).

Nevertheless, Jesus, upon the cross, prayed for His murderers: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And, as if in answer to this prayer, the kingdom is again offered to them. For if the words of Peter mean anything they imply this.

"And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did *it*, as *did* also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, *that* every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, so many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first, God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts iii. 17 — 26).<sup>c</sup>

But if some believed, the mass, alas! hardened themselves against the voice of the apostle, as they had done against the voice of his Master.

Yet once more Stephen makes an appeal to Israel as

<sup>c</sup> "When the times of refreshing shall come" (ver. 19) should be, as it is in the Greek, "that the times of refreshing may come."—Ed.

to the people of God, and charges them not to follow the example — of the patriarchs, who, moved with envy, sold Joseph, whom God had raised up to be a saviour of his own family, and of the world — or of the Israelite in Egypt, who said to Moses, “Who *made* thee a prince or a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday” (Acts vii. 27, 28). “This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send *to be* a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush” (ver. 35). But more hardened even than their fathers, the Jews stoned Stephen and sent him, in a sense, after the Lord, as the servant in the parable, “We will not have this man to reign over us” (Luke xix. 14). From that time onward, the body which the Holy Spirit had formed of the children of Abraham, gathers into itself numbers from among the Samaritans and the Gentiles, as may be seen in the eighth and tenth chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. And, then, that which takes the place here below, which the kingdom held, assumed the characteristics of the *new man*: where there was neither Jew nor Greek. At the same time, from the midst of the murderers of Stephen, God picks out him who was to be the minister of the church, the minister of the mystery hid from ages and from generations. “Whereof I Paul am made a minister (Col. i. 24, 29). And it seems as if, in his very call, he had to learn to know the church as the body here below of Jesus slain but raised again from the dead. “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” says the Lord to him; and when Saul replies, “Who art thou, Lord?” the Lord’s answer is, “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest” (Acts ix. 4, 5). The church had, in reality, commenced before Paul, yet without intelligence as to it in those who formed part of it. Peter, for instance, when bade to carry the word to the Gentiles, complied — yet, in some respects, unwillingly, without intelligence; he gave not himself heartily, so to speak, to the work, until he saw the Holy Ghost given to the Gentiles, after that they believed; this fact convinced him that he had no right to refuse the water of baptism. “Who was I that I

should withstand God?" Peter clearly understood the fact that Gentiles were saved by faith; but he did not thence deduce the idea of the unity of believers in but one body with Christ. It was reserved to Paul to be the minister of this mystery — which, without a doubt, he means when he speaks of "my gospel" (Rom. xvi. 25; 2 Tim. ii. 8).

And thus we find ourselves again at the point from which we set out — the teaching of Paul as to the nature of the church, which we can now better understand.

§ 4th. *Summary of the Doctrine of Paul as to the Special Nature of the Church.*

1. The most important of all his instructions, that which in a sense contains all the rest, and to which Paul also most constantly reverts, is that the church is "the body of Christ." "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 22, 23; see, also, Eph. ii. 15, 16; iii. 6; iv. 1 — 16; v. 23 — 32; Col. i. 18, 24; 1 Cor. xii. 12 — 27).

Now, could this body exist before that Jesus had been rejected? No; for we have seen, in various parts of Scripture, that when Jesus came, He came to sit upon the throne of His Father David, to reign over the house of Jacob. Such was the ostensible object of His coming; and not that of forming a body of sinners redeemed from among all nations. Therefore, as we have also seen, he associates the idea of the church with that of His rejection by Israel; the church is the house built in spirit upon the rejected stone, during a parenthesis in which time is not counted. Paul also teaches us that it is by *the blood of Christ* that they who were afar off were brought nigh, to form together with those that believed of them that were nigh, "one new man"; "for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. ii. 15, 16). Caiaphas, prophesying by the Spirit, taught that Jesus was to "die for that nation; and not

for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John xi. 51, 52). This gathering together in one of the children of God, in other words, the body of Christ, is then a fruit of His death.

But the Church is not the body of a Christ that is dead and gone, or even of a Christ upon earth that may yet die,—it is the body of Him who was dead, but is alive again, being raised from the dead; who consequently cannot die any more, but liveth for ever and ever (Rom. vi. 9; Rev. i. 17); and let it be distinctly noticed that the Christ who is given as head of His body is a Christ raised from the dead, seated at the right hand of God, "Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set *Him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all *things* under His feet, and gave *Him to be the head over all things to the Church*, which is His body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 20—23). This body of Christ then could not exist before that Christ Himself was raised from the dead, and glorified.

Lastly, the Church being the body of Christ, the Spirit of Christ must needs dwell in it, and animate it as the spirit of a man dwells in a man. And so we are taught in these words: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. iii. 16). "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, *which* is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Cor. vi. 19). "Ye are the temple of the living God" (2 Cor. vi. 16); see also Eph. ii. 21, 22, and iv. 4; 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5, etc. Now, it was meet that a man—just and glorified, human nature—in the person of the Lord, should be in heaven, in order<sup>d</sup>

<sup>d</sup> Adam the first was *the centre* of a system—this was one grand distinctive honour to man—and it pointed to the second Adam, the Lord from Heaven, the Son of God, who as son of man, is and will be displayed as the *centre* of a system; one which links all human blessedness to the throne of God, and Him that is upon it.—Ed.

for the Spirit to be able to come down, and dwell in such poor sinners as in a temple. "In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)" (John vii. 37—39). "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (*Ib.* xvi. 7).

This body of Christ, animated by the Holy Spirit, could not have existed before the Spirit was sent down from on high. This in no wise interferes with the unquestionable truth, that saints of all times were taught, formed and sanctified by the Spirit of God; by Him also men of God have ever been moved to speak: but never of any of them, or of any union of any of them, was it previously said, they are the body of Christ, members of His body, the temple where His Spirit dwells.

2. Again, Paul tells us that the Church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner *stone*: in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye are also builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 20—22). Now are the prophets of whom mention is here found those of the Old, or those of what is called the New Testament? (Acts xiii. 1 and 1 Cor. xii. and xiv.) We shall soon be convinced, that it is the latter, and not the former, who are referred to, if we remark that they are always named *after* the apostles—"built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. ii. 20).

"Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. iii. 5). "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and

some, evangelists ; and some, pastors and teachers ; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (*Ib.* iv. 10, 11, 12). "And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. *Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?*" (1 Cor. xii. 28, 29).

In this last passage, the apostles and prophets are expressly said to be in the Church. And in Eph. iv. 11, it is said they are a result of the ascension of the Lord. And Paul says, speaking of gifts to the Church of Corinth, "Are all apostles? Are all prophets?" Thus we see clearly, that in these passages the allusion is not to prophets of olden times, but to those of the Church. The Church, then, that is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets of a risen and ascended Christ, cannot be the unity of all those who have believed since the foundation of the world, the greater part of these having lived before the said apostles and prophets, and it having been impossible for them to be built upon this foundation. This in some respects tends to confirm and develop what we adverted to in the Word of the Lord to Peter: "Upon this rock *will* I build my Church." He says, not *have built*, but *will build*.

3. According to Paul, the Church is raised as a *new man* upon the ruins of a middle wall of partition, namely, the law of ordinances, which had previously separated Jews and Gentiles (Eph. ii. 11—22). But while that middle wall still existed, could the Church exist? In other words, could the Church, in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, exist, when, so far from there being no wall of partition, there was a deep and impassable line of demarcation drawn between the Jews and Gentiles? Will it be able to continue hereafter, when that line of demarcation, though less exclusive and less rigid, will still exist, as we have seen will be the case here below in the age to come?

4. Lastly, Paul teaches us: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of

the body of Christ" (Eph. iv. 11, 12). Now if the Church includes all the saints from the beginning of the world, how comes it to pass that the apostle, when speaking of the gifts which the Lord has made to the Church for its edification, makes no allusion to patriarchs, kings, and prophets of the old covenant? Did not these serve for the profiting of the saints in their times? Most surely: but for Paul the Church is the body of Christ, animated by the Spirit at Pentecost, and which was in existence only from that time. Therefore it is that he speaks only of gifts and ministries communicated by the Spirit since Pentecost, as the context clearly shows.

Yes, there is a Church which is neither the continuation of Israel, nor Israel restored, and the nations blessed in the age to come; but is the complement of those who, during the time of Israel's rejection, are drawn by the Holy Spirit to the Lord Jesus Christ, seated in heaven—to be His bride, His body, a new man, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, scythian, bond nor free; but Christ all and in all (Gal. iii. 27, 28; Col. iii. 10, 11). In that Christ "made Himself of no reputation," etc. (Phil. ii. 7, 8), THEREFORE it is, that—

"God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 9—11).

God has raised Christ—

"from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephes. i. 20—23).

Thus, that place of glory, which Jesus has, through humiliation and suffering, won for Himself, as Son of Man, at the right hand of God, His, as Son of God, it ever was (John xvii. 5), is our blessing. His being set at God's own right hand in the heavenly places, far above

all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but in that which is to come, is the security of His body the Church: thus it can be said, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephes. i. 3). "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephes. ii. 5, 6).

As being of His body, members of Him who is now seated at the right hand of God in the heavens—His Spirit uniting us to Him, we are looked at as already in some sort, that is according to the Spirit, in the heavenly places. For such was the place which the Father's love assigned to us when He chose us before the foundation of the world, us, who were but dead as members of the family of the first Adam, that He might unite us in an indissoluble union to Christ, the Prince of life.

'Tis here we find what is our righteousness, peace, and the anchor of our hope, "Our life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3). Who shall deprive us of it?

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities,

nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. viii. 27—39).

"But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above): Or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith, which we preach" (Rom. x. 6—8).

May we feed on these precious truths! In proportion as we do so, we shall be able to live the life of those that are raised from the dead, dead in ourselves, to sin and the world, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Being the body of Christ, His bride, "bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh": we are "His fulness or complement"—"the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." For the aggregate of the members, the very least of them not excepted, is necessary to the Head to complete the body. A head is not a body without the members; and a body is not complete, though it have a head, if but one single member be wanting. The bride renders the Bridegroom complete; He is not complete without His bride; She is His glory—"The woman is the glory of the man" (1 Cor. xi. 7). Thus is it with the Lord Jesus; in a certain sense, He will not be "the perfect man, will not have come to the measure of the fulness of His stature" (Ephes. iv. 13), until His body shall be completed by the entrance of the last member of the redeemed. Then will the Second Adam "present it unto Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish" (ver. 27) and He will find His glory in her, as it is said: "He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe" (2 Thes. i. 10), and with her He will reign over Israel and the nations, and share with her His inheritance.

Is it asked, Why has the Lord called the Church to so high a position far above every other category of the blessed? The primary cause of this vocation, as also of

the individual calling of each of us, is found in the good pleasure of God. Why, indeed, have we received the love of the truth that we might be saved, we, who now believe, but because He "predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. i. 5).

Well, in vain shall we seek for other reason for the calling of the Church. We must, after all, in the one case as much as in the other, come back to this: "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Mat. xi. 26). Yet the Word does reveal to us *the end*, which God has proposed to Himself herein. This was to be—

"to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Ephes. i. 6). "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Ephes. ii. 7). "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephes. iii. 9—11).

And how greatly does this yet magnify the thoughts which we may have of the Church and her calling! To be a monument to the praise of the glory of His grace, to the setting forth to those in the heavenly places His manifold wisdom, to the exceeding riches of His grace, in ages to come.

If the belief in this high calling seem to any to be pride, be it remembered that *the ways of God are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts*. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Is. lv. 8, 9). And be it specially remembered, that true humility does not consist in rejecting, upon the plea of our own utter unworthiness, the free grace of God, though Peter seemed to think so when he said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet" (John xiii. 8). Of what are we worthy? Humility consists rather in adoringly receiving that which

God says, and in setting it altogether above all our most familiar thoughts, above the oldest and most established traditions, and above the most revered instruction; as, said Mary, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke i. 38). In this spirit, let us receive the instruction which the Word gives us concerning the Church. Let us humble ourselves, and what more suited to humble us than the contemplation of the immense grace of God, set in contrast with all our wretched misery? How, while so occupied, can we avoid saying, "For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor. iv. 7). Let us humble ourselves then, but let us do so in full faith; let us adore and worship; and by the contemplation of the unsearchable riches of the love of God, may we be strengthened to walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called.

## APPENDIX.

I.—The present evil age is, say we, the time of the absence of the Lord, and that is, at all events, true as to us. But when, precisely, did this age begin? Perhaps at the deluge. It is, then, on this account that the times of our Lord, and of His apostles, are called "the last times, or the last days"<sup>a</sup> (Heb. i. 1).

They would have been, indeed, the last times, or days, of the evil age, if Jesus had been received, since his glorious reign would then have introduced the age to come. [Are the ages, and all *time*, COUNTED as to earth? The Church is heavenly.—ED.]

But, enough;<sup>b</sup> if the precise moment of the beginning of this age is not clearly seen, its characteristic traits to us are most definite. It is an "evil age" from which the Christian is delivered (Gal. i. 4); an age of darkness, the prince and god of which

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<sup>a</sup> This remark is based upon a faulty rendering: "The last of these days," is the correct rendering of Heb. i. 1.

<sup>b</sup> I would remark, that the Church is "of the age to come, and for the heavenly glory of it," though formed here below, in this present evil age. "In the world, but not of it, even as Christ is not of it," says John xvii. "Living down here, as being alive in Christ in heaven," says Ephesians. It is this "to be and not to be" which makes a clear apprehension of the Church difficult to the *mere* human mind,—and to act upon it, impossible, save to one led by the Spirit of God.—ED.

is the devil (Eph. vi.12 ; 2 Cor. iv.4) ; the children of which are opposed to the children of light (Luke xvi.8). Those who love this age abandon God and His children (2 Tim. iv.10) ; also, we must not be conformed to it (Rom. xii.2).

The age to come evidently begins at the coming of the Lord, and corresponds to the time of His reigning. It is a desirable and a glorious age, since those who will be counted worthy to have part in it, and in the resurrection from among the dead, cannot die any more (Luke xx.35, 36). It is the age of recompence (Mark x.30) ; Luke xiv.14). It is the age of resurrection, of life, and of glory.

The world and the age have oft been confounded together, which is a great error. The world, or earth, *κοσμος*, or *οικουμενη*,<sup>c</sup> is the earth on which we dwell. The age, *αιων*, is a time appointed for the duration of the world, or a dispensation of God as to the world and its inhabitants ; one of those dispensations<sup>d</sup> which he made by the Son (Heb. i.2). They are as two parallel lines,<sup>e</sup> often even cut at equal distances, by the same events, but always distinct.

If the present age began at the deluge, it corresponds, as to its duration, with that which may be called the present world, in contrast with the old world, or world before the deluge.<sup>f</sup>

The age to come, which is introduced by the coming of the Lord, corresponds also to the world to come, or the habitable earth to come<sup>g</sup> (Ps. viii. ; Heb. ii.5). That is to say, to the world restored by the Lord, and in which all creatures will be subject to Him.<sup>h</sup>

There is also correspondence between the traits of this world and those of the present age.<sup>i</sup> If this age is evil, the world also lies in the wicked one, and all that is in the world : the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the

<sup>c</sup> The Bible student will find that the *κοσμος*, *orderly system* of the world, and the *οικουμενη*, *inhabitable earth*, are very distinct in Scripture. *The land* also is distinct from both.—ED.

<sup>d</sup> In Greek, the word is often used, not for the *being*, or *duration* of a thing merely, but for the thing which so endures. The English translators knew this, and so rendered, "Made the worlds" (Heb. i.2).

<sup>e</sup> The author's meaning is not clear.

<sup>f</sup> This quietly *assumes* that the destruction of the present heavens and present earth is at the beginning, and not at the end of the 1000 years. I do not admit it.—ED.

<sup>g</sup> This, again, is pure assumption, and is fraught with evil consequences.—ED.

<sup>h</sup> 1 Cor. xv. says He must reign *till* He have put down His enemies. As to the world, the inhabitable earth and the land—the reign and the post-millennial state are not identical.—ED.

<sup>i</sup> One remark here. There is *an orderly system*, the world, round us, which itself is all out of God's order, and, through

Father, but is of the world. And, therefore, as we may not love the present age, nor conform ourselves to it, neither may we love the world, nor the things that are in the world (1 John ii. 15—17; v. 19; James iv. 4). If the devil is called the ruler of the darkness of this age (Eph. ii. 2; vi. 11, 12), he is also called the prince of this world (John. xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11). To walk according to the age of this world (lit.) is to walk according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the children of disobedience (Eph. ii. 2); also, now the kingdom of Jesus is neither of this world, nor of this age (John xviii. 36). That it is not of *this age*, the word *now* proves; that it is not of *this world*, is proved by the words — *from hence*; but it will be displayed in the age to come, upon an earth renewed.

Notwithstanding these connections, *the world* and *the age* are not the same thing, and must not be confounded together. Matt. xiii. 39, 40, 49, and xxiv. 3, should be translated “end of the age,” and *not* “end of the world”; end of the world leads the mind to the question of the destruction of the heavens and the earth, and to the judgment which will then take place (Rev. xx); whereas, in these passages, and Matt. xxv. (which is but a development of it), the question is not about the end of the world, but about the end of the present evil age, and of the judgment then executed by the Lord, as introductory to the age to come.

2.—This interruption in the ways of God, with regard to His earthly people, agrees with the mystery of the Church, and is as a key to the understanding of prophecy. It quite accounts for the silence of prophecy as to the destiny of the nations of Christendom since the rejection of Israel. Israel being the centre of the places of God for the earth, God gives prophecies concerning nations, only according to their connection, or not, with Israel. Now Israel existing not as His people for eighteen hundred years, prophecy is silent also about the nations during all that time. It does not again speak of them until the moment when the nations again gather themselves together around Jerusalem; that is, at the moment when God again turns toward

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sin, in disorder — and the present dispensation, or age of it, is one in which power is in the adversary's hands. The character of a *place* — the character of the *power* which acts there for a given time — the character of the parties who are seen there in various actions, etc., are not the same thing. The world was made by God, and gave witness to Him — it has been usurped by Satan, and (while he cannot efface its testimony for God) gives sad witness to the presence of sin. Though the good *providence* of God still shows itself. God never abdicated His claim, nor ceased to show His power — but Satan has been allowed, as well as man, in his wickedness to act. God, Christ, Satan, man, etc., are all seen in action in the world — under Christ it will, or part of it, become the habitable earth.—ED.

Israel, to purge it by judgment, and then to re-establish it in its glorious privileges.

If this had been apprehended, men would not have searched in Daniel, and the prophets generally, for the Pope, Mahomet, the Goths, the Saracens, Attila, Charlemagne, Napoleon, all the kings, and all the revolutions of modern history. Search for the year of the return of the Lord would not have been made. Nor, lastly, should we have seen all these systems, which, falsified so many times, by passing events, afford the infidel an occasion for mockery, and disincline even pious persons from the study of prophecy.

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## II.—*The Failure of the Church.*<sup>e</sup>

Israel ought, by its obedience, and the blessings which would thereupon have manifestly resulted, to have shown to all the peoples of the earth, how “Happy is that people, that is in such a case; *yea*, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord” (Ps. cxliv.15).

That which God will look for from Israel and the

<sup>e</sup> Here is an instance of the word “church” (see note, p.223) used, not in the more strict sense of *the body* of Christ, but in the sense of those on earth who professed to receive the doctrines of the church, but walked not accordingly — used for the house of testimony, rather than for the body of the Lord. In a succession of trusts, from the beginning, God has set man in privilege and responsibility — and in a succession of acts of unfaithfulness, man has, from the beginning, betrayed himself and his trust. But all these trusts, whether of the earth to Adam, of government to Noah, of a kingdom to Israel, etc., have another side from which they may be considered. The goodness of God provided them for Himself and His Son, man-ward, as much as for man, God-ward. In the latter bearing, they were first entrusted to the creature, and he always proved himself incompetent; in the former bearing, they will be made good by the God-man Christ. In Him, centre of the divine system, neither the right to the earth, nor government, nor the kingdom, nor the church, etc., has failed. He holds fast all that God has committed to Him — and will take all, and through the redemption He has accomplished in grace, will take all as Head of a redeemed race. Man’s right to the earth; man’s power to govern for God; man — a kingdom upon earth for God; man — associated with a heavenly Christ and God; man — a tabernacle for God in heaven, etc., all stands fast and sure in Christ — and sure to us too in Him through the Spirit — though we have failed as to them, and as to the charge dispensationally committed to us as to them.—ED.

nations of the age to come, is that, in contemplating the glory, then manifested, of the son of David, they shall gladly yield themselves to the true Melchisedec, who will guide them in the path of holiness and peace—and that they abide therein.

The Church, in its walk here below, during the time of the absence of the Lord Jesus, is called to witness to the world, by its spiritual and heavenly walk, that the Jesus of Nazareth whom the world has rejected, yet lives as Son of God on High in heaven, since 'tis He — the Son of man upon the Father's throne — who, by His Spirit, produces and sustains in her spiritual and heavenly affections; and that consequently the world should turn to Him during the time of His long-suffering patience.

If, faithful to its call, the Church had presented the astonishing sight of one united body, gathered from the midst of all nations, by a power till then unknown, kept thus in the unity, love and expectation of its Head from heaven, doubtless a far greater number would have believed. But it must, to have done that, have waited upon God in spirit, for so only would He have acted. Instead of this, what do we see in Christendom? Romanism refusing to the believer the privilege of being guided by the Spirit, and making a monopoly of it for the clergy. Among Protestants, the Holy Spirit is, for the greater part, little more than a notion and sterile doctrine. Even those who have proved His effectual power in regeneration, and who seek the Spirit for their walk as individuals, oft seem to forget that there is but one Holy Spirit, when the walk of the body collectively, or of the Church, is in question. They ignore the principle, in itself so simple, that as the Church as a whole is the body of Christ, animated by His Spirit, so the Church, in each place, is but the gathering, under the Holy Spirit, of the members of Christ who are in that place; and that, consequently, all that they have to do, is to unite as such in the name of the Lord, to worship in Spirit and in truth; and that such is the Church and her worship.

Instead of this, the liberty to make churches, there where we, according to our own wisdom, may think well

that there should be such, is contended for. Schools, indeed, are set up where, with a little learning, a little toil, and, perhaps, what is called the orthodox faith, pastors and doctors, and, in short, ministers for these churches are made; but all this in the entire forgetfulness, that it is the Spirit who, in the church, distributes His gifts to each as He will (1 Cor. xii.4—12).

In Rubrics and Confessions, etc., there is drawn up an order of walk which the Spirit Himself ought rather to produce by His own free and mighty action; for it is not real, and has little value before God, save as it is the fruit of the Spirit. How could the world be won over to the faith, when it sees those who make profession of faith as to the Spirit, to be in reality dependant as much as itself, not upon that Spirit, but upon the wisdom of its rules, on the talent and eloquence of its teachers? And how can it be but that the Spirit should be grieved and quenched by such a proceeding? 'Tis like Israel despising its privilege of having God as king, and saying: Nay, but make us a king like the other nations.

The Church should have been a witness to the life of its Head, risen from the dead, — by a constant waiting for Him from heaven; and this was the case at the beginning. It is utterly impossible, if we read with simplicity of heart, the letters of the apostles, not to see that the early Christians looked for the Lord in quite another way from what the greater part of Christians do, in our days. They really, and without any figure of speech, waited for Him as if He might come at any moment. This coming was, for them, one of the ends of their conversion, a motive for the fulfilment of every duty, and a consolation under every affliction.

“For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come” (1 Thess. i. 9, 10). “For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy” (*Ib.* ii. 19, 20). See also iv. 18; Tit. ii. 13; Heb. x. 36, 37; James v. 7, 8, etc.

But sentiments now reign which are so far removed from

those of the first disciples, that, no longer understanding their language, many of our day have given to the simplest expressions of that day a strange and forced meaning. The coming of the Lord is for many only the destruction of Jerusalem, or death, or perhaps that which is called a spiritual coming, to set up a pretended spiritual reign of which the word knows nothing.

By far the greater part know nothing of the future coming of the Lord, more than that He is coming to judge the world; thus confounding the day of the wrath of the Lamb with the day, peaceful and happy, of His meeting His beloved Bride. And if you call their attention to the instructions of the Word upon this truth, they will tell you, as Festus did Paul, that too much learning has made you mad.

Together with the daily waiting for the Lord has disappeared the union of disciples as such, their separation from the world, and the spiritual and heavenly life which distinguished them at first. When the servant says in his heart, "My Lord delayeth His coming," we know the result. "But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming; and shall begin to smite *his* fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken" (Matt. xxiv. 48, 49). When the Church ceased to look up and wait for the Lord from heaven, she began to look down, and to seek around her for rest, ease, wealth and honor; she has become earthly, and inimical to the cross; joining herself to the world, even so far as to give to it the rights of her citizenship, and to corrupt for it her worship and the supper. She has put her glory in that which is her shame, and has a recognised position, peaceful and honoured, in the midst of that world which crucified her Lord.

And not only have Christians united themselves to the world, but they have also sanctioned divisions among themselves. Instead of being a witness of the unity of the Spirit which animated it as one body, the Church is divided into sections innumerable, distinguished by the names of men, of nations, and of various doctrines. Ah, this is not what the Lord asked for, when He said: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me,

and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou has sent me" (John xvii. 21). Neither is it the sight which the early disciples presented when—

"All that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved" (Acts ii. 44—47). "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul: neither said any of *them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold. And laid *them* down at the apostle's feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need" (*Ib.* iv. 32—35).

Great grace was upon them all, and many believed: it is true, that this blessed union had already received some violent shocks at Corinth, when one said: "For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul" (1 Cor. i. 11—13). It was the mystery of iniquity which did already work (2 Thess. ii. 3—8). Yet the evil was far from having the extent which it now has. With the exception, perhaps, of the Church of Diotrephes (3rd John), I know not that in any one place in the days of the apostles, more than one flock was to be seen. They, doubtless, little thought that the time would come, in which, even in the same city, or the same village, would be seen three, four, five, or six differing congregations, each having its own peculiar faith, organisation, supper, and ministry. It is said, notwithstanding these separations, there is at the bottom unity between all these assemblies, if they all rest upon the true foundation; and

that it is of that fundamental invisible unity that the Lord meant to speak, when He asked that His disciples might be one. But this invisible unity cannot suffice to lead the world to believe — it needs something which is manifest and visible. And, moreover, if this union really exists, why then all this disunion, and why these separations, which are the occasion of so much sin, and the abiding cause of weakness in the Church? For the gifts bestowed upon the Christians of the various congregations, and which, increased if there were union, would provide them abundance of edification and consolation, subdivided as they are, suffice but to sustain a feeble and languid state of life, even if they are not employed (as is, alas! too oft the case) one against the other. It is like Israel and Judah, whom sin had separated; and who, instead of uniting their forces against common enemies, used them to make war one against the other, who even leant upon Egypt and Assyria.

Thus, to perceive the failure of the Church, it only needs to recall what it is in the intention of God, and then to cast a glance upon that which it is become in Christendom; but, besides this, we have upon this subject declarations of the very clearest and most precise character. Paul, in addressing the Church of Rome, says: "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Rom. xi. 22). He here then establishes the possibility of the fall; and in such case it is not a restoration, but a cutting off of which he speaks; not, indeed, an immediate cutting off, because, according to the faithfulness of God, it cannot be that one of His sheep should perish, though they may have to suffer the consequences of that fall. And this fall, of which Paul warned the Christians when he was addressing the Church of Rome, he announces in a manner most positive, in his address to the elders of Ephesus: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts xx. 29, 30). See

also 2 Pet. i. 12—15, compared with the whole of the second chapter, and more especially with the first verse: “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.” And what, after this, is the apostolic succession and the antiquity of doctrine, upon which so many assemblies lean? Ah! there is no doctrine of necessity true, but that of the Word — and of ministry none worth, according to God, but that of the Spirit.

Moreover, false teachers and damnable heresies did not wait even for the departure of the apostles, ere they insinuated themselves into the churches. There are few of the apostolic churches in which one cannot recognize, in some respects, their presence, from that Church of Ephesus just named, to that of Diotrephes, whence they drove out the apostle John, and those who wish to receive him. See, for instance, 1 Cor. iii. 1—4; v. 6; xi. 17—22; xv. 12, 33; Gal. i. 6, 7; ii. 4, 5; iii. 1; v. 7—15; vi. 12, 13; Col. ii. 8, 16—23, etc. And far from its being the case, that these disorders were to disappear afterwards, the apostles teach us that the corruption will rather go on increasing even to the end.

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines 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” (1 Tim. iv. 1—3).

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Tim. iii. 1—5). “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (ver. 12, 13).

“But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them,

and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not" (2 Pet. ii. 1—3). "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation" (*Ib.* iii. 3, 4).

What a sad picture of the last days of the age! and yet some think that, in spite of this, they can therein trace the progress of the gospel, and the advancement of the kingdom of God! Ah! that which characterized the latter days in the eyes of the apostles, was not the triumph of the gospel, but the presence of antichrist: "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time" (1 John ii. 18). Paul also declares to the Thessalonians, that the day of Christ will not come until . . . . What? that truth shall have triumphed over error, and the earth be filled with the knowledge of the Lord — as so many Christians think? No: but "except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. ii. 3, 8). Jude also teaches us that the corruption which he saw had already glided into the churches, so far from disappearing, would go on encreasing until the coming of the Lord; for after having drawn an awful picture of the corruption of his time, he adds: "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (ver. 4). He sees, then, the wicked of whom he speaks on the increase, and forming an uninterrupted chain down to the moment when, the evil being come to the full, the Lord will come to destroy it by His personal presence.

So also the Lord had previously taught, in the parables of Matt. xiii., which contain the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

In the first, the Lord shows us the sowing of the kingdom, and even there we see three parts of the seed lost, as to fruit-bearing, for every one that springs up and brings fruit to perfection.

The second shows us the good grain gathered into the garner; but previously to this, it shows us tares sown by the enemy, where the householder had sown good seed; that is to say, in Christendom. The servants express a wish, indeed, as do certain Christians, to pull up the tares and to clear the field; "But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn" (Matt. xiii. 29, 30). Now, "the harvest is the end of the world" (ver. 39); that is, the end of the present age, of the existing period, and by no means the end of the world in the sense of the globe which we inhabit, which is the field where the seed is cast. "The field is the world" (ver. 39). "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear let him hear" (ver. 41—43). Thus we see, that in this world the evil will remain mixed up with the good until the harvest; that is to say, until the end of the age, and till the judgment executed by the Lord, personally present (Joel iii. 13; Rev. xiv. 15, 16).

Further be it remarked, that the question here is not about the Church and the discipline by which it puts away the wicked. To use this parable as an argument against discipline, is to set Paul in opposition to the Lord. For the Lord says, "Let both grow together until the harvest" (ver. 30); "children of the kingdom and children of the wicked one" (ver. 39); but Paul, or

rather the Holy Spirit by Paul, on the contrary, says, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Cor. v. 13, read the chapter). If the question in the two cases is about the same persons in similar circumstances, there is a manifest contradiction; but one simple remark explains this, and disperses every appearance of contradiction. The Lord, speaking of the kingdom, says, *the wicked are not to be put out of the world* or earth, for "the field is the world" (ver. 39). Paul, speaking to members of the Church, says, "*put away from among yourselves,*" that is, put outside *the Church* the wicked.<sup>f</sup> The two things are both equally true, and perfectly accord one with the other. Paul, indeed, confirms the doctrine of the parable, when he says, "For what have I to do to judge them also that are without?" (ver. 12). "But them that are without God judgeth" (ver. 13). But he also says, "Do not ye judge them that are within . . . . therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." Of the last two verses of the chapter, the two first clauses confirm what the Lord had said, and the two last contain the additional doctrine for the new circumstances.

To the Lord alone does it pertain to take out of the world the evil and the wicked, and He will do it when He appears at the end of the age; but till then the Church must exercise discipline in its own precinct and put away the evil.

Mat. xiii. 31, 32. The Church, which should have been a little flock, pilgrims and strangers here below, in the midst of reproach and poverty, like its Master, is become an establishment of this world, a great tree, just like Nebuchadnezzar—"The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth" (Dan. iv. 11). In the Church, enriched with wealth and goods, and the glory of this world, one could, as in any other system of the world, satisfy the heart's desire for titles, revenues, etc. There is food and shelter for all who desire to avail

<sup>f</sup> The command of Christ is against Rome and its carnal persecution of heretics—the command of the Spirit is against Protestant neglect of spiritual discipline.—ED.

themselves of it. "The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it" (Dan. iv. 12). But then it is also said, "Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches" (ver. 14). "Otherwise (if thou continue not in God's goodness) thou shalt be cut off" (Rom. xi. 22).

Such is the judgment passed upon the glory and the worldly greatness to which the Church has allied itself in its blindness; and it is only when the Lord shall have brought down the high tree and have dried up the green tree, that He will make the dry tree to flourish, and make it to become a goodly cedar on the mountains of Israel.

"Thus saith the Lord God; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon a high mountain and eminent: In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell. And all the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: I the Lord have spoken and have done it" (Eze. xvii. 22—24).

"Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened" (Mat. xiii. 33). Many think they see here, as in the parable that precedes it, a picture of the progress of the Gospel in the world, that is, to them the meal represents the world, or the children of this world, and the leaven the Gospel. But the Word gives to these figures quite an opposite rendering. The good seed, or the wheat, is the children of the kingdom, and leaven in Scripture always stands for an evil influence. Jesus said to His disciples, "Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Mat. xvi. 6, 11,

12); “the leaven of Herod” (Mark viii. 15). Paul said to the Corinthians, in connection with the incestuous person among them,—

“Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 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” (1 Cor. v. 6—8).

And in writing to the Galatians, on the subject of those who trouble them by another Gospel, which was not another, the apostle says—

“Ye did run well: who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Gal. v. 7—9).

Thus, it is always, under one form or another, evil which is represented by leaven. How, then, should the Lord have used it in this parable to represent, on the contrary, that which of all things is the most excellent. Moreover, the very act of HIDING the leaven might alone suffice to show that by leaven something evil is intended. He who preaches the Gospel does not seek *to hide* it. Oh, it is but too clearly of the leaven of modern Pharisees and Sadducees, of the formality, incredulity, the old leaven of malice and wickedness, of the unconverted heart, that the Lord speaks in this parable. It is this leaven which has leavened the Church, which at first was a new and unleavened lump, and has turned it into Christendom with all its corruptions. 'Tis the mystery of iniquity, which, even in Paul's days, did already work (2 Thes. ii. 7), and which we eventually find in full development in the harlot who has written on her forehead — “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Rev. xvii. 5).

Thus the mysteries of the kingdom, presented in these parables, seem to us the mysteries of the corruption of the kingdom by man; or, if you please, the destinies of that kingdom, such as man has made it, by confounding it, contrary to the intention of God, with the Church.

These parables are, in some sort, to the kingdom, that which the seven addresses to the seven churches of Asia are to the Church. In these parables we have, as we have just seen, the destinies of the kingdom corrupted by the sin of man, and which will remain so until the King come in person to set all to rights. In the seven addresses, we have the destinies of the Church, not such as it was in the thought and intention of God, but such as the sin of man has made it; till the Lord come to gather together His own out of the midst of disorder and then to judge the people.

Doubtless, the addresses to the seven churches of Asia (Rev. ii. 3) were written to as many churches really existing at that time, and had in them a first accomplishment; but one cannot question but that, like the whole of the book, they have a prophetic character, and thus present us with a picture of the various phases of the history of the Church here below. Now, looked at in this point of view, what do they show us, if not a gradually increasing declension, accompanied by partial and passing renewals, from Ephesus, which had lost its first love, to Pergamus, the church of this world's splendour, dwelling where Satan's seat was; and from Thyatira, where a lie was openly taught, and which has only a little remnant left, down to Laodicea, the Church of the people's judgment which is spued out of the Lord's mouth. If thou continue not in His goodness "thou shalt be cut off," says Paul (Rom. xi.) "I will spue thee out of my mouth," says the Lord to that which bears still at the end the name of Church upon earth.

And the rest of the Revelation down to chap. xix., what is it but a sad picture of the terrible judgment which falls in the end upon apostate Christendom? There is no longer anything seen upon earth which wears the character of the Bride of Christ. We see, indeed, in the book, saints who render witness to the coming kingdom, and themselves smite the earth with various plagues (Rev. xi. 5, 6). But that is scarcely the characteristic of the members of Christ —

"And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village" (Luke ix. 52—56).

'Tis in heaven that the Church's song is heard (Rev. v.)  
'Tis from heaven we see her come forth to form the procession of the Lord, when He comes to take possession of His kingdom. The Church, then, has been previously gathered in. In very deed, the faithfulness of God cannot fail. He has said of His elect — "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter i. 5). And, before He left the earth, the Lord said to His disciples — "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John xiv. 2, 3). In spite of the fall and ruin of the Church here below, through the sin of man, the word of the Lord must needs stand good; just as, spite of the loss of the vessel in which he sailed, Paul must needs stand before Cæsar.

But when will this reunion of the Church and its Head take place? Is it not traced in Philadelphia, that Church which has only a little strength, yet does not deny the name of its Lord, but keeps the word of His patience? "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. iii. 10). And what is that hour of temptation, if not the great tribulation described Is. ii. 10—19; Jer. xxx. 6—9, 23, 24; Dan. xii. 1; Mat. xxiv. 14—22; Mark xiii. 19—24; Rev. vi.—xix.? Doubtless Philadelphia could be kept in the midst of the temptation, as Noah was kept in the midst of the waters of the flood. So will it be with the saints who will then be on the earth, but in that case, Philadelphia would not be kept "*from* the hour of temptation," but

rather brought through it. To make good the promise, it must not only be in a place inaccessible to the temptation, but also in a place where time is not reckoned. It must be in the heaven, as was Enoch, who, taken away to heaven, was thus kept from the deluge. And is not such the open door which is set before her?<sup>ε</sup> If it be so—what is that Church-to-come, dreant of by so many, as about to realize here below the pattern of a Church? Alas! it is all an illusion—the tendency and effect of which is to attach thoughts and hopes to the earth which ought to be on high. Yes, if you please, there is a Church yet to be; there are, indeed, two; Philadelphia which is now gathering, and to-morrow may be caught up to meet the Lord, and Laodicea, which will then be spued out of his mouth and judged together with those with whom she has committed fornication; but other Church-to-come is there none in this present age.

The ruins which sin had wrought in Israel were not to be completely removed but by the Lord at His coming. An attentive student of the prophets would see this on every page; so those whom the Holy Spirit taught would never have sought themselves to re-establish the kingdom of Israel, or to make an ark to replace that which was lost; but in the feeling of what the real want of their people was, they would humbly wait for “the consolation of Israel” (Luke ii. 25 — 28), the times spoken of by the prophets in which “the Lord” Himself shall act. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness” (Jer. xxiii. 5, 6). And Jerusalem itself shall be called the throne of the Lord (Jer. iii. 16, 17).

<sup>ε</sup> I give this paragraph faithfully. I agree with the author that *we* cannot be in the tribulation, but I do not accept either his application of Philadelphia and Laodicea, nor the point of view from which he regards them.—TRANSLATOR.

Well, it is, in some respects, the same as to the church. Every hope of restoring it to what it was at first is chimerical and baseless, for there is no foundation for hope save a promise of the Lord, and promise to this effect there is none; on the contrary —

“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means : for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition ; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped ; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things ? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work : only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming” (2 Thess. ii. 1 — 8).

stands before us. How could any such hope exist in the presence of so positive and distinct a declaration ? This need not discourage in the work of edifying the saints ; for who shall set limits to the blessing which the Lord is ready to give to the scattered ones, who, amid the general ruin, wait on him in sincerity. We have the word and the Spirit of God to guide and direct us safely to the end of our calling. That, it appears, was what Paul desired to recall to the Elders of Ephesus, when, after having announced to them the terrible fall of their church, he adds, “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts xx. 32).

We have the blessed promise that “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mat. xviii. 20). Well, let us beware of attempting to do, in our own strength, that to which the Lord does not call us, and for which he has not given us any promise ; let us not seek to restore, by organisation and rules, which are but barriers raised up

between the sheep of Christ, that which cannot be restored. Let us be united together as disciples, as brethren, in the name of the Lord, and in dependence upon His Spirit; let our church-to-come be that of heaven, and I again repeat, *Who shall set limits to the blessings which the Lord may yet give to those that wait upon Him?* But the first means of obtaining these blessings, is humility, for God abases that which exalts itself, and lifts up that which humbles itself. We have found this in our individual salvation; we found lifting up, peace and assurance, only as being worthless, condemned, and nothing in ourselves. Why should God depart from this principle, when His church is the question. If any one, satisfied with his own church, his own life, and his own progress, were to say, "Why humble myself for unfaithfulnesses which are not mine?" it would be greatly to be feared that he had somewhat of the Pharisee of the Parable, or at least, of those Jews who said, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these" (Jer. vii. 4); glorying in a temple in which God had ceased to take pleasure, and in a temple which He was about to abandon. In all such cases, there is defectiveness of sight and great narrowness of heart; great short-sightedness if one cannot see, save in a church of his own, in one's own sect, the members of Christ; and great narrowness of heart if any one does not feel the need of humbling himself for the wretchedness in which the scattered members of the body of Christ groan.

I need not say that Christendom is not the body of Christ; but if, as we cannot question, there are in all the various portions of Christendom, believers, that is to say, fellow members, of our own flesh and blood; we have need to humble ourselves for the scattered, dispersed state of self in which we are; it is contrary to the intentions and the glory of the Lord; we have to humble ourselves for unfaithfulnesses of various kinds, in which our brethren are entangled, and from which they suffer; for when one member suffers, all the rest suffer with it (1 Cor. xii. 26, 27). When Daniel made intercession for his people in Babylon, he did not hesitate to say, "*We have sinned,*

*we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly, we have rebelled*" (Dan. ix. 5.)

And the communion and integral unity of the members of the church — is it to be less strict than that which was found in the people of Israel? Moreover, we carry, each in his own bosom, that which has led to the failure of the church. In this view, we all of us have connection with it; and above all, we all suffer from it; we all suffer from the feebleness of the spiritual gifts, from the little energy of heavenly affections, the result of the Spirit, who produces these fruits, having been grieved in so many ways; we suffer from the divisions; from the weakness, the prejudices, and the waxing cold of the love of many which have followed. The Lord's name has been dishonoured in the place in which we are set; His testimony turned to His dishonour. Let those that see the evil, bear it in confession before the Lord. Let us, then, all join in a common act of humiliation, and then let us take comfort and encouragement from the hope of the Lord's speedy return, to deliver us from every evil work, and to introduce us into his heavenly kingdom.

### 3. *The Rapture of the Church to meet her Lord.*

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. iv. 14 — 18).

Here is the clearest and most complete revelation of the removal of the church; a revelation which presents us with three things to be accomplished by the Lord at His coming.

1. The resurrection of those members of the church who may ere then have died.

2. The transmutation, or translation, of those which shall then be alive in the body.

3. The catching up of the one and the other to meet the Lord.

1. The fact of several distinct acts in resurrection, is proved by the single expression, "the resurrection from [or from among] the dead" (Acts iv. 2; Luke xx. 35). To which passages we may add, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of [better, from among] the dead" (Phil. iii. 11).

The truth thereof is confirmed by several distinct declarations; for instance, Luke xiv. 13, 14, where we have a resurrection of the just clearly distinct from that of the wicked — "But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke xx. 35, 36). Clearly it is not a resurrection of all the dead, since some only are judged worthy of it, even as of that age, the age to come, and consequently of that resurrection, they are like to the angels, and are sons of God, being children of the resurrection; even as Jesus Christ himself was declared to be Son of God with power, by His resurrection from among<sup>h</sup> the dead (Rom. i. 4). "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. iii. 11). Paul would not have spoken in this manner, if there were but one resurrection: for in that case, just and unjust would equally, without any question, come there.

The instruction which God gives to the Corinthians, concerning the order which will be observed in the resurrection, agrees perfectly with the idea of a distinct act of resurrection, first, for the church at the coming of the Lord, then of another act at the end for the rest of the dead, as we have just seen. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every

<sup>h</sup> This is perhaps better translated by "the resurrection of the dead."—ED.

man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Cor. xv. 22, 23).

[But we will pause a moment on John v. 28, 29, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation"—as a passage often cited in proof of there being but one only resurrection; and let us endeavour to lay hold of the thought in the mind of the Lord. Accused by the Jews of blasphemy, for having said that he was Son of God, Jesus justified Himself by shewing that whatsoever the Father did, to the Son, also, gave He power to do likewise. Thus, quickening pertains to the Father, as also resurrection and judgment. And the Son does precisely the same things; and, indeed, we find them. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24).<sup>1</sup> Here is the quickening of those who

<sup>1</sup> I give this just as I find it; but I beg my reader to examine the whole context, here printed between [ ], by John v. 19 — 30, itself.

Many, erroneously as the writer remarks, insist that there is but one resurrection, because John v. 28, says, "*the hour* is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

The common answer to this is, "That the term *hour* does not mean a definite period of sixty minutes, in this verse, *any more than* in verse 35, where *quickenings* is spoken of. And that as the *quickenings* power of Christ has been displayed through 1800 years, so may the resurrection-power." This answer leaves the question of how many acts of resurrection there are to be answered by other Scriptures. The author has another thought, and would force "the hour cometh and now is," into a formula for what he calls "the time of the church." He is driven to this by a violence *himself* offers to the 25th verse; and even then his explanation is lame. The result is, that he holds that "because I live ye shall live also," and such passages, present, not what is true of us in Christ *now*, but what will be true when we see Him; not what *is* true *in him*, but what *will be* true *in us*. This error sadly weakens the foundation. — TRANSLATOR.

were spiritually dead, by faith in the word of Jesus. Everything is said upon this subject; nothing is wanting. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (John v. 25). Here the Lord repeats the thought expressed in the preceding verse; but does he not go further, and does he not include, also, the resurrection of the bodies of those who have been spiritually quickened by faith in the word? But for this, this verse would add nothing to that which the former presents; but, this granted, the word "shall live" is all the more fitly chosen, in that it points as well to the change of the living saints, in whom mortality shall be swallowed up of life (2 Cor. v. 4), as to the saints that have died, who shall then come forth out of the tomb. It is true, Jesus defines this moment by the words, "the hour cometh, and even now is"; an expression which he used with the Samaritan woman to designate the time of the church (John iv. 23). The quickening unto glory of the church is but the full manifestation of the life of Christ, which she already possesses in herself (Col. iii. 4); moreover, there is no event, no interval whatsoever, laid down as between her and the moment, or hour, of her passage hence. There is only the last "moment," the last "twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor. xv. 52). Why should she, then, be separate in the word of the Lord. "The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death" (1 Cor. xv. 26). This recalls to mind the word of the Lord to Peter (Mat. xvi. 18); that is upon "Christ, the Son of the living God." Son of the living God, I have life in myself even as the Father has life in Himself, and as I have life, those that are mine shall have it also. As I come forth victorious out of the unseen world, they shall come forth also.<sup>k</sup> "Because I live, they shall live." "Our life is hid with Christ in God." "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. iii. 3, 4). "And hath

<sup>k</sup> This would seem to prove that the writer held that we all must die. He does not, however, though he appears to do so.

given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man" (John v. 27). After the quickening to glory of the church by "the Son of God," comes the judgment executed by "the Son of man"; judgment which extends, in some sort, from the judgment of the nations, at His return, to the judgment of the dead, little and great, before the great white throne. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John v. 28, 29). "Be not surprised that the Son of man should judge, for to him also pertains the raising of the dead." "The hour cometh." The hour of the church, of the hidden mystery, has already lasted 1,800 years, and we cannot say how long or how short a time it may still last. There is nothing opposed to the hour here spoken of lasting a thousand years; and it is an hour of resurrection, as it is of judgment. There is resurrection at the beginning, on the arrival of the Son of man; immediately after the great tribulation. It is of that resurrection, or at least, of a part of those that are then raised, of those raised unto life, that the Lord speaks. "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage" (Luke xx. 35); for all here shews a Jewish order of thought. It is this resurrection, and not that of the church, in Daniel xii. 2, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt." Since it is placed after the great tribulation.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, he says "many," and not — all of them that sleep in the dust of the earth — shall awake. This is not exactly what the Lord says, "all that are in the grave." Indeed, it is after the thousand years, that there is still resurrection for those who till then remain in the tomb, that they may appear before the great white throne. It is

<sup>1</sup> Here, again, the author is a little too quick in his conclusion. The verse is ably discussed elsewhere; and most minds have come to a different conclusion to his.—Ed.

the mass of those that are raised, outside of the church, which that expression of the Lord seems to designate: "All that are in the grave shall hear his voice"—all; no one excepted.]

But it is pre-eminently in Rev. xx. 4—6 —

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 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."

that we have two resurrections clearly distinguished: "the first resurrection" which sets free for ever from the power of the second death, and "the resurrection of the rest of the dead." We learn, moreover, here, what is not taught elsewhere, that the interval between these two resurrections (the first resurrection and the general resurrection) is of 1000 years.

Will it be said, the first resurrection is a spiritual resurrection? Then so is the second, which consists of the rest of the dead; for *the rest* is of the same nature as that which went before (which in this case was the first resurrection); and then, clearly, it results that there will be *no* resurrection at all. Moreover, we find here, the Church in the first part of ver. 4, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them": "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" (1 Cor. vi. 2); then, also, there are saints forming part of this first resurrection, who do not form part of the Church, for they have passed through the great tribulation, from which the Church will be kept; "they had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had they received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands." Are not these the same as those spoken of—

“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled” (Rev. vi. 9—11).

As well those who then have been put to death, as those who yet must be.

So that the ordinary notion of one general resurrection for the just and the unjust, taking place at a given moment, before the general judgment; this notion cannot stand before a calm and tranquil examination of the passages which treat of the subject.

If there were but one resurrection at the moment at which the heavens and the earth flee away before the great white throne—

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works” (Rev. xx. 11—13).

How could we account for—

“For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Rom. viii. 18—23).

Where the deliverance of this creation from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of

God, is evidently bound up with the redemption of the bodies of the saints, that is to say, of their resurrection? Or how explain such a passage as —

“And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life” (Mat. xix. 28, 29). “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?” (1 Cor. vi. 2). “And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of my Father” (Rev. ii. 26, 27).

Or, Is. xxv. 8—10 compared with 1 Cor. xv. 54. And, remark here, that in Is. xxv., after swallowing up death in victory, the Lord will cause Moab to be trodden down under Him, even as straw is trodden down for the dung-hill. Now, these words are applied (1 Cor. xv. 54) to the resurrection of the saints, that is, that, after that resurrection will have taken place, Moab will be destroyed. How is this to be explained according to the system of but one general resurrection?

Not only does the Church rise before the wicked, who are left in the bands of death until the final judgment; but, when the Son of Man comes in his glory to judge the world and to deliver Israel, saints from among that people and from among others who have been in relationship with him, rise in order to have part in the kingdom, as, also, it would seem some of the wicked to be judged. Then a Daniel, an Isaiah shall rise and shall “stand in their lot in the end of the days.”

But “some to shame and everlasting contempt.” For “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” (Rev. xi. 18).

Is. xxv. 8, xxvi. 19, 21; Dan. xii. 2, 13; Mat. xii. 41, 42; Luke x. 12, 14, xi. 30—33; 2 Tim. iv. 1; 1 Pet. iv. 5. Then, at length, shall be the redemption of Israel by the Son of Man in His glory, and the resurrection of the saints who shall be dead (a Daniel, etc.), is but the first act, as the resurrection of the dead of the Church is the first act as to the Church.

These various acts of resurrection, it is true, are sometimes summed up under two heads, as the resurrection of the just and of the unjust (Acts xxiv. 15); or, as the first resurrection and that of the rest of the dead (Rev. xx). And, clearly, when the character of those raised is the point of view in which the question is considered, there are but two classes, the just and the unjust; those who rise unto life and those who are raised for judgment. If we consider the epoch of the resurrections, we can sum them up under two heads; those who rise at the coming of the Lord (this expression, in its most extended sense, includes the coming for the Church and the coming for Israel) form all together the first resurrection; all others are the rest of the dead.<sup>m</sup>

However it may be, as to other difficulties which this subject may present, when we seek to study it a little in detail, it remains clear, and that is the special point which is now sought to be shown, that the resurrection of the Church is altogether distinct from the resurrection of the wicked, both as to time and in principle.

As to time, the wicked, with the exception of those who, having been in relationship with Israel,<sup>n</sup> are judged at the time of the redemption of that people; the wicked remain in the bands of death, until the Lord calls them, in judgment, to stand before the great white throne. The Church, as the first-fruits of the new creation, rises

<sup>m</sup> There are not *two* comings before us, but only one. The Lord has left the earth (Acts i.), passed through the heavens, and is now on the Father's throne. He will *return from that throne* to the created heavens and earth. The return is from the place He went *to*, *i. e.*, the eternal throne to the place He went from — creation; whether the earth which He left, ere He went up through the heavens, or the heavenlies through which He passed to the eternal throne.—Ed.

<sup>n</sup> This wants proof.—Ed.

before the end of the age, at the coming of the Lord, to meet Him. "Every one in his own order, Christ the first-fruits," the germ of the new creation, or the first of the first-fruits, "then those that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. xv. 23).

In principle. 1. The wicked are raised by the irresistible power of the Lord, who calls them up to judgment. The Church, already justified and partaking the spiritual life of her Head, rises by the power of the coming of that glorious Head, whose life communicates itself then to the bodies of His members sleeping in the dust of the earth.

2. "Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thes. iv. 17). If the glorifying of the bodies of those living is not here distinctly mentioned, it is, at least, fully implied; for it is not with these heavy and infirm bodies that we can be received up into the clouds, before the Lord in the air, to inhabit heaven and taste its joys. As Paul says elsewhere — "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Cor. xv. 50). And he immediately adds — "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (ver. 51—54). "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John iii. 2). "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able

even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. iii. 20, 21).

It was for this, transmutation and not death, that Paul waited; as he says, "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. v. 4).

Yet his will was in subjection, and he was willing to die if God called him. "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you" (Phil. i. 21—24).

But, instead of retaining that expectation of Paul, and saying with him, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed;" men have not feared to contradict him and to say, "One thing is quite sure, viz., that we must all die," and thus, they have separated both mind and heart from waiting for the Lord, which, according to grace, is the most mighty principle of all true devotedness, of all joyful obedience; in order to turn them upon death, which is the wages of sin, which, by itself, can produce only constrained and servile obedience. Yet, it is oft said, with the thought, too, of merely citing a scripture — it is appointed unto all men once to die. No. The Word says not so: if it did, it would contradict itself.

It says, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 27, 28). Thus, while telling us it is appointed UNTO MEN, to the mass, once to die, it recalls to our minds that Christ will be seen, a second time, without sin, by some who, therefore, will not die at all, by those who wait for Him, unto salvation, and shall be alive at His coming.

3. In that self-same moment, in that twinkling of the eye, the raised and the changed "shall be caught up

together with the Lord in the clouds." Enoch and Elias had already had this privilege of quitting the earth for heaven, without passing by death. Enoch had no witness, it would seem, of his translation, about which we have no details. Elias, prophet of the covenant, given from the midst of tempest and lightning, was carried up, in the midst of a whirlwind, in a chariot of fire and by horses of fire. Jesus, the mediator of a better covenant, of a covenant of grace, went up, and a cloud received Him out of sight. The Church, His Body, is taken up in like manner as Himself.

It will not be, then, a transformation slow and painful as that of the chrysalis, the produce of which needs long to feel its way into the use of listless and unexercised wings, before it can joyously rise into the air.

It will not be even as the resurrection of Lazarus, who came forth out of the grave bound hand and foot, and who needed to be set free from the clothes ere he could walk. It will be in a moment, in the twinkling of the eye, that the resurrection of the dead saints will take place, and without a doubt, also, the catching up of the one and of the other to meet the Lord.

Such is the accomplishment of the good promise which the Lord made to His disciples before He left them. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John xiv. 2, 3).

Such is the completing of the work of God in His elect, the fulness, and, as it were, the last word of our heavenly calling, without which, indeed, we shall never have a full and complete knowledge of it.

It is the heavenly Eve, who, after having been taken out of the side of her husband, while he rests upon the throne of the Father, is presented to Him at His coming forth in action again, a glorious Church. "That he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. v. 27).

God having chosen us in Christ, from before the foun-

dation of the world, has also accordingly "quicken'd us together with his Son," "raised us up together with Him," and "made us sit together with Him in heavenly places" (Eph. i. 3; ii. 5, 6). "For whom he did fore-know, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29).

And the purpose of the free and gratuitous love of the Father to usward is now in progress. The Son has drawn us to Himself, and united us to Himself through faith. Set thus in communion with Him, we have, in some measure, had His sentiments and likeness communicated to us. But the work begun He will perfect, quickening our bodies and transforming them to the likeness of His glorious body. The Lord has separated us in principle and spirit entirely from the world, and makes us feel the nothingness and the corruption of it, and draws to Himself our affections and thoughts. This, also, He will perfect in us, drawing us to Himself upon the clouds outside of this world.

And the means employed by the Lord, for this admirable work, is always the same — His Word. It is His Word, in the mouth, perhaps, of some feeble and despised sinner, which quickened us, and separated us from the world by uniting us to Him. His word also it will be, but a word of command, sounding through the heavens with the voice of the archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God, which will quicken the last particle of our perishable bodies, and will re-unite us to Him for ever. Those who shall have heard His voice calling them to faith and conversion, and who have obeyed Him, shall hear His glorious voice to the bottom of their tombs, and shall come forth thence; or, if still alive, shall hear it in the body of infirmity and mortality, and shall be changed. Those who shall have refused to hear it, and to obey Him, when they were called by that word to conversion, shall abide in the bands of death, until they shall be raised for judgment.

Thus Thy word, Lord Jesus! Thy blessed voice is that which works everything in Thy people; as Thou hast said, "My sheep hear my voice, and follow me!"

Oh! how yet far more attractive and more precious would the attractive voice of the Lord seem to us, if we were in the constant habit of thinking, that it is about soon to sound from the cloud to quicken our mortal bodies, and to draw us to Him in the heavens, that there where He is we may be also!

Yes! if the unbeliever could but believe that the voice which now speaks to him in the gospel, and which seems to him but weakness and folly, is the only one which can, not only give him peace in his own soul, but also quicken his body! If he could believe that that voice which now speaks of grace and pardon is about to become as a double-edged sword, to smite the nations with a flame of fire, to execute vengeance upon those that know not God, and obey not the gospel! If he could but think that it is the almighty voice of Him to whom man *must* yield obedience, when it cites the dead, small and great, to appear before Him to be judged according to their works! But these are things which the Spirit alone can reveal to the heart.

Ours then be it, brethren, beloved of the Lord, and partakers of the heavenly calling — ours be it to render thanks without ceasing to God, that He has chosen us: “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess. ii. 13, 14).

May that blessed hope, more and more laid hold of by faith, become more and more our comfort, and the power of practical holiness, according as it is written, “Comfort one another with these words” (1 Thess. iv. 18); “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure” (1 John iii. 3).

Do we weep over friends, beloved in the Lord? Soon He shall appear Himself in the heavens, and at His word the beloved ones shall rise *first*; then we who are alive shall be caught up together with them in the air, and so shall we be ever with the Lord. Then there will be an end to all the separations produced by the circumstances

and the dire necessities of life; to the separations too often yet more afflictive, which sin has brought in between those, who being but one body, should also have but one and the same heart. In the house of the Father all the children will be united around him, the firstborn from among many brethren, who has not been ashamed to call them brethren; not one shall be wanting — not a fear even remain of any further separation. If then we weep, let us not weep as those who are without hope, but let us comfort one another with the thought, “so shall we be for ever with the Lord.”

The infirmities of this body of sin, do they render it like to a heavy burden which we have to drag with difficulty about with us? Do they hinder us from glorifying the Lord with all the diligence which we should desire? The Lord, when He comes, will change our vile bodies, and will render them like unto His own glorious body. As we bear now the image of the earthly Adam — full of pains and groans — we shall then bear the image of the Heavenly Man — full of glory and happiness. Then shall we see the Lord face to face — then shall we serve Him without fatigue and without infirmity. Patience, then, and courage for a little time, that we may be able to glorify Him, if He call us thereunto in the midst of suffering and infirmity. He will come quickly, and will not tarry.

Are we suffering from poverty, under the injustice of men, or from persecution at their hands? 'Tis to the coming of the Lord that the Word sends us for our consolation. “Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain” (James v. 7). Thus are we taught that acts of violence, injustice, and oppression, shall reign on the earth until the Lord come to destroy those that corrupt it, and to renew all things by His presence in glory; but before that day we shall be gathered up to Him, away from the world and the wicked.

Oh! how should we be comforted in all our suffering, if we had ever before our eyes that blessed moment in

which the Lord will unite us to Himself for ever! For which of our sorrows will not then disappear, as a dream in the morning! And how would that consolation ever contribute to our practical sanctification? For whence come murmurings, irritation, envy, avarice, and so many lusts, which war against our souls, if not from this, that the hope of our speedy meeting with the Lord is not lively in us? Then our poor hearts, which like the ivy have need of something to which to cling, no longer able to cling to heaven, cling to earth. But when that hope animates us, then irritation and murmuring will give place to a peaceful and patient waiting, even to joy and thanksgiving; earthly affections will yield to heavenly; then, even while our feet tread this nether earth, our hearts will already be in heaven.

'Tis thus that the Lord sanctifies His people; first by His grace, and then by the hope of His glory, which is the perfecting of it. When He has said to us, "Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee," He has taken from our hearts the burden which oppressed them; He has brought us to Himself, confounded both at the thought of our own wickedness and of His love. We then feel the need of no longer living to ourselves, but to Him that loved us, and gave Himself for us. In saying to us, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also," he transfers our hope, our treasure, our life into heaven; He makes of us heavenly citizens, — strangers and pilgrims for a little while here below. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. ii. 11—14). May the Lord deign to direct our hearts to the love of God, and to the patient waiting for Christ! (2 Thess. iii. 5).

N<sup>o</sup> XIV.

## 2 CORINTHIANS.

THE Apostle writes the second Epistle to the Corinthians under the influence of the consolations of Christ — consolations experienced when the troubles which came upon him in Asia were at their height; and renewed at the moment when he wrote his letter, by the good news which Titus had brought him from Corinth — consolations which (now that he is happy about them) he imparts to the Corinthians; who, by grace, had been their source in the last instance.

The first letter had awakened their conscience, and had re-established the fear of God in their heart, and integrity in their walk. The sorrowing heart of the apostle was revived by hearing this good news. The state of the Corinthians had cast him down, and a little removed from his heart the feelings produced by the consolations with which Jesus filled it, during his trials at Ephesus. How various and complicated are the exercises of him who serves Christ, and cares for souls! The spiritual restoration of the Corinthians, by dissipating Paul's anguish, had renewed the joy of these consolations, which the tidings of their misconduct had interrupted. He afterwards returns to this subject of his sufferings at Ephesus; and develops, in a remarkable way, the power of the life by which he lived in Christ.

He addresses all the saints of that country, as well as those in the city of Corinth, which was its capital; and, being led by the Holy Ghost to write according to the real sentiments which that Spirit produced in him, he at once places himself in the midst of the consolations which flowed into his heart, in order to acknowledge in them, the God who poured them into his tried and exercised spirit.

terest, but was content to be weak that they might be strong; for what he desired was their perfection. But he wrote, being absent, as he had said, in order that when present he might not be obliged to act with severity, according to the authority which the Lord had given him for edification, and not for destruction.

He has written that which his heart — filled and guided by the Holy Ghost — impelled him to say: he had poured it all out; and now, wearied, so to speak, with the effort, he closes the epistle with a few brief sentences. “ Rejoice, be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace.” Happen what might, it was this which he desired for them; and that the God of love and of peace, should be with them. He rests in this wish, exhorting them to salute one another with affection, as all the saints, including himself, saluted them; praying that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, might be with them all.

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#### EXTRACT.

. . . . “ We will not say . . . the former days were the best. I do not believe it. I own we have been humbled and exercised, and been ensnared and drawn aside, and have betrayed nature again and again,—to our rebuking and shame, but still the present days are the best. *He* has used all to our blessing; and the heart is a little nearer to Him, and the hope more surely is making Him its object.

“ That is a fine bold saying of faith in Psalm xlix., though, perhaps, in its fullest sense, we may, through preventing grace, have not been called to utter it. ‘ Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall encompass me about.’

“ There is the early springing of the year’s growth in its infant greenness, while as yet it has not been broken or withered, and it is lovely to the eye; but it is not fit for the sickle, as it is when broken and tossed by summer and autumn sun and wind, and [with us] the experience of the soul is after such a pattern. It is freshest and more pleasant in its earlier buddings, but it is far less ready *then*, for the bosom of Him that binds the sheaves.”

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

## FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST.

ALL our blessing—all that God has to give, and all that we can receive—flows to us through association with the Christ of God, in His earth-rejected but heaven-honoured position.

I.—*On Association with Christ Jesus in His Death.*

Rom. vi. 5 — “If we have been planted together<sup>a</sup> in the likeness of His [Christ’s] death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.”

The word *together* does not here refer to us merely (as though it were said, “we, all together, were planted,” etc., or, “we all were planted together”); but it refers

<sup>a</sup> The word rendered *planted together* is the adjective *σύνφυτος*, which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. In the Septuagint it occurs twice. 1st. in Zach. ii. 2, “the *thickly-planted* forest.” Here it represents the Hebrew כִּצְוֹר, rendered in the authorised version, “the forest of *the vintage*” (marg. *defenced*). 2ndly., in Amos ix. 13, “the hills shall be *planted*.” Here it stands for a hithpahal of מָוֶה; English translation, “the hills shall melt.” The idea of “*consolidation in one*,” of what could be looked at as having many component parts, is easily traced in all these renderings. In ordinary Greek (as contrasted with Greek in the Bible) we might give — *Growing together, naturally* or *necessarily connected together*, as the meaning; as, for instance, *strife* naturally grows up with a contentious character, courage with a manly character, etc. In a secondary sense, it is applied to a closed, healed wound, where the parts have *grown* together in one.

The word *φύσις* is from the same root (without the *συν*). It is rendered in Eph. ii. 3, “by *nature* the children of wrath”; and in 2 Pet. i. 4, “made partakers of the divine *nature*.” The force of the preposition *συν*, as added to the adjective, would be much that of *co-*, *associated with*, *made participants of this or that*, etc. — “*made of one nature*,” *co-natured*. GROWTH, *as of nature* (in contrast with art), is the proper meaning of *φυτος*. When it *sprang up* (Luke viii. 6, 8), and a root of bitterness *spring up* (Heb. xii. 15), give the thought (it is that, I think), of the development, according to nature, of something which exists, and of nature as contrasted with art.

to us *together with Christ* (as though it were said, we—believers—have been planted together with Christ, in the likeness of His death, etc.). It might be rendered, word for word, thus—

For if we have (or are) become co-planted (with Him) in the likeness of His death, we shall also be (in that) of His resurrection.

Adam (the first) transgressed in Eden; there was moral death<sup>b</sup> in Paradise; as to the body, death was first seen outside of the garden; with transgression, man became exposed to wrath, to a wrath the full force of which is not seen until the second death.

Now, herein was the mercy of God shown; that when man, as such (all men), were lying under the just judgment against the sin of their forefather Adam<sup>c</sup>—when each man had received from that head of the family the law of sin and death in his members—when each one was in himself a sinner, also in action, and many, also, were transgressors of the known will of God—loving self, and hating God and one another—God gave His Son, in love, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but might have everlasting life. That Son of God went, as Son of man, to the cross, and there tasted—and oh! how fully—of the bitter wages of sin in His death upon the cross. Personally guiltless, not only innocent but incorruptibly pure, no penalty resting upon Him, He was treated as if He were the only one that had penalty resting upon Him—as if He were guilty. The cup was given into His hand to drink,—

<sup>b</sup> By moral death, and death in trespasses and sins, I understand that which appeared in man directly he had transgressed. He could not form a just estimate of God, or of himself. On the one hand, having offered an insult to God, he, as a transgressor, suspected Him whom he had insulted—he had lost all power to recognise what was true of God. On the other hand, he thought himself competent, when fallen, to set aside Omnipotence and Omniscience, while himself was but the snared prey of Satan (see Gen. iii.). He was, as to God, morally dead.

<sup>c</sup> The law of the Creator's supremacy to the creature, and of the creature's voluntary obedience and dependence upon the Creator, had been violated, once for all, in Eden, by Adam; and all his race were guilty, whether they knew it or not.

the cup of wrath, due to us alone, — and He drank it in our stead. And now the way is open for God to act toward those who are personally guilty under penalty, as though they were guiltless under no penalty. This way He proposes to sinners. His love, and mercy, and compassion, in having provided such a way, and the perfectness of the work, is found in the gospel.

In a field into which sin had entered, and death by sin — where the sentence of death lay upon all, for that all have sinned — where all are dead through the offence of their common source — all under a judgment of condemnation, death reigning over them, for that they are sinners and transgressors — none able to turn aside the penalty, none competent to bear it — into that field the doctrine of grace, through the Lord Jesus Christ, has been introduced. “The free gift”; “the grace of God, and the gift by grace”; “the free gift is of many offences unto justification”; “they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Christ Jesus”; “by the righteousness of one (the free gift was) toward all men unto justification of life”; “by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous”; “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord”:—Such are the expressions in which the blessed subject is presented to us in the fifth chapter of the epistle to the Romans.

To turn now to our portion of scripture in Rom. vi.

In all religion which is based and built upon what a man, as a creature, can do, certain things are, for the time, taken for granted; a certain power is supposed to be in him, — a certain goodness of *will*, at least, is admitted possibly to exist, otherwise, why and how should he trade on his own account with God? If he believed himself hopelessly ruined, to have no strength and no will for God, he would hardly attempt to utilise his time so as to prepare for death and for judgment. For it is appointed unto man once to die, and after that the judgment, is a truth which characterises not only the reality of man's position as a creature, but also all his thoughts

of religion as a creature. As a fallen creature, he has to meet death and to stand in judgment. Contrasted with this is the religion of grace; in it death and the judgment are behind us, and not before us.

This changes everything; for it clearly connects the believer with a system in which a *mere* human creature, as such, has no place. As a creature, I go not beyond the range of creature thoughts and the ruin I am in; I think, to use my life that I may meet death and stand in judgment. But, as a believer, I have to do with the resurrection-power which raised Christ from the grave; and death and judgment are behind me, that I may be able to live in grace. To stand on both grounds at once, or to stand with a foot upon each, is impossible.

I, creature-life—death and judgment to come—stand in contrast with Christ, once dead but now alive again for evermore, resurrection-power, heaven and glory.

I do not think Christians have marked the contrast enough, or that they are adequately alive to the impossibility of one and the same person being at any given time upon the two grounds. The religion of nature supposes that I am alive; the religion of Christ that I am dead and buried. The religion of fallen human nature supposes *I* have more power now that I am fallen than man unfallen had; *i. e.*, that I can undo the fall from which my forefather kept not himself; the religion of grace settles that power is all in God and Christ. The former supposes I can stand before God in my sins to adjust my matters with Him; the latter declares that the Christ of God has adjusted everything before God, when He was forsaken on the cross, because He bore my burden, and paid the penalty due by me.

A man cannot be in Christ and out of Christ at the same time. If in Him, all is settled; if apart from Him, he is lost.

But as to the believer in Christ: "Shall we continue in sin?" says Paul. Away with the thought. If dead to it, how shall we live in it. We have become identified with Jesus Christ in His death, baptized into Jesus Christ—baptized into His death.

I — under sentence for Adam's transgression, morally

dead myself—a transgressor, also, and a sinner—had, in myself, nothing to expect but the penalty, the penal consequences of this state of sin. Christ endured the penalty; took, in the bitter cup, the penal consequences, the punishment due to me. Grace has identified me with Him,—buried me, by baptism, into His death. The penalty paid, I am clear. I have been planted together in the likeness of His death. So identified with Him who died, that, as certainly as He was personally guiltless who was reckoned as guilty upon the cross, so all the I, that was most grievously guilty, is reckoned guiltless. Christ was the beloved Son in whom God was alway well pleased. There was nothing in Him, or that He did, that could challenge anything but favour from God. His going to the cross, even, was obedience—“obedient unto death, the death of the cross”; “the cup which my Father hath given, shall I not drink it”; “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O my God!” There was nothing that exposed Him to wrath, no penalty was due to Him; but He, the Just One, took up the penalty due to us. He would stand in our stead in the judgment. It is I, myself, not my actions done, or my thoughts and intentions even, which is in question. What a man is, the state of his being is infinitely worse than his actions.<sup>d</sup> I was guilty, exposed to the wrath of God on account of what I was; but, through the death of the guiltless One, I am guiltless in God’s sight.

In that He died, He died unto sin once<sup>e</sup> (vi. 10).

<sup>d</sup> It is interesting to compare such portions as Psa. ciii. and Eph. i. and ii. The former is the view of mercy of a well-taught Jew, the man after God’s own heart; and the latter the view of mercy which the apostle of the uncircumcision had. Again, the way in which a Jew learnt sin, by deeds done, in 2 Sam. xi. and xii. (the awful acts of sin of the anointed king of Israel), when contrasted with what men were found to have been whom God took that they should become members of Christ, in Eph. i. 20, to ii. 5, is most instructive. Principle is deeper than practice; it is its root.

<sup>e</sup> In that He died He died unto sin once. There is but one sense in which Christ can be said to have died unto sin, and that sense is, unto its judgment, or penalty, when He was our substitute in the judgment. Himself and His position were quite peculiar. Eve was a bone taken out of Adam’s side, and built up into a woman

There is but one sense in which it can be said of Christ that He died unto sin, and that one sense is penally, as bearing its penalty. We were morally dead and under sentence; He bore the sentence, and to those that believe there is an end of the whole matter. Adam's judgment is passed and executed; the sentence against all our transgressions, sins, omissions, and commissions — and that, too, against the very root of all these, sin in our nature — is executed and past, and never can revive. What to man was impossible — what seemed, in the nature of things, absurd — God has made true to faith. "I have to live so as to be able, if possible, to meet death, and then to stand before God in the judgment," says thoughtful man outside of Eden. "God has put death and the judgment for ever behind me," says faith; "they are passed and not future to me, through the death of the Lord Jesus."

Faith lets God be true, though every man be a liar; and, therefore, faith accredits God's testimony. He that

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by divine power; and the Lord was seed of the woman by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, and, therefore, that holy thing which was born of her was called Son of the Highest. But there was not only thus human body, soul, and spirit, but the eternal Son of God, tabernacled in that holy, harmless, undefiled flesh. Satan had nothing in Him. Death, as the wages of sin, were not His, by position, as a descendant of Adam, nor His, by nature, as if He had sin in Him; to say so would be blasphemy. He had power to lay down His life, and He had power to take His life again; and none had power to take it from Him. Being thus in Himself, and in His position, entirely free and clear, He voluntarily took up the penalty due to others; and having paid it, in dying — having died unto it, under it — He was free from it, and freedom for those for whom He died is found in Him. Where we find freedom from the penalty there, also, we find freedom from many things besides; as (1st) from the position of the descendants of Adam; (2ndly) freedom from the power of law, and (3rdly) of lusts stirred up by law; and (4thly) freedom from the mastership of Satan, and (5thly) the course of the world; and (6thly) freedom from the bondage of sin in nature. None of these things, clearly, could (without blasphemy) be said to have been fruits to the blessed Lord Himself of His death. They all existed, as to Himself, previously, or He could not have become our substitute; He would not have been fitted to give Himself for others, if Himself had been in any way under the yoke of sin.

has faith is "dead to sin;—he has been baptised into the death of Jesus Christ;—buried with Him by baptism into death;—planted together in the likeness of His death;—the old man crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed;—he that is dead is freed from sin," etc. Yes, everything that man in nature—man in fallen nature—had to reckon with God about, thought that he had to settle with God, but which he never could have settled, has all been settled and reckoned for between God and Christ. In nature, death to a man is the doorway out of life—this life—into the world unseen; and the second death is the realising fully what in God's presence is the anguish prepared for the devil and his angels, whose slave man has been. In grace Christ's death is, to faith, the answer, put into time that is passed, of all that was or that seemed to be against us; it is the doorway into life,—doorway where all our guilt is left, for the judgment against us is there passed,—doorway into eternal life, where all is life, and love, and favour.

In the latter part of Rom. v. Paul had shown the two headships—that of Adam, and that of Christ, and the contrast between the positions and portions of those to whom each was severally in headship before God. In chap. vi. he shows what is the passage from off the ground of Adam, on which all men are by birth, on to the ground of Christ, which pertains to those only who have faith, and receive the grace which God presents to faith. Faith and confession unto salvation (says the word) identifies us with Christ; and with Christ, not only as one who has merits, and against whom, personally, no charge *could* stand, but with Christ, who has met and borne, in His own person, all the consequences justly due to all that we—looked at as part of a fallen race, as having the law of sin in us, as having done sin, and as having to meet death and judgment—were exposed to. Not one point or item which stood against us but what has been met; and more than this, for "I"—the fallen creature *I*—is got rid of. Faith puts us on the other side of death and of judgment; that is no part of our portion, or inheritance, or lot, from Adam; but

faith sets us in eternal life, and gives us heaven and glory. To nature and to common sense, as derived from Adam, the thing is impossible, unreasonable, absurd; and to nature it supposes a confusion of times past and to come. What! I, who am here, with death and the judgment before me, am to consider that death and the judgment are behind me! so might nature exclaim; and it might add, More easily might the sun stand still upon Gibeon, and the moon in Ajalon (Josh. x. 12) — more readily should the shadow go backward ten degrees by which it had gone down (2 Kings xx. 11, Is. xxviii. 8), than that thing *be!* But to faith it is *not ONLY* so. By faith, I can say I am not only *dead* and have passed the judgment, so that there can be nought against me, for who shall punish a dead man, who has been fully judged already; — the justice of God, justice due to Christ who died for me, is my safety; — but I am alive again for evermore, in a life which death cannot touch, which knows no grave, and is beyond judgment — yea, in which judgment is turned to victory.

This is reckoned, counted so of God, and therefore sure. Yes; but while that is true, and makes all sure to the faith which accredits God's written word, there is more than the mere reckoning and counting to be thought of. For "the why" of this is revealed. God has given to us the Spirit of Him who — being holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, Himself the Just One — died for us, the unjust. That Spirit has communicated to us the divine nature, we are born of an incorruptible seed. And though the bodies in which we dwell are still unrenewed, they yet are redeemed; and the power that will change and renew them is in Him who sits at the right hand of God. The grace that made me one with Christ — the grace which gave Christ to be Head of His Body, the Church — the grace which sought to make its exceeding riches known in us, through the love of God, are the *why* and *because* of this reckoning, this counting.

I may remark, too, a difference, and to a conscience in God's presence, and to a renewed man, it is a most important one — the difference between, on the one

hand, I, in nature, having to die when God's providence brings the hour, and then to stand in judgment before the great white throne after the thousand years are ended: and, on the other, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ in securing a race for Him, having made good death and present acceptance to me, within the veil where Christ, earth-rejected, sits at His own right hand; and the means of this—the death upon the cross, under judgment, of the Son of Man, who was divinely perfect, yet took (proof of His perfection) my place and bore my judgment. Himself, the Judge of quick and dead, will never forget His judgment as borne by Himself for me.

The difference is immense; because it is between things being settled according to the claims of God as Creator over a creature, and the same thing being settled according to the right of God as Redeemer to make Himself a name in displaying the riches of His grace in saving rebels.

Faith knows that it is finished! Not only Christ's death upon the cross, but ours also to guilt, and all penalty through Him. It is finished: the penalty is paid, the guilt is passed: we were guilty and under penalty, but we are so no longer, for the penalty is paid—it is finished! With most Christians, the truth I speak of has not hold of their minds, and their minds have no hold of it.

When thinking of what they *were* by nature, they know, perhaps, that the mercy and compassion of God has found an answer to it all in Christ. But the thought of most minds is rather as if they were one with Christ a-dying on the cross, than one with Christ who has died and is alive again for evermore. To their minds the sentence is not, as yet, seen as having been fully executed—and they never have settled peace. They want their old man, their original selves, to be still alive before God, though perhaps a-dying. Some think of this old man, this original self, as *yet to be* crucified, that then they may find acceptance; but of course they find not how to accomplish this; others, again, talk of it as being “a crucifying,” but that it will only *die* when

body and soul are separated;—of course peace is then put off till death. Some, again, pray that we “may die” in Christ; so misapplying, to the question of their personal acceptance with God, verses which, in Scripture, apply to the walk of a person who is personally accepted. For instance, “I protest by your rejoicing, I die daily,” is often so applied: the verse means nothing of the sort, but quite another thing; even this, that Paul was heedless about guarding the life of his body in its present state, because its resurrection was assured; and, moreover, to him to live was Christ, and to die was gain. Then, again, two other verses are often thus most sadly misused, viz., Rom. viii. 13, and Col. iii. 5. In both of them, Paul speaks of the walk and work of accepted persons, and not of the work by which acceptance is gained.

In the first of these verses, remark, mortification of the deeds of the body, flows out of life in Christ, and is the pathway into life, life in glory. To say that mortification of the deeds of the body gains life, is Romanism and legalism of the very coarsest kind. Again, as to Col. iii. 5, the very perusal of the verse is enough: “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry” (vers. 3—5).

And observe **WHAT** *the members* spoken of are, fornication, uncleanness, etc. And (ver. 6) they are the things which draw down vengeance on the children of disobedience—the things which *used to mark* those to whom Paul wrote (ver. 7), but now were to mark them no longer. Again; do not many Christians really ignore the force of Christ’s death in judgment as their substitute, by a system which, while it recognises Him alive to intercede for them, supposes their old guilty selves to be alive and recognised too as alive and guilty in God’s presence. While they are in holy intercourse with God and the Lamb, they have a blessed, present taste of guilt put away, or, rather, they forget all about it, and taste ac-

ceptance and security; but, when going through the routine of ordinary life, they are verily, in their own thoughts, guilty. The effect is, that instead of having been once for all cleared from all that belongs to Adam the first, and set free to walk in the power of a new life in Christ, habitual failure and sinning, and fresh application for pardon and peace and acceptance mark their state and course. The habit of sinning and failing thus gets justified. Adam is honored and nourished and reckoned to be alive, is carefully kept, and must be allowed to breathe and act while alive, according to his nature — that is, sin; and they think that this it is which constitutes a Christian life, even the constantly washing out, by fresh applications to the throne of mercy and the blood there, the soil that flows forth from ourselves. This is a practical denial of being dead with Christ, and leads to a *sanction* of sinning, and to a denial of the perfectness of the one offering once offered, the one purgation of sin once made. I never saw it exist where a clear view of the new life in Christ was seen; indeed it could not be in such case; nay, more, a clear view of new life in Christ cannot be sustained, unless our being dead as to all that we *were* according to Adam, has been seen: dead as to its penalty and lordship over us.

Believing in Christ, I am one with Him. One with Him who [not being unjust, but the alone Just One] died for me [who was unjust]; as before God I am to recognise that I am so indissolubly one with Christ in His death, through grace and divine power, that I am cleared from the Adam-standing, that God has nothing against me. I am clear upon the counts: 1. Of my being a descendant from the rebel Adam. 2. Of my having a nature prone to sin through the law of sin and death in the flesh. 3. Of the issues of this nature in me being not according to God, but contrary to Him. To each of these counts in the charge, I can say I was guilty, but am clear, as one that was guilty but has been cleared. I personally am accepted — I have for the acceptance of myself no pardon to ask — all that needed pardon in *that* sense is through Christ dead and buried. I do not in *that* sense need washing afresh, or that Christ should

either die again or shed more blood, or offer His blood again, or apply His blood again; His hands, and feet, and side, and forehead, as well as His sitting at the right hand of God, tell me that all *that* is finished. I am free, therefore, to walk in a new life, even in the un-mixed life which I have in Christ, who is in God. In Him surely there is no mixture of the old life of Adam, the rebel, and the new life of the Christ of God. Yes! it will be said, but as to practical failings — Have you done with Adam? Have you not a law of sin and death in your members? What do you do with that?

My answer to such a question would be this — I can look at things, 1st, according to God, and according to God's presence; or, 2ndly, according to man and man's presence; or, 3rdly, according to what will be when God brings His own people home to His own presence.

1st. Of things according to God and God's presence; I can know nothing whatsoever save from the Scripture. "It is written," is the alone explanation of God's thoughts, to those that have faith and are led by the Spirit. Now according to that word, I find that what Christ has done as to those that are united to Him, who once died though now He liveth for evermore, has cleared them personally and individually of all culpability. Who shall condemn — who shall lay anything to the charge of those whom God has justified by the death and resurrection of Christ. All that I, as from and of and in Adam, was, Christ took upon Himself, and what it was, was told out fully and once for all upon His cross; and the judgment thereon, borne by Him: all that He was and is, is mine in the power of the new life in which I am associated with Him. And more than this, for my security of being with Him and like Him, hereafter, is in Himself who is hidden in God; and the answer to all my wilderness-walk as a Christian here below, is found in Him as alive from the dead, an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

2ndly. According to man and man's presence. My being personally without culpability before God, does *not* take the law of sin and death out of my members. Then I must sin still and be always failing, you will say.

Nay. It is left in me because of the good pleasure of God, who, as the living God, has been pleased to undertake Himself to conduct His people through the wilderness. He wills that we should find grace to make choice of Him and His ways, in preference to ourselves and to our own ways; and He leaves us the full leisure to show whether we will identify ourselves with Him who first identified Himself with us; whether we will appropriate Him and His path, who has appropriated us to Himself. This, however, is in the *government* of God in time; of God governing the ways, and forming for eternity the characters of the people *whom He has eternally saved*. As according to man and in man's presence, I desire to justify myself in my having hailed Jesus Christ as the alone Saviour, and preferred righteousness which is of faith to that which is of works; I desire to prove that the works of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, are better than the works of the flesh under law; I desire (according to a new nature), to justify God, and Christ, and the Spirit of grace, against the world, Satan, and the flesh. To me to live is Christ and to die is gain, for "in all things more than conquerors through Him that loved us," is not effaced from our banner. I do not, for a moment, suppose sin to be taken out of my body; it ought not to be; I, as a Christian, do not even wish it to be so while I am in the wilderness. God forbid. No: but being occupied with Christ on high, and Christ in the coming glory, I, yet *not I*, but Christ that dwelleth in me, can keep it under. Keeping under his body and bringing it into subjection, Paul could do what Saul could not — appropriate his body and all its members unto the glory of God, and give himself to the service of Christ, in spite of Satan who, through lust and the course of the world, had once been his absolute master. Paul himself was, through grace, the master when walking near the Lord, and realised the sweetness of victory, not only over him who had been his master, and over circumstances, but over himself.

The power of this our life and walk here below, is not the death of Christ, though that puts us free from the life of man and of earth, to live the life of Christ

and of heaven upon earth; save for His death there would be no such freedom: but the power of our life and walk down here is in the living grace of a living Christ, Head over all things to His Church, which is His body; and Himself the great High Priest — Captain of salvation. It is as alive from the dead that He guards us, and that if we do fail He restores, and that He washes all His people from the defilement of the wilderness as they pass through it. Instead of this, the wretched system I advert to practically denies this present grace of the living God, and in denying our death through Him that died, leaves us to go on sinning, and in uncertainty labouring for forgiveness; and it practically denies, too, the existence of a church militant upon earth, and the grace of God which, while it secured the salvation of Lot as well as of Abram, left it to each when saved, to show out his own walk and the experience consequent thereon in the wilderness.<sup>f</sup>

3rdly. As to what will be when God brings home His own people to His own presence. If God has already identified us that believe with His Christ, who is in Himself—if he permits us, down here, each in a little world of His own, to put down the evil and to take up the good in detail—a time is coming when we, whom He has redeemed, will meet Him in His own circumstances and glory. Faith desires that Christ's personal presence should be the honoured place of full fruition, and it alone—to be with Him, to see Him, to be like Him—waits; and faith would have it wait, until He has His full joy, and until He can receive His church and present her to Himself, a glorious church without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. I would not have it otherwise. In the wilderness, *let me have the wilderness portion Christ has given and marked for me; let me suffer with Him; let me fill up that which remains of*

<sup>f</sup> There is a bearing of this question upon mere human responsibility in those that are not believers, though they have the oracles of God and are professors, which I do not enter upon here; because, as speaking to believers, I speak to those who need not to be convicted of responsibility as men for having light; seeing they know themselves lost in Adam and found in Christ.

those sufferings of the Christ: if absent from the body and present with Himself in spirit — patience and bliss will go together, as now patience and suffering go together; — but, only when *He* has *His* full joy, would I have mine, even at the second coming. But then *He* shall change this vile body, and fashion it like unto *His* own glorious body, by the mighty power whereby *He* is able to subdue all things unto Himself.

As connected with the Lord's government in the church (1 Cor. xi. 27—34), and with the Father's regulating of His family (1 John ii. 1), a person who knows himself saved can most clearly, if and when he fails, make confession of failure, and ask not only for pardon as a servant or as a child, but also that the consequences of the failure be removed. But then remark, 1st, that no one but a person who knows himself to be already saved can think of his work as a servant, or of his walk as a child. If an unsaved man were to do so it would be self-righteousness, self-justification. He is not saved, his works are not, to his mind, fruits — of the Spirit and of fellowship with Christ. What must I do to be saved? is really his question; self and not Christ is in question. It is monstrous to think of the works, whether they are good or bad, whether they can be accepted or not, before and in the presence of One who has *already* condemned the very being himself whose works are in question. And according to John (iii. 18), man is under condemnation already. Man's thoughts are, that a sinner must work, and a saint, if such can be found, must rest.<sup>§</sup> God's command is, that the sinner do rest from his own works, and that the saint do labour to bring forth fruit unto God. And so entirely distinct before God is the salvation of the soul and works, that the Scripture never refers to the works of an unsaved man, save to show that he is condemned; the tree is condemned, and the fruit proves it. It never speaks of a saved man, without supposing that there will be works, and fruit unto God, for God to examine. The tree was planted to bear fruit. He that is one with Christ is fruitful.

<sup>§</sup> Perhaps it is on this account that man reserves the word saint, contrary to the usage of the Bible, to those that are dead.

And, secondly, let men say what they like about their failing every day, and every hour, and in everything. It may be true, or it may not—it makes no difference to me—I have to follow (not them but) Paul, even as he followed Christ. Now I utterly deny that his life was a life of incessant failure. The even course of it justified his saying “To me, to live is Christ;” and again: “According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death” (Phil. i. 20). He was in all things more than conqueror through Him that loved him: and may not, ought not we to follow him even as he followed Christ?

I know it is easy to excite the flesh to say, in self-confidence, “To me to live *shall be* Christ:” but I know also that the first step in the life of obedience, raises the question of how far do we know, practically, this death of which I speak: not dying, not willingness merely to suffer and purpose to deny oneself, but how far we have learnt what it is to count ourselves already dead through Christ. So Paul saw and felt to be the case when he wrote to Timothy. It is a faithful saying: “For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him” (2 Tim. ii. 11).

Here it was not the value of association with Christ that had died (as in Rom. vi.), so as to get judicially clear from all the penalties resting upon man as a creature, and as a descendant of Adam’s (in which light all judgment is past and none remains, save for us to judge ourselves in our walk); but it is the value of that association as setting one free from self; that we may suffer for Christ and endure hardness as His good soldiers.

A man must be fully assured, through faith and the Spirit, that in God’s presence he is dead judicially, in Christ,—looked upon by God in this sense as dead,—able to reckon himself as dead for him to be able to use that death against Satan, the world, and the flesh: to give, if I may be allowed the expression, by it, the slip to himself and all that self furnishes as a handle to Satan, the world, or lust to lay hold of.

The way that Christ's death is made of little effect by most Christians; the way that they have judaised it, out of its eternal value and the estimate heaven forms of it, and reduced it down to be a part of a human system of their own, borrowed from the law of fallen humanity and the elements of the world (both of which marked Judaism), is a most solemn sin. The Colossians (who had been dead in their sins and in the uncircumcision of the flesh (ii. 13), that is morally dead, are thus charged: "Wherefore, if ye be dead with<sup>h</sup> Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" etc. (ii. 20). They would sanction worldliness and accredit their own flesh, if they did so. And he adds: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. *For ye are dead*, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (iii. 3). "*Dead*," says he — most correctly — "seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds" (iii. 9). If the foundations be destroyed what can the righteous do?

He has so appropriated all that I was, as to bear the record of it in His own body; my soul knows those hands, those feet, that side, that forehead — but, blessed be God, I know them in Him who was dead but is alive again; I know them in Him who shall reign for ever — as the Lamb that was dead, but is alive again for evermore.

Reader! if God has shown you these things, may He add this grace, even that they act in power upon you, and that you find power to act upon them.

<sup>h</sup> In the expression "dead with," observe the difference of having died "*judicially*" according to God, "together with Christ," and the having died, according to man, in nature, together with Christ. The two thieves upon the cross both died according to man, in nature, as man would speak, with Christ. One died hardened in sin; the other believed unto life. Of the latter only can we speak as being judicially identified by God with Christ in His death, so that all penalty of sin passed from Him by the death of Christ. That which God has joined together let no man put asunder. To the believer, God has made "sin" and the death of Christ to be indissolubly one — its penalty is gone, gone for ever, and also the freedom to live in it.

## No. XVI.

## THE DISMISSAL OF HAGAR.

Gen. xvi. xxi.

WHEN Hagar was driven from the house of Abram by Sarah, the angel of the Lord met her, and told her to return and submit herself under the hand of her mistress. For it was very wrong in her to have acted in her mistress's house as if she had been the principal person there. She was a mother, it is true, and Sarah was still without a child. Nevertheless, she was but a servant; and acting in any other character, she entirely forgot her place. The angel, therefore, reproved her, ordered her to go back, and charged her, while she remained in Abram's house, to be in subjection to Sarah (Gen. xvi.).

This is a mystery. During the age of the Law, two elements were found together — that of *law*, and that of *grace*. There were the demands of righteousness, addressing themselves to man, and there were “the shadows of good things to come,” the witnesses of grace, revealing God in Christ. The Jew who made the law the principal of the two, mistook God's mind; the Jew who used it subordinately, having his soul nourished by the tokens and witnesses of grace, was, so far, a Jew after God's own heart.

This right-minded Jew is seen, for instance, in Nehemiah (see Neh. viii.). The Law was read on the first day of the seventh month; that day (as Lev. xxiii. 24 teaches us) in the Jewish year which witnessed grace or revival. The two elements were, therefore, on that occasion, brought into collision. At the hearing of the law the congregation weep. But Nehemiah tells them not to weep, but to rejoice; and he tells them to do this on the authority of that day, the first day of the seventh month. And they do so, making the witness of grace principal, and using the Law subordinately.

This was according to God.

*The Dismissal of Hagar.*

In due time the Lord comes; and, in the course of His ministry, He settles the question, or rather verifies the decision already made, between these two contending elements (see Mat. xii. 5, 6). The Sabbath represents the rights and demands of the Law, the priests in the temple witness the ways and provisions of grace. The Lord declares how the Sabbath had to yield to the Temple, whenever their rights interfered with each other. And this was as though He were the angel of Gen. xvi., telling Hagar to be under the hand of Sarah while she remained in the house of Abram.

The apostle in Rom. ii., I judge, teaches the same; for he rebukes the Jew for making his boast of the law, not knowing the "goodness," *i.e.*, the grace of God, in leading him to repentance. In the apostle's thought (of the Spirit surely), the Jew who was then refusing Christ and the Gospel, was making the Law *principal*, instead of using it as the servant of grace. He was resting in the Law, ignorant of the riches of divine "goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering."

But we are to go further with the history and with the mystery of Hagar. In process of time, one of the conflicting parties in the house of Abraham has to leave it, as we say, for good. Hagar is dismissed a second time, and there is then no angel or angel's voice bidding her to go back. Sarah had now become a mother; and her son, the son of a freewoman, must occupy and fill the house all alone (chap. xxi.).

And this is a mystery also.

In this present age — in these days of the risen, glorified Jesus, when the Spirit has been given to the elect on the title of all their sins being forgiven and Jesus ascended — the Law is not to appear. It has been nailed to the cross. We are dead to that wherein we were held. The handwriting of ordinances has been blotted out. The light and glory of the work of Christ must fill the house of God with one simple, bright, and gladdening element. Hagar has left Abraham's house, and left it for ever.

And as the Lord, in Mat. xii., was like the angel telling Hagar, that while she remained in the house she

*The Dismissal of Hagar.*

was to be subject to her mistress, so the apostle, in the epistle to the Galatians, is like Sarah insisting on Hagar quitting the house for ever. For it is now, in this age of a glorified Christ and of a given Spirit, no longer a mistress and a servant dwelling together under one roof, but a mother and her child, the freewoman and the heir. Scripture spoke in Sarah, as Gal. iv. tells us. It was the Holy Ghost who gave the word. And whether we look at the zeal of Sarah in Gen. xxi., or the earnestness of Paul in Galatians, we learn the precious secret of the bosom of God, that He will have His elect in the adoption and liberty of *children*. Relationship, as well as redemption, is of the grace in which we stand.

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FROM A SCOTCH HYMN BOOK.

- 1 THE LORD Himself shall come  
And shout a quickening word ;  
Thousands shall answer from the tomb :  
"For ever with the Lord !"
- 2 Then as they upward fly,  
That resurrection-word  
Shall be their shout of victory,  
"For ever with the Lord !"
- 3 How shall I meet those eyes ?—  
Mine on the cross I cast,  
And own myself the Saviour's prize :  
Mercy from first to last.
- 4 "Knowing as I am known!"—  
How shall I love that word,  
How oft repeat before the throne,  
"For ever with the Lord !"
- 5 That resurrection-word,  
That shout of victory —  
Once more: "For ever with the Lord !"  
Amen, so let it be!

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

## THE PRECIOUS AND THE VILE.

If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be  
as my mouth.—JER. XV, 14.

IN considering movements which affect the mass that professes itself Christian in one's own day, it is often as important as it is difficult, to divide between that which is of man and that which is of God. When the mass is out of order, a great truth may often act upon it in *a way* which shows the mass is out of order. Perhaps instead of such and such a truth, being, as it appears to be, the expression of the faith of the mass,—an action of the mass,—it has become an act from outside upon the mass; if so, there may, there will, be much that is defective, much, perhaps, that is positively evil manifested, and yet a truth of God may be there, and be to be recognised.

Take, for instance, the Bible and the Missionary Societies. What strong effects have been wrought upon the professing mass by these associations. That the associations were themselves defective, cannot be doubted—they were human associations; not the church of God as set up by Him; each attempting a part of the church's work—and but a part—and mixing up the good sought after with a quantity of human evil. The love of the Bible, and the sense of its claim over all men, was of God; so was the evangelist character of the body professing faith in Christ,—even this, that the holders of Bible-truth should be men to carry the message the wide world over—men that can utter its contents. But these two principles in our day were the principles of a few, and they have used them in these societies as a means of acting upon the mass, which still lies practically in the world; they were not, they are

not, the real principles of the many even yet. I am not finding fault; for, however defective and mixed the constitution and actions of the societies may have been, I am persuaded God has had *His part*, which is the precious to be taken forth from the vile.

Sense of responsibility; first, as to having the Bible, and, secondly, as to helping on the preaching of it to the heathen — can only be of God. The sense of both the one and the other marked the early Christians — was inseparable from the faith and the presence of the Spirit. The Bible Societies are but *modern and human expressions* of the former principle, and Missionary Societies of the latter. The principles are of God, and dear to every child of God. The difference between the constitution of the societies and that of the church tells its own tale; so also, I conceive, does the fact that the action of these societies is both partial in its object (each society having some *one* object) and is rather an action upon the mass of nominal Christians, than the action of the mass.

Within the last few years we have seen another association — the Evangelical Alliance. This is rather the effect of the action of a principle held by a few upon the many, than the action of the many from principle; and, while the scope of the action is less controlled than in either of the before-mentioned societies, it is yet limited and arbitrary. I conceive in this movement, also, there is the precious which faith will recognise as being of God, and take forth from all the vile with which it may be mixed. The master-principle here I conceive to be that stated by James in his epistle, viz., that one trait of faith is, that it is energetic, and will act and show itself by good works. I thank God for the good, and though I keep myself apart from the evil of confederacy, I can rejoice if that which in solitude I am acting upon to God, is used by others before the public to act upon the mass, and to lead the mass to act at all. To act by means of a truth upon another, and to communicate that same truth so as to become the spring of action to that other, are two very different things. The principle itself is one of eternal and divine moment;

faith acting, through life, in the soul, must show itself by recognising God, and that which is of God before man. The irregularity of the movement I conceive to be the proof of the mass being out of order, and that, while the principle of the few who are acting is in itself divine, they err through not seeing aright its bearing.

One effect of all these associations is, to the considerate mind, clear, though little thought of by the actors in them. Their action has been showing, and is showing, the error and insufficiency of the ecclesiastical apparatus of the day; and they have been, and are, developing new objects and new motives, which cannot exist long with the old machinery. It is not for me to prophesy how these things *will* work; how far, on the one side, they may be overruled of divine grace to gather His elect together, where there is faith; or how far, on the other, where mere human will, and energy, and novelty have had their sway; they may lead many into a maze, out of which they will see no readier exit than infidelity. I am persuaded the old high church view was correct, viz., that all these things were innovations upon, and not consistent with, the church order of 1800; that to sanction them would be to endanger it. And I am afraid, too, that the tendency of all these associations is to hurry man out of his walk, as an individual with God, into public, where human influences may neutralise faith.

One point I would notice as to the evangelical alliances, whether in England or on the continent, which I conceive to be solemnly important, because it is the denial of the doctrine of the church of the living God. It is this that *Christians, AS SUCH*, are to be united together for every good work. I purposely state the principle broadly, because of the various modifications found in the various alliances and their branches. That good works should be pressed as inseparable from life is blessed; but that association, upon the ground of life in Christ, should be used, as it constantly is, for the setting aside of God's holy order and the government by the Lord Jesus in heaven, through the Holy Ghost down here, is most evil.

It is impossible to read the reports of the Evangelical

Alliance at London, in Paris, etc., without seeing with sorrow the self-complacent joy at finding that they could all be happy there together, in spite of all their differences of judgment and conduct when at home. And where was there godly sorrow for the then exhibition of the sectarian, schismatic state of the professing church—where the grief and mourning for the quenching and grieving of the Holy Ghost?

Many will remember how, at one of the earlier meetings of the Alliance in London, a godly man, now with the Lord—a popular preacher of no little eloquence too—raised the question, whether the table of the Lord was not properly the first expression of Christian fellowship. I believe it to be so most surely; and more than that, even that the association of Christians, apart from discipline and the owning of the Spirit of God, is the very denial of the church of God as set upon earth—it is the denial of God, present as the living God, to govern *now* the people He has saved; it makes little of man's sin in continuing the present state of disorder; and in the occasional table, so, from time to time held, there is nothing but dishonour practically put upon the various guests and the usual habit of their church association, if they have any.

Principles may be of God, may be connected with the life and conduct of the church of God, as such; and yet, if held apart from other truth, which originally was connected with them, or if acted out in another energy, or with other objects than those originally proposed, they lose much of their blessedness, and oft become even mischievous as to the glory of God and the well-being of His people.

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EPHESIANS IV. 3—6.

“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

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

## GALATIANS.

THE Epistle to the Galatians sets before us the great source of the afflictions and conflicts of the apostle, in the regions where he had preached the Gospel, that which was at the same time the principal means employed by the enemy to corrupt the Gospel. God, it is true, in His love, has suited the Gospel to the wants of man. The enemy brings down that which still bears its name, to the level of the haughty will of man and the corruption of his natural heart, turning Christianity into a religion that suits that heart, in place of one that is the expression of the heart of God — an all holy God — and the revelation of that which He has done in His love, to bring us into communion with His holiness. We see at the same time, the connection between the Judaizing doctrine of those who hindered the apostle's work, and the attacks that were constantly aimed against his ministry, because that ministry appealed directly to the power of the Holy Ghost, and to the immediate authority of Christ. In withstanding the efforts of the Judaizers, the apostle necessarily establishes the elementary principles of justification by grace. Traces both of this combat with the spirit of Judaism, by which Satan endeavoured to destroy true Christianity, and of the maintenance by the apostle of this liberty and authority of his ministry, are found in a multitude of passages in Corinthians, in Philippians and Colossians, in Timothy, and, historically, in the Acts. In Galatians, the two subjects are treated in a direct and formal way. But the Gospel is, consequently, reduced to its most simple elements,—grace to its most simple expression. But with regard to the error, the question is but the more decisively settled,—the irreconcilable difference between

N<sup>o</sup>. XIX.

## ON FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST.

II.—*Crucified together with Christ.*

THOUGH I have spoken, first of all, of association with Christ, as in His death—there is the association with Him, as on the cross; which, according to the order of the subjects, should naturally come before the other. Following, however, the order which the needs of conscience seemed to suggest, I have taken that first, which, as Scripture presents truth, ministers most directly to the soul's liberty and peace.

The being, through the grace which identifies us with Him in death, "dead to sin,"—"baptized into His death,"—"buried with Him into death," and as "dead—free from sin," etc., changes the whole *standing* of a soul. It takes it clean off one foundation, and sets it upon altogether another; takes it out of one place which has a character, judgment, and experiences proper to it, and sets it in an altogether other place, having a character, judgment, and experiences, which are in contrast with those of the former place, and which are peculiar to itself.

Israel in Egypt, and Israel out of Egypt, were strongly in contrast. Egypt was the iron furnace, the house of bondage, the land of captivity,—a doomed place, under God's judgment; and though it might have its leeks and melons, and cucumbers, it had, also, its tale of bricks, and its treasure cities to be built by Israel's toil. There, too, Israel was a nation of slaves, thrust aside as unfit to associate with the lords of the earth—the murderers of their male children. Outside of Egypt, they were the Lord's freed ones,—bound for a land flowing with milk and honey, a land of rest, and a place of blessing. And they pitched their tents around the tent of Jehovah of hosts, the king of the whole earth, possessor of heaven

and earth. The purpose of the Lord concerning them, had ever been the same; but the positions are two, and contrasted. First, the providence of God lets them sink down to the standing of a nation in slavery, in Egypt; but then the God of providence takes that same people to be as His own firstborn Son, and overthrows the power of their oppressor. It was their passage through the Red Sea which definitively marked the redemption of the chosen ones; for the return of the waters which destroyed the pursuer, shut them effectually out of Egypt, and *with* God in the wilderness. The positions are two, and easily distinguished, the one from the other.

The positions, also, are two, and contra-distinguished, of a man when trying to bring a clean thing out of himself, who is unclean, and of the same party when the death of Christ has been made his. He was an outcast from Eden; member of a race under judgment; himself so far wrecked and ruined, as that he thought himself competent to find out God; and, as a sinner, to stand in His presence, and to settle matters with Him for death and judgment to come, and to bring life, by his own power, where death reigned. His standing ground *was* human nature as a creature. But he has heard that Christ died, the just One for the unjust; and that faith identifies the sinner with Him who died under the penalty due to sinners. All that he had, and all that he was, has found its answer, and its end, in the death of Christ. Divine, indissoluble association of the old Me and all that it had or was, with the death of Christ, the Son of Man under judgment for me, is the goal, the end of that Me. "I [yet not I (*that* ended in the death of the Son of Man under judgment)], yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me — 'live.' "

The unbelieving believers of this day, know little of the death of Christ *in this way*, as the Red Sea between God's Israel in the wilderness and Egypt. They have forgotten that it was "when He had by Himself purged our sins," that, then (and not till then), He "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." They have let slip that "we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all;" that this One, after He

had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever (as to sacrificial offering), "sat down on the right hand of God;"—he rested from all further offering, and sat down:—"For by one offering, He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Surely, if, instead of looking to the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man; and judging themselves and their feelings, according to what is found in God's display of mercy in the heavens, if I say any are absorbed in what passes within themselves, and so let slip the display of mercy in the heavens; substituting for God's dealings in mercy, God's conduct with His saved people in government, there is great danger and just cause for us to stand in doubt of them. However unintentionally on their parts, they yet do, practically, use the death of Christ as the means to get themselves into a place of judgment, and out of the place of liberty and peace on the other side of the judgment.

As to the bearing upon the believer, through grace, of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have it explained in Rom. vi. 6, and Gal. ii. 20.

As we shall see, the thought presented is not that of our bearing the cross to-day (though that, in another connection, as saved people, may elsewhere be taught), but that which is presented to us, is God's estimate of "our old man;" God's treatment of it, once for all, when the Just One once stood before Him as representing the many unjust, and bore our judgment for us.

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified (or has been crucified) with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. vi. 6).

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20).

The cross was a wantonly cruel punishment; and when God gave laws to His people Israel, He appointed another mode of putting a sinner to death, and branded the cross by saying, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Deut. xxi. 23). How marvellously had He, in

grace, thus anticipated a way for His own mercy to flow forth in to a rebellious people. We may see this in Gal. iii. 10—13: “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” All that are *of law* are under the curse, because it curses all that keep it not, and none can keep it: but Christ bore the curse in His own body on the tree. But then, if He who merited everything good when He was our substitute in the judgment was so treated, we — the old man — (i.e. what we were, and what our body is), got there expressed upon it God’s estimate of it — He treated it, when we were represented by His Son, in a way to mark His estimate of it, that is, of us according to our Adam connection. Crucifixion and death are not necessarily identical; a man might be saved from death, though he had been put to open shame before God and man, and been nailed to a cross; so, Christ was not only nailed to the cross, and had experiences when there, as if, instead of being the faithful Prophet, Priest and King whom God delighted to honour, He had been one whose sins and iniquities were more in number than the hairs of His head, and that He could not look up — His cry before He died was, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me” — but, besides this, He gave His life a ransom for us.

God’s estimate of our old man, of the “I” that was crucified together with Christ is pretty plain; and it is a good thing for those whose tastes and minds are being formed in their communion with God, to see His estimate of what they were when He found them. A little more disgust and nausea with our own old selves, and with man in himself, would not be at all an evil thing in us. God’s treatment of our representative, in spite of all His

personal perfectness, shewed His estimate of *me*, and that may suffice to form and fix mine.

There is a needs be that a believer should have the same thoughts as God has about his old man — his former self. God has presented His thoughts in no ambiguous mode of expression; they have been strongly expressed: but, if strongly expressed, what considerateness is found in God's mode of expressing them. God's own Son crucified, that on Him, when bearing the judgment due to us, in self-devoted love to us, those thoughts of God concerning what we were by nature might be seen. And let it be observed, that as God does, to our comfort and salvation reckon, that our old man was crucified with Christ, so He calls upon us also to reckon it so.

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin” (Rom. vi. 6, 11).

Paul knew the power of this taking God at His word; and what strength the faith by which he said, I am crucified with Christ (Gal. ii. 20), gave him!

Instead of this simplicity and firmness of faith, which in Paul reckoned that to be true which God declared, and in spite of experience and feelings, accredited God's declaration, and, therefore, acted upon it, we are apt to change everything. Paul took God's view of things and acted upon it—upon God's view of things—that “our old man is crucified together with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” Paul reckoned that God was true in this and acted thereupon. He reckoned himself to have been “crucified” and “to be dead, indeed, unto sin,” and acted accordingly: for he knew *who* had said: “For sin *shall* not have dominion over you.” Instead of like faith hereunto, we find that but few receive and hold fast what God has said about the old man having been crucified, and being dead even so far as it bears upon justification of themselves; and still fewer hold it as to the principle of sin in them.

Now the hard thing is *not* for the results of faith to flow from faith; for the results of faith flowed from faith as naturally in Paul's case as the results of unbelief, now-a-days, naturally flow from unbelief. Paul reckoned himself as crucified and dead, because God said that He reckoned him, through Christ, to be so — and sin had not dominion over Paul. Christians, now-a-days, own the cross and death of Christ as the alone portal of rest, but they do not reckon that as to the penalty due and the power of sin in them they are dead through Christ's crucifixion and death, and so they go on in doubt and sinning. The difficulty is not in the connexion between faith and good works, or between unbelief and bad works; that is natural and easy enough in both cases. No: the difficulties are here rather, to let God be true and every man a liar; to believe God and trust ourselves implicitly to Him and His hand.

What a difference between the being crucified with Christ [as (in Matt. xxvii. 44; Mark xiii. 32; John xix. 32) we read of two thieves who were crucified on Calvary, when the Lord was crucified], and this being crucified together with Christ, through grace (Rom. vi. 6, Gal. ii. 20).

In the former case (just as in the crucifixions of the Romanist, and other carnal religions, which propose to punish men's bodies for the sins of their souls) all the pain falls upon sinful flesh; in the latter case, it all fell, and fell in times that are past—the reward justly due to us — upon the sinless Jesus, who bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

So far on Rom. vi. 6, and Gal. ii. 20;  
and

on the believer being one, who is to reckon that his old man and former self, are reckoned by God as crucified together with Christ Jesus.

The cross of Christ has branded me (in all that I was as a fallen man) as with a stigma; but then His death has freed me, at once, from the penalty due to sin, and from the liberty to go on sinning. May we act accordingly!

III.—*Buried together with Him.*

Rom. ii. 4; and Col. ii. 12.

Therefore we are *buried together with Him*, by baptism into death.

*Buried together with Him in baptism.*

That which is buried, is put away out of sight. God has, in His grace, revealed, and faith has received, the testimony, that all that we were has been put away out of sight, through association with the Lord who died. I, yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me, was Paul's word when he was speaking of the energy that was active in him as Apostle. But, previously to this being true of him, as Paul, the case of Saul had had to be met. He had had to say, previously, as speaking of *that*, "I am (or have been) crucified with Christ:"—that was the fate and end of him as Saul. The light of a living Christ, risen and ascended, had broken in upon his soul, and he learnt that grace looked upon all that had been Saul, all that was of Saul, as so identified with that Christ, that the end of it, in death and judgment, was reckoned of God to be there—in Christ crucified. If God reckoned it so, so would he; and so, "I am (or have been) crucified together with Christ." But if the chapter about Saul contained that blessed truth, the chapter about Paul went on with a "nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." But there was this one most gracious provision to be noted, as to the Saul, not moribund, but defunct—to be noticed, to the praise of the grace that saw that God's glory required it, and for the comfort of the party thus found and blessed,—the dead was buried also out of sight, through God's grace through Christ—buried together with Him by baptism. "To bury our dead out of our sight," is perfect in its own needed time and place.

Abram and Isaac, and Jacob and Joseph, felt this; and, by faith, saw God in connection with their burial-place. God foresaw the tomb where the body of our Lord should lay, as we see in Isaiah liii. Devout men also carried Stephen to his burial; and Divine wisdom

and grace had provided a grave for the "I" who was Saul the persecutor, and for the "I" wheresoever found dead in trespasses and sins, that finds grace unto eternal life. The law could curse such an one — could pierce through with its thunderbolts — could show that there was life in no one who stood at the foot of Mōunt Sinai, and that moral death reigned in each and in all of them; — but Moses could neither kill nor bring to an end the life of such a one as Saul, nor give him a new life. Christ secured to him the full benefits of death — made over His own death in all its fulness to him — shared with him the cross in all its fruit — and declares Himself the burial-place. Buried together with Him by baptism into death; buried together with Him in baptism.

All these things are of faith; and, therefore, are made good to individuals by faith, and enjoyed by individuals through faith. It *may* be true of each individual member of a family, or of a community, whether the family have but three members, as a man, his wife, and a child, or whether the community be as numerous as is the church of God; — BUT these things are not true of the family, or of any community, as such. Of no family, of no community, as such, can it be said, it is "crucified, dead, and buried in Christ." To say that the Church is dead, crucified, and buried with Christ, would be senseless as a statement; and, if it meant anything, must mean something very wide of what would be truth. Of every member in the church, it is true, however, as to what he was; and God reckons each one that believes, to be, as to the old man, crucified, dead, and buried, together with Christ; and the Word bids us, also, to reckon that His measure and estimate of the self in us, as thus formed in Christ Jesus — the crucified.

"To be as God, knowing good and evil," is the practical folly of our fallen selves; the cross for His Christ, the equivalent, according to God, of this folly in us. So, when He dealt to Christ, according to His estimate of *us*, did He act; — so has He branded, as with a stigma, ourselves and our self-complacent wisdom, and love of power.

So much then as to the "I," which was, and was

looked upon as standing upon its own foundation as a creature, upon the merits and being of what is and is found in and of *ourselves* before God. Through grace God has said of all *that*, "crucified together with Christ; dead together with him; buried together with him." God's estimate of what each of us was, God's judgment of it, and God's putting of it, as it were, out of sight, are presented to us in the crucifixion, death, and burial of the Lord. What was true of us morally, was visited on Him penally. God so identifies, so reckons us (in all that we were and had of our own) one together with Christ in His crucifixion, death, and burial, that we can and are bound, as believers, to reckon that it is finished. God, who calleth those things which be not as though they were (Rom. iv. 17), is He with whom we have to do. He has reckoned it thus. Who will say unto Him, What doest thou? or, What hast thou done? Are His rights limited? Is His power straitened, that He should have no title to do as seemeth Him good, no power to make good what He wills? Nay: rather hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good? But for His grace in reckoning each one that believes one, according to all that he had or is, one with Christ, Christ would never have been crucified, never have died, or been buried. But He has been crucified, dead, and buried; and faith says, "And I am crucified, dead, and buried together with Him."

Divine grace is wondrous in power and in wisdom. It has made death and judgment, which are in prospect *before* man in the avenue of human life, to be in retrospect *behind* the believer in the course of grace. Grace, too, has known how to substitute the death of the only sinless and the only just one, and His judgment on the cross, who is to be judge of quick and dead, in the place of the death of the sinner that believeth, and in place of the judgment of the self-accused culprit. Grace, too, has not only thus met the anticipations of the sinner that believes, but it has also, in the one same deliverance through the crucifixion, death, and burial together with Christ, cleared out all old family scores and debts. There was a reckoning to come in judgment,

because of the rebellion of the ancestral head of the family; another, because of a nature in corruption come down from him,—tried, as it has been, in every varied way by God since Adam fell, and always yet showing itself rebellious. Grace has met and cancelled all that: for if the penalty borne by the Son of Man on the cross, was borne because He was identified with some whose case challenged judgment, substituted for those in the judgment, all has been met; and faith can say, “I reckon myself (all that I was, as a mere creature, descended from Adam) crucified, dead, and buried; and there is an end of the whole matter, for me, at least, among men, because God has said it is the end of the whole matter with Him for whosoever believeth.”

Unless a man reckon himself crucified, dead, and buried together with Christ, where is his faith—where is his apprehension of what God reckons as to every one that believeth? I press this, 1st, because I know, from Scripture, and from experience too, the needs of the soul and of conscience of the poor sinner before God. There is no *measure* of self—that is, no divine and perfect measure—such as can satisfy the soul in God’s presence, because it has satisfied God Himself—save the cross of Christ Jesus; no *end* of self save His death; no *burial*-place for self unless it be Himself: and, 2ndly, because unless a man has said “*dead*,” how can he say, “I am alive again”? This brings us to the close of the first part of our subject.

I would desire to challenge my own conscience, and that of my reader, with the question—How far does conscience, in the secret solitude of God’s presence—there, where it is thinking of righteousness, temperance, and eternal judgment to come—know these things to be *real* and existent, according to God’s thoughts of us and our own thoughts of ourselves?

*Crucified,  
Dead, and  
Buried,  
Together with Christ.*

## No. XX.

## THE RAPTURE OF THE SAINTS.

THE rapture of the saints to meet the Lord in the air, before His manifestation to the earth, and the existence of a Jewish remnant, in whom the Spirit of God is graciously working, before the Lord manifests Himself to them for their deliverance, is happily attracting the attention of Christians. It has made sufficient way to be the occasion of a renewed opposition, which can only do good by urging serious Christians to examine the Scriptures on the subject; an examination which will, under grace, spiritually enlarge their apprehensions on many most important points, full of blessing and interest for their souls. The true character of the Church of God will appear, and the nature of its connection with Christ on one hand, and the ways of God in the government of the world on the other, — the two great topics of which the Scriptures treat; besides that first of all concerns, the reconciling of the soul with God. On this last, also, indeed, a right intelligence of the other two casts abundant light. The rapture of the saints before the appearing of Christ has, strange as it may appear to some, nothing to say to the Church, directly or exclusively; but as we form part of those caught up, it, of course, interests us in the highest degree.\* The rapture is in connection with the glory of the kingdom; and the saints in general, who are to reign in the kingdom, have part in this rapture. Still, indirectly, the enquiry leads to the question, What is the Church? because the doctrine of the rapture of the saints, before the appearing of Christ, connects itself with the existence of a Jewish remnant waiting for deliverance after the rapture and before the appearing;

\* Hence, indeed, it is often, in a practical way, treated of as applicable to those who now believe, without going further.

and the position of this remnant connects itself, more or less, with the spiritual condition of the saints before the manifestation of the Church on the earth.

Those who believe in the rapture of the Church before the appearing of Christ, hold that the Church has a special and peculiar character and connection with Christ, in virtue of its being formed into one body by the descent of the Holy Ghost from heaven; and that while salvation is always necessarily the same, the relative condition of the saints previously was a distinct one. They are convinced that in the Psalms a Jewish remnant is found, and that thoughts, feelings, hopes, fears, into which the Spirit of Christ enters prophetically with and for them, are there expressed in their behalf. This remnant is believed to be continually spoken of in the prophets, as existing before the appearing of the Lord, and waiting for that appearing and delivered by it. But, farther, the Lord Himself being a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, as well as a Saviour, presented Himself necessarily to Israel according to these promises, and became associated with, and the leader of, the remnant, as far as it was awakened to know Him. Hence the interpretation of many passages of the New Testament also became involved in this question; and, indeed, the whole order of the dispensations of God, but above all, the question of the Church and its privileges, as formed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, is important and essential in this matter, and a right understanding of it a key to the interpretation of the word of God.

On the other hand, the denial of the existence of a Jewish remnant, such as is above spoken of, involves the most grave and, indeed, fatal consequences; because it connects, especially through the contents of the Psalms, the Spirit of Christ, which speaks in them, with the ungodly and unconverted Jews, and makes the declarations of integrity and uprightness, not the breathings of a righteous soul pleading with God, — yea, its pleadings furnished to it by the Spirit of Christ, — but the pride of self-righteousness presenting itself to God. It is hard to suppose that any could allege that the Lord should give

guage; one has only to compare the passage above cited, to see the difference, to see that they are another class. To use this passage, certainly obscure in its application (in which those who have been in the great tribulation are definitely distinguished *from* the heavenly company of crowned and enthroned elders, their whole position being different) to destroy the force of one, expressly declaring that those who have kept the word of Christ's patience will be kept out of it, is certainly the opposite of a sound interpretation of Scripture. In result, what is the evidence of Scripture on this point. There are six passages which speak of tribulation: and by which we know there will be tribulation; four are clear and positive, in applying it to the Jews; one declares that the faithful Church saints will be kept out of it; and the last, speaking of Gentiles, distinguishes them, in the most marked way, from those who represent the Church, and saints in heaven, the crowned and enthroned elders. Thus direct Scripture is as clear as clear can be. We have seen that, indirectly, Rev. ii. confirms this view. What remains? General principles. Hence the attempt to bring the Church into the tribulation; and this is the **SECRET OF THE WHOLE MATTER**—*the confounding the Church of God with the Jews and with the world, their hopes, and the trials that come upon them.*

<sup>a</sup> One tract I have seen goes so far (shewing the utter destruction of all spiritual discernment, which is the result of these views), that it speaks of the loss to the Church in not going through this tribulation; thus confounding suffering for Christ with the terrible chastening of God for sin and unbelief; the temptation which the disciples were taught to pray to be kept from.

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#### THE SKELTON RECORD.

“How bright, there above, is the mercy of God!”—

“And void of all guilt, and clear of all sin,

Is my conscience and heart, through my Saviour's blood.”—

“Not a cloud above:”—“not a spot within.”

Christ died! then I'm clean:—“Not a spot within.”

God's mercy and love!—“Not a cloud above.”

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

“Not a cloud above:”—“not a spot within.”

POETRY.

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*Revelation vii. 9—17.*

BEFORE the Lamb, before the throne,  
Behold a vast innumerable throng,  
From every kindred, people, zone,  
Of every various speech and tongue.

In snowy robes, with boughs of palm —  
Their glory charm'd my raptur'd gaze ;  
While, jubilant, a lofty psalm  
The many-voicèd chorus raise.

Solemn and grand arose the strains ;  
And high the joyous anthem rung ;  
“Salvation to our God who reigns,  
“And to the Lamb!” the theme they sung.

And all the angels — gather'd round  
The elders and the living four —  
Fall with their faces to the ground,  
And God upon the throne adore.

“Amen! Let blessing, glory, power,  
“Thanksgiving, honour, wisdom, might,  
“Be to our God for evermore,  
“Through never-ending day and night!”

Then said an elder, “What these bands,  
“Bright-shining in their white array,  
“With palms of victory in their hands?  
“O tell me, canst thou? whence came they.”

“Outcame they to this glorious height,  
“From the great Tribulation-flood:  
“They've wash'd their robes and made them white  
“In the Lamb's precious cleansing blood.

“Therefore, before God's holy throne,  
“They day and night His praises tell ;  
“Their worship He who reigns shall own,  
“And with them will for ever dwell.

“Hunger no more, nor thirst, nor heat,  
 “Nor sun-blight, shall they ever know ;  
 “Fed by the Lamb, who guides their feet  
 “Where founts of living water flow.

“Grief ne'er shall cast a shadow there,  
 “To cloud the gladness of the way ;  
 “And God Himself, with tenderest care,  
 “Shall wipe all sorrowing tears away.”

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1 *Peter*, v. 7.

LORD, it belongs not to my care,  
 Whether I die or live ;  
 To love and serve Thee is my share,  
 And this Thy grace must give.  
 If life be long, I will be glad,  
 That I may long obey ;  
 If short, yet why should I be sad,  
 Since God appoints my day ?

Christ leads me through no darker rooms,  
 Than He went through before ;  
 And he that to God's kingdom comes,  
 Must enter by *His* door.  
 Come ! then, since grace has made me meet,  
 Thy blessed face to see ;  
 For if Thy work on earth be sweet,  
 What will Thy glory be ?

Then, then, shall end my sad complaints,  
 My desert pilgrim days, —  
 End — in the triumph of the Saints, —  
 In endless songs of praise.  
 My knowledge of that life is small ;  
 The eye of faith is dim ;  
 But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,  
 And I shall be with Him. — *From* BAXTER.

END OF VOL. IX.

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