

# THE REMEMBRANCER.

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A MONTHLY MAGAZINE  
FOR  
THE LORD'S PEOPLE.

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“Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them. Yea, . . . I think it meet . . . to stir you up by putting you in remembrance.”

—2nd Peter i. 12, 13.

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VOLUME VII.

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HAMILTON, ONT., CANADA:  
BIBLE TRUTH AGENCY, BOX 274.

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## THE CHURCH IN THE GLORY OF GOD.

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*(Substance of a Lecture on Rev. xxi. 9-27, xxii. 1-5.)*

You must not suppose, beloved brethren, that I am going to speak of something very difficult, because I have taken up this symbolic part of God's word. It is the description of the Bride, the Lamb's wife, as displayed in the Millennium, in the glory of God.

There are few things which strike one more in Scripture, as soon as we are clear in our souls before God, as to redemption accomplished and our acceptance in Christ, than the fact of the frequency with which the glory of God is brought before us in its present sanctifying power. Our meetness for heaven cannot grow ; it depends on what the blessed Son of God has accomplished, and He has done it perfectly. The grace of God comes and meets us in our ruin as poor lost sinners ; then, as soon as He has cleansed us, He brings before our souls the glory, that our hearts may dwell in it.

I wish to trace, first, in a few passages, how God presses the glory upon us. Our capacities for enjoying heaven by-and-by will not grow when we are there. Our capacity depends upon the

diligence of our hearts now in growing up to Christ, just as our fitness for the scene depends upon Christ alone.

I think we shall find, too, that the character of a person's conversion very frequently gives a tone to his walk, as his walk determines his place in the glory ; while of course it is given to those for whom it is prepared by the Father. You will find, too, that when Christ is before the eye at the first fresh moments of the converted soul, a fruitful walk of discipleship generally follows. John the Apostle was converted by the last lovely note of John Baptist's preaching. It had begun with tremendous threats of judgment ; the last strain but one was, " Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world ;" then came the last lovely note, " Behold the Lamb of God." The beauty of the Lamb of God drew the souls of the two disciples to Jesus, as the needle to the magnet. Then we find that the other, Andrew, seeks for his own brother Simon ; he tells him that they had " found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ ; and he brought him to Jesus." How different was the conversion of the two (Peter and John) ! how their walk was characterized by their conversion ! How often had the Lord to say to Peter, " Follow me : " never to John ! See, too, how their ministry was characterized by what they first learned of the Lord. John carried the person of Christ in his heart, and ministered Him by his pen. He was a true Ko-

hathite. Peter's ministry always savoured of the "Messias, which is called Christ !"

This is important and striking, and especially so in preaching Christ. Of course you cannot know Him without His work ; still the person of Christ is the magnet to attract the heart, and no conversion is like that in which Christ is first.

To return. All the present sanctifying work of Christ in His people comes out in this scene (Rev. xxi.). Every line—even the most faint—which He has written on our hearts (though now oft blotted and sometimes almost effaced), comes out in this scene of glory. See a photograph as at first taken by the artist on the glass. What a dull-looking thing it is ; but let the light of the sun print it on the paper, and every line is there. See, too, a garden of flowers in the night season : they are colourless to the eye. You cannot discern a single touch of God's Almighty hand. All you can detect is the perfume of the flowers in the darkness of the scene. Still every line of beauty, every delicate touch His hand has imprinted and traced is there. Let the first ray of sunlight from the horizon strike upon those flowers, and every heavenly colour, every line and tracery which the darkness had hidden, comes to light, and displays the hand of Him who had inscribed them in all their living grace.

So it is with Christians now, during the long dark night of their history. Christ is inscribing the characters of His own blessed hand upon your



hearts, faintly seen here below ; still the perfume of His graces should be discerned. When the moment comes, and He appears, the work is complete. "When He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2).

We will now trace, in a few passages, how God brings the glory and the power of it to bear upon our hearts when His grace has met our condition as sinners. It is the consummation of His grace to us. See Rom. v. 2. Here it enters into the question of our hope. After unfolding how God has cleared us, and set us at rest and peace before Him, he says, "Rejoicing in hope of the glory of God."

See 2 Cor. iii. 18. "We all [the common privilege of every child of God], with unveiled face mirroring the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory." Here it is the transforming power of the glory of God which he unfolds ; a power which—as we are occupied with Him who is there—transforms us into His image from glory to glory, until He appears. Then "mortality" is "swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. v. 4).

How do you seek for this conformity to Christ? God has "~~predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son~~" (Rom. viii. 29) : ~~how is it to be brought about?~~ "I seek to reduce myself to order," says one. "I study Christ as He walked on earth," says another. These efforts will not bring it about. What will then? Gazing on a

glorified Christ, in a scene into which self and flesh can never come. Look at Stephen. He is filled with the Spirit, and consequently is engrossed with an object—Christ in the glory; the result is that his occupation with a glorified Christ throws him back into the place of a humbled Christ. This produced conformity. It is not putting forth efforts to be conformed, but his heart being thus engaged with Jesus, conformity to Jesus is the result; and the light of the glory shining down into his heart, is emitted from the vessel when broken to pieces by the stones of his murderers.

“Ah,” you say, “there is no chance of my being a Stephen; the stones of the multitude will never reach me.” I reply, the circumstances of life—the sorrows, the trials of the way, all these do for you what the stones of the multitude did for Stephen. The stones smashed the poor earthen vessel, in his case; but the beautiful graces of a humbled Jesus on the cross were emitted from the broken vessel: Christ was seen, and Stephen was not seen!

I may remark, in passing, a striking feature with reference to this. It has frequently been noted how the words are almost the very same as those spoken by the Lord on the cross (compare Luke xxiii. 34, 46, with Acts vii. 59, 60); but it has not, I think, before been observed that the order is reversed, in the case of Stephen, from that seen in Luke xxiii., for “In all things he [Jesus]

must have the pre-eminence." Stephen *first* says, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" and *then* he adds, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." The Lord *first* says, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do;" and *lastly*, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit." One was man, however blessed martyr he might be : Jesus was God as well !

Thus it is the proper, normal work of the Holy Ghost to fill your eye with Christ ; and with this simple and steadfast occupation with Him, you will find things withered up in your heart which have no place in the glory ; and also you will find the impossibility of falling into sin with the Lord before the soul. When this is so, Christ is the governing motive ; the spring and power of every act of your lives. In the case of a Christian thus occupied with Him, you find him walking through this world, with his heart in another scene, and he insensibly drops into the place of a humbled Christ—seeking not his own things as he passes along. If this were the constant state of His people, what glory it would bring to Him : how little would be found in our hearts but Christ ! Suppose God were to take out of our hearts *now* what was not of Christ, how large a gap would He find !. It is good thus to test our hearts, beloved brethren.

. Take a passage in Colossians (i. 11) ; which epistle, I may remark in passing, never takes you to heaven as Ephesians. Colossians takes your

“affections” where you are yourself, “in Christ,” in Ephesians. Well, “strengthened with all might according to the power of His glory” (not “glorious power”). As you traverse the wilderness of this world, in all its tryings and testings, you are “strengthened with all might according to the power of His glory.” To what are you strengthened? Do you suppose you are going to get on with great effects? No! It is “strengthened . . . to all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness.” Will you be irritable, when the power of the glory is your strength? It was the very plea of Moses, in Numbers xiv., with the Lord, that He would use His *power in long-suffering*: “Let the power of my Lord be great” in “long-suffering.” So Paul looks that you may be strengthened to be like God!

James says, “My brethren, have not the faith of glory with respect to persons” (ii. 1, etc.). If you have the faith of glory, the spirit and ways of the world will be broken in you; you cannot go on with its ways, which put the poor man at the footstool, and the man with a purse and a gold ring in the seat of honour.

Peter, too, who looks on us as pilgrims traversing the desert, presses in his way, the glory. He says, “If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified” (iv. 14). There are few true believers who do not, in some

measure, know what the reproach of Christ is. What comes into my heart often, when I have endured it for myself, or seen it in others? Well, it is the *skirts of the glory* where Christ is—the spirit of the glory, that have touched that person !

So that, however you take it, beloved brethren—as entering into your hope, or with reference to conformity to Christ, or the needed patience by the way, or the spirit of the world, or the reproach of Christ—it is the glory all the same.

Now, as to the glory to which we are wending our way. God brings it in very marked power before us. He reveals to us the glory prepared from everlasting, where He purposes we should be. But the glory does not touch the heart. Therefore He gives us an object in the glory, which is Christ: the Lamb of God is there, the centre of it all. Is that enough? No ! Then He gives us the Holy Ghost to dwell in us, to take the things of Christ who is in the glory down into our hearts, and to take our hearts up to the glory, and to unfold the things of that scene that we may know them.

In 1 Cor. ii., Paul quotes Isaiah: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him." Thus far Isaiah. "But," continues Paul, "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." Is not that an advance beyond Isaiah ?

There is an earthly Jerusalem by-and-by, as well as this heavenly Jerusalem now before us. But the principles of the two scenes are exactly opposite, the one to the other. The principle of the one is heavenly grace ; that of the other is earthly justice. We never can combine the two things.

There is another thing to be remarked as to the elaborate description of this city, that it is all *displayed* glory. This is why you never find in Scripture a *description* of the Father's house. The reason is simple. The Lord says it is that place where He is—"my Father's house," "where I am ;" and He pre-supposes that that is enough for our souls. God expects that your hearts will find a satisfaction in the fact that His Son is there, and that consequently, no further description is needed of that place of rest and holy joy. The display of this heavenly city is that "the world may know that thou [the Father] hast loved them as thou hast loved" Jesus (John xvii. 22, 23).

We shall find, too, that what Christ was *personally*, what the saints are *relatively* by His grace, and what the church is *absolutely*, as displayed in the glory, all come out in the scene. For example, the Lord says, when on earth, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Personally, He was the source of blessing. Then the church on earth takes up the strain : "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." She has drunk the stream, and knows that her thirst is quenched ; and she invites others to partake of

what she has tasted. Then out of the city flows the river of living water, in the day of glory.

The feature which most of all arrests our attention is the way in which the *glory* of God is such a marked feature in this display. Whether in actual words or symbols, it enfolds, underlies, encircles, and lights the scene, as we shall see.

One of the seven angels comes to John, to bring him to see this heavenly Jerusalem from "a mountain great and high, descending out of heaven from God." Her character, both heavenly and divine. She is the convoy of the glory towards the millennial earth, over which she is seen.

"Having the glory of God." She has it, yet it is called "her light." This is God's way. Suppose He has produced some precious grace in your heart, surely enough grace has done it (for in ourselves there is nothing good), yet God has reckoned it to you in grace. More, too : God can delight Himself in the very grace that He has wrought in our hearts. (Take the little self-denials of to-day, exercised when no one saw them but Him ; God has produced them, and counted them to you.) You will see an example of this in the Syro-phenician woman. The Lord turns round and admires and delights in the very thing that He had produced in her soul : " Oh woman, great is thy faith," etc.

"The city had twelve gates." Here you have the side of human administration : we have had the divine and heavenly side as well. You see

those lovely touches of what is human and what is divine in the Lord Himself. See Him putting His hand on the leper. Where is his leprosy? Gone! When God touches evil or defilement, He withers and dispels it; when man does so, he sympathizes with it and becomes defiled. But it is gone at His touch in a moment. Next verse you see Him on His knees in prayer: the human side (Luke v.). See Him at the gate of Nain; His "Weep not," comes from the tender, sympathizing human heart; His "Young man, I say unto thee, arise"—the voice of God that quickens the dead. Again, in His delivering "him to his mother," the human heart once more. You almost cannot tell which is human and which divine, those scintillations of the moral glory of Jesus.

"And had a wall great and high . . . and . . . twelve foundations." In the wall we have thoughts of *security*; as in the foundations, *stability*. Test your own hearts for a moment. Is there any feeling of insecurity or uncertainty there? I can tell you from whence it comes: from hearkening to one that will never be anything but an unbeliever. To whom do you refer? you say. The "old man, which is corrupt" I mean. Harken to Him no more.

The names of the tribes of Israel are written on the gates. Wherever you find anything *written* thus, it is not indigenous to the place, as I may say. Israel does not belong to this heavenly city, though those who were at first apostles to Israel



govern them from their heavenly peculiar place :  
 “ 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 ” (Matt. xix. 28). But they are also in the foundations of the city on high :  
 “ Ye are built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone (Eph. ii. 20). The “ gate ” was the place of judgment and government. Lot “ sat in the gate ” when he became a citizen of the world.

The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and the glory of God is in both wall and foundations ; the stability and security of our rest is His glory. I ask, Will you have your salvation without it ? Will any true heart tell me that he will receive his salvation on the terms that God’s glory has lost its brightness ? Not one ! All such would refuse it. How blessed to find that God never had such glory as by that very scene when our salvation was wrought, on the cross, long ago ! Then the display of God’s moral being came out, as even this heavenly city will not unfold. The Lord spoke of it thus : “ Therefore doth my Father love Me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again ” (John x. 17). It presented a fresh motive to the Father to love His Son. It was likewise to be a proof to the world of His love to the Father (John xiv. 31). God’s glory had been compromised, and His first thought was to make it good, and to establish all that His holy being required as

to sin. He came for this, and to bear our sins as well, that He might bring us into all the results of it, while God was glorified at the same time.

In Ezekiel xl., you will find that the angel measures the earthly Jerusalem with a line of *flax*. The line denotes His taking possession of what He measures. But here it is display : He is about to display that which is the fruit of the travail of the soul of Christ ! Can human admeasurement measure this ? Impossible. It requires a *golden* reed, one of divine righteousness, as symbolized by the gold, to measure that which God alone can measure as it should be.

"The city lieth foursquare." This indicates the completeness of that which is formed, as a circle does eternity. "The building of the wall was of jasper ;" that is the supreme glory of God (see iv. 2, 3). "And the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass : " gold is divine righteousness, and the clear glass is the fixed purity of truth—transparency. It presents to you what the Lord was Himself personally—what the new man, created in *righteousness* and holiness of truth (*marg.*), is in you as produced by Him (Eph. iv. 24). With Christ it was so in its perfection ; His words bespoke Himself. With us it is so in the measure the new man is in action. But oh, how double-minded we are ! I challenge you all to say " no " to this charge. You know you do not tell me all that is in your heart ; and in a certain sense it would do me no good to know it. The

world would be a worse place than ever if we were all to know what is in each other's hearts. But what was Jesus? *He* was all He said. The words came forth from a heart of which they were but the living index—pure and holy truth—and He was God as well. In the city I shall know what is in your heart; you will know what is in mine: all shall know then. But there is nothing to conceal; nothing unsuited to the purity of that scene: all shall be like Him, who only is what He says He is.

Coloured stones are three times mentioned in Scripture. They occur when God displays Himself, and are used as symbols of this display. You find them in creation, in grace, and in glory. If you have seen the pure light of the sun shining through the tears of a rain-cloud, it produces a rainbow. Thus God, who is light, when He displays Himself even in a lowly Man on earth: "He could not be hid." The pure light within proves its power, by piercing the cloud that concealed it from human eyes. See the Lord weeping at Lazarus' grave: the tears fell from the human eyes, yet they came from the heart of God. Thus in your sorrows and tears, God displays that heavenly life which He has given you, and brings forth the heavenly colours suited to His heart. God is thus carried down into the circumstances of life—a far more wonderful thing than to have our hearts carried out of the circumstances up to glory. God come to us where we are, is more

wonderful than for us to be carried to where God is.

Now we come to the external beauty again. Here we find the fulness of that moral beauty which Christ saw in the "one pearl of great price." "Every several gate was one pearl." Angels, too, are looking at it there. Are they not doing so now? Righteousness and holiness within, and comeliness and loveliness without; just what Christ was here below, and what you see by His grace in a lowly, true-hearted saint. He has a divine nature within, and moral comeliness without: nothing too prominent, but like his Master (yet who is ever like Him?), who was the "fine flour mingled with oil" (Lev. ii.).

What dissatisfaction one finds in one's own heart as this scene unfolds itself in its moral beauty! (I use "moral," in contrast to "physical.") Be assured of this, however, that every note of dissatisfaction you find in your heart, it is a note of sympathy with that heavenly scene!

"The street of the city"—that with which our feet come into contact—"was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." What a contrast to that which we walk on now! Here, if we do not watch and pray, the heart contracts defilement; and if we weary in watching, and we contract the soil, we weary with ourselves the more. What rest to let the heart go! What relief to find we want no conscience there! Everything we come in contact with is suited to God, and

suited to the nature He has caused to spring up in your heart.

“I saw no temple therein.” The great object in the earthly Jerusalem is a great temple, which Ezekiel elaborately unfolds. And here I would remark, how strikingly fitted is each instrument God uses in the ministration or revelation of His thoughts. His vessels are chosen happily and well for the work they have to do. Who would be the most fitting instrument to unfold the great Gentile empires in their rise and fall? Of course, a Prime Minister. Therefore we have a Daniel, “greatly beloved,” doing his work well. The capability of the vessel and its suitability is recognized and employed, but kept from human infirmity by God’s over-ruling hand, while it never loses its individuality, its identity, or its moral features, even in the things of God. See the “Herdman,” Amos. Who could use better the figures he does? Who could so speak of the cow going out of the breach that was before her (iv. 3), or of Jehovah’s being pressed under His people as a cart is pressed under sheaves (ii. 13), or of the impossibility of ploughing on a rock with oxen (vi. 12), or of the sifting of the corn in a sieve (ix. 9)? etc. Ezekiel, too, the priest, is the man chosen of God to tell us of this Temple in the holy city of the day of glory, when the Lord will be there. We might instance Paul, and Peter, and John, in their respective lines of work, in the New Testament, also. But so it is. God sees to the

preparation of the vessel ; the school and college of God is not man's ways ; then, when the time comes, the vessel is called—then broken—then used for His glory. This is God's ordination !

No temple is there—no temple now. It is all the "holiest" with His people, now as then. His people are all priests now, and all go into the holiest now to worship God. They have been brought nigh by sacrifice, and they bring in their hands that which brought them nigh. Now, in Judaism He had a great temple with a veil ; and He will have it again ; and He will hang up the veil again ; shutting Himself in, and shutting them out. In this heavenly city "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it : " all is worship there.

"The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it ; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Thus you have the glory of God in the *security*, the *stability*, the *foundation*, and the *light* of our rest ! The tabernacle of old needed no light from without, but it had no *seat* ; the priest's work was never done, consequently he never sat down. But glory never fixes the eye ; it cannot draw out the affections of the heart. It dazzles, but does not fix the gaze. But here you have the spring and centre of the glory. The fountain of the light is the Lamb of God. So that, if the glory fills the scene, the Lamb is the attraction for the heart. When Paul carries our souls into that sphere

where there is neither length nor breadth, nor depth, nor height—a boundless ocean of glory without a shore—he recalls our hearts and makes them at home in the scene by “the love of Christ which passeth knowledge” (Eph. iii. 18, 19). Ah, you say that is enough—I feel that I am at home.

In verse 22 we have worship; in verse 24 we have testimony. So it is now in measure. In 1 Peter ii. 5, we are “a *holy* priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ;” that is worship. In verse 9 of the same chapter we are “a *royal* priesthood” to “show forth the praises (or ‘excellencies’) of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light;” that is testimony. The only place where there is a gleam of light in this dark world, so full of the habitations of cruelty, is the church of God.

The day is coming when the Beast will own that the “heavens do rule” and the nations “bring their glory and honour to it” (not “into it”).

“The gates shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there.” When you throw open your doors, you say there is no feeling of insecurity, even here below, in the little measure it is in some places enjoyed. What do we learn by those open doors, and no night there? That uncertainty and insecurity, and doubts and fears, are things of the past, and the darkness, which is (with John) ignorance of God, are gone for ever.

How sad to see in the saints of God doubting and uncertainty! Some will tell you that doubting and uncertainty is a healthy state in a Christian. How dishonouring to the grace that has set us free! Saints in time past used to doubt, and suppose it was the right state too. But shall I tell

you what the dear people did? They doubted, and doubted, and doubted, till they found themselves in heaven, and then they could doubt no more!

“And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” A touching and beautiful verse. Our hearts can feel how much that defiles enters them now. Look at a young Christian—bright and happy: an older Christian looks on, and is glad to see that young heart fresh in the love of Christ—that bright joy springing up there. But a mournful thought crosses his soul when he thinks how soon something may creep in if Christ is not completely its object. So also with a company of Christians walking together; the sharp corners that scratch each other arise, and jealousies enter, if Christ is not all. Ah, I say, take care; man’s evil is still in the scene and Satan’s lie. But in the church of God on high, nothing enters but those who are the objects of the love of Christ.

In xxii. 1–5, you have her relative condition; that is, what she is towards the world below—the vessel of grace. The river of full blessing from God takes its rise in the city from the throne of God and the Lamb: only one tree—the tree of life—is there. The tree of responsibility is gone forever. Have you any responsibilities as children of Adam? Not one! Christ united in His own person the principles of the two trees—life and responsibility. He took up and bore the latter for us, as poor sinners, and having done so, He became our life. Have I no responsibilities then? you say. You never had so many, but they are on another footing;—to be what you are—a child



of God ; to show your parentage as you pass through the world.

The leaves were for the healing of the nations ; the droppings from the tree of life ; but its fruits for the redeemed on high. The church is thus the vessel of divine grace towards the renewed earth, while it needs the healing grace of heaven ; when the Sun of righteousness arises with healing in His wings.

“ There shall be no more curse, for the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.” How poor our service now ! Questioned perhaps by those you seek to serve—questioned by the world. Here is a scene where His servants shall serve Him ; a scene of the happy rest of activity and service to Him who was a toil-worn, weary Man—the missionary of God’s love to earth in days gone by.

“ There shall be no night there,” no darkness ; and hence no need of borrowed light. I may have more than you, you may have more than I ; and what light we have is often borrowed light. Here “ the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever.” To serve and wait is their occupation now ; there, to serve and reign for ever.

May we have the power of this scene working more deeply by His grace in our hearts. May we be able to put aside, to drop every burden that we cannot carry into that scene of endless joy. Test your hearts, beloved brethren. Have you anything in them, any unnecessary burdens that you cannot bring in with you there ? If so, they are checks to your progress. Much better to throw them aside, that you may run the course with vigour that ends there ! Amen.

## "I LOVE THE BLESSED BIBLE."

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*"We have not followed cunningly devised fables."*  
—2 Peter i. 16.

Some tell me that the Bible  
Is not God's sacred word,  
And brand as cunning fables  
The records of the Lord ;  
That Moses is a fiction,  
And Prophets never spake ;  
And e'en the blessed Gospels  
As myths I should forsake,

There was a time I listened  
To these old serpent's lies,—  
My foolish heart sore tempted  
The Bible to despise :  
Its holiness rebuked me,  
Its precepts crossed my will ;  
I wished to silence conscience,  
And thus my lusts fulfil.

I cared not for the Saviour,  
This present world I loved ;  
Its lusts, and wealth, and glory,  
Alone my passions moved.  
I cared not for a heaven,  
I hoped there were no hell ;  
I wished for no hereafter,  
I loved my sins too well.

Alas ! in mad rebellion,  
I hoped there were no God :  
I cared not for His favour,  
Though trembling at His rod ;  
I wished His word a fable  
That warned of wrath to come ;  
"No God," my heart would mutter,  
"No future weal, or doom !"

And yet my mother taught me,  
In tones so sweet and mild,

To know its holy pages  
 E'en when I was a child ;  
 She read to me of Jesus,  
 Of all His grace and love ;  
 And sought with tears my blessing—  
 His blessing from above.

Oh, why did I so madly  
 My mother's law forsake ?  
 Oh, why did I so basely  
 God's righteous precepts break ?  
 Oh, why did I so blindly  
 His warnings all despise,  
 And from the Friend of sinners  
 Avert my heart and eyes ?

His mercy still pursued me  
 While wand'ring far away ;  
 His hand with sickness smote me,  
 To wound, but not to slay :  
 His Spirit then convinced me,  
 And brought my guilt to light ;  
 I saw my lost condition,  
 How awful was the sight !

The serpent's crafty teachings,  
 The heart's deceptive lies,  
 The sceptic's subtle reasonings,  
 All vanished from mine eyes :  
 Naked, and lost, and guilty,  
 Beneath God's searching eye—  
 Eternity before me—  
 Oh, whither could I fly ?

Oh then what beauteous sunshine  
 Burst on my raptured sight !  
 It chased away the darkness,  
 And all was life, and light :  
 I saw how grace and glory  
 In God's free gospel shone ;  
 Before the cross, my terrors  
 And unbelief were gone.

I love the blessèd Bible,  
 I know it all is true ;  
 It is a faithful mirror

In which myself I view :  
 It shows me all my weakness,  
 My folly and my shame ;  
 But makes thereby more precious  
 My Saviour's grace and name.

Oh what a light in darkness !  
 Oh what a balm in woe !  
 What streams of consolation  
 Through all its pages flow !  
 What mines of richest treasure,  
 What glories fresh I meet,  
 While, pondering the Scriptures,  
 I sit at Jesu's feet !

His name, like sweetest music,  
 Falls ever on mine ear ;  
 I go to it, expecting  
 My Saviour's voice to hear :  
 A monument of mercy !  
 Oh, may my life proclaim  
 The truth of God's salvation,  
 The glory of His name !



## REMARKS ON MODERN RATIONALIST VIEWS.\*

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

Here we have more than one point. First,

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\* These remarks were originally penned by the writer for himself, but were subsequently sent to a religious magazine to shew Christians the bearing that modern rationalist views have on Christianity, so that they might not lightly suffer the taint of such views to approach them ; whatever might be their patience with those who may be deceived.

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

Who can tell then that there was a Christ to come ? or if Jesus was not the subject of this testimony, He was, if there was any such testimony, deceived as to Himself. The whole authority of Christ and His words is gone—as to God's mind and as to Himself. Christianity and Christ Himself are without foundation. For if Christ's own testimony is unfounded and Moses' too as to Him—or rather, if there is none such, as Christ supposed there was—what foundation have I for anything in Christianity as a revelation of the mind of God and of His Son as the truth ?

Again He says, on the most solemn occasion as to the repentance or ruin of the Jews. " They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them." All this was misleading—they were not authentic.

But further, if they are not heard, Christ declared His resurrection has no force to persuade : “ If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” But all this was a blunder. There was no real power in Moses and the prophets. Christ made a mistake. Whatever His resurrection might do, Moses’ writings were a forgery and had no authority whatever ; so that there was no adequate ground to be persuaded by the resurrection itself. This was all Christ’s solemn attestation was worth. Yet here the Lord was taking them out of the whole system of Jewish legalism. The event proved the truth of His words. They did not believe though one rose from the dead ; but then, it was a mistake of the Lord from that to blame them for not receiving the testimony of Moses and the prophets, for they were of no value at all. It was not Moses at all. •

So, when He said, “ Search [or, ye search] the Scriptures . . . they are they which testify of Me ”—the business, He declares, of the Scripture was to testify of Him, Jesus, as the Christ. On whose part ? Was it God’s testimony, or the wild notions, previsions, or interpretations of fanatics that Christ appealed to ? What was the person testified to, or who appealed to their worth if they were ? But if of God, “ The Scriptures ” are so. We all know what that meant in a Jew’s mouth.

Again in Luke xxiv., “ and beginning at Moses

and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." What was He doing? And here no stupid, blasphemous pretext about His having the prejudices of the Jews is of any avail. He was risen. I suppose He was freed from prejudices by that time. But what shall we say? It was not Moses; and the testimony of Scripture was no really inspired prophetic testimony; consequently, not about Himself. The risen Lord misled, as much as when walking, before His death, on the earth. And Christians are to believe this! But He goes a step farther. He uses divine power over their minds as to it. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures; and said unto them: "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer"—opened divinely their understanding to understand forgeries, or even, if you please, the rhapsodies of patriotic bards and pious compositions from old legends. Is not that singular? We have no truth as to Christ and what He did, if this be so; for what is ascribed to Him as risen and divinely operating on men's minds was never pressed in in respect of an imposture. The utmost foundation was an obscure legend, patched up into a false story, and He not only mistook, when risen, all about it, but opened divinely their understanding to understand it!

Further, the Lord Himself quotes, as His reply to Satan, the Scriptures with the emphatic decla-

ration : " It is written." And when even Satan sets about, consequently, to use Scripture, He does not leave this ground, but says, " it is written again." Impossible to give a more striking testimony to where truth and power were to be found to baffle the enemy. He was led of the Spirit to this solemn conflict, that He might bind the strong man, and deliver men, spoiling his goods. But His victory was founded on a forged imposture, something that Jeremiah's fanaticism and Huldah and the chief priest's deceit got up to try and work a reformation : but in vain. So they tell us. I suppose the devil must have been a prejudiced Jew too, to let himself be silenced in this way ! He was more blind and easily cheated than we are led to suppose.

Poor John the Baptist too ! He was misleading the people, for he quotes the Scriptures as testifying of himself. But that was all a mistake. How many am I to cite of them ? In Matthew half the things which he recites are fulfilments of prophecies—some expressly so in purpose. But this was all a delusion.

When Jonas and Solomon are cited by the Lord, God knows what the cases are worth. When the Lord contrasted one of the ten commandments as the commandment of God with man's tradition—He made a gross mistake in condemning the scribes thus. It was no more such than the tradition. It may have been a more respectable tradition ; but the ground which the Lord laid it on



was all a blunder. The very point He insists upon, and which He declares was of such weight as to make all their worship vain, was a grave mistake. It was not to be believed, that they were really spoken or given of God at all. The appeal to Esaias was a mistake, and His own judgment equally so.

The appeals of the Lord to the Scripture are, I need not say, incessant. "Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The Stone which the builders rejected," etc. This was a prophecy just going to be fulfilled through their conduct towards Him. Was His appeal just?

When David in Spirit calls the Son of David his Lord, was it inspired or not? When the scribes and Pharisees, evil as they were, sat in Moses' seat, they were to be listened to. Why, if Moses had not authority as a Divine testimony? Their fathers had killed the prophets—but they were no prophets at all, if we are to listen to our new masters. When the Lord appeals to Daniel as speaking of the abomination of desolation, and presses on them to give intelligent attention, all this was a mistake, or a wilful deception. Of all prophets, Daniel, they tell us, was the most false and unreal.

I do not go any farther. I have cited sufficient of this class of texts to shew that the authority of the Old Testament (Moses in particular, but Psalms and Prophets too, is so interwoven with the whole text and substance of the New Testament,

that if it goes the New goes with it ; and the authority of Christ, His being really the Christ too (for then His testimony and judgment are not worthy of credit), and Christianity itself. And this applies to Him, quite as much when risen and operating by Divine power, and supposing that He opened man's understanding Divinely to understand forgeries and imposture. This may do for rationalists, but not for men in their senses. And I pray the reader to remark, that we have not the expression "the word of God," as to which men might cavil, but "*the Scriptures.*"

Moses and Elias appeared in glory. Can we believe that this was no sanction to the places they held in Old Testament Scriptures ?

The Lord declares that Moses gave the commandment as to divorce, but because of the hardness of their hearts. All a mistake ! Nor had He any need to blame or excuse him. David himself, He tells us, said, by the Holy Ghost, that Christ was to sit on God's right hand. Was this inspired, or what is Christ's authority here ? They might in the books of Moses have read of God's appearance in the bush, a proof of the resurrection—all a fable ! The Son of Man was to go as it was written. He could have prayed, and had twelve legions of angels ; but how, then, should the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be ? It governs the Lord's own mind in the most solemn moment on which all hang, if Christianity is true, as in His early conflicts with Satan. When Jerusalem was

encompassed with armies, they were the days of vengeance, that all things that were written might be fulfilled. But these were only idle threats of zealous Jehovists : so they would have us believe. Zacharias, filled with the Holy Ghost, prophesied and declared that the raising up Christ was as had been spoken by the mouth of God's holy prophets since the world began. Here we get three-fold delusion. In Luke, who says Zacharias spoke by the Holy Ghost ; in Zacharias, who declared the coming of Christ was fulfilling the prophets ; in the supposition that they were God's Holy prophets. This was so far from being the Holy Ghost, that it was Jewish prejudice ; and the prophets themselves were fanatics or guilty of pious frauds ! This is a comfortable basis for a religion and laying down your life for the truth of it. Christ quotes Elias and Eliseus according to this history ; but His quotations of them are constant, and as applied to Himself and owning the prophets, and the law as distinct as in a passage already referred to in another view : " These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me." Here the well-known division of the Hebrew Scriptures is given. The Lord (and remark He is risen here) puts His seal upon them, and treats them as to be fulfilled as having spoken of Himself. The risen Lord treats them as inspired, and as prophecies of Himself.

And then, as we saw before, He opened their understanding to understand them.

The Scripture, the Lord declares to us, cannot be broken. Here men would have Him speak *according to Jewish notions*. Did He come then to sanction them and to deceive men? In John they (the Jews) are always treated as reprobate; and this is the chapter where He is taking His sheep out of their fold. So the Evangelist treats Esaias as inspired in the judgment pronounced on Israel, and declares the glory seen in Isaiah vi. to be Christ's glory, and chapter liii. to apply to Christ. In the most solemn of all hours that Jesus passed on earth, Jesus, intelligently aware that all things written of Him as to His path here were accomplished, says, "that the Scripture might be fulfilled, I thirst," and then, the last word being fulfilled, gives up His own Spirit. But all this, for our new teachers, is a mistake and a delusion! And what comes of Christianity and of Christ? That John should quote other Scriptures then as fulfilled is of small moment comparatively, save that it takes away all foundation as to any Divine authority in any Christian documents.

That the Bereans searched the Scriptures to see if Paul was right, commended in the account we have of it, was all a mistake! It was no way of judging it at all. They ought to have judged of Paul by their own minds, and the Scriptures themselves by the same measure. When Peter refers to Psalm xvi. as a proof of Christ's resurrection,

all such prophetic statement of facts or reliance on Scripture is unfounded. That Pentecost was a fulfilment of Joel—this is all a mistake. Pentecost was a comparatively modern invention; faith in prophecies—a delusion of the Jews. I refer to these cases to shew that the Lord and the apostles systematically, constantly, and as of Divine obligation, refer to the Scriptures as of authority, as inspired prophecy, and make Christianity a fulfilment of them. Its truth is inseparably involved in it; its character is a fulfilment of them, though there be more in it. Christ Himself is declared to be “a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers” (Rom. xv. 8). But all this is a mistake. That is, the promulgation of Christianity, as alone it was promulgated, was all error. Christ, Peter assured them (Acts iii.), was the prophet that Moses had spoken of. This was all a mistake—Moses never wrote it—it was a legend; and he never spoke of Christ at all. Peter was misleading the Jews when he called them the children of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with Abraham. All was delusion. It was no true history at all—not authentic; and prophets were patriotic, but deceived themselves, persuaded themselves, like any modern fanatic, that they were inspired.

But this is the only promulgation of Christianity which we have; and what comes of it and of Christ Himself, too, when it is the only testimony? So

the second Psalm is quoted. To Him give all the prophets witness. All a mistake! Stephen's speech is a tissue of legendary and unauthentic inventions; resisting the Holy Ghost—the Jews never were guilty of at all. They had judged justly in not believing Moses and the prophets. The mistake was in Christ and His apostles. Peter and the dying Stephen were only deluding themselves and others. When Philip opened his mouth and taught the docile eunuch out of Isaiah and other Scriptures, as prophecies about Jesus, this was a mistake. He was baptized, as a fiction. That the Spirit caught away Philip . . . who then is to believe? When Gentiles were admitted (Acts x.), Peter declares: "To Him give all the prophets witness." All a mistake! Paul, in Antioch, recites briefly the history of Israel given by Moses, Judges, etc., and declares God's promise there referred to Jesus the Son of David, declares that the Jews' conduct in putting the Lord to death was by the Jews not knowing the voice of the prophets, which yet they fulfilled, that they fulfilled all that was written of Him, and that now God had fulfilled to the Jews the promise made to the fathers, and quotes the Psalms as fulfilled in Christ's resurrection, and declares that this was accomplishing the sure mercies of David, of which the prophet had spoken. That is, he founds Christianity on the truth and inspiration of the Scriptures. It was God's fulfilment of what God had said. So in Thessalonica he reasons out of the Scrip-

tures to prove its truth. So Apollos mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the Scriptures, that Jesus was the Christ. In all his testimony Paul declares before Agrippa, that he was saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say. His appeal to Agrippa was: "Believest thou the prophets?" All this was delusion or deceit. When he came to Rome, he persuaded them concerning Jesus out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning to evening, and he declares that the Holy Ghost spoke by Esaias.

I have thus brought forward these repeated instances, as shewing that the whole structure of Christianity is based on the inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures, and on the truth that God's mind was intentionally expressed in them; and that Christ presented Himself, and the apostles presented Him, as the fulfilment on God's part of what God had said, that there might be a positive previous testimony. If this be not so, then the whole system falls. There was no such intention, no such prophecies, and no such fulfilment. Christ and His apostles mistook the whole matter—and what are they?

We shall find the Epistles proceed upon the same foundation. It would be endless to quote from the Epistles to the Romans, the Hebrews and others—all the Scriptures quoted as conclusive authority, as being God's statements; and hence leaving no room for argument. But some pas-

sages as to the place given to Scripture in the New Testament, and to those in the New Testament itself, it is of importance to quote definitely.

In Romans xvi. 26, the New Testament Scriptures are thus referred to: "But now is made manifest and by prophetic Scriptures [this is the literal and only literal translation], according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." I say the New Testament—for the mystery is declared to have been kept secret since the world began, but to be made manifest now (ver. 25). There were things revealed before, as we have seen; but the doctrine of the Church, the breaking down of the middle wall of partition, the Gentiles being fellow-heirs and of the same body, was hid in God (Eph. iii.), and required a positive revelation, and a new one.

The revelation of Christ, Son of David, and other truths, God had promised afore by the prophets in the holy Scriptures. God Himself is the author of them, and Christ the purposed fulfilment of Scripture; but there was needed a new revelation for certain truths, and we have it in prophetic Scriptures.

"As it is written" (Rom. iii.) is sufficient with Paul to bring in the whole world guilty. The great privilege of Israel was, that the oracles of God were committed to them; they were "oracles of God" for the apostle. In Exodus xxxiii. "God spake to Moses," he tells us; and "the Scripture



saith to Pharaoh ;" so "the Scripture saith" suffices to set aside the whole Jewish system (Rom. x.). Let the reader only take a concordance and see the use of "it is written," say in the single chapter of Romans xv.; so in Galations iii., "the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen," thus giving the authority of God's own mind to Scripture : and that to Moses's statements of God's revelations to Abraham.

And note, as the foundation and character of Christianity itself, Scripture concludes all under sin (Gal. iii.). What authority has it here? The law was our school-master ; nay, Christ submits to its prescribed curse—and it is not authentic !

Here is the apostle's account of his revelations. He knew the things by the Spirit ; he spake them by words which the Holy Ghost taught, and they were received by the grace of the Spirit. Now I recognize freely here that this applies to preaching. I quote it to shew the direct assertion of revelation by the Spirit to him, and that his communications were in the words taught by the Spirit. But he can add, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. xiv.).

The well-known passage in 2 Timothy iii. gives us the clearest instruction on this point. It has peculiar emphasis, because the Church had already separated from godliness and order, and perilous times were to come, and evil men and seducers

wax worse and worse. The saints needed a sure ground to go upon ; a resting-place for their hearts somewhere. Besides personal confidence in Paul, which we have only in his writing, the apostle continues, " 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 (every) Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." Now here, when the resource of a soul in a dangerous and distracting time had to be furnished, what was it? The holy Scriptures, the holy writings. Forgeries are not holy, they are very unholy, whatever pious frauds may be in them ; and certainly they are not a resource in dangerous times. It is a knowledge of it as a child takes it, a known resource of authority over the mind ; next, it is not partial. All (or more exactly, ' every ') Scripture is (*theopneustos*, literally, ' God breathed ') given by inspiration of God.

It is said, it is the Old Testament here. Be it so. The part attacked as legends and frauds is inspired. But it is not so. It is an assertion of what the true character of all Scripture is ; whatever has a claim to that title (the prophetic Scriptures spoken of, Romans xvi.), they are given by inspiration of God, and sufficient to make the man of God perfect.

Now, remark here, that if I receive Christianity, I receive it as a revelation of Divinely-inspired teachers. But these teachers (whatever credit they assume to themselves, both Christ and the apostles) refer me to the holy Scriptures as Divine authority, and quote them as absolutely conclusive, an authority by which they would be judged, and sufficient proof of their words ; and refer to them as we have them, and in particular to Moses as the giver of the law.

The whole authority of Christianity as a revelation fails, if the inspiration and authority of Scripture fails. There is nothing else certain in it. It professes to give it as a security always, and especially where men failed in practically acting up to it.

Other passages confirm this. In the Hebrews we read : “ God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.” The Epistle to the Hebrews is wholly founded on the authenticity of the law as given of God, and that, as a Divine revelation, prospective of Christianity, a shadow only it is true, but purposely designed to be only such; and the tabernacle and its furniture to be given of God as a pattern of things in the heavens ; and, if there was then a veil and it was rent now, the Holy Ghost was signifying, it tells us, something by it. I repeat, the whole structure of the New Testament, and the religion it reveals, is interwoven into the inspiration of the Old, as of itself. Take

it away, and it is a false system : both of them are,

Note here, that the Epistle to the Hebrews never refers to the temple, which might be said to be then before them, but to the tabernacle, and the Mosaic account of it, and in chapter xi. quotes, I may say, the whole history of the Book of Genesis, and all the Pentateuch and Joshua, as the Lord used Deuteronomy against Satan.

And, remark, all the New Testament writers thus quote Scripture. All the prophets, Job, the Kings, the Pentateuch, Joshua are quoted by James as acknowledged ; nor for him can the Scriptures speak in vain.

Peter is equally clear. The Spirit of Christ was in the prophets, and “ testified beforehand.” Because “ it is written ” is a sufficient authority—the natural appeal. Christianity is then for them to act on, because also it is contained in the Scripture, “ Behold I lay in Zion,” etc. Again, the prophecies of Isaiah are interwoven with his own statements. What Isaiah was prophesying, he was preaching ; both stand or fall together (1 Peter i. 23, 24 ; ii. 8). So as to Exodus and Hosea (chap. ii. 9, 10, 24) ; Genesis, the Psalms (in chap. iii.), and Isaiah. It is a complete working up of the Old Testament Scriptures. In his second epistle we have the glory of Christ as seen on the mount of transfiguration ; a confirmation of the Old Testament prophecies, which were a candle till the full light of the dawn of Christ’s coming on earth should arise in their hearts.

But Scripture was no isolated individual announcement; every prophecy of *Scripture* was divine. Holy men—not patriotic bards, or concocters of pious frauds to act on the mind of a young king—had spoken. Prophecy did not come in old time by the will of man, exactly what is alleged as to it; but “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” He also calls the writings of Paul *Scriptures*; putting them on a level with the rest. John is very bold, and says that listening to the apostles is a test whether a man is of God or not. “*Hereby know we the Spirit of truth and the Spirit of error.*” He that knoweth God heareth them, he tells us. How am I to listen to him now? He and Jude both refer to the Pentateuch as of unquestioned and unquestionable authority. We know what the Revelation threatens to them who mutilate or add to it. Such are the witnesses which the Lord and His apostles give to the authority, authenticity, and inspiration of Scripture.

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

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“*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.)

## COMPANIONSHIP.

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(*John xi. 35.*)

We thank Thee, Lord, for weary days  
 When desert-springs were dry,  
 And first we knew what depth of need  
 Thy love could satisfy.

Days when beneath the desert-sun,  
 Along the toilsome road,  
 O'er roughest ways we walked with One,  
 That One the Son of God.

We thank Thee for that rest in Him  
 The weary only know—  
 The perfect wondrous sympathy  
 We needs must learn below :

The sweet companionship of One  
 Who once the desert trod :  
 The glorious fellowship with One  
 Upon the throne of God ;

The joy no desolations here  
 Can reach, or cloud, or dim—  
 The present Lord, the living God,  
 And we *alone* with Him.

We know Him as we could not know  
 Through heaven's golden years ;  
 We there shall see His glorious face,  
 But Mary saw His tears.

The touch that heals the broken heart  
 Is never felt above ;  
 His angels know His blessedness,  
 His way-worn saints His love,

When in the glory and the rest  
 We joyfully adore,  
 Remembering the desert-way,  
 We yet shall praise Him more.

Remembering how, amidst our toil,  
 Our conflict, and our sin,  
 He brought the water for our thirst  
 It cost His blood to win.

And now in perfect peace we go  
 Along the path He trod,  
*Still learning from all need below*  
 Depths of the heart of God !



## JESUS TEMPTED OF THE DEVIL.

*(Luke iv. 1-15.)*

In chapter iii., we see Jesus taking His place of servant with the excellent in Israel, and thereon the heavens opening and Himself owned by the Father as His beloved Son. His delights were with the sons of men, and He is traced up, not to Abraham only, the root and depositary of Jewish promises (as in Matthew), but to Adam and God Himself. Independently of His proper divine glory as Son of the Father, Jesus should be called the Son of the Highest, the Son of God. As man on earth, He was sealed with the Holy Ghost. He took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. His entire perfectness now was to fulfil, as a servant, the will of Him who sent Him ; for a servant doing his own will is a bad

servant. Dependence, waiting, and obedience, were the characteristics of this place, and they are found in Him to the uttermost. Hence, as in the Psalms, "I waited patiently for the Lord." He would not *ask* for power, but waits on God. "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" Put thoroughly to the test, He would do nothing but His Father's will. He was to learn obedience. Having taken the place, He would go through it wholly, not in one act, but experiencing the force of that expression, *learning* obedience, without one comfort here, with enemies around, bulls of Bashan besetting, dogs compassing. He had to learn obedience where obedience was always suffering, even to the yielding up of life. Every single step was humiliation till the close came in the cross, where the wrath of God was borne in love to us. No doubt He found, in His rejection, fields white for harvest, and so shall we, in our measure, when walking in the same path. But the cross was always before Him—everything that could stop a man. Nevertheless, He went on, patiently waiting, and not asking for deliverances. Thus He presented God perfectly to man, and perfect man to God.

In chapter iv., He begins this walk of suffering obedience publicly. And the first thing to be remarked is, that (ver. 1) being full of the Holy Ghost, He is led *by Him* into the wilderness, where He is tempted by the devil. There are two



ways in which the enemy has power : first, by allurements ; and secondly, by terror. In the one, he works upon us through our lusts, presenting what is calculated to attract, and so he rules over us naturally. In the other, he has the power of death. Thus, Judas being a covetous man and without the faith that purifies the heart, Satan suggested the occasion and gets him. He has no right to rule over men, but he acquires dominion through the lusts of the flesh. Another way is through the terror of death. In both he assailed the Lord, but found nothing in Him.

Here, then, we have the devil meeting *man* in the power of the Spirit of God—man tempted, not in paradise, but in the wilderness. Jesus does not say, “ I am God, and you are Satan ; go away.” That would not have glorified God, nor have helped us. But as the Lord was led into the wilderness, not by lust (God forbid the thought !), but by the Holy Ghost, so in His blessed grace He puts Himself in the place where man was. He has help from none. There was all that might have stumbled rather, had it been possible : through all He goes *as man*. He must be tempted, and must overcome where man not only had failed, but was lying under the power of wickedness.

*Vs. 2, 3.* There was no harm in hunger ; it was no sin. He could have commanded stones to be made bread ; but to do so, save at His Father’s word, would have been doing His own will, and

then He had not been the perfect man. Satan tries to introduce into His heart a desire which was not in the word of God. He succeeded in insinuating a lust into the heart of Adam ; he fails with Jesus, though He was forty days exposed to his presence and power. Jesus had to know by experience what it was to have working at Him, without a single support, without a friend, in solitary dreariness (save indeed the wild beasts) with the devil ! Thus He measured the power of Satan. The strong man was there, putting forth all his weapons, but the stronger than he overcame : Jesus binds the strong man. He was abstracted from human condition for forty days, not like Moses to be only with God, but as the one who was always with God, to be exposed to Satan. None other man needs to be abstracted in order to be tempted, he has only to go on along with men. In this case, this extraordinary separation was to be with the devil. To be with God He did not need anything out of His every-day path, for it was His natural place ; but to be with Satan, He needed it. Others are strangers to God, and at home with Satan. He, in the most adverse things, is a stranger to Satan, and dwells in the bosom of the Father. But He emptied Himself as God to become a servant as man, and there He waits in dependence on the word of Him whom He served. The living Father had sent Him, and He lived by the Father. He was as man under His authority, and His meat was to do His will.

“By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.”

*Ver. 4.* It is the written word He ever uses, and Satan is powerless. What amazing importance Jesus gives the Scriptures! God now acts by the word, and Satan is resisted morally in this way. A man cannot be touched by Satan while the word is simply used in obedience. “He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one *toucheth* him not.” It was not as an exercise of divine authority He dismissed Satan, but the enemy is proved unable to grapple with obedience to the word of God. If he cannot take out of the path of obedience, he has no power. What more simple? Every child of God has the Holy Ghost *acting by the word* to keep him.

Jesus does not reason with Satan. A single text silences when used in the power of the Spirit. The whole secret of strength in conflict is using the word of God in the right way. One may say, I am not like this perfect Man: it might be so with Christ, but how can I expect the same result? True, we are ignorant, and the flesh is in us, but God is always behind, and He is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted *above* that we are able. Temptation may be simply a trial of our obedience, as in Abraham’s case, not a snare to lead us astray. Satan presents what has no appearance of evil. The evil would be—doing one’s own will. Now it solves every difficulty to ask—not, *what harm* is there in doing this or that, but—*why* am I

doing it? Is it for God or myself? What, am I to be always under this restraint? Ah! there the secret of our nature comes out: we do not like the restraint of doing what *God* will approve. It is *restraint* to do God's will! We want to do our own will. To act merely because one *must*, is law, and not the guidance of the Spirit. The word of God was the *motive* of Christ and such is Christ's guidance. Not fencing the old man, but the new man living on the word is our defence against Satan.

*Vs. 3-13.* The first temptation is an appeal to the need of the body. The second in Luke (not in Matthew) is the inducement of the world's glory. The third in our gospel is the religious temptation through the word of God, and therefore morally the hardest of all to one who values that word. And this is the reason why Luke departs from the actual order of the events, in order to group them morally, as is the habit of this evangelist elsewhere also. Thus we have the tempter assailing the Lord Jesus, first, as to man's *life*; second, as to the *power* given to man; and third, as to the *promises* made to Christ Himself.

The Lord might have argued with the devil, but He does not even tell him that the dominion of the world would be His by and by. He takes His stand on that which settles everything, and is a perfect example for us. He stands to God's word, and God's worship. He awaits *His* word, He worships *Him*, He serves Him *only*. How

simple and how blessed ! It was the immediate link of an obedient heart with God. The question was one of relationship to God. So of old, Eliezer receives blessing, but before he begins to enjoy it, he gives thanks. He had the word first, then the blessing—and what follows forthwith ? He bows his head and worships. God is the first thought of his heart (Gen. xxiv.) And so still more fully with the Lord here. The last and subtlest temptation was grounded on the promises to Messiah (9-11). If thou art the Son of God, why not try ? But why should He try, who **KNEW** that God was for Him ? Why should He be like presumptuous Israel of old, who would go up the hill in disobedience, to prove whether the Lord was among them. Not even when Lazarus was sick would He stir, till it was the Father's will, though all nature would have moved ; and He knew well the sorrow of that house which was His refuge ; for " Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus."

The Lord did not listen. Who would ? you say. But you do listen to Satan, every day of your lives, that you seek a very little bit of the world. But was there not a promise ? Duubtless there was ; yet *why* should He throw Himself down to see whether God would be as good as His word ? Did He not know that God was with Him ? And so with us ; let us only have the word *behind* us, no matter what may be before us. Never should we raise a question whether God is with us. If He does not send, let us not move, but let us never

question His presence. If we are in the simple path of His will, the Holy Ghost will act *in* us to guide, and not merely *on* us to correct.

Thus then, in the order of Luke, which, as we have seen, is not historical, but moral, we have the progressive exercises of a man. First, natural lusts ; secondly, worldly lusts ;\* and lastly, spiritual temptations. The Lord Jesus was tempted *here*, not in Eden, but in the great system where we are. He put Himself, by the will and wisdom of God, in the place of our difficulty in the world, where man is. He has gone through all the difficulties a saint is in. Who wants His help ? Not a sinner, for he wants salvation ; but a saint needs help and sympathy in his path. We have practically to keep our first estate, as renewed. Satan cannot touch the new man, but he tries to entice him out of the path of godliness. We want succour to walk as obedient ones where Christ walked.

*V. 14, 15.* "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit, into Galilee. . . . And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all." In all things His obedience is shown. Untouched by Satan, He goes forth *in* unhindered power ; as we shall in a measure, if like Him we pass through temptation, so as not to be touched by Satan.

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\* Satan's saying in Luke iv. 6 ("All this power, &c.) was false as to *right*, but true in *fact*, through men's lusts. So far as these go, he gives the power ; but God, after all, is above him, and governs in providence.

## THE DEATH OF LAZARUS.

(*John xi.*)

“Sorrow is a sacred thing,” it has been justly and beautifully said. But it is a fruitful thing also. If a sorrowing house be a sanctuary, so that no rude foot should trespass, it is also a spot for divine husbandry, and ready to yield its good and profitable fruit.

The sickness and death of Lazarus procured for the loved family at Bethany a visit from the Lord, a circumstance in itself full of blessing and of promise; and in that visit we see several things which may well engage, not only our attention, but, our hearts.

He sympathizes with the sorrow, and then removes the cause of it. He “wept” first, and afterwards said, “Lazarus, come forth.”

The purpose which He carried with Him of removing the occasion of the misery, left His heart still the seat of present compassion with it. It was so in the case of sending out the apostles. He was about to give them pastors according to His own heart; but looking on them as sheep that had no shepherd, He had compassion on the multitudes (Matt. ix. 36—x. 5). It was so again in His feeding the people. He was about to give them bread enough and to spare, but, on seeing them, He had compassion (Matt. xv. 32-38).

No prospect of the future, be it as bright and

certain as it may, can rightly close the heart to the claims of the present. The follower of Christ will "weep" as he enters the house of mourning or the chamber of death, though he knows that the power of resurrection, in season, will clothe the scene in all its own magnificence and joy.

With this sympathy and this power over the cause of the sorrow, we see, moreover, the instructions of wisdom and the lessons of God enjoyed through His sorrow.

Martha speaks of her grief to the Lord, and much ignorance is expressed through the natural, and in some sense pardonable, exercises of her wounded heart. But Jesus teaches her the way of God more perfectly. He lets the light of some wondrous truths break in upon her soul, truths deeper and more precious than what the hours of her undisturbed ease and happiness had been able to discover. The light of the day of prosperity had not shown her what Jesus now brought with Him in this night of weeping. She is made to see some bright shinings of the glory of God through the tears of that sorrow, through that gloom of death which had entered her dwelling. "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." The place was indeed a sanctuary, and Jesus Himself treads softly. He wept. He owned the claim of such a moment. But it was a spot for Him to cultivate also. It was a garden of the Lord's; and He enriches it with fresh fruit and growth of



knowledge. Again, let me say of this affecting scene, that it is made productive to others also. Many believe, when they witness how the grace and power of the Lord had dealt with this sorrow. "Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on Him."

I ask, is not all this as much the history of this our day, as it was of the day of Martha and Mary? Who need live long and travel far to know that the sorrows of the saints still draw the willing visits of Christ; and that, during such visits, He sympathizes and teaches? Who, I ask, need live long and travel far to know this? Gracious it is in the Spirit, and gracious to us, to have the record of such things in the book "written for our learning." But is it less gracious in Him, or less gracious to us, that these things are not merely the things of history, but the common things of experience and observation?

And further. This sorrow is the occasion of fresh acts of supplication and of worship. "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me," said the Lord. And is this at all more strange or less a matter of experience than the others? What say our own souls?

"Trials make the promise sweet,  
Trials give new life to prayer;  
Trials bring me to His feet,  
Lay me low and keep me there."

This is not history, but experience. It is not

the light of other days which, as we hear, was wont to cheer the night of weeping or the house of mourning, but the light which, as we know, is still wont to hold its court and display its power in the dark valley and in the shadow of death !

I am bold also to add another thought—a thought, too, lately made very precious to my own heart—that the blessed Lord, in unjealous love, allows both our sorrows and our mercies to be fresh links between Himself and our poor fond hearts. The widow of Sarepta was afresh bound to the prophet, when she received her son from the dead. Her joy, in one she so loved being restored to her, acted as another link of tenderest and yet strongest texture between her heart and the man of God, the witness of Christ ; and the Spirit allowed it, I am sure (1 Kings xvii. 24). So in much later days, the Lord allowed His servant to be thankful and take courage on seeing brethren again, after a long separation, though during that separation he had enjoyed His presence and encouragements in a sweet and large measure (Acts xxviii.) And so here. Receiving their brother from the dead, the dear family at Bethany are more than ever the Lord's. In the power and joy of resurrection they sit with Him (Chap. xii. 1, 2). They delight in Him afresh through the mercy which their common natural human feelings had received.



“ He does not *send* the rod, but *brings* it.”

## THE HAND OF GOD UPON HIS OWN.

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How little there is amongst the dear people of God, the bowing in heart, to that word in 1 Peter v. 6-7: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time; Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you."

In how many ways does God, in the exercise of His government amongst His own, put His hand upon us in sickness, in infirmities, or it may be by bringing us into tight places; but how slow are our hearts to lose sight of second causes, and to own Him in all that betides us. And wherefore this slowness? Is it because we cannot *trust* Him? It is not the hand of a judge smiting me that brings me down, for note the sweet connection: if I own that mighty hand of God upon me, I own also the effect of it is not to drive me from Him, but rather to draw me closer to Him, so close that with the consciousness of His hand upon me I can cast all my care upon Him and rest in the everlasting arms of the One who assures me, "He careth for you." What a sweet lesson to learn that the hand that brings me low, at one and the same moment, draws me near!

Hearken to the remnant cry again: "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."

The following heart-stirring words are ascribed to the French Huguenots in the days of their bitter persecution:—"If perish we must under Thy justice, we shall perish adoring Thee. Thy wrath, would it extinguish us? Then we shall flee to Thy heart. Is extermination Thy design for us? We shall make that new cause to fear Thee. In spite of life, in spite of death, we shall bless the stroke Thy hand applies. They are the blows of a tempest, but they bring us into port."

Surely but a verification of the concluding verses of Romans viii.: "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."



## **DO WE TRACE THINGS ONLY TO THE HAND OF GOD AND GO NO FURTHER?**

I trust I may never forget one lesson I learnt of God some years ago; and, as He who takes to Himself (and O how rightly!) the title of "The Father of mercies and the God of all comfort," comforteth those that be in tribulation, not only that they may be comforted themselves, but that they may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith they themselves have been comforted of God, I will just jot it down hoping that it may be used to help and comfort

others. Many years ago, and not long before being called to pass through a very heavy trial and sorrow, I went up to London (England). Whilst there I went one evening to where I knew a Bible reading was to be. During the meeting the old brother in whose house the meeting was held, made the following remark (I forget now what the connection was): "We often speak of tracing things up to the Lord's *hand*, but do we give His *heart* credit for moving His hand." I was much struck by the remark at the time (little knowing what was before me) and my mind reverted to it occasionally, and I saw that the *hand* was but the servant of the *heart*, even in ordinary things. For instance, if a thief steals anything, the heart has first coveted it, and the hand is merely the agent that appropriates what the heart longs for. Well, I returned to my home and about six weeks after, one very very dear to me was taken rather suddenly. In my sorrow (and deep it was) the above mentioned remark came before me. Others spoke about so and so having been the means of bringing the infection, etc. But to me (and I thank God for the grace given) there were no second causes to be looked at. No, to God Himself I must trace it, and not to His hand only but to His heart. What, His heart? Yes, *the same heart that gave Jesus*. Oh, the exquisite sweetness and infinite preciousness of the thought were inexpressible! And I knew what it was to have God Himself wiping away the tears from my eyes.

Another incident comes before me which I will mention as being in every way in keeping with what has gone before. A young sister in the Lord had just lost her babe, her first-born, and was, as might be supposed, in deep grief. An old brother who knew her well wrote to her. In the letter was the following (as nearly as I can call to mind) : " May you know the joy of having Jesus wipe away the tears from your eyes, and know that it is more blessed to have Him wipe away your tears than to have no tears to wipe away."

In conclusion I would add that I have found in my own experience the truth of what I once heard another say, viz. : " There is no bitterness, even in the deepest sorrow, unless the will is at work. It is the working of the will that brings the bitterness."



### DEUTERONOMY VIII. 3.

No one is led into the place of weeping without getting *some* joy. Israel were already God's people : He leads them into the wilderness to humble them ; He makes them hunger that He may give them manna ; He leads them into trial that He may give them something better. Some would say, If in the midst of the leeks, onions, and flesh-pots of Egypt God had given them the manna, they would have rejected all other things because the manna was better ; but it is not so. While the flesh is surrounded by that which suits it, it is fed thereby, and will reject the better things. Day

by day, hour by hour, God is leading us to that condition of hunger that He may give us something better, something not discernible by the natural mind, but satisfying. When I have tasted the manna, there is a *reality* about it ; it is not faith any longer.. If I am hungry in the wilderness and am fed and braced up by the food, do I not know it ? Can power come into my veins, and I not know it ? It might be a matter of faith that we are to have the manna to-morrow ; but it was a matter of feeling and reality that they had eaten it to-day. As we eat and are strengthened, let us say, I *know* that man doth not live by bread alone. We feed on Jesus the living bread, the gift of the Father, and we may say that we are miraculously fed from heaven every day by supernatural food, that we might know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

What think you of possessing in *measure now* all that we shall possess in the day of the Lord ? Then pain of body and pain of heart would all appear very light, and we could say with the Apostle, after enumerating things that would make some people mad (read 2 Cor. xi. 23-33), “ these *light afflictions*, which are but for a moment.” Why do not we thus speak ? It is the right of all who have the Spirit. Outside the sanctuary, until the Lord comes, there will be troubled hearts and diseased souls, but it must not surprise us ; it is all alike an opportunity for the display of God’s grace

which spreads itself abroad to meet the misery. Every want that pressed on the Lord Jesus always gave an occasion in His soul to the cry of faith.



## LAST INTERVIEW WITH A SERVANT OF CHRIST, BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE TO BE WITH THE LORD.

Sadly altered was the poor worn-out body, pil-  
lowed in an easy chair, but his spirit rejoicing in  
his much-loved Lord. He said, "Two months  
ago, when I felt this sickness was unto death, I  
asked Him to reveal Himself to me in increased  
loveliness and nearness.—*He did, He filled me with  
Himself—I know the blood has done its blessed,  
blessed work for my soul ; it is His love, His beauty,  
His perfection, that fill my heart and vision.*"  
He then spoke of feeling a little better that day ;  
"But, ah ! that is no pleasure to me." Then, clasp-  
ing his dear, thin hands together, he said, while  
tears flowed down his face, "My precious Lord  
Jesus, *Thou knowest* how fully I can say with Paul,  
to depart and be with Thee is far better ! Oh how  
far better ! I do long for it ! They come and talk  
to me of a crown of glory—I bid them cease ; of  
the glory of heaven—I bid them stop. I am not  
wanting crowns.—I have HIMSELF ! HIMSELF. I  
am going to be with HIMSELF : Ah ! with the Man  
of Sychar ; with Him who stayed to call Zaccheus ;  
with the Man of the viiith of John ; with the Man  
who hung upon the cross ; with the Man who died ;



Oh ! to be with Him before the glories, the crowns or the kingdom appear ! It's wonderful—wonderful !—with the Man of Sychar alone ; the Man of the gate of the city of Nain ! and I am going to be with Him forever ! exchange this sad, sad scene, which cast Him out, for His presence. Oh ! the Man of Sychar ! ”



FRAGMENT.—The Christianity of the closet, and the Christianity of busy life, are not, as is often fancied, conflicting things. The man who has fellowship with Jesus in his solitude knows how to carry the savour of the fellowship even into the most common affairs. There is need of prayer in this matter. For though we be convinced that there is but one thing needful, we are easily led away, like Martha, to busy and trouble ourselves about “many things.” Many things we must needs do and care about, while we are in the body ; but the work to which Christ calls us is to do and care about these things in such a spirit as to make them part and parcel of our great work—the work of keeping close to Jesus, and of following Him whithersoever He goeth. If only willing to leave all and follow Christ, He would make the cross not heavy to be borne, but a delight, more pleasant than to the miser is his load of gold, or to the earthly monarch are his insignia of power. “ *My* yoke is easy, and *my* burden is light.”

## MOUNT SINAI AND CALVARY.

*"Ye are not come unto the mount that  
burned with fire," &c.—Heb. xii. 18.*

I have stood beneath the "burning mount,"  
And heard the loud trumpet sound,  
While the thunders pealed, and the lightnings  
flashed,  
And the earthquake shook the ground ;  
And Moses himself, the man of God,  
Who had braved the tyrant's ire,  
And cleft the sea with his shepherd-rod,  
Yet quailed before Sinai's fire !

How terrible was that mighty voice,  
More dread than the lightning's flame,  
That there His holy and righteous law,  
Did to Israel's host proclaim !  
It exposed, and judged all my words and ways,  
And searched out the depths within :  
I cannot abide in this awful blaze ;  
It has shown me I'm nought but sin.

Moses descends from the burning mount,  
The tables are in his hand ;  
His face so reflects that condemning light,  
No soul before him can stand :  
With the fiery law that convicts of guilt,  
He speaks of the shadows of grace ;  
But till the true blood of the Lamb is spilt,  
The veil must enshroud his face.

On Calvary I've adoring stood,  
And gazed on that wondrous tree,  
Where the holy spotless Lamb of God  
Was slain for a wretch like me !

How my heart has stirred at that solemn cry,  
 While the sun was enwrapt in night,  
 "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"  
 Most blessed, most awful sight!

My sins were laid on His sacred head,  
 My curse by my Lord was borne;  
 For me a victim my Saviour bled,  
 And endured that death of scorn;  
 Himself He gave my poor heart to win  
 (Was ever love, Lord, like Thine!)  
 From the paths of folly, and shame, and sin,  
 And fill it with joys divine.

I've watched by the tomb, where my Saviour lay,  
 When He entered the gloomy grave;  
 That by death He the power of death might slay,  
 And His lambs from the lion save.  
 Oh, glorious time when the Victor rose!  
 He liveth no more to die;  
 He hath bruised the head of our mighty foes,  
 For us was His victory!

The gates of heaven are opened wide,  
 At His name all the angels bow;  
 The Son of man, who was crucified,  
 Is crownèd in glory now:  
 We love to look up, and behold Him there,  
 The Lamb for His chosen slain;  
 And soon shall His bride all His glories share,  
 With her Head and her Lord shall reign.  
 And now I draw near to the throne of grace,  
 For His blood and my Priest are there;  
 And I joyfully seek my Father's face,  
 With my censer of praise and prayer:  
 The burning mount, the mystic veil,  
 With my terrors and guilt are gone;  
 My conscience has peace that can never fail,  
 'Tis the Lamb on high on the throne!

## GALATIANS.

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The great principles which constitute the bases of the Epistle to the Galatians are of great interest and importance. It is upon the face of it elementary, the churches of Galatia being in imminent danger of adding Judaism to Christianity in such a way as to destroy the nature of Christianity itself. Nor was theirs the only age in which liability to do so has existed, and has had to be watched against.

The law is a testing of human nature, to see whether it can produce righteousness for God, and a perfect rule of righteousness for that nature in all it owes to God and to a man's neighbour. So that it claims subjection, and that man should fulfil its requirements under penalty moreover of judgment. The authority of God, the subjection of man to His commandments, and a perfect rule of conduct for man in his present state as a child of Adam are all involved in this system. But man, conscious he ought to fulfil it, his own conscience telling him it is right, and not suspecting his own weakness and the depth of his ruin, and seeing that keeping it would be righteousness for him before God, readily takes it up as the way of having that righteousness, and enjoying divine favour—of being right when judgment comes. When unawakened, observance of its outward claims satisfies the natural conscience ; if understood spiritually, it leads to the discovery of that law in our members which hinders all success in the attempt. But God having established

the law, it was a very difficult and delicate thing to shew that, as a system, it was passed away, not because it was not right in its place, and useful too for its own real purpose, but to make way for a system of grace purposed and promised long before the law was established ; and that by the discovery that it was death and condemnation to be under it, that the mind of the flesh (the nature the law dealt with) was not subject to it, and could not be, and that we escape its curse as under it, not by the destruction of its authority, but by dying as so under it, and that by the body of Christ in whom we then found ourselves in a new life beyond its condemnation. The cross makes all things clear. But the credit of the flesh (that is, of himself) is dear to the natural man, and till he had discovered that in him (that is, in his flesh) there was no good thing, he was loth to give up a rule he knew to be right, in the humbling confession that he was such a sinner that it could be only his condemnation, the law of sin so strong in his members, himself so disposed to evil, that the law, weak through the flesh, could only condemn him. Judaising teachers, proud in their own conceits, zealous of the law as the credit of their nation, could not bear to have it set aside as necessary for the way of righteousness and life with God ; and the ministry which judged the flesh in Jew and Gentile, and freed the latter from all subjection to the Jewish system, was intolerable to them. Man always clings to the law, speciously alleging God's claims and holiness, till

he experimentally finds (in the discovery of the true character of the flesh) his true state, that as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.

Hence Paul, both as to his own ministry and the place the law held, was in perpetual conflict with these Judaizing teachers. The more intimate we are with his writings, the more we shall find how he was harassed by it, and how his writings continually bear on the point that you cannot mix the two systems, law and grace. This lay at the root of all his doctrine, and in all its highest developments, as well as in its first elements. The counsels of God, in the second Man, were formed before the world was, or man was responsible at all, and revealed only after that second Man was come, and had accomplished the work on which the bringing all these counsels into effect was founded. The apostle's doctrine, fully unfolded, brought out the ground and scope of these counsels in their full development in Christ, and, as to us, in a new and heavenly position of man in and with Him ; while the true state of the first man, responsible for his walk, of which the law was the perfect rule, gave occasion for insisting on the first elements of the truth, and the necessity of setting aside the first man, and thus for the application of the law, which could reach him only as long as he lived, in order to substitute grace and divine righteousness, not because the law was wrong, but because being right it was death and condemnation to man under

it. Christ met this responsibility for us on the cross, magnifying the law by bearing its curse, but bringing us, dead to sin and alive in Him, into connection withal with another—Himself raised from the dead. In His death God had condemned sin in the flesh, and brought in what was divine in righteousness and life in place of man, when Christ was for sin a sacrifice for sin on the cross. These elements the Epistle to the Galatians fully instruct us in, without going into the counsels whose accomplishment is based on the cross. These are found elsewhere, most fully in the Ephesians.

The first part of the Epistle to the Galatians is occupied with the independence of Paul's ministry. It was neither *of* nor *by* man. From the apostles he received nothing. The revelations he received, and his apostolic authority were immediately from the Lord. At the end of chapter ii. the apostle gives, in earnest and burning words, the whole bearing of the law on the gospel, and how they were related one to another; but of this at the close. I will now shew how he sets the law and the gospel over against one another.

Up to the flood, save the testimony of godly men and prophets, God did not interfere after the history of man's perverseness was complete in Adam and Cain. That issued in the judgment of the flood. After that, God began anew to deal with man, to unfold His ways to him in the state in which he was. And they were carried on till the full proof of man's irreclaimable state was

given in the rejection of Christ. The first of these dealings, after scattering men into nations and tongues and languages, was His taking Abraham out of them all for Himself, and making him the stock and root of a new family on the earth, God's family fleshly or spiritual ; the former, Israel ; the latter, the one Seed, Christ. Leaving aside for the moment Israel, the seed according to the flesh, to whom the promises will surely be accomplished in grace, we find the promise made to Abram in chapter xiv., and confirmed in the seed in chapter xxii. This referred to all nations who were to be blessed in the Seed, the one Seed, typified by Isaac, offered up and raised in figure. On this the apostle insists. The blessing came by promise. This, confirmed as it was to Isaac, could not be disannulled, and (what is more directly to the point) could not be added to. The law could not be annexed to it as a condition. To that there were two parties ; but God was only one. The accomplishment of this conditional promise depended on the fidelity of both, and hence had no stability. God's promise depended on Himself alone. His faithfulness was its security, and it could not fail. But the law, coming four hundred and thirty years after, could not invalidate or be added to the confirmed promise. The law is not against the promises of God, but merely came in by the bye till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made, bringing in transgression but not righteousness. The law



was not of faith ; its blessing was by those who were under it themselves doing it. Promise, and faith in the promise and promised One, went together. The law brought a curse ; Christ, the promised Seed, was made a curse for those under it, and when Christianity or faith came they were no longer under it at all. The law was an intermediate added thing, whose place ceased when the promised Seed came. The law and grace are contrasted, as the law and promise, faith and the Seed are, first for justification. A man under the law was a debtor himself to do the whole of it ; and a Christian taking this ground was fallen from grace ; Christ had become of none effect to him. A man who looked to the law frustrated the grace of God : if righteousness came by *it*, Christ was dead in vain.

But the contrast is applied to godly walk. The Spirit is opposed to the flesh. They are contrary one to the other in their nature. We are to walk after the Spirit, having the things of the Spirit before us, to produce its fruits ; but if we are led of the Spirit, we are not under law. Life and power and a heavenly object characterize the Spirit, in contrast with the law which deals with flesh, and in vain, instead of taking us out of it. Thus, as to godly walk as well as for righteousness, the law is contrasted with grace. On one side are grace, promise, faith, Christ, and the Spirit, and, I may add, a righteous standing before God ; on the other, the law claiming obedience

from the flesh, which does not render it, and out of which the law cannot deliver us. It gives no life. If there had been a law which could have given life, then, indeed, righteousness should have been by the law. It is this full contrast which makes the Galatians so striking.

The result is this. Being led of the Spirit we are not under law. What, then, is our state? We, through the Spirit, wait for the hope that belongs to it, that is, glory. How so? Being righteous in Christ, we have received the Spirit, and in the power of that we wait for what it so richly reveals. The contrast of the flesh and Spirit, and the power of the latter leaves the law functionless as to walk, whether in power or character. Law was a rule for flesh, a perfect one, but not for Spirit. This reveals heavenly things, Christ in glory, and changes us into His image. This was in no way the law's object.

How, then, is its real use and power stated in the epistle? Peter, when certain came from James, would no longer eat with the Gentiles. Paul withstood him to the face, the weakness of one yielding to the presence of Jews, the energetic faith of the other holding fast the truth of the gospel. Peter had left the law as the way of obtaining righteousness, and he was going back to it, building again what he had destroyed; he was then a transgressor in destroying it. Now Christ had led him to it. Christ then was the minister of sin. What was the effect of the law? Ah! we have, through grace, in

the earnestness of a holy conscience, its true work. It wrought death. The law had killed Paul (that is, in his conscience before God). He had been alive without it once. But thereby he was dead to it ; and this, that in another way, in another life, he might live to God, which the flesh could not do. Had it been simply given effect to in himself, it had been curse and condemnation as well as death, but it was in Christ, who had died under its curse for him, and he was crucified with Christ, being thus dead, dead to law, and to sin at the same time, having done with the old Adam, to which the law applied ; he was, nevertheless, now alive. Yet not he (which would have been the flesh) but Christ lived in him.

The law, and condemnation, and the flesh, were gone (so to speak) together as to Paul's position before God, and replaced by Christ and the Spirit, on which last he largely insists in what follows—chapter iii. But there is more ; there is the object before the soul. “The life which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” This is the great point. The divine person, who has so loved us and given Himself for us, whom we thus know in perfect grace, in love even unto death, is the sanctifying object of the whole life. We live by it. The law gave no object, any more than it gave life and strength. Here we have the most blessed one, where the heart is filled with love, and led out into confidence with an object that conforms it

to itself. The principle of dealing, grace, life, power, object, are all contrasted with law, which afforded none of these, and could therefore no more produce godliness than it could righteousness before God.

The Epistle thus contrasts grace, promise, faith, Christ, the Spirit for righteousness and walk alike, with law and flesh. The law was useful as bringing death on us, that is, on the old man, condemnation being borne by Christ, with whom we have died to it and flesh. A new place, and life, and righteousness, beyond the cross, is that into which we have entered, with Christ in heaven before us.



## HAGAR.

(*Gen. xvi.—xxv.*)

Abraham had already received the promise of a seed, so by faith in that promise (trusting God as the quickener of the dead), he was now standing in righteousness before Him. (*Gen. xv.*)

That promise, I may observe, had not mentioned Sarah in connection with the Seed, but there was strong intimation that she was to be the mother.

However, be this as it may, Sarah's suggestion to her husband at the opening of chap. xvi. too clearly discloses the working of an unbelieving heart, and the principle of confidence in the flesh, two things which go together and measure each other. The more the simplicity of faith is surren-

dered, and grace refused, will the law, either in its morality or religiousness, be taken up.

For grace, or the promise, calls us out of ourselves, unto God and His resources ; and Abraham had followed that call in Gen. xv. But now at the suggestion of Sarah he takes up himself again. He is back again in the flesh, or under the law, or becomes a dependant on his own resources. For these are all one and the same thing. Hagar is his confidence, and not the divine Quickener of the dead.

This is very sad ; but it is not destructive of his standing. Surely not. It betrays the bad, mistrustful habit of the soul, and has to be rebuked and chastened, but Abraham is still the heir of God through righteousness by faith.

Very expressive, I judge all this to be, and very significant or typical also. For the law, after this pattern, entered through man's confidence in himself, Israel accepting this offer of it and saying, "all that the Lord hath spoken we will do" (Ex. xix. 8\*) ; as Hagar is now seated in Abraham's house through the same want of faith and the same confidence in the flesh.

But there is much more of this same typical character. For Hagar's despising of her mistress, is, in the Lord's esteem, highly out of place ; and as He meets her in her wanderings, He knows her only as *Sarah's maid*, and sends her back with this

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\* And we see in Josh. xxiv., 19-24, the same confidence persisted in after experience.

injunction, "return to *thy mistress*, and submit thyself under her hand." She may get promises respecting the son that was to be born to her, but she is *Sarah's maid* still, and *submission* is her only duty. The law, too, has its hour. It may fill the house of God for a time, as Hagar and Hagar's seed now do the house of Abraham for fourteen years. But to the elect, or the heirs of promise, *even the dispensation of the law is, or was, still only a servant*. Sarah, likewise, may betray herself in other ways, in her undue impatience against Hagar, as well as in giving her to her husband, but still the relationship is unaffected by all this. *Hagar is still and only Sarah's maid, and as such she must reside in the family as long as she is permitted*.

All this is strong, decided teaching, and teaching of mysteries, as I have said. For Hagar, as we know (Gal. iv. 21-31), is the law of the Old covenant, which, though it filled and formed the house of God for its hour, was but serving some great purpose of instruction or discipline to the heirs of promise. And all the time there was a great underplot, so to express it, in this mystic house of the Patriarch; which, in a divine sense, was surely the chief thing. Ishmael is born and circumcised, and being the only child and heir apparent, he becomes the object no doubt of daily solicitude. But with God, Ishmael is but second. He appears to be principal in the scene, but he is not really or divinely so. Accordingly neither is he or his mother scarcely noticed by the Spirit or hand of God after

this, while they reside in the house, till the due time for their dismissal comes. Abraham, through human or fleshly fondness, draws him forward for a moment under God's eye, and he is circumcised as any purchased slave would have been ; but neither is he or his bondwoman-mother the Lord's object. The elect Abraham and Sarah, or persons and things connected with them, are His thoughts. His communications are with them, and His discipline spent upon them, they learn and experience their value in His esteem, and others are made to know it also (xvii.--xx.).

Is not this, in like manner, a word of instruction to us ? Hagar and her child were in the house all this time. But Sarah and Abraham are *God's* objects. As again I may say, during the age of the law, the house of God was, it is true, manifested as under law—the law filled it with a material of its own workmanship ; but there was all the while a hidden action of the Spirit with the elect—the elect in the house were really *God's* objects.

These two stages in the way of the Egyptian bondwoman are, thus, very significant. Her *entrance* into Abraham's house as the mother of his first child Ishmael, and then her *residence there* for a season, have this mystic sense in them. But these things do not dispose of the whole history. We have still to look at her *dismissal* from the house.

Her child grew up to boyhood, and was, as I have suggested, no doubt the object of family con-

cern. But the current which had long run underground, or was known only in the counsels and promises of God, must appear and assert its course. Grace and the covenant must have their way, and become principal in the scene. And therefore in due time, yea at the very right moment, "when the fulness of the time had come," Isaac is born.

The appearance of such a child was a great era. And soon was it found that he was set for a sign that should be spoken against, as well as for the joy of the elect. Abraham makes a feast, but Ishmael mocks over the very same event. Here was the revealing of hearts. One taunts what the other glories in. But Sarah is bolder still. She will not merely take part in Abraham's joy, but she is for judging the scorers. "Cast out the bondwoman and her son," says she. Here was another heart revealed, a great heart truly. Here was an energy of faith which far out-did even Abraham's. Abraham would personally and quietly enjoy the child of promise, but Sarah will not only do this, laughing with divine believing delight over him, but is for cleaning out by a summary dismissal all that would disturb his full unrivalled heirship of everything.

This was indeed great-hearted faith. This spoke the mind of God (Gal. iv. 30). This was *interpreting the gift of God, the child of promise, aright*. This was putting honour upon that gift as it well deserved. It was not a mother's fondness, but faith's boldness—for shall the gift of God be kept



merely on a level, on the same floor, as it were, with the fruit of human strength or the creatures of man's resources?

This great-hearted faith of Sarah is very encouraging, receiving, too, as it does, the full and ready sanction of the Lord Himself. It is very happy to watch this. It is well when the soul can, with Abraham, rejoice over the accomplished councils and promises of God. But it is better, when we can be so bold in the faith as with this joy to cast out from our hearts all spirit of bondage and fear, every fruit of nature and every confidence save in the sovereign and glorious resources of the living God—God of all grace and salvation as He is—when we can refuse to hear anything or to see anything, that may hush or cloud that goodness and power of God by which He has brought Himself unspeakably near to our hearts.

From the presence of such a faith as this everything must retire, and make room for God and His gift. Hagar is dismissed, and of course, the mocking Ishmael. Sarah will have it so—faith, rather, will have it so. And so will God; and Abraham, let fondness and nature be as reluctant as they may, must have it so likewise.

What precious mysteries may our souls thus feed upon; while they meditate on Hagar's *introduction* to the house, her *residence* in the house, and her *dismissal* from the house, of our *father* Abraham!

But I would now also, for a little, trace the results

of the birth of Isaac, of the appearance of the child of promise in the house of Abraham.

1. The *immediate* fruit of this appearance of Isaac, as I have been observing, is the dismissal of Hagar and her child. And, as I have also observed, this is a mystery.

“After that faith is come, we are no longer under a school-master ;” but the exhortation now is, “stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.” (Gal. iii. 25 ; v. 1.)

The Spirit of sonship displaces that of fear. *There must be no room in the house for two children of such opposite tempers.* Since Jesus had appeared, the elect stand in the righteousness of faith, and wait for the hope it inspires (Gal. v. 5.) and fear and bondage depart.

2. The *future* fruit of this great mystic event, is the covenant of peace between Abraham and the Gentiles, Abraham on that great occasion taking the lead, and soon afterwards owning, for the first time, the earth as a beautiful or millennial scene, and the Lord God as the everlasting God, or the Father of the millennial age (Gen. xxi. 22-33).

In this way the *immediate* and the *final* results of the appearance or birth of the child of the free-woman are exhibited. But there is more to be observed in the history down to ch. xxv. Another thing is incidentally shewn also—the fortunes of the outcast child of the bondwoman.

At first he is all but dead. The provision with which he left Abraham's house is all spent, and he

is cast entirely upon God. But under His provision he grows up and thrives, as a man of the wilderness. There he dwells and has his occupation, and the prophecies which went before on him (ch. xvi.) were made good. But in the principle and taste of his mind he returns, as far as he can, to his mother's native land. *She gets him an Egyptian wife.*

All this is significant. For we know that Ishmael is, mystically, the children of "the Jerusalem that now is" (Gal. iv.). And quite after this pattern of Ishmael, is it now with the Jew ; for the Jew (or the nation of Israel) since the day of his dismissal from the house of God, since he ceased to be owned of the Lord in the land of his fathers, has been kept alive by the peculiar hand or provision of God. A full end has been made of other nations but not of Israel, and never will. For so runs the promise : outcast that people are, but not destroyed. They have, it is true, gone back all they could, to the flesh out of which by profession through circumcision they had come ; they have, in principle, returned to Egypt, or found affinity with the ways of an uncircumcised world ; but there they are to this day, kept by the present hand of God for the coming purposes of God, all their history marking the energies of a divine hand over them.

This is all significant : the wilderness of Ishmael is as much mystic ground as the land of Israel. But further, during this growth of Ishmael in the wilderness, the house of God has been enjoying its

liberty. Isaac has filled Abraham's and Sarah's heart with laughter. And all this liberty and joy was as much divine as the preservation of the life of Ishmael in the wilderness—the one betokening the *Spirit*, the other the *hand* of God. God sanctioned this joy. He would by no means have it otherwise.

And, blessed to tell it, it was a *worshipping* as well as a deep personal joy; for it could associate itself with any sacrifice. The father and the son, Abraham and Isaac, loved each other with the warmest affections, but at the bidding of the Lord they can go to the altar as the offerer and his lamb. And it was also a joy that could dwell in thoughts of *resurrection*, and lay its objects in scenes beyond the grave. And it was holy jealousy as well. It refused all kindredness or Ishmael's affinities with the world. Chapters xxii.-xxiv. exhibit these qualities in Abraham and Isaac, while Ishmael is growing up no better than an Egyptian in the desert.

This is, I believe, all deeply significant. Is it not the picture of what we in this age ought to be—in a *spirit of full gladness and liberty before our God*, but also in a *spirit of sacrifice*, and in a *spirit of separation from the world*?

Finally, as I have already anticipated, in a little time the scene will change to glory or the kingdom. Abraham or Israel will be courted by the Gentiles and their kings; the earth will be beautified, or planted with groves again; and the altar of the

everlasting or millennial God (see again ch. xxi.) will be raised, while a covenant of peace binds all the families of the earth together ; as here at the close of Abraham's seed, as by Keturah, are sent into distant lands, with gifts as from a father, though Isaac was at home the heir of his estate ! (xxv.)

“ Witty inventions,” surely, divine wisdom employs to teach our souls with joy and profit !

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NOTA BENE.—It is not unworthy of notice, in connection with the foregoing article, to observe what an illustration the conduct of Esau, in Gen. xxviii. 6-9, gives us of the truths, “ the flesh profiteth nothing,” and “ they that are in the flesh cannot please God ” (Jno. vi. 63 ; Rom. viii. 8) ; and, at the same time, the readiness of the flesh, even in its worse forms, to turn to the law for help. Valuing a mess of pottage more than that to which the blessing of God was attached, Esau shews himself to be a “ profane person,” thereby, under the government of God, forfeiting the blessing. He seeks the latter “ carefully with tears,” but finds “ no place of repentance.” In this position, instead of self-judgment and repentance, “ seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not his father, Esau went . . . and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael, to be his wife,” *joining affinity with the son of the bond-woman* Profanity and the law (in type) linked together ! Truly, as has been said (page 71), “ the working of an unbelieving heart and the principle of confidence in the flesh go together and measure each other ! ”



The difference between law and grace is—grace depends on what God is for me ; law, on what I am for God.

## ALONE ! YET NOT ALONE !

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*"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."  
(Heb. xiii. 5.)*

Alone with Jesus ! Oh how sweet  
To lay my sorrows at His feet !  
So kindly He consents to share  
My burden and my ev'ry care.  
I know how sweet it is, my God,  
To fall before Thee, 'neath Thy rod.

Alone, yet not alone ! One *eye*  
That can my ev'ry grief descry—  
An eye that beams with pitying love  
And scans earth's depths from heaven above :  
That never tires, that never sleeps,  
But watches while the tried one weeps.

Alone, yet not alone ! One *hand*  
To hold the glass as runs the sand ;  
To wipe away the scalding tear,  
Dispel each gloomy doubt and fear ;  
To soothe this wounded heart of mine,  
Pouring thereinto oil and wine.

Alone, yet not alone ! One *heart*  
To feel my wounds' acutest smart ;  
A spacious heart to hide me in,  
Safe from the world's o'erwhelming din ;  
So mighty, yet so kind and free,  
Stooping to love a worm like me.

Alone, yet not alone ! One *voice*  
To bid me make the Lord my choice ;  
To whisper "Peace" when troubles roll  
Like waves across my chasten'd soul ;  
To say in accents, soft and mild,  
"As thy day, so thy strength, my child !"

Alone, yet not alone ! One *ear*  
 To suppliant's whisper ever near ;  
 Awake to silent agony,  
 To bleeding spirit's misery ;  
 Attentive to the humblest cry,  
 The faintest prayer, the smother'd sigh.

Alone, yet not alone ! One *breast*  
 Where I may lay my head to rest ;  
 Reposing in those loving arms,  
 So calm, so safe from all alarms ;  
 Oh here, for ever lying still, .  
 I'll bow me to my Father's will !

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### “DYING ALONE.”

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I was asked one day to go and see a poor old woman, who had for many years lived quite alone. “And now,” said her neighbour, “she is dying alone, and I have my children to mind, and can only see her once a day.”

Circumstances prevented my going just at once to see her, but those two words, “dying alone,” rang in my ears, and seemed to haunt me from day to day. To live alone appeared to me sad enough, but to die alone, seemed the very depth of human misery. I was young, but had known sorrow, and had stood by several death-beds. I had watched the last breath flicker out by the bed-side of both rich and poor, but none of them had died alone. My own friends were surrounded by every luxury and comfort ; everything that love could plan to make the sick room cheerful and smoothe

the dying pillow, was done by cheerful hands ; and many cherished ones softly glided in and out with words of comfort and sympathy. I had stood, too, by the dying beds of the poor, and had watched with admiration how every nerve had been strained to provide comforts for the sick one out of the hard-earned wages ; and kind neighbours were ever ready to come in and share the weary night-watch. But now a new phase of suffering presented itself, one I had not heard of before, and I oft repeated those dismal words, “ dying alone ! ” “ dying alone ! ” Death on the battle-field amidst the dying and slain, or death in the crowded wards of a hospital, seemed comfort to me compared to this, and I even prayed, “ Lord, may I never die alone.”

Nearly a week after this I found myself on the way to see the poor creature I did not even know by name, but whose circumstances called for my deepest sympathy—“ dying alone ! ” ’Twas a very low door by which I entered a very small dark room ; the window, but one pane of glass, scarcely giving sufficient light to show distinctly the few objects in that chamber ; and it was with a feeling somewhat akin to awe, I went up to the low bed in the corner, and gazed upon that aged woman dying alone ! It was a calm and pleasant face, though much furrowed and wrinkled by care and years ; her silvery hair was parted upon her brow, and her white cap and sheets showed no signs of neglect—yet she was dying alone !

“ Sit down, Miss,” she said, with a kindly smile ;



"my neighbour told me you would come some day ; but I thought likely I would be gone home before you came ; but now I hope you have brought me some good word about the Lord."

" I have His word in my pocket," I said.

" Ah ! that's well ; His own word is better than anything we can say. Read for me, please."

As I turned from passage to pasage of the blessed Book, her aged eyes beamed, and her whole soul seemed to drink in the precious words, and, as I prayed with her before leaving, she joined with me in every petition. As I parted from her, I expressed my surprise that she could be so full of peace and joy when dying alone !

" Tsh ! " she said, " Christ is with me, and when you have known Him as long as I have known Him, and proved His love as long, you will not wonder. I've known Him more than twenty years, and I've lived much of that time alone with Him, and now I've been dying these six months past, alone with Him ; for few come to see me, and there's few I care to see, for I've Christ always with me, and there's no solitude in that."

I came away from that humble dwelling with very different thoughts from those with which I had entered it. God had a new lesson for me through His aged saint. Her calm face and joyful answer, " Christ is with me," opened up to me depths in Him hitherto unknown ; for though I knew Him as my Saviour and Friend, He was not as yet *everything* to me. I saw this aged servant

of Christ many times after this, and learned from her what I believe I have never forgotten. One day she told me that she had asked the Lord, if it were His will, that some one might be with her when she breathed her last.

"Why?" I asked, thinking she was dreading to die alone.

"Because, if no one saw me die, they would not know I was as happy to die as to live; for Christ is with me now, and shall be with me then, and I shall be with Him forever."

Each day, as I left her, I saw she was passing quickly to her desired haven. She had few earthly comforts, save those the Lord privileged me to take her; yet she was full of joy, and thankfulness, and unclouded peace. One day I knocked as usual at the door, but got no answer. "Oh," I said, "has she died alone?" With breathless anxiety I opened the door; her hands were clasped, her lips moved in prayer. I stood in silence till her eyes opened and she saw me.

"You've come to see me die," she said. "Sit down. If it was not for others, I would rather be alone with Christ, but you'll stay till the end."

Then in thoughtfulness for me, she said,—"O, but you are young, and you may not like to see any one die."

"Yes," I said, "I should like to be with you."

Pointing to her well-worn Bible, she said—"Read for me once more the last verses of the eighth chapter of Romans."

"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."

As I closed the book, I was about to ask her if I should pray. I observed a slight movement of the eyelids, she gazed upwards, a radiant smile lit up her features, and her happy spirit was with the Lord. I knelt and closed her eyes, drew the sheet over the pale face of death, came out, locked the door, and, having made a few arrangements with her neighbour as to her remains, I returned home.

The lessons learned in that little room were precious to me. Dear reader, have you learned anything from reading this simple account of one who was truly satisfied with Christ? Can you say, "That is the Christ I have got. He is everything to me, if called to live alone; everything to me, if called to die alone. A Christ who is above, and beyond, and over every earthly circumstance—a Christ who thoroughly satisfies my heart?"



"The secret of all blessing and progress, after a soul has been brought to taste of blessing in Christ, is the being led into intercourse with God as He has revealed Himself in Scripture, knowing Him as the living and true God in action in Scripture. Standing then face to face with Him, we see what poor things we are, and what the blessing for us in this book—called truly God's library."

## HEARING AND FOLLOWING.

(JOHN X. 27.)

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If there be one lack in souls at the present time more marked than another, it is feebleness of appreciation as to these two important points.

The quietness of communion is but little known, not to say enjoyed, in this busy, active day. How truly the moment speaks loudly of *unrest* and *unreality*; and how little is known, even among the saints, of that deep, personal, unexpressed joy in Christ.

The satisfaction of the heart in the personal nearness of the Lord, the being in His company for the simple joy of it, is true communion; thus it is we have common mind with Him, which is the meaning of communion. When this is the case, we know the mind of our Lord and Master, and this it is which qualifies us for every service as Christ's confidential servants: it is well to bear in mind that, the amount of our service or the laboriousness of our work does not of itself constitute us confidential servants.

There is a very close alliance, a very intimate connection between the two attitudes of soul we are considering; in fact, they wait the one on the other. It is very blessed to see the *producing* and *maintaining* power, of hearing and following Christ. In a word, it is Christ. He, and He alone, is the blessed source and spring of all that has its rise and satisfaction in Himself. To be a

good *listener*, one must be both *free* and *at rest*. Dear reader, are you? The blessed Son, ever the Father's delight, ever in the bosom of the Father, came into this world of sin, slavery and sorrow, to bring both liberty to the captives and opening of the prison to those that were bound, as well as *relief* of conscience and *rest* of heart to every weary soul: His work and person alone can give freedom and rest. It is mournful to see how little of either exists around us; the disquietude of the age infects the saints, not only in the things that relate to this life, but even in their relationships with God they have not the *fixed, settled* peace which cannot be moved.

With many at the present time it is as it were but the dawn of union, the full day in soul consciousness not having yet come. With them it is like "the morning spread upon the mountains," and hence there is but little, if any, repose; unsatisfied longings, ardent desires as yet unmet, abound in many a heart. Oh, how one longs to see His own people possessing conscious knowledge of union with Christ glorified in the place where He is; this imparts rest of heart, and detaches from earth and its things! Thus it is that the soul listens, absorbed with Him who is its rest. The ear, once engaged with other sounds, now does homage at His feet, and waits upon His words, knowing how to interpret all the tones of His voice, and to treasure them up in the soul. What could be more blessed than an ear at leisure from self

and its surroundings to wait on the word of Jesus ? Then it is that we “ sit down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit is sweet to our taste ” (Cant. ii. 3). Is not this the “ house of wine ” where He delights to entertain His own during the weary hours of this far-spent night ? It is wonderful how little any of us know what real *solitude with God* is ! And may I not ask, how is it possible to grow in personal acquaintance with Christ, if the solitude of His company is not sought after and cultivated by His saints ? I hope I may not be understood by any as undervaluing the outward means of instruction and soul refreshment which abound on every hand ; nothing could be more distant from my thoughts ; but I do say that these by themselves will not make up for the loss of meditative solitude with God. Another has said, “ Never less alone than when alone ; ” but alas, how little impress of this is left on any of us !

It is interesting to see this illustrated in the history of Elijah. Remarkable servant of God though he was, it is clear that his life inwardly was not sustained in proportion to his outward testimony. With him the *fire, wind* and *earthquake* were everything ; and when outward testimony excited the malignity of the enemy, as is usual, his faith was not equal to the pressure. But mark the blessed tender way of Jehovah with His poor servant.

1st. He is called to go and stand before the Lord, thus proving that solitude is useless unless

it be with God. We may be even as he was, under a juniper tree, or in a cave (1 Kings xix. 4, 9), but *that* is only the solitude of disappointed nature; there is neither *liberty*, nor *rest*, nor *listening* in that. Oh, no, it must be *with God*. “Go forth, and stand upon the mount *before the Lord*.”

2nd. The demands of nature must not be yielded to. This is typified by the prophet's fasting forty days and forty nights; that which had been supplied to him was the providing of Jehovah's hand—even a “cake baked” and “a cruse of water,” supplies outside nature, in the strength of which all its claims can be set aside.

3rd. The consequence of the two former, the prophet *listens*—he hears “a still small voice;” and thus receives *communications* and *commissions* which previously would have been unintelligible to him.

Following seems to come in as a consequence of what we have had before us: “My sheep *hear* my voice . . . and they *follow me*.” As it is the Shepherd's voice that is heard and known by the sheep, so it is the Shepherd Himself they follow; He it is who has gone before. In the passage quoted from John x., we find the blessed Lord, scorned and reproached, leaving the ancient fold of Judaism, and thus going before His sheep, the security to all His own that it was the true way, as well as the authority for the sheep following Him come what might, their hiding-place from danger, and their safe-conduct for the way.

It is very blessed to see how it is the knowing *His* voice here (vs. 4, 5), not that they know all the false voices of strangers, but their security is in knowing His voice, and they likewise follow as they know it.

Dear reader, has your heart found One whom you are now *following*? Is this your one object day by day? It is very blessed to be allowed to serve, but many a one serves in this day who is not following. Remember what He says Himself: "If any man *serve* Me, let him *follow* Me" (John xii. 26), showing the importance He attached to following Him. Oh, for more distinct going forth from all around to follow a rejected Lord and Master, and to esteem it our holiest joy to tread the path He has walked in, rough it may be, but trodden by Himself, who has left His own mark upon every rose and every thorn.

" 'A little while'—He'll come again!  
 Let us the precious hours redeem;  
 Our only grief to give Him pain,  
 Our joy to serve and *follow* Him.  
 Watching and ready may we be,  
 As those that wait their Lord to see."



"Our true liberty is to belong to God. All that is for oneself is stolen from the rights of Him who has bought us for His own."



## CONFUSION AND ORDER.

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The Lord found a state of sad and humbling and various confusion in the land that He walked through day by day. But it only gave occasion to His path to shine the brighter—for it was light and only light undimmed by the darkness, and unbroken by the confusion that was all around.

The state of politics and of religion in that day exhibited this confusion. The authority of the Roman was there where Jehovah should have been supreme ; Cæsar's image was circulating in Immanuel's land. And He had to do with Herodians, Sadducees, and Pharisees ; with His own kinsfolk according to the flesh in their ignorance ; with doctors and scribes in their pride and pretensions ; with the multitudes in their self-seeking and fickleness ; and with the low condition of His own disciples.

He had to walk through such regions as Galilee, Judea, and Samaria—diverse, I mean, not in place or situation, but in character. For Samaria was the *defiled*, Galilee the *rational*, Judea the *religious*. This we see in John iv. v.

Galilee would receive Him, because they had seen the miracles which He had wrought ; but without signs and wonders they would not believe. Like Christendom and her walk every day, Galilee gave Him *historical* faith and acceptance. They believed on competent testimony ; but there was no exercise of soul, nor awakening of conscience.

Judea or Jerusalem was occupied with its temple and its sabbath. Religion, or the observance of ordinances, the maintenance of what honoured themselves in their own place as the house or centre of the nation's worship, was chief with them, and prevailed to blind them to the doings of the Son of God.\*

Samaria was unclean. It had no character to maintain, no religious honour to vindicate and uphold. But there the conscience was stirred. No miracle had been witnessed there, but no miracle was sought for. Jesus was received there because His words had reached their souls.

This was Galilee, and this was Judea, and this Samaria : Galilee, the rational ; Judea, the religious ; and Samaria, the defiled. But all such various confusion only glorified the path of Him who knew how to answer every man. Herodians and Sadducees and Pharisees, His kinsfolk and His disciples, the doctors, the scribes, and the multitudes, Galilee, Judea and Samaria, all in their way and season, got their answer from Him. He would not resist, but yet He would escape the snare. His voice should not be heard in the streets, and yet He would leave them unable to answer Him a word. He did not cure the confusion, but He passed through it, only glorifying God the more by reason of it.

And it is our comfort to see this. It tells us

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\* A great multitude of impotent folk were lingering over Bethesda, though the Son of God was going about healing all manner of diseases, doing the work of Bethesda in a far better way than Bethesda.

that the scenes in which we find ourselves involved day by day are nothing new, and need not be a surprise to us. They may exercise us, and we may fail under them, and to our humbling, but they need neither amaze nor dishearten us. We need not hope to cure it ; but, like the Master, we have to pass through it. Judgment will do its work in its season, and confusion shall cease. But the time of judgment is not yet fully come. Jesus was ever judging the sinner's enemy, but never His own. He contended for us against Satan, but never for His own rights against either the Roman or the Jew. Such was the combination of weakness and strength in Him : ever passing by His own wrongs, but judging all the power of the sinner's enemy, destroying the works of the devil (1 John iii. 8).

And *order* shall succeed judgment, as judgment succeeds long-suffering. In its time, this shall surely be, as now confusion surely is. His hand will form and mould a scene of order in the days of the coming kingdom. And of this order He has already, by His spirit, again and again, in the progress of His grace and wisdom, given pledges and samples. And as we look at this for a little, we shall have to say : How beautifully things take their proper place when the Spirit of God comes to regulate them ! And this is done, as I may say, *noiselessly*—as creation of old assumed all its order under the same Spirit.

We see a sample of this in Gen. xviii. The

Lord had taken counsel with Himself, that He would reveal a matter to Abraham. Upon that, the two angels who had attended Him to Mamre, pass on, while Abraham, on the other hand, draws near. How simple, and yet how beautiful that was! The scene, as without noise or effort, takes its due form. The objects which fill it fall into their right places—the angels leaving the place in the possession of those who had a secret between them, while they themselves, left alone, draw nearer to each other.

So Abraham again in Gen. xxi. He had just been distinguished by divine favour. He had got Isaac, and his house was established by the Lord. The Gentile comes to seek his friendship. Abraham accords it to him heartily—but on the occasion he assumes the place of the better, while Abimelech, though a king, and Phichol, his chief captain, who accompanied his master, without grudging, took the place of the less.

This was another witness of souls finding their right relationship to each other under the hand or Spirit of God, all between them being in the order and harmony of “a noiseless sphere.”

The same is seen, and that, too, in a larger field of vision, in Ex. xviii. The ransomed tribes of Israel meet Jethro at the mount of God. Aaron is there, and Moses is there, heads of Israel, priestly and royal heads. But Jethro, nevertheless, takes the place of the better. He was but a stranger, visiting, in company with Moses' Gentile

bride, the Israel of God. But he was *heavenly*—his person and his place tell us that—and he assumes at once, without asking leave and yet without wrong, the rights of the heavenly ; and Moses and Aaron as instinctively and at once yield the place of the better to him, both in the sanctuary and on the throne.

O, when the Spirit works, what an end of strife, and emulation, and self-seeking there is ! And what relief to the heart such anticipation brings with it.

The interview of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba shows the same.

John and Peter, in the presence of the Lord, take their relations to each other in the same spirit in John xiii. Peter in the distance beckons to John, and John, at that beckoning, being near, presses the bosom of his Lord afresh ; and thus together they get out the secret of that bosom. There is no jealousy, no provoking here. One scarcely knows in which to delight the more, the beckoning of Peter to John, or the pressure of John upon the bosom of Jesus, Peter using his brother, or John using his Lord. It is an exquisite sight—lovely to behold, happy to anticipate—to think of communion after such a pattern, when no envyings or provokings will soil the interchanges of heart with heart, when, “ which of them shall be the greatest ” will be heard no more, the confusion which passions and tempers bring forth gone for ever.

And to these few instances of the beautiful, regulating power of the Spirit I must add that of our Lord and the two disciples going to Emmaus, in Luke xxiv. Jesus, a stranger, had joined Himself to them on the road, and helped their thoughts, and in that way relieved their hearts. The road was *common* property. But when they reach their home, the stranger will not intrude. He may join them on the King's highway, but their house is their castle. They, however, cannot allow this. They are too much His debtors to let Him pass on so soon, and they constrain Him to enter. But upon this, when *faith* has its desires towards Him, if not as yet its knowledge of Him, He at once takes His proper place. He becomes the host rather than the guest; the Lord of the feast dispensing its best provisions, while they, in the fullness of their hearts, awakened to know Him, thankful and happy, own His title. All is in its due order. From the beginning to the end this was so. The scene on the common highway, the scene at the gate of the dwelling, and then the scene inside the house—all is order.

And surely I may say all these are passing shadows, whether in patriarchal or evangelical days, of happy days to come, when, again, in "a noiseless sphere," harmonies, not unisons, shall strike and move the joys of thousands of hearts together. For at the end, as at the beginning, in the scene of redemption at last, as in that of creation at first, all shall be in order both in heaven and on

earth, under the power of the Word and Spirit of God. On earth "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim." The wolf and the lamb shall dwell together, the leopard and the kid lie down together. The nations shall delight to own the glories of Zion, and minister to her, as best they may, Geba and Sheba, Nebaioth and Kedar. And in the heavens all shall be compacted and joined together, as in the mystery of one body ; principalities and powers, and dominions and thrones, may be diverse, but still consistent and harmonious, dignities.

Thus, in the places of the coming kingdom, whether earthly or heavenly, things will be in beauty and order—moral as well as natural order. The two sticks shall be one. Judah and Israel shall dwell together under the same vine and the same fig tree, and the nations will take the second place, the place of "the less," and take it joyfully.

" There all the millions of His saints  
 Shall in one song unite,  
 And each the bliss of all shall view  
 With infinite delight ! "

The Queen of Sheba was too happy at the sight of Solomon's glory to envy him the possession of it. And Peter, on the holy mount, was so satisfied in the power of that place, that he would count it his happy business to serve those who were above him.

What a relief such a prospect gives ! It is high time to be wearied and ashamed of all the vanity,

the envying and the strife, which we are sensible of within and around. The Syrophenician breathed the happier spirit of the coming kingdom, when she was so heartily willing to be second to Israel, thankful to receive the portion of dogs under the table where the children feasted.

“Blessed are the people that are in such a case !” Blessed to anticipate a state of order—moral, holy, gracious order, kept in the power of the presence of God—such order the Scriptures both pledge and foreshadow. And well it is for us, beloved, if we can, until this age of *order* come, pass on through the *confusion* which is now around us, in something of the light and purity of the mind of Christ.



## FRAGMENT.

Those who fight the Lord's battles must be contented to be, in no respect, accounted of—they must expect to be, in no wise, encouraged by the prospect of human praise. And if you make an exception, “that the children of God will praise you, whatever the world may say,” beware of this, for you *may turn them into a world*, and find in them a world, and may sow to the flesh in sowing to their approbation ; and you will neither be benefited by them, nor they by you, so long as respect for them is your motive—so long as you are conscious as to how they will think of you. All such motives are a poison to you, and a taking away



from you the strength in which you are to give glory to God—and because such a time may be needful for you, I beseech you, be prepared for a time when you shall be as persons unknown, even to those that know God. It is not the fact that the misapprehension of the world is the only misapprehension the Christian must be contented to labour under. He must expect even his brethren to see him through a mist, and to be disappointed of their sympathy, and their cheers of approbation. The man of God must walk *alone* with God, he must be contented that the Lord knoweth. And it is such a relief, yea, it is such a relief to the natural man within us, to fall back upon human countenance, and human sympathy, that we often deceive ourselves, and think it brotherly love, when we are just resting on the earthly sympathy of a brother worm.

You are to be followers of Him who was left alone, and you are, like Him, to rejoice that you are not alone, *because the Father is with you*, that you may give true glory to God. Oh, I cannot but speak of it. It is such a glory to God to see a soul that has been, through the flesh, accessible to the praise of man, surrounded by hundreds and thousands of his fellow-creatures, every one of whom he knows how to please, and yet that he should be contented, yea, peaceful and happy in doing, with a single reference to God, that which he knows they will all misunderstand and misconceive! Here was the victory of Jesus!

## THE THREE BIDDERS.

*(An incident in the life of Rowland Hill.)*

Just listen for a moment, kind friends,  
And a story I'll unfold—  
A marvellous tale of a wonderful sale  
Of a noble lady of old ;  
How hand and heart in an auction mart  
Her soul and her body she sold.

'Twas in the king's highway so broad,  
A century ago,  
That a preacher stood of noble blood,  
Telling the poor and low  
Of a Saviour's love and a home above  
And a peace that all might know.

A crowded throng drew eagerly near,  
And they wept at the wondrous love  
That could wash away their vilest sins  
And give them a home above ;  
When lo ! through the crowd a lady proud  
Her gilded chariot drove.

" Make room ! make room ! " cried the haughty  
groom,

" You obstruct the king's highway ;  
My lady is late, and their majesties wait ;  
Give way there, good people, give way ! "  
But the preacher heard and his soul was stirred,  
And he cried to the rider, " Nay."

His eye like the lightning flashes out,  
His voice like a trumpet rings ;

“Your grand fête-days, your fashions and ways,  
Are all but perishing things ;  
'T is the king's highway, but I hold it to-day  
In the name of the King of kings.”

Then he cried, as he gazed on the lady fair,  
And marked her soft eye fall,  
“Now here in His name a sale I proclaim,  
And bids for this fair lady call.  
Who will purchase the whole—her body and soul,  
Her coronet, jewels, and all ?

“Three earnest bidders already I see,  
The world steps up as the first :  
' My treasures and pleasers, my honours I give,  
For which all my votaries thirst :  
She'll be happy and gay through life's bright day,  
With a quiet grave at the worst.’

“Next out speaks the devil and boldly bids :  
' The kingdoms of earth are mine ;  
Fair lady, thy name with an envied fame  
On their brightest tablets shall shine ;  
Only give me thy soul, and I'll give thee the whole,  
Their glory and wealth to be thine.’

“And what wilt Thou give, O sinners' true Friend,  
Thou Man of Sorrows unknown ?  
Then gently He said, ' My blood have I shed  
To purchase her for Mine own ;  
To conquer the grave and her soul to save  
I trod the wine-press alone.

“‘ I will give her My cross of sufferings here,  
My cup of sorrow to share ;  
Then with glory and love in My home above  
For ever to dwell with Me there ;

She shall walk in light in a robe of white  
And a radiant crown shall wear.'

"Thou hast heard the terms, my lady fair,  
That each has offered for thee ;  
Which wilt thou choose and which wilt thou lose,  
This life or the life to be ?  
The figure is mine, but the choice is thine.  
Dear lady, which of the three ?"

Nearer and nearer the preacher's stand  
The gilded chariot stole,  
And each head was bowed as over the crowd  
The gospel accents roll ;  
And every word which the lady heard  
Burned in her very soul.

"Pardon, good people," she kindly said,  
As she rose from her cushioned seat ;  
As the crowd made way, you might almost say  
You could hear her pulse's beat :  
And each head was bare as the lady fair  
Knelt down at the preacher's feet.

She took from her hand the jewels rare,  
The coronet from her brow,  
"Lord Jesus," she said as she bowed her head,  
"The highest bidder art Thou ;  
Thou hast died for my sake and I gratefully take  
Thy offer—and take it now.

"I know the pleasures and treasures of earth  
At the best but weary and cloy ;  
And the tempter is bold, but his honours and gold  
Prove ever a fatal decoy ;  
I long for Thy rest—Thy bid is the best :  
O Lord, I accept it with joy !

“ I turn from the pride and ambitions of earth,  
 I welcome Thy cross now so dear ;  
 My mission shall be to win souls for Thee  
 While life shall be spared to me here ;  
 My hope ever found with Thee to be crowned  
 When Thou shalt in glory appear.”

“ Amen ! ” said the preacher with reverent grace  
 And the people all wept aloud.  
 Years have rolled on, and all have gone  
 Who around that altar bowed ;  
 Lady and throng have been swept along  
 On the wind like a morning cloud.

But soon, oh, how soon, the glory and gloom  
 Of the world shall pass away,  
 And Jesus shall come and take His own home  
 To be there with Himself alway ;  
 Wilt thou, reader, be there, His bright glory to  
 share,  
 Throughout eternity's day ?

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## WHAT IS THE WORLD, AND WHAT IS ITS END ?

A SERIOUS QUESTION FOR THOSE WHO ARE OF IT.

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This is the question I would now look at, according to the light Scripture affords us. Nor am I going to forget that the world we live in has taken a Christian form.

And first—What is the world ? Men are apt to think that this world is as God made it, and that all things continue as they were at the creation, only that man has made great progress in prosperity and

civilization. Now, in material comforts, none will deny it, though the men of a past age would hardly think our refinements comforts ; and, while passions subsist, the difference is not so great as is supposed. Men have telegraphs, railroads, Armstrong guns and iron-clads, but I hardly know in what respect they are the happier for it. It is a question if they have not excited the passions more than they have satisfied them. Children are not more obedient, families not more united, servants not more honest and respectful, masters not kinder, nor wives more faithful. Morally speaking, I do not see what the world has gained. It thinks better of itself, and vaunts its powers ; I do not know that this is any advance. Christianity, as light come into the world, has made a difference. Men do not do in the light what they do in the dark. But if we look beneath the surface, even that is not much. But the world is in no sense as God made it. He overrules all, has patience with it ; but He never made it as it is. He made Paradise, and the world has grown up as it is through man's departure from God. It has been destroyed once since, because of its wickedness. It is conscious at this moment that things cannot go on long as they are ; that we are in a crisis of the world's history which must result in some great disruption. Some will tell us that democracy is the evil and it must be put down ; others, that it alone can save the world. But all feel things cannot go on as they are.

I do not participate in men's judgments in this respect ; but these fears, even if they magnify the apprehensions of men on one side or the other, are the fruit of the restless working of some principle which man cannot control, and hence his fears ; they are the confession of the instability of the order on which he relies ; and they presage, and in in the world's history have ever presaged, some violent disruption, because they were the expression of the consciousness of the force of what is breaking all up—that passions are stronger than what controlled them. The bonds of society are too tight or too weak. Power is not in them, but in the force that is working underneath them. Some would slacken them to give vent to the power at work ; some would tighten them, hoping to break or repress it ; some hope, and many more fear ; and none know what is to come. “After us, the Deluge,” has become the proverbial expression of this in men's mouths—the exaggerated expression of self-importance, but the accepted utterance of general fears. The Christian knows that God overrules all things, and he does not fear in this way, but for that reason he is more calm and clear-sighted, less interested in the maintenance of particular forms, and hence more interested in judging the effect of principles on them. And, if indeed taught of God in this, guided by His word in the knowledge of what the result will be, yet a large number of Christians, however, add to the delusion, because, even among them, man's

capacity for doing good is worshipped. Yet even these are getting uneasy at the influence Popery has acquired and is acquiring.

What is, then, the world? It is a vast system, grown up after man had departed from God, of which Satan is actually, though not by right of course, the god and the prince. Man was driven out of the place in which God had set him in innocence and peace. He gave up God for his lusts, under the influence of Satan, who thus got power over him. His way *back* to the tree of life was barred by divine power. He has indeed built a city, where God had made him a vagabond, and adorned it by the hands of artificers in brass and iron, and sought to make it agreeable by those who handle the harp and organ (Gen. iv.). But he is without God in it. Left without law, the world became so bad that God had to destroy mankind, save eight persons, by the Deluge. Under law, man plunged into idolatry, from which no prophetic warnings could ultimately deliver him. God sent His son: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. v.); but man would have none of Him; He was cast out of the vineyard and slain. The world is a system sprung up from man's disobedience and departure from God in its origin, and which has turned God out of it as far as it could when He came into it in mercy. Hence the Lord says of it as a system, "*Now* is the judgment of this world" (John xii.).



This is its state of sin. But it is also a system in which men have been proved in every way, to see whether they could be recalled or recovered from this state, by promises, by law, by prophets, yea by God's own Son. Especially among the Jews was this process carried on, as represented under the figure of a vineyard, where the owner sought fruit, but no fruit was to be had. The servants, and even the *only-begotten Son*, were killed. And when we look now at the principles and motives of the world, are they other than "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"? Do not pleasure, gain, vanity, ambition, govern men? I do not speak of exceptions, but of what characterizes the world. When we speak of men "rising in the world," "getting on in the world," is it not ambition and gain which are in question? Is there much difference in what Cain did in his city, and what men are now doing in theirs? If a Chinese, who had heard a missionary speak of Christ and Christianity, came to London to see what it was, would he find the mass of men, the world, governed by other motives than what governed the masses in Nankin, or Peking, or Canton? Would they not be seeking gain, as he would have done there; or pleasure, as they do there; or power and honour, as they do there? What is the world in its motives? A system in which men seek "honour one of another, and not the honour that cometh from God only" (John v. 44). In a word, the world having rejected the Son of God

when He was here in it, the Father set Him at His right hand—fruit of that solemn appeal of the Blessed One, “O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me” (John xvii.). Then comes the sentence: “All that is *in* the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not *of the Father*, but is *of the world*” (1 John ii.).

But it will be said, Yes, but now Christianity has come in. That applies to the heathen world. I answer, “The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power” (1 Cor. iv). The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life are not found only among heathens; if comparison is to be made—now much more among Christians. But it is important to take up Christianity as a system, because, not only does faith recognize it as the truth and true revelation of God in Christ, but it has in sum formed the world in its present condition. If I go to inquire what the world is, I cannot turn to heathens or Mohammedans. I must look to Christendom. This is what characterizes the state of the world. Now I have already spoken of the motives none can deny which govern men in it—as pleasure, gain, ambition, vanity. They may pursue these things, preserving a good reputation before men; it is only another snare to make Pharisees of them, or without conscience. But they pursue this, and a man is morally what he pursues. He is covetous, if it be gain; ambi-

tious, if it be power ; a man of pleasure, if it be pleasure ; and so on. But we must look at Christendom itself. At the beginning, the exhibition of the grace and power of Christ's operation by the Holy Ghost in raising men above human motives, and uniting them in the enjoyment of heavenly things with one heart, and so displaying a care for each other which the world does not know, and a deadness to the world which is the opposite of the very principle of its existence—pure in walk and unselfish in its ways, the church forced itself on the attention of a hostile yet admiring world. Now, and for centuries, the seat of anxious and tortuous ambition, of crimes and deceit of every kind, haughty power over others, and worldly luxury and evil, characterize what pre-eminently calls itself the church. The name of its most active supports has passed, in common parlance, into the name of cunning, falsehood, and want of conscience. The world has been driven into infidelity by what calls itself the church.

Take the Greek church. Where does ignorance reign pre-eminently ? There where its clergy sways. Where all seems fair as regards profession, infidelity reigns universally in the active-minded population of the Romanist system. As to Protestantism, every one knows, because there all is open, how it is sunk into infidelity. Christianity only adds this additional feature to the world's history, that the worst corruption has come in—the corruption of what is best. The

Reformation was caused mainly because the iniquity of the church was intolerable. This was predicted by the apostles ; so that it confirms, instead of shaking, the faith of him who believes and reads the Scriptures ; but it teaches that reference to Christendom does not do away the proof of Satan being the prince and god of this world. He has proved it more than ever, by making that which was brought in as a witness of God to be the seat of the power of his own corruption. Taking in Christendom as a whole, what do we see? Mohammedanism has overrun the eastern part and Popery the western. The north of Europe has been delivered from the latter ; and what is its state? Overrun with infidelity and Popish tendencies. I do not mean to deny that the Spirit of God is active, and that good is done in the midst of all this. I believe it, and thank God for it. But that is not the world, but a distinct power which works in the midst of it. In influencing the world and its government, Popery has made more progress the last thirty years than the power of truth. We may deplore it, but it cannot be denied. The world is far more guilty by having Christianity in its midst. But it has not ceased to be the world.

Remember, reader, that it was in connection with the death of Christ that the devil received the title of "prince of this world" (John xiv. 30), and as to his religious influence, is called "the god of this world" (2 Cor. iv. 4), who blinds the minds

of them who believe not. God did not call the devil the prince of this world till He had fully proved and tested it. But when it followed Satan wholly, in rejecting His Son (the few who owned Him adding confirmation to it by their fear), then the name is given to him. When God's throne was at Jerusalem it was impossible ; but, when the true ruler of it was rejected, then it was plain that Satan was its prince. The intrigues for power when the empire became Christian proved, not the exclusion of Satan from the throne of the world, but his acquired dominion over what was called the church. No doubt the cross gave his power its death-blow in the sight of God and of faith, but not in the world. There it was his victory ; and the Christ was called up to sit at the right hand of God, till His enemies were made His footstool (Ps. cx.). Then men stumbled on the Stone. When It falls in judgment, It will grind them to powder (Matt. xxi.).

Now, though Satan's worst reign is his religious one (see 2 Cor. xi. 3, 13-15), far the worst, even when the blasphemous beast is raging (Rev. xiii.), as any one may see in reading the character of the second beast, yet he reigns anywhere only by the corrupt motives of man's heart. We may add, indeed, the fears of a bad conscience to his means of power. He leads men astray by their lusts, and then gives them his religion to quiet their consciences, which he cannot cleanse. He makes religiousness (characterized by certain forms

which strike the imagination, and a diligent activity in what flesh can perform) minister to the power of those who rule for him, and excites the passions of men to contend for their religion, as for something in which their own interests and honour are concerned ; thus making religion the activity of the flesh to sustain, superstitiously or through interest, a system, and capable of any wickedness to sustain it, so that wickedness becomes religious wickedness, and the conscience even thinks it is doing God's service, while Satan's craft directs all this to his own ends. Still, outside all this direct system of Satan's religious power, he governs the world—the Christian world, as all the rest, and more than the rest—by men's ordinary lusts. But the eager pursuit of gain is more ardent than ever, leading to less scruple in acquiring it ; and pleasure holds its sway over men, in defiance of Christ, as it did when there was no such motive to restrain them ; war rages as it ever did ; conquest and oppression range over a wider sphere than of old, while the nominal power of Christianity, with all men's boastings, has receded to smaller limits than in the seventh century, when it ruled over known Africa, filled Asia, and was almost the established religion of China.

Such is the world which is attached to its own objects, grandeur, power, pleasure, gain, *not to Christ* ; and thus is enslaved to him who governs the world by these motives.. The external system

of Christianity, instead of delivering souls from them, is the seat of the highest exercise of these worldly principles ; and where it is not the sphere of the concentrated influence of them, it is sunk into philosophy and unbelief.

What, then, is its end? Judgment, speedy judgment ! Of the day and the hour, no man knows ; it comes as a thief in the night (Matt. xxiv. 36-39 ; 1 Thes. v., etc.). The world will not get really better (2 Tim. iii. 13). The thoughts men have of its doing so are one of the worst expressions of its evil confidence in man, man's development, man's energies. Man is to be made better. Nay, Christianity, say some now, is only a phase of man's history ; and now we are to have a better. What is it to come from ? What are its motives ?

Commerce, we are told, civilizes. Education enlarges and improves the mind. Commerce does take away grossness and violence ; but gain is its motive. Its earnest pursuit tends to destroy higher motives, and to make a moral estimate of value sink into money and selfishness. It has nowhere elevated the tone of society, but the contrary. It has not stopped wars ; it has caused many. Commercial nations have, in general, been the least scrupulous, and the most grasping. Excuses may be formed ; but none but a commercial people would make war to sell opium.

What has education done ? It enlarges the mind. Be it so ; of course it does. Does it change the motives which govern the heart ? In no way. Men

are more educated than they were ; but what is the change ? Is the influence of superstition really diminished ? In no wise. On the contrary, the infidelity produced by dependence on man's mind has forced men, who are not personally established in divine truth, back into superstition, to find repose and a resting-place. One of the worst signs of the present day, and which is observable everywhere, is that deliverance from superstition and error is not now by means of positive truth ; but that liberty of mind, sometimes called liberalism, which is bound by no truth, and knows no truth, but doubts all truth, is simply destructive. Go anywhere and everywhere, to India or England, Italy or Russia, or America, deliverance from superstition is not by truth, but by disbelief of all known truth. The blessed truth of the gospel is a drop of water in the ocean of mind and error. And even Christians reckon, not on the Spirit and word of God, but on progress, to dispel darkness. It is building up Popery and mere church authority, without the soul knowing truth for itself, for those who dread with reason the wanton pretensions of the impudence of the human mind ; which, satisfied as to its own claim to judge, has no real taste for, or interest whatever in, truth itself. On the other hand, the utter absence of truth in church pretensions, and its claim independent of godly fruits, drive even honest minds, not divinely taught and guided, into the wanton pretensions of that mind which has no truth at all.



The manifest conflict of the day is between superstition and the mere pretensions of man's mind (i. e., infidelity as to all positive truth, or standard of truth, or acquired truth). Neither superstition nor infidelity knows any truth ; nor have they any respect for it. One recognizes authority ; the other is the rejection of it. One is the church, so-called ; the other, free thought. Faith in the truth is known to neither. Every intelligent person knows that this is a true description of what is going on : rest in authority ; or the mind of man is to find out truth. Where it is, no one knows ; the business of man's mind being to disprove any existing claim to it. One of them is no better than the other : church authority, the most hostile to God and His people, as the judgment of Babylon shows all the blood of saints is found in her (Rev. xviii. 24) ; but the other, a rising up of man against God, which will end in his destruction.

It is as needful, in referring to the state of the world, to refer to its religious aspect, as to the lower and more material motives which govern it. I do not doubt for a moment (God forbid I should) that the Spirit of God acts for the blessing of some in the midst of all this scene, but it does not affect the state of the world. It is one of the striking phenomena of the liberal or infidel party, that where it is free (that is, where it is not itself oppressed by Popery), it prefers Popery to truth. Truth is divine, and it cannot be borne. Popery is human, and liberality will be liberal to it, not

to truth. So governments, when too rudely pressed by it, pander to Popery, because it is a strong and unscrupulous political power. Truth does not concern them. If it presses on their party, it annoys them. All this has an evident tendency—the giving power to superstition as long as governments hold their own, but when human will grows too strong, a breaking up of all that, and the destruction of the whole system. A well-known specimen of this has been seen in the French revolution of 1789.

If we turn to America, to what (to many) would be the most attractive part of the new world, what do we see? Large profession and religious activity, but the churches the great promoters of the dreadful conflict now going on ;\* Christians more worldly than the world ; money supreme in influence ; and the world, save as partially prohibited by law, overrun with drunkenness, pre-eminent in profane swearing, and demoralized by the corruptions which follow the absence of family habits. Intelligence, activity, energy, education reign there. None of the supposed hindrances of the old world exist there. No one can have been there and not have seen in that immense country the amazing development of human energy ; but, morally, what is the spectacle it affords ?

The world, then, has been evil from its origin, for the horrors of idolatry cannot be denied.

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\* Written during the war in United States, in 1862.

Christianity, then, has been corrupted by man, and has not reformed the world—is actually the seat of its greatest corruption. Commerce, a partial civilizer of men, absorbs them with the lowest of motives—money, and is wholly indifferent to truth and moral elevation ; for it, a good man is a man with capital. Education, which also frees from what is gross, has not, with all its pretensions, changed the motives, ameliorated the morals of men, nor even freed from the bonds of superstition, save as it has set aside all positive truth, and every standard of it ; and thus, while wounding infidelity on the one side, riveted the chains of superstition on the other.

I appeal to facts. Is not Popery or Puseyism on the one hand, and infidelity on the other, what stamps the activity of England at the present moment ? It is not otherwise elsewhere. Will God be the idle spectator—whatever His patience with men, and how blessed soever the testimony of His grace—will He be the idle spectator without end of the enslaving power of superstition, and the rebellious rejection of truth by the pretended lovers of truth who cast down all foundations ? He may, He does testify, as long as souls can be won and delivered. But is He to allow the power of evil forever ? He will not. He will allow it to fill up the cup of falsehood and wickedness. He declares that “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse ;” but they are filling up the cup of wrath for themselves. He is patient till no more can be

done. "The iniquity of the Amorites," He says, "is not yet full;" but then He will remove the evil and bless the earth.

My object is not here to enter into any detail of prophecy; it has been amply done elsewhere. But as the course of the world's history points to judgment, the removal of the power of evil by power as the only remedy, so that the end of this scene is judgment, is as clearly stated in Scripture as possible. I do not mean the judgment of the dead and the secrets of their hearts before the great white throne, but the judgment of this visible world. God hath appointed a day in which He will judge this habitable world (such is the force of the word *oikoumenē*) in righteousness, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Jesus from the dead (Acts xvii. 31). Man has multiplied transgression, and will continue to do so till judgment comes. But the central sin of the world, that by which its true character has been stamped, is the rejection and death of Christ. But whom the world rejected, Him has God raised from the dead, and to Him all judgment is committed (John v. 22). Every knee shall bow to Him (Phil. ii. 9-11); and the more boldly they have rejected and opposed Him, the more terrible will be their judgment. But all man's pride, and vanity, and pretensions must come down (Is. ii. 10-22; xxiv. 19-23; xxvi. 21; Zeph. iii. 8).

As to the corrupt and idolatrous system, read

what is said, in reference to it, in Revelation xvi. 19 ; xvii. 1-6 ; xviii. 21-24.

As to the haughty power and rebellion of man, read Revelation xvi. 13, 14 ; xix. 11-21. Figures these are, no doubt, but figures whose meaning is plain enough. Read also Dan. ii. 34, 35 ; vii. 9-11. (In verse 9, "cast down" should be "placed" or "set.")

Such, then, is the end of the world as it now is. The Christianity which it professes will have increased the severity of its judgment, and moreover judgment will begin there as 1 Peter iv. 17 shows us. They that have known their Master's will, and not done it, will be beaten with many stripes (Luke xii. 47). Can we say that Christendom, as it now subsists, is the least like the heavenly state in which we see the disciples in the New Testament (Acts ii.-iv.)? True, we find there that they soon declined, and that evil came in. But the record that tells us this, tells us it would wax worse and worse, and ripen for the judgment which surely awaits it.

Dear reader, are you the Lord's? If not—*Flee from the wrath to come to Him "who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us FROM THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD, according to the will of God,"* having "once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (Gal. i. 4 ; 1 Peter iii. 18),

## A STRANGER HERE.

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*“ The name of the one was Gershom ; for he said,  
‘ I have been an alien in a strange land.’ ”—Exodus  
xviii. 3.*

A stranger here, a Gershomite by grace,  
Because in heaven is now my name and place ;  
Called from above, a heavenly man by birth  
(Who once was but a citizen of earth),  
A pilgrim here, I seek a heavenly home  
And portion in the ages yet to come,  
Where all the saints of every clime shall meet,  
And each, with all, shall all the ransomed greet ;  
But oh, the height of bliss, my Lord, shall be,  
To owe it all and share it all with Thee !

Thou art “ the Image,” in man's lowly guise,  
Of the invisible to mortal eyes ;  
Come from His bosom, from the heavens above,  
We see in Thee incarnate, “ God is love ; ”  
Thy lips the Father's name to us reveal :  
What burning power in all Thy words we feel,  
When to our raptured hearts we hear Thee tell  
The heavenly glories known by Thee so well !  
The prophet, not of law, but sovereign grace,  
What glory shines in Thy unveiled face !  
Unlike to him, whose countenance severe  
Made the beholders shrink with slavish fear,—  
Thou dost attract the wretched and the weak,  
Thy joy the wand'ers and the lost to seek.  
Physician of sick souls, Thy skill divine  
Heals the most desperate cases—such as mine.  
The leper fears not to approach Thy feet,  
The publicans and harlots welcome meet :  
“ Whosoever will,” Thy all-inviting word ;  
“ Whosoever will,”—I come, most gracious Lord :

The Bread of Life, the living waters give ;—  
 Lord, I believe, I drink, I feed, I live !

And oh, Thou art the Lamb, the Holy One :  
 I see Thee on the cross for sin atone ;  
 That precious stream of water and of blood,  
 Which from Thy opened side so freely flowed,  
 Has put away my sins of scarlet dye,  
 And washed my every stain, and brought me nigh ;  
 So clean, that through the veil I enter in,  
 For there Thy blood appears, and not my sin.  
 And Thou art now my great High Priest on high,  
 No more like Aaron's carnal line to die :  
 The Lord has sworn that Thou His Priest shall be  
 Through the long ages of eternity,—  
 The King of Righteousness, the King of Peace ;  
 We upward look and all our terrors cease.  
 Our names are on Thy shoulders and Thy heart ;  
 Thou hast been tempted, and with faithful art  
 Thou dost the succour grant that now we need,  
 As on our weary way, Thy saints proceed :  
 There's not one step of all the desert road,  
 There's not a sorrow, or a heavy load,  
 But with a human heart and pitying eyes,  
 Thou dost in tenderest mercy sympathize.

I am a stranger here ; I do not crave  
 A home on earth, that gave Thee but a grave ;  
 I wish not now its jewels to adorn  
 My brows, which gave Thee but a crown of thorn.  
 Thy cross has severed ties which bound me here,—  
 Thyself my treasure in a heavenly sphere.  
 No earthly city (by man's labour built,  
 Whose greatness is but congregated guilt ;  
 Where mammon holds its toiling myriads bound,  
 And sordid slaves are pleasure's votaries found ;  
 In whose foul streets walk closely, side by side,  
 Most abject want and rank luxurious pride ;

Where self reigns lord in temple, hall and mart)  
 Has now a hold on my enfranchised heart.  
 A freed man now, whom truth indeed makes free,  
 There's no continuing city here for me ;  
 A city yet to come, with longing eyes  
 I now am seeking, built above the skies ;  
 Whose strong foundations God Himself has laid,  
 Like a fair bride in whitest robes arrayed.  
 Without the camp—where Christ was crucified,  
 And the Sin-offering for His people died,  
 To sanctify them from this world below,—  
 To Him, and His reproach, I gladly go ;  
 For all, compared with Him, I dross esteem,  
 My one desire is to be found in Him.



## THE CHRISTIAN NOT OF THE WORLD.

(COLOSSIANS II.)

There is practically one subject in the above Scripture, but divided into two parts : one, Christ as contrasted with all the thoughts of the world ; and the other, the true place of the Christian as in Him. It is a new place, even in Christ. He begins by pressing on them a warning against all the philosophy and Judaism abroad. They really ran into the same channel ; and this is connected with the second point referred to, because they belong to this world. Christ is put, first, in opposition to all that ; and, secondly, he unfolds that what is in Christ is in a *risen* Christ, outside of this world. There are the same things current now, for people are turning back to “the rudi-



ments of the world." All this infidelity and ritualism have just the same root, though not the same shape ; both belong to this world, and are what man's mind and imagination, as a child of Adam, can take up. The contrast is Christ risen—Christ out of this world. •

This chapter brings out both. They are the workings of man's mind and imagination—what man can do ; whereas the moment you get what God has revealed in Christ, and the place Christ is in, man has nothing to do with it. They are the rudiments of this world : the one is reasoning or mental flesh ; and the other is imaginative flesh. This ritualism—Christ offered every Sunday, &c. is as if there was not one offering for sin. But I find " By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified " (Heb. x. 14 ; see also ver. 10). Then it is not perfected ! This makes all the difference. My imagination and fancy can take hold of these things, or the mind rejects them ; but they are the denial that Christ has finished the work of redemption.

We are very little aware (though they are quite different parts of human nature) how it all has to do with man, i. e., with man not delivered from himself, and having Christ instead. The apostle first warns them, and then shews what the real thing is, that is, Christ in heavenly places. God had taken up human nature among the Jews to see if it could be brought into connection with Him ; and it could not. It was tried, in a certain

sense ; but God had to hide Himself behind a veil : if there were no veil, you must be able to stand in the light, as God is light. God never came out, but He set up a gorgeous worship, and He gave the law as a perfect rule for human nature, for man as he is. The question is, has man kept it? No one has. Where a person is going on as under Judaism, he will take all the gorgeous part of it, and talk of the law, without the consciousness that he has not kept it. Of course numbers fear the law when their conscience is awakened ; and, where there is truth of conscience under such a system, they are always unhappy. Man's mind takes its own course, and ends necessarily without finding God. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" (Job xi. 7). Instead of that, you get God fully revealed in Christ, and man (i. e., the believer) brought to God on the ground of His death (1 Pet. iii. 18). Christianity supplants the darkness of the natural mind (I do not say soul), which could have nothing to do with God (1 Cor. ii. 14), and which, take it in its fullest, broadest sense, is necessarily atheism, as it never reaches to God, confining itself to what the mind can find out ; and that is what they are all doing here.

The apostle was anxious about them, because they were constantly mixed up with these things—living in the midst of these Greek philosophers. Although he had never been there, yet his heart knew experimentally by the power of the Holy

Ghost what the snares were, and he says, "I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you." He felt the dangers that were there, and he looked on these saints as belonging to Christ, whom he so loved and laboured for, and he shewed interest in them.

Verse 2. Here I get the understanding of the mystery of God, and that is another thing altogether. It is not the way we are accustomed to understand the word "mystery," as a thing not to be found out; but it is a thing only known by revelation—it is not known save to the initiated. It is that which by divine revelation and teaching we know, and it brings us into a totally new world.

You get, then, another important thing needed. Supposing I was the greatest scientist in the world, there is not a bit of love about it; it is connected with nobody, and there is not an atom of soul-work in it. Therefore God cannot be known, for God is love. Faith gives us an inlet into all the things that His love has done. Science is as cold as ice—dead cold; you cannot let a bit of feeling in. There is no relationship with anything in the world or any One above it. (Ver. 2.) But revelation lets in "To the acknowledgement (or 'full knowledge'—*epignōsis*) of the mystery of God"—God the source of their life, God the One who dwells there by the Holy Ghost among them, and gives the feeling that flows from the relationship into which they are brought. The mind may get developed, but there is no moral

motive in it—it is not in its nature. The Christian acts by a motive. Science does not touch the ground that the soul is on. What has feeling to do with the discovery of how the physical nature works? In Christ I learn the blessed truth, that God dwells in me (i. e., the believer) by the power of the Spirit in the divine nature, and I have communion with the Father and the Son. I get into a new world altogether.

Then I rise “unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding.” Understanding of what? Of how animals were born? No; of the hidden mystery. I get my heart opened to see all the scope of God’s plans and counsels in Christ. You get the “full assurance of faith” (Heb. x. 22), (that is not science!) that “he that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true.” Science says, “I think this, and I think that”—such is all it has. I find adequate certainty about all common things, but if I have the testimony of God, I get the positive certainty of faith—the only certainty we have. I have set to my seal that God is true—He cannot but be true.

I get another “full assurance,” and that is “hope” (Heb. vi. 11), for there you have the affections engaged, and the things realized. It gives much greater reality—the very acquaintance imparts great reality. I am going to be in the same glory with Christ, and that is the full assurance of hope. Am I going to be there? Yes, of course, if you are a believer, and you have the

earnest of it in your hearts. “ Earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven ” (2 Cor. v. 2)—that is the full assurance of hope.

The third thing goes much higher—“ Full assurance of understanding ”—for it is part of God’s plan and counsel in Christ ; and if we are not there, Christ’s glory is not complete, and it cannot be otherwise. We have the mind of Christ ” (1 Cor. ii. 16). If I have the full assurance of hope, then I see these things as a part of God’s plan and Christ’s glory, and that is the full assurance of understanding. .

“ To the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, wherein are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” There is nothing so certain in the world as the revelation of God, known only by redemption. Now you belong to another world, to which these things (philosophy, Judaism, etc.) do not belong. Of course there is God’s creation, but it is His first creation ; it passes away, or we perish from it. It is a wonderful creation, but that is not being reconciled to God, and being in the new creation. In this mystery are all God’s wisdom and knowledge—all summed up—all His counsels there, to which the natural mind has not even an entrance, and never can, for “ they are spiritually discerned.” It rests on the revelation of God. The soul finds its affections in the new creation ; it has a world it belongs to, and “ they that say such things declare plainly that they seek

a country." You get the figure of it in Abraham. God gave him none inheritance in the land, no, not so much as to set his foot on ; yet He promised that He would give it to him for a possession, and that is just where we are, "As having nothing, and yet possessing all things." The world attracts Lot's heart in the character of its efforts at grandeur ; but Abram was a stranger and pilgrim, and he says, "If thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." (Gen. xiii.) Lot goes down to the plain just ripening for judgment, and pitches his tent near Sodom ; then he gets nearer and nearer, till he is snatched out of it. As soon as Lot had gone down and chosen this prosperous place, then God says to Abram, "Lift up now thine eyes," etc. As soon as he had completely given up the world in heart, then the promised land rose up before him. He realized the thing that was promised to him. It was separation to God in faith. He got the full assurance of hope.

Now we go on to learn where the Christian is, not yet what he is. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." It is Christ up in heaven in another world. "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Here I find the actual starting-place, and this is, that in Christ all the fulness of the Godhead bodily is revealed. I have the perfect revelation of the fulness of the Godhead in Christ. I have nothing new to look

after (save of course to know it better), for I cannot go beyond the fulness of the Godhead, and it is revealed to me. In Christ,—in that Man—more than man, for He was God too—has been the revelation of the fulness of the Godhead. It requires eyes to see it ; but to faith, which saw through the veil of His humiliation when here, there was not a trait in His character, an act in His conduct, or an expression of the feeling of His heart going out to the misery around Him, that was not the revelation of the Godhead ; the Father was revealed, as in John xiv., all was revealed, and nothing else to seek after, except to know it better.

Then I get the other blessed side (ver. 10), “ In Him dwelleth all the *completeness* of the Godhead bodily, and ye are *complete* in Him ” (just the same word in the original). Yes, and I say I am *complete* in Him before God—God is *completely* revealed to me in Christ ; but what about you ? Can you stand before Him ? I am before Him complete in Christ, with not a single thing wanting. This makes it such a full statement of what the mystery is—the positive relation of all the fulness of the Godhead in One who has come close to me in love, that I may know He is love. When Christ was in this world, He did not seek anything great or grand for Himself.. What did He seek ? Sorrow, poverty, misery. That is what God has been doing in this world—perfect love (and power too) relieving distress—love that brought down perfect goodness to where I was ; that is what God is to

me. Perfect goodness in the midst of all the sorrow and misery of this world, and the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Him bodily! Ah, poor science, it is a long way off from that! It can talk about protoplasms, microbes, etc., but about divine love, never!

The mystery of Christ shows me this completeness without going to outside things—not up in the clouds to reach it if we can, but brought down to me here. I am complete in Christ, but as I find God perfectly revealed (none of us can measure it, of course, or even go through it—we have to search it out, and grow in it) then I find this on the other side: How can I stand before Him, and grasp all that? Are you fit to be in His presence? Yes; I say, “Giving thanks unto the Father, which *hath* made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. i. 12). That is the place you are brought into, just as the completeness of the Godhead was brought to us in Christ. Then I find that I am complete according to all God’s thoughts. Just as God stood in Christ before man, man stands in Christ before God. It is not merely philosophy spelling out what has been all around us since the creation, it is the One who created it all; and besides this, I find my personal blessedness in it. I am complete in Him, I have everything I want, and that I want for eternity. “Both He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one” (Heb. ii. 11)—all one set. What life have I got? Christ.



What righteousness? Christ. What glory? Christ. Just in one position and state. How can I tell how much God loves me? This I can tell you, that you are loved as Christ is loved, as He tells us Himself: "I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it, and the love wherewith Thou has loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John xvii. 26). And *we* know it now, for He dwells in us, and the Holy Ghost brings down this love into our hearts, "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. v. 5). By and bye *the world* will know it, as He says that the world may know that Thou . . . hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me" (John xvii. 23).

Now the apostle turns to a special thing which was their difficulty then, that, while he gives the whole scope of God's mind in the mystery, he goes down and deals with this fleshy religion. The Colossians were accustomed to be in the midst of these things. The Jewish system was bringing out for us whether man in the flesh could have to do with God. How many souls there are now under the law in their hearts (they are lawless if they are not)! You must get the knowledge of sin by the law, if rightly applied (Rom. iii. 20). It is man, as responsible man, getting a perfect rule of what he ought to be, and circumcision is merely the expression of that—death of the flesh. All that was shadowed forth in those things you have in Christ.

The apostle turns more to details to shew

where we are as Christians (ver. 11). A totally new thing it is—the putting off the body of the flesh. They never had circumcision in the wilderness, not till they crossed the Jordan—a figure of our dying with Christ. Gilgal was the place where they rolled away the reproach of the world (Josh. v.) I get the same here. Before, it was a circumcision made with hands; now it is without: I have the true circumcision. Instead of the mere outward ritual of the thing, I have the thing itself; I am complete in Christ. How so? Why *I* am dead and gone! I have put off the old man altogether; I am not speaking of carrying it out: this you get in 2 Corinthians iv. 10. A risen Christ is my life, all connection with this world is gone. I am dead to sin, and alive to God. I have put off the body of the flesh, I have died with Christ. I reckon myself dead; I have got a risen Christ as my life; to faith then I have done with this flesh—done with it altogether. I have got this new thing; I am in it (of course I am in this poor earthly tabernacle still, but) I do not belong to this world; I have died through the death of Christ. It is not merely saying you must die—saying “you must” does not give a thing. If you have died with Christ, you are risen with Him—you have left it all behind. It is the very character and meaning of baptism. With Christ I died, I am baptised to Christ’s death. Here am I, a living man, and I go through death with Christ (an out-

ward sign, of course)—a person who has gone with Christ into His grave, and come up out of it again. He passed out of the condition he was in here as a man on the earth into a totally new place—God raised Him from the dead. You then get, “Wherein also ye are risen with Him,” etc. As a Christian you are risen. I have got into this new state ; I say, That is myself, for I am a Christian.

And now we get much further light on our condition. “And you being dead in your sins” (ver. 13). I was living in sins in the other, but the truth of “dead in sins” goes a good deal farther : alive as regards my sins, but dead as regards God. This goes farther, and takes up the nature that likes doing them. There is not one single thing in your heart naturally with which God could link Himself. “They that are in the flesh cannot please God.” There is nothing in heaven your nature would like.

I get now, not merely “quickened,” but “quickened together with him (ver. 13) ; because, supposing I am alive, I may be spiritually alive, or I may be in Romans vii. Any one there says, “I think Christ is precious to me, and I love His word and His people,” but he is examining himself to find out if he is in the new creation. Like the prodigal before he met the father ; but this is not quickened together with Christ—quickened, no doubt, and when I speak of being quickened in that way, it is the divine operation of a new life in

my soul. But quickened together with Christ is different. Where do I see Christ Himself? Not as quickener, but as quickened. Christ as man has been raised from the dead. He died under our sins—for them; He went on unto death for us, and God has raised Him up, and, supposing I am a believer, I am raised up with Him. If I look at myself, it is as raised with Christ, as it says here, “Quickened together with him.” It looks at Christ as a dead man, but that in coming down to death, He put away my sins, and therefore I am raised with Him. It is not merely the fact that I have life; I have life in a new condition where Christ is. I have got into a new place before God—Christ’s place—and all my sins are left on the other side of Christ’s grave. I do not own the old man: it is the horrid thing that has been deceiving me.

There are two more things I would just mention. There are these ordinances—all “blotted out.” All the things the flesh can do in order to gain acceptance are dead in the flesh that did them. Where do I find Christ now that we are risen? Where do I find Christ in the Lord’s supper? It is His death. “Bringing Christ into the elements,” as people say; there is no such thing, for it is a dead Christ. The shed blood shews forth His death, and there is no such Christ now. After His resurrection He is alive, death can have no more dominion over Him. And so baptism, as to its signification; it is unto His death: I have

gone down with Christ to death, and I am risen with Him.

Only one thing more. In order to bring us thus complete in Him, there were other things against us—these “principalities and powers” (ver. 15). Christ has destroyed Satan’s power in the cross; I was a living man in sin—that is gone. Then all those ordinances I was bound to—they are gone. Well, then, Satan’s power (not that he has not power)—Christ has triumphed over him, “Through death destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil” (Heb. ii. 14); so death has lost its power too. The cross of Christ has closed the history of the old man, and of all its associations. I was a slave of sin, “I am quickened together with him”—a slave to ordinances, they are “nailed to his cross”—a slave to Satan, his power is destroyed. I am risen with Christ beyond these things, and that is where the Christian is. I am going to have an everlasting holiday: I have it even now in spirit. I am going to God’s rest in heaven. I do not keep days, for this is going back to heathenism. Do you think the sun going round will make them keep days in heaven? It is an everlasting holiday; it is only in our hearts now, for if we follow Christ, we learn its sorrows and griefs too, for He was “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” We are taken out of all the speculation of philosophy, for we are in a world into which it cannot get.

Now, beloved friends, are your hearts ready to accept such a Christianity? The flesh clings to what the flesh likes—clings to the world, and that which Satan has power over us by, and therefore there is still the combating. But are you content with this? I do not talk about realization; but are you content to take the path which Christ walked as your path?—to take up your cross daily and follow Him? It looks bitter to the flesh, for it is another world that the flesh can have nothing to say to, even in thought. We shall fail in many things; but are you content to have done with the world into which you were born—to be dead out of it? It is the character and essence of what Christianity really is. My place is, as a Christian, come up out of Christ's grave. Are you content to take such a Christianity as that? You will never escape the wiles of the devil—either philosophy or Ritualism—you have not got what takes you out of their sphere and dominion. It is the wiles of the devil we have to stand against, not his power—resist him (see James iv. 7; 1 Peter v. 9). We have still that allowed in us, in our lives, which Satan can use and get hold of. You say I must have done with this world that does not want Christ; but if I am risen with Christ, I say I have done with it. The more we go on, the more we shall see it is what is needed. If we are not using the power of Christ in that way, we shall not succeed. If we are risen with Christ, there is a world that the life belongs to, and a world that the flesh

cannot touch. Is my heart living for the world where Christ is gone, or for this world?

The Lord give us to see Him, so precious, that "those things that were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ" (Phil. iii. 7). It is all very easy with a single eye, but "a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." It must be a thorough thing.

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## THE WASTER.

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Luke xiv. and xv. are, in one sense, very happy chapters to dwell upon, seeing how the Lord visited our world, and how we are to visit His world; how nothing in our world pleased Him, and everything in His own. It should be so with us. If we are right-minded we cannot find a home here. Man's apostate condition has built this world, and it is a painful thing to build a house and not be happy in it, yet it should be so with us. You have built a house here, and Christ has built a house in the heavens. Do you cultivate the mind of a stranger in this world and of a citizen in the heavens? (cf. 1 Pet. ii. 11; and Phil. iii. 20—for "conversation," in the latter, read "citizenship" or "commonwealth").

After this wonderful moral scenery, we enter on chap. xvi.—a continuation of the same scene. This chapter is one of the most serious in this gospel. The Lord begins by the parable of the unjust steward, and before we go further let me call your attention to the word "wasted," in the case of the prodigal. It was just what he had done, and it is the business of this parable to show

that the elder brother may do just what the younger did. He may be a very respectable waster—there are hundreds of thousands of such in the world, and high in the credit of the world they stand—but, weighed in God's balances, they are just as much *wasters* as was the dissolute prodigal. If we do not carry ourselves as stewards of God we are wasters. If I am using myself, and what I have, as if it were *my own*, in the divine reckoning I am a *waster*. This lays the axe deep at the root of every tree. The elder brother thought he was not a waster ; but let me ask you, if you are living for this world, and using what you have as if it were your own, are you not an unfaithful steward, and if so, are you not a waster ? Here is a steward. We are not told *how* he spent his money, but it is enough to know that he was not faithful to his master. Then we see how the Lord goes on to draw out the reasoning of a man like that. He lived for this world, laid plans about his history in this world, and not in the next. The moral is beautifully laid to you and to me. As that man laid out his plans for *this* world, so do *you* lay out your plans for Christ's future world. If you live to yourself, do not you deny your stewardship to Jesus ? Then the Pharisees who heard Him derided Him. To be sure they must ! It was a heavenly principle, and *they* were covetous. Covetousness is living for this world, and we are so far covetous, as we are laying our plans for this world. Now when you find corruptions in yourself, what do you do ? Do not let corruptions lead you to give up Christ, but to put on your armour. The Pharisees derided Him, and what did the Lord say to them ? "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men." This is just what we were saying. The elder brother may be highly



esteemed among men, but "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

We are now introduced to the parable of the rich man. Tell me, has this passage been rather repulsive to you than attractive? There seems something rather repulsive in it, but let us look at it. Observe the difference between the rich man and the prodigal. The prodigal "came to himself" *before* it was too late, the rich man after the door was shut. The prodigal was dissolute and abandoned, and when he came to himself he thought of his *sin*. The rich man came to himself in the place of judgment, and did *not* think of his sins but of his misery. The prodigal came to himself in the midst of his misery *here*, the rich man in the midst of torment *there*.

That is all the difference. The prodigal said, I will go back; what a sinner and a rebel son I have been! There was nothing of that gracious stirring in the spirit of the rich man when he lifted up his head in flames. The prodigal had not to finish the first sentence; his father answered him on the spot, and put on him a ring and the best robe, and killed the fatted calf; but the rich man cried again and again. It was *too late*! Here is the end of the respectable waster. Why do I call him a waster? Will you tell me he called himself a steward of God, while he was living sumptuously every day with a saint of God lying at his gate? I am bold to say you and I are just the same if we are living to ourselves. This man *died* a respectable waster, full of honour and gratification. He had no misery to call him to himself. Have you ever contrasted these two pictures? It has changed this Scripture from repulsion into attraction.

## THE "MAN OF SORROWS."

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O ever homeless Stranger !  
Thus dearest Friend to me ;  
An outcast in a manger,  
That Thou might'st with us be !

How rightly rose the praises  
Of heaven, that wondrous night,  
When shepherds hid their faces  
In brightest angel-light !

More just those acclamations,  
Than when the glorious band  
Chanted earth's deep foundations,  
Just laid by God's right hand.

Come now, and view that manger,  
The Lord of Glory see,  
A houseless, homeless, Stranger,  
In this poor world, for thee,—

*" To God, in th' highest, glory,  
And peace on earth, "* to find ;  
And learn that wondrous story,  
*" Good pleasure in mankind."*

( How bless'd those heavenly spirits  
Who joy increasing find,  
That, spite of our demerits,  
God's pleasure 's in *mankind* ;

And chant the highest glory  
Of Him they praise above,  
In telling out the story,  
Of God come down in love !)

Oh, strange yet fit beginning,  
Of all that life of woe,  
In which Thy grace was winning  
Poor man his God to know !

Bless'd Babe ! who lowly liest  
 In manger-cradle there ;  
 Descended from the highest,  
 Our sorrows all to share.

Oh, suited now in nature  
 For Love's Divinest ways,  
 To make the fallen creature  
 The vessel of Thy praise !

O Love ! all thought surpassing !  
 That Thou should'st with us be :  
 Nor yet in triumph passing,  
 But--human infancy !

We cling to Thee in weakness,  
 The manger and the cross ;  
 We gaze upon Thy meekness,  
 Through suffering, pain and loss ;

There see the Godhead glory  
 Shine through that human veil ;  
 And willing, hear the story  
 Of love that's come to heal !

My soul in secret follows  
 The footsteps of His love ;  
 I trace the Man of sorrows,  
 His boundless grace to prove.

A child in growth and stature,  
 Yet full of wisdom rare ;  
 Sonship in conscious nature,  
 His words and ways declare.

Yet still, in meek submission,  
 His patient path He trod,  
 To wait His heavenly mission,  
 Unknown to all but God.

But who, Thy path of service,  
 Thy steps removed from ill,  
 Thy patient love to serve us,  
 With human tongue can tell?

Midst sin, and all corruption,  
 Where hatred did abound,  
 Thy path of true perfection  
 Was light on all around.

In scorn, neglect, reviling,  
 Thy patient grace stood fast,  
 Man's malice unavailing  
 To move Thy heart to haste.

O'er all, Thy perfect goodness  
 Rose blessedly Divine ;  
 Poor hearts oppressed with sadness,  
 Found ever rest in Thine !

The strong man in his armour  
 Thou mettest in Thy grace ;  
 Did'st spoil the mighty charmer  
 Of our unhappy race.

The chains of man, his victim,  
 Were loosened by Thy Hand,  
 No evils that afflict him  
 Before Thy power could stand.

Disease, and death, and demon,  
 All fled, before Thy word,  
 As darkness, the dominion  
 Of day's returning lord !

The love that bore our burden  
 On the accursèd tree,  
 Would give the heart its pardon,  
 And set the sinner free.

Love, that made Thee a mourner  
 In this sad world of woe,  
 Made wretched man a scorner  
 Of grace, that brought Thee low ;  
 Still in Thee, love's sweet savour  
 Shone forth in every deed,  
 And showed God's loving favour  
 To every soul in need.

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I pause :—for, in Thy vision,  
 The day is hastening now,  
 When, for our lost condition,  
 Thy holy head shall bow ;  
 When, deep to deep still calling,  
 The waters reach Thy soul,  
 And, death and wrath appalling,  
 Their waves shall o'er Thee roll.

O day of mightiest sorrow,  
 Day of unfathomed grief !  
 When Thou should'st taste the horror  
 Of wrath, without relief :

O day of man's dishonour !  
 When, for Thy love supreme,  
 He sought to mar Thine honour,  
 Thy glory turn to shame :

O day of our confusion !  
 When Satan's darkness lay,  
 In hatred, and delusion,  
 On ruined nature's way.

Thou soughtest for compassion,  
 Some heart Thy grief to know,  
 To watch Thine hour of passion,  
 For comforters in woe.

No eye was found to pity,  
 No heart to bear Thy woe :  
 But shame, and scorn, and spitting ;  
 None cared Thy Name to know.

The pride of careless greatness  
 Could wash its hands of Thee :  
 Priests, that should plead for weakness,  
 Must Thine accusers be !

Man's boasting love disowns Thee ;  
 Thine own Thy danger flee ;  
 A Judas only owns Thee,  
 That Thou may'st captive be.

O man ! how hast thou provèd  
 What in thy heart is found ;  
 By grace Divine unmovèd,  
 By self in fetters bound !

Yet, with all grief acquainted,  
 The Man of sorrows view  
 Unmoved, by ill untainted,  
 The path of grace pursue !

In death, obedience yielding  
 To 'God His Father's will,  
 Love still its power is weilding  
 To meet all human ill.

On him who had disowned Thee  
 Thine eye could look in love,  
 'Midst threats and taunts around Thee,  
 To tears of grace to move !

What words of love and mercy  
 Flow from those lips of grace,  
 For followers that desert Thee,  
 For sinners in disgrace !

The robber learned, beside Thee  
 Upon the cross of shame,  
 While taunts and jeers deride Thee,  
 The savour of Thy name.

Then, finished all, in meekness  
 Thou to Thy Father's hand  
 { Perfect Thy strength in weakness),  
 Thy spirit dost commend.

O Lord ! Thy wondrous story  
 My inmost soul doth move ;  
 I ponder o'er Thy glory,  
 Thy lonely path of love.

But, O Divine Sojourner  
 'Midst man's unfathomed ill,  
 Love, that made Thee a mourner,  
 It is not man's to tell !

We worship, when we see Thee  
 In all Thy sorrowing path ;  
 We long soon to be with Thee,  
 Who bore for us the wrath !

Come then, expected Saviour,  
 Thou Man of Sorrows, come !  
 Almighty, blest Deliverer !  
 And take us to Thee—home.



## THE MAN CHRIST JESUS.

(PSALM XVI.)

What we find written in the Psalms is primarily connected with the Jews, or the Lord Jesus Himself, and particularly as Messiah. They have a special reference to the godly remnant in the latter

day. Many of their expressions wholly belong to the Jews, and cannot be used by the church. Hence, the true solution of those passages which have been such a terrible stumbling to Christians not seeing it. The saints of the present dispensation cannot rightly be looking for the destruction of their enemies, as a way of escape from their sorrows. But in the time of trouble, such as never has been, that is to come, it will be quite proper for the suffering Jews to look for judgments as a way of deliverance. They are God's promises, and what their hope rests upon. But the church looks to be caught up, and escape from sorrow, by being with the Lord in the heavens, whilst it is quite true that she has His sympathy in her sorrow down here. But what the Psalms are chiefly occupied with is the suffering of the soul, the sorrows of the godly remnant of the Jews, and God coming in judgment, as their deliverer, by the execution of vengeance on all their foes. Christ is viewed there as associated with Israel, and enters into all the sufferings of the holy remnant. Then there are certain Psalms which belong personally to Himself. They shew out the character of the spirit of Christ, as the Gospels shew His walk and work. The Gospels display the One in whom was no selfishness. They tell out the heart that was ready for everybody. No matter how deep His own sorrow, he always cared for others. He could warn Peter in Gethsemane, and comfort the dying thief on the cross. His heart was above circum-



stances, never acting under them, but ever according to God in them. We see that He was always sensible to them, and often get in the Psalms expressions of what His heart felt in them : " I am poured out like water ; " " My bones are out of joint ; " " My heart is like wax." He was the tried man ; and, as man tried, I am called to follow Him. I should forget self and the things belonging to self, in shewing love to others. The true effect of being near Christ puts me into fellowship with Himself about others, instead of being under my own circumstances. How can I be turning my heart to the joys of one, and the sorrows of another, unless I am living close to Christ, and getting my heart filled with Him instead of self ? What we find all through the life of Christ, as shewn out in the Gospels, is the total absence of selfishness, never acting for self in any way whatever. He could rejoice with those who had joy, and grieve with those in sorrow. He could cheer, warn, or rebuke, as need arose. Whatever love dictated, that He did. In Psalm xxii. we see Christ alone, suffering under God, enduring the wrath due to sin, but continuing the righteous man, crying unto God, and justifying Him, even when forsaken by Him ; or if we look at Him, as in Psalm lxix., suffering rather from men, God is still His refuge. His heart goes through all the sorrow sin could bring on one who takes the sinner's place. He passed through the deepest exercises heart could endure, but He brings all to

God. We find the greatest difficulty often in bringing our sorrow to God. How can I do so, the soul of some may be saying, as my sorrow is the fruit of my sin? How can I take it to God? If it was suffering for righteousness' sake, then I would, but I am suffering for my sin; and can I, in the integrity of my heart towards God, take my sorrows to Him, knowing I deserve them? Yes; Christ has been to God about them. This, then, is the ground on which I can go. There has been perfect atonement for all my sins; Christ has been judged for them. Will God judge us both? No; I go to Him on the ground of atonement, and God can afford to meet me in all my sorrow, because Christ's work has been so perfectly done.

In the main, all sorrow is from sin, and all help is grounded upon the atonement. There would be no possibility of my trusting in God, had not all His dealings with sin been put upon another.

God could not be indifferent about sin. Peter knew that, when he said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." The holy character of God has been fully exercised in putting away sin. He hath dealt with Christ about it, according to all that He is. I may have to taste the bitterness of its fruits; God may make me to feel the effects of my sin, because He is not going to judge me for it, that "as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ." I get my conscience perfectly purged, through the blood of Christ shed

in perfect love. The obedience of the One who bore my sins is mine. I am declared righteous through the righteousness of Another. My heart is free : I can deal with God about my sin, because He has dealt with Christ on the cross about it. I can go to Him in all my sorrow on account of it. I can confess my sin : yea, more, I can say, " Search me, O God, and try me . . . and see if there be any wicked way in me," etc. (Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.) Through grace I can take the place before God which Christ takes, and the ground for me is the atonement.

We find divine utterance in the Psalms for all our sorrows, and it is blessed to look at them in this way. Christ entered into the full effects of sin, as none other can, in a way we never shall ; and, when He had been at the " horns of the unicorn "—the very transit of death, as it were—and had settled every question with God about sin, He could then say, " I will declare Thy name unto My brethren ; in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee " (Ps. xxii. 21, 22). We shall never lose Him as our companion : what a comfort ! We shall follow Him to the glory. I am going to be with Him : His presence will be my delight ! What a place the saints are brought to in Christ—all sorrow passed !

We get in Psalm xvi. expressions of the Lord's own proper joy—the joy of Him whom God called His " fellow " (Zech. xiii. 7). Peter on the mount of transfiguration would have put Him on a level

with Moses and Elias : but God said, as it were, No ; He is My fellow, not man's. When the young man in the gospel went to Him, saying, " Good master "—coming to Him as man—He said, " Why callest thou me good ? there is none good but one, that is, God " (Matt. xix.) Goodness was not to be looked for in man, not even in Him if He had been only man. The saints are Christ's constant delight, and the poor sinner who puts his trust in God has the Lord Jesus for his comforter ; and He, having been tempted, knows how to help, as none other can.

In the days of John the Baptist all who repented came to the waters of baptism ; Jesus did the same. He could not repent, but He would not be separated from them, and said, " Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." I will take my place with you, with the saints in the earth.

What abundant consolation faith gives the man who hangs on God ! Christ when down here could say, " I set Jehovah always before me ; " and should not I ? In the details of life, do I not constantly need Him ? How continually I get moved by circumstances ! He alone can stay me. Christ once took the dependent place. He was raised by the power of the Spirit, through God the Father. He could have raised Himself ; death hath no power over Him. The Son was the Father's delight. The Father's heart was bound up in the Son. The Lord Jesus Christ was all the Father's delight.

Christ is in His presence as man and for man, as our forerunner and our way (Heb. vi. 20 ; John xiv. 6). It is so blessed to look at Christ as the way ; it brings Him so near to us. As surely as I have, as a man, partaken of the first Adam's nature, and the consequences of his sin, so have I as a believer a portion in the second Adam. The Lord Jesus Christ is in the presence of God for me. There are truly difficulties down here ; but I shall be with Him where there are joys for evermore. God will be glorified as God, but He will be displayed as man also ; and, as in Christ, we shall share the glory (John xvii. 22-24). How gracious and truly blessed those words, "Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God, believe also in me. 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. 1-3). He will be with His saints, and His saints with Him. They shall be conformed to His image ; they shall be displayed in His likeness. We shall see Him, and we shall be like Him ; and now, in the measure we are looking at Him, are we transformed into His image.

It is our positive portion, and in communion with Him we share what He is. His delight is with the saints. He entered into their deepest sorrow, and they shall share His joy and glory, as exalted on high.

How am I acting towards Him now? Do I take all my concerns to Him? Do I make Him the uppermost thought in all my need, in every exercise of soul, and also in my seasons of joy? This is the way to learn Him, and to know the love that is in His heart.

There is no condition but what I may have Him for my companion in. "Deep calleth unto deep," He could say. There is not a place faith cannot find Christ in. "Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things" (Eph. iv. 9, 10). But am I going on in the world with Him? Are my joys such as I can share along with Him? Am I walking with Him in my every-day life? If I am in sorrow, how far has He lifted me up? If I am resting on Him, He has lifted me up, and this is my positive privilege. The heart that is cast upon Christ finds constant comfort. The heart that keeps close to Christ gets nothing apart from Him. (See Psalm xxiii.) If I have a question of want, I can say, there is no fear, "The Lord is my Shepherd." Am I saying, I am in green pastures, but they will soon be gone? Nay, He maketh me to "lie down" in them. Then there are "still waters," but may they not be shortly troubled? How is that, when Christ leads me beside them? My heart is sorrowful; I have wandered away from Him. This is sad.

But Christ "restoreth my soul;" and if I have to "walk through the valley of the shadow of death," He will be with me, and will comfort me. Ah! but I am in the land of my enemies. What of that? Christ prepares a table for me in their very presence. "Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

How blessed it is to look at the Lord in this way! He is our present and eternal joy. The time will come when all our sorrow will be over, but our Friend will remain. He is our tried and true Friend. He has entered into the deepest woes of our heart, and will make us the sharers of His joy for ever. Our blessing, our safety, our hope is all grounded on the atonement. Is there a soul reading this who cannot rejoice in Christ, who knows Him not as his portion? Is there one who is saying, My sin is too great to be pardoned? To feel about your sin is right, but to be in despair about it is quite wrong. You are virtually saying, My sin is greater than the grace of God. You will not dare to say so if you are looking at Christ. Is Christ come short? Is grace beneath your need or above it? Christ is the portion of every poor soul who believes on Him. The atoning work is done. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin (1 John i. 7).

**TRUE GREATNESS.**

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(LUKE XXII. 14-30.)

I do not know that there is a more touching lesson in any of the words or ways of our Lord Jesus Christ than that which comes before us at the last supper.

First of all His desire is to eat that paschal feast with His disciples. He was the only One who knew what it meant—the One to whom it spoke of such a burden as never was nor could be borne by mere man.

And yet with desire He desired to eat of that passover before He suffered. He knew it was the immediate harbinger of His death upon the cross. Yet there was not one of the disciples that so desired to eat it with Him, as He desired to eat it with them. This is love, and love is self-sacrificing.

It was this cup that He told them to divide among themselves—not that of the Lord's supper. Our Lord Jesus never partook of His own supper. He partook of the paschal supper, but not of His own. For this is for us, being the witness of a redemption which He wrought for us (not for Himself, of course). The paschal supper was for Him as well as for the disciples, and He desired to eat it along with them. On the occasion of the passover, after its cup was passed round, He institutes His own supper; but before that He says He was no longer to drink of the fruit of the vine till the



kingdom of God was come. He had done with the earth and had no fellowship more with men in flesh and blood. He took the supper, to Him not a sign of joy, but of the deepest suffering. The Lord's supper, which speaks to us of perfect peace through His suffering, He needed not : He gave it all to us.

But this very thing forthwith brings out, as grace invariably does, whatever is unjudged in nature. The more love you show, if there is not a heart that answers to it, it is but provoked by it, and takes advantage of it. The very perfection of Christ's love brought out whatever was unjudged in the disciples. As for one of them, there was nothing at all in him but unjudged self, and he betrayed his Master. As for the others, what were they doing ? They were striving at that precise moment which of them should be the greatest. That was the question in their minds. Jesus was going to shew that He would become the least and lowest of all, that they might be exalted ; yet this was just the moment in which they had this discussion which should be the chief among them. But our Lord turned it to infinite profit, bringing out for us the character of true greatness. Self is never great, and it has the consciousness of its own littleness. Persons strive to be great, when they have no greatness in reality ; whereas when the soul has found Christ and when Christ is the object of the soul, our satisfaction in His greatness forms our affections. Accordingly, here with the

disciples, self was their object. Thus they were totally inconsistent with what Christ had made them. Had they had Christ, not only as their life before God, but as the object of that life, there would have been, without a thought about it, the real greatness which properly belongs to the child of God.

True greatness at the present time is shewn by being nothing at all. Greatness can go down ; greatness, instead of seeking to be served, serves others : greatness now, in an evil world far from God, shews itself in the resources of grace known in Christ before God, and giving out of that fulness which it possesses in Christ. Everything in the world is founded on the exact opposite ; and the deeper runs the stream of the world, the greater is the desire to be something, and the desire to parade whatever we think we have. This is flesh in its littleness ; and flesh and the world always keep company together. Self likes the world : it holds hard what it has got, and seeks to make a bargain with the world to get more. The knowledge of Christ delivers from all this. But a Christian who does not know that he is a Christian, who does not know that he has got Christ and eternal life in Christ is entirely inconsistent, and all else must be out of course. In order to have practical power, I must not only have the thing, but know that I have it. Supposing a man possesses all the wealth of India and does not know that he has got it, it is practically useless to him.

The consequence is that the man, after the manner of men, is miserable ; he can do nothing, serve nothing, help nothing. The possession of the things of this life never makes a man happy ; but Christ does, and we possess all in Him.

Why was the poor widow who gave the mites the richest of all, as the Lord Jesus marks her out with His eye of love ? She was the only one who had such consciousness of what she hoped for from God, that all that she had in the world was but an offering for the Lord. And we rob ourselves, as well as defraud Him, if we do not exercise this ennobling faith. Conscious of what we possess in Christ, all that we have is at the Lord's disposal. The consciousness of the grace of Christ imprints its own character upon us : instead of seeking, it gives ; and instead of seeking to be served by others, it loves to serve. There is not one of us that is free from this tendency to self, but there is not one that may not have a complete victory over it. Let my heart be only towards Christ and set upon Christ, and it will be impossible for Satan to get me into anything mean or selfish. But let my eye be off Christ, and there is nothing I may not do, nothing too low or too unworthy that Satan may not slip in by.

What is the Bible ? The history of the struggle between God and the devil. This one thing runs from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation. It is not merely a question of man, but of Satan working by man to dishonour God. The

earth was the place where the battle was fought. The first Adam comes, but falls ; and all the history of the Old Testament is the failure of the first Adam, with promises and predictions of the triumph of the Second. Then the New Testament comes ; the battle is over, the triumph is won. We (*i. e.* believers) are put with the Second Adam, and Christ looks that we should be victorious. But we are never victorious except so far as Christ is our object, when He is before our eyes at each moment, in each difficulty or trial that comes before us here below. When are we happy ? When Christ is before our eyes—not when we are looking back to the happiness of yesterday. Satan would have us look back upon past happiness, and perhaps date our blessing upon such or such a day. But it ought not to be so. I am, of course, to have a joyful recollection of all that the Lord shews me, and I shall certainly not forget the first moment of blessing from Him. But how miserable if this only be our comfort and stability now, and our assurance that we shall be with Christ ! Nay ; it is a living Christ that we have—a Christ that died and is alive again, and a Christ that would imprint His own character upon us, making us truly great. It is holding fast what Christ has given us that delivers us from littleness, and holding it fast in Christ Himself.

The Lord grant that, strengthened of His grace, we may be enabled thus to do. Then each word of Christ will have its own power over our souls, will be clothed with His own love ; it will come to us not as some great draught upon us, as if the Lord could be enriched by us, save only in such

honour to Him as really blesses our own souls. It is the consciousness that we have such blessing, such wealth, such dignity in Christ, which gives and keeps us in the feeling that all that is of this world would rather detract from us than add anything to us. It is not only that we have got Christ, but that there is nothing but Christ that is a real honour or power or glory to the saint of God. And the bright day will come when Jesus will tell us what He told the disciples, "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations." This was after the discussion of who should be the greatest, after He had before Him the treachery of one disciple, and the unworthy vanity of the others; after all that He says, "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations." But knowing all that they had been in the past, the trial they had been to Himself, their many weaknesses and failures, yet He puts it as an honour to them, "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations." It was He who had continued with them, who had sustained and kept them in spite of themselves. Yet see how love delights in saying to us, "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom."

The Lord give us then to be steadfast. It is but "a little while." Soon the time of our trials and temptations will close. Soon the time of Christ's dishonour in this world will give place to a throne of glory, and "every eye shall see Him," and every knee bow before Him. May we be faithful to Him for this little while. Bright will be the remembrance of suffering for Him in His presence for ever!

## THE TRUE TOKEN.

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*"And she bound the scarlet line in the window."  
(Joshua ii. 21.)*

*"When I see the blood, I will pass over you."  
(Exodus xii. 13.)*

Why do the priests their trumpets blow,  
And round and round the city go ;  
While those who bear the Ark of God  
Follow the track which they have trod,  
And silently a message bear  
Of wrath and judgment brooding there ?

Because our God is slow to wrath,  
And never pours His judgments forth  
Before He seeks with warning word  
To make His voice in mercy heard,  
Saying to souls, " Why will ye die,  
And madly pass the refuge by ?"

The seventh day comes—then seven times round  
And after that—O solemn sound !  
A shout is heard that rends the air,  
And fills the sinner with despair ;  
While down, all Satan's strongholds fall,  
And death becomes the lot of all !

And yet not all ; for there's a spot,  
Which God in grace has not forgot ;  
It is a house which has a sign—  
Oh, look ye—'tis the scarlet line !  
By God esteemed a token true,  
Which *must* with favour meet His view.

Oh, who is she that there abides,  
And in the word of grace confides,  
That none her shelter shall invade,  
Or make her feel of death afraid,

Because the token will be seen  
By Him in whom her faith has been ?

Not one who rests on her own works,  
Or in whom fancied goodness lurks,  
That boasts of fasting twice a week,  
Of tithes being paid—and she so meek,  
Comparing self to others round,  
To them is far superior found.

It is a stray, a lost one found,  
Whose ear had heard the far-spread sound,  
The true, yet terrible report  
Of what by Israel's God was wrought ;  
Which true report her heart believed,  
When she with peace the spies received,

Rahab, a sinner much despised,  
By Him whom she believes, is prized  
Who owns her faith, and lets her call  
In freest love her kindred all,  
The shelter of her house to share,  
And find escape from judgment there.

Oh, happy souls ! how blest your lot  
Who prove that death can touch you not ;  
While those who've not your token known,  
Find all their hopes of life o'erthrown ;  
Their works, though much esteemed by men,  
As " filthy rags " will all seem then.

And say, dear reader, where art thou ?  
Oh ! know you what's the token now,  
And what for you in grace divine  
Now answers to the scarlet line,  
To make your fears and terrors cease,  
And cause your soul to rest in peace ?

The Blood is now the God-giv'n sign,  
The ever precious scarlet line.

The blood of Him, e'en God's own Lamb,  
Himself, though man, the great I AM ;  
Under its shelter safe am I,  
For Jesus won the victory !

And when the Lord himself descends,  
And at His shout the gravestone rends'  
Making that blessed secret known,  
That He has come to claim His own,  
With joy He'll meet them in the air,  
And greet them as His loved ones there.



### RAHAB ; \*

OR,

SAFETY, SALVATION, CITIZENSHIP, UNION.

(*Joshua ii and vi.*)

We are told (Ephes. ii. 7) that in the ages to come God is going to "shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." The Spirit of God, however, is careful to remind believers of the fact, that it is grace and nothing but grace, saying, "For *by grace* are ye saved *through faith*, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God ; not of works, lest any man should boast," etc.

I know of no case in Scripture that (in type) il-

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\* Rahab (or more accurately "Rachab" meaning "enlargement") the name of the woman referred to in this paper must not be confounded with "Rahab" (meaning "pride"), used figuratively for Egypt in Psalms lxxxvii. 4, lxxxix. 10, and Is. li. 9, occurring also in Job ix. 13 and xxvi. 12, where it is translated "proud," and in Is. xxx. 7, where it is rendered "strength."



illustrates the above more forcibly and fully than Rahab's history.

In Jericho we have a picture of this world. It was marked out for judgment; and so is this world. Jesus said when about to go to the cross, connecting it therewith, "Now is the judgment of this world," adding, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This He said, signifying what death He should die." The doom of the world was sealed at the cross. We are told also (2 Pet. iii.), that the heavens and the earth are reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men; and that the present interval is the period of long-suffering on God's part, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

What was it that was used of God in blessing to Rahab? She tells us herself in chap. ii. 10, that they had heard what Jehovah had done at the Red Sea, which was the place where the power of God was displayed; a type of the death and *resurrection* of Christ. Acts xvii. 30, 31, informs us that "now God commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath *raised Him from the dead.*" Many in Jericho heard it besides Rahab, and how many there are now that know of the historical fact of the resurrection of Christ, etc. What then is the differ-

ence? Let Scripture answer: "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with *them that believed not.*" Ah! there was faith in Rahab, and "faith cometh by hearing." Whereas on the part of them that believed not, "the word did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Heb. iv. 2).

Never had Jericho *seemed* more secure. *To all appearance* it was impregnable. So with this poor world in these days of progress and advancement in learning—vaunting itself and going on, on, on, to judgment, heedless of what God says.

But "faith is the evidence of things *not seen*" (Heb. xi. 1), and so Rahab (let appearances be what they may) says, "I know that Jehovah hath given you the land" (ver. 9). What then? She wants a place of safety when the judgment falls, for herself and her father's house, and a true token (vers. 12, 13). "Our life for yours," if she acts on the word spoken ("obedience of faith," Rom. ii. 5; xvi. 26); and, "bind this line of scarlet thread in the window." How precious her faith shews itself. She did not put off, saying, "Oh! there's plenty of time. They have to hide for three days at least, and then they have got to go over to the other side of the Jordan and get all the men of war ready, and it will take them some time before they will be ready," etc., etc. No. God's word says (and if any unconverted person reads these lines let him hearken), "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of

salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2), "And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed ; *and she bound the scarlet line in the window*" (ver. 21). Not a moment did she lose putting the scarlet line in the window. She was then safe. Let the judgment fall on Jericho, she was perfectly safe. That "scarlet line" is a type of "the precious blood of Christ," and God says "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). Like Israel of old in Exod. xii., where Jehovah said, "And the blood shall be to you for a token . . . and when I see the blood, I will pass over you."

But she thought also of the blessing of others : "And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters," etc. (ver. 13). She is heard, but there must be a test for them : "thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household home unto thee" (ver. 19). What, be found under the roof of such an one, one who had been a disgrace to the family ! Yes, dear reader, there is not one platform for the thief and the harlot to be saved, and another for the moral respectable person. "There is no difference ; *all* have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 22, 23). "Ye must be born again" (John iii.) was said to the moral, upright, religious ruler, and not to the immoral woman of chap. iv. (though of course she needed to be born again). Ah, how many have stumbled at this stumbling-stone !

Pride in the heart, self-sufficiency and utter ignorance of the awful havoc that sin has made, have led many to reject God's way of being saved. Simon, the Pharisee in Luke. vii, and the elder brother, in Luke xv., are illustrations of this. If this meets the eye of any one out of Christ, I pray you don't turn away and reject God's *great* salvation. In the *governmental* ways of God *in this world*, it is much better to be honest, upright, etc.; but, if it is a question of the *soul's salvation* and where you will spend eternity, remember the words of "Peter filled with the Holy Ghost," in Acts iv., where, referring to Jesus Christ who had been crucified, but whom God had raised from the dead: "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Chap. vi. 23 shews us that Rahab's family availed themselves of God's way of safety from the judgment about to fall. Though *safe* under the shelter of the "scarlet line," the power of God had not yet acted in their behalf. We are told "the Gospel is the *power of God unto salvation* to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16), shewing that salvation (or "deliverance") is connected with the display of power. We see it in the types as well as in the antitype. In Exod. xii. we get the blood of the lamb as the ground of security, but when we come to Exod. xiv. we find God's power displayed against the enemies of God's people and in their favour, placing them on the other side of the Red

Sea. We see God's love shewn in giving His own beloved Son to be the Lamb who shed His precious blood on Calvary's cross, but there *the enemy's* power was displayed in leading on man (and every class was there represented—kings, ecclesiastics, religious people, educated people, soldiers, common people, thieves) to reject the blessed Lord. God refrained from displaying His power (Matt. xxvi. 53) to deliver His Son. Man, blinded and led on by Satan, even went so far as to use what God had placed in his hands against His Son. God had given His law to the Jew. Not only did he break it himself, but actually used it to condemn God's Son. "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die" (John xix. 7). Power in connection with governmental authority was also given to man, "the minister of God . . . to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil (Rom. xiii. 4). This power, which had been connected with Jehovah's throne in Jerusalem, was transferred into the hands of the Gentiles in the person of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. ii. 37, 38). Pilate, the representative in Jerusalem of this power in the hands of the Gentiles, used it against Jesus (Luke xxiii. 24, 25 ; John xix. 15). Thus man used the two things with which he was entrusted by God against His Son. But in the resurrection the power of God was displayed (Rom. i. 4 ; 2 Cor. xiii. 4 ; Ephes. i. 19, etc.). Paul desired that the saints may know that they stand before God according to the display of His power which was put

forth when He raised Jesus from the dead ; see Ephes. i. 19, 20, and ii. 6. For the important place that the resurrection holds, and what is connected with it, see Rom. iv. 24-v. 1 ; x. 9 ; 1 Cor. xv. 16, 17 ; 1 Pet. i. 3-5. And so in Rahab's case when the power of God had been displayed against the enemy and on her behalf, then (and not before) it is said, " And Joshua *saved* Rahab, etc., bringing her out of what had been judged and putting her in an entirely different place. And so it is now with the believer, before God and for faith. He is no longer seen as " In Adam," where death holds universal sway, but " In Christ," where there is " no condemnation," and all " made alive" (Rom. viii. 1 ; 1 Cor. xv. 22. See also Col. iii. 1). Rahab was safe when " she bound the scarlet line in the window" (chap. ii. 21), but she was not " saved " till the action in chap. vi. had taken place (see ver. 25).

But that is not all, for we read, " and she *dwelleth* in Israel " (chap. vi. 25); so now, instead of being a dweller in, or citizen of, Jericho, she becomes a dweller in Israel—her citizenship is entirely of a new order and a new country. And so when we turn to the New Testament we find that we who were once " dead in trespasses and sins, . . . walking according to the course of this world," not only have peace and are saved (by grace), but are " no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God " (Ephes. ii. 19). Our relationships

and responsibilities are wholly changed. We belong to an entirely new order of things, as it is written, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature (or 'it is a new creation'); old things are passed away; behold all things are become new; and *all things are of God*," etc. (2 Cor. v. 17, 18). We are "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Pet. ii. 11) as to this world, and "our conversation (or rather 'citizenship' or 'commonwealth') is in heaven" (Phil. iii. 20).

But that is not all in the history of Rahab. If we turn to 1 Chronicles ii. we get from the fourth verse the genealogical register of Judah, the Royal tribe. Comparing verse 11 with Ruth iv. 21, and Matt. 1. 5, we find that she was married to Salma (or Salmon), the prince of the royal tribe. Now turn to Romans vii. 4 and 1 Cor. vi. 17, 19, 20, and what wondrous and precious truth is brought before us, and how calculated to speak to the heart! Ah, beloved fellow-believer, you and I are not only safe and saved, but are citizens of heaven, yea more than that, "joined to the Lord" "married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, *that we should bring forth fruit unto God.*"

Just think of, and ponder over, the contrast between the "harlot of Jericho" and the "wife of the prince of the Royal tribe," and see therein a wondrous picture of what GRACE hath done for you and me!!! Surely our hearts may well exclaim:

"What heights and depths of love divine,  
Will there through endless ages shine!"

What manner of person ought Rahab to be now and how ought she to conduct herself? Not only old things were passed away and all things were become new, but she was a wife—her affections had been won. How would she prove that her heart had been won? Surely by seeking to please the one who won it. Dear reader, do *you* “know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet *for your sakes* He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich?” HAS JESUS WON YOUR HEART? Then He gives you and me an opportunity of proving it, here in this scene where He once was, but has been cast out of; and He tells us, “If a man love Me, he will keep My word: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him” (John xiv. 23). Amongst the “all things new” is the motive of the heart, for it says, “*The love of Christ* constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that *they which live* (have you and I got life at *such cost* to Him?) should not henceforth live unto themselves (we did that long enough when we were citizens of Jericho), but *unto Him which died for them and rose again*” (2 Cor. v. 14, 15). It is thus, having been united to the Other who has been raised from the dead, and the affections of the heart in exercise: that we “bring forth fruit unto God” (Rom. vii. 4). How sweetly then, to one walking in that spirit, come His precious words, “If any serve Me (not a



“cause’ or a ‘sect’ but ‘Me’), let him follow Me (what was His path in this world?) ; and where I am, there shall also my servant be ; if any man serve Me, (he wont get any honour in this Jericho but) him will My Father honour ” (John xii. 26).

Finally, let us remember, that “no man can serve two masters,” and—

“We’ve now to please but One.”

“And WHATSOEVER ye do *in word or deed*, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him ” (Col. iii. 17). We shall then be able truthfully to sing,

Oh worldly pomp and glory !  
 Your charms are spread in vain !  
 I’ve heard a sweeter story !  
 I’ve found a truer gain !  
 Where Christ a place prepareth,  
 There is my heart’s abode,  
 There shall I gaze on JESUS !  
 There shall I dwell with God !



## THE CHILD OF THE BRIDECHAMBER.

*Matt iv. 9-17.*

The conversion of Matthew, the publican, will not, I believe, be fully enjoyed, if we do not continue with it in our view to the end of ver. 17. For I regard Mathew as being at that moment in the thoughts of the Lord, a new bottle with new wine in it.

The Lord met him in the place where the world had put him. He was a publican, and was sitting

at the receipt of custom. But He passed by, and it was "a day of power," and Matthew was "made willing." He "hearkened diligently" to Christ, and his soul at once "delighted itself in fatness." For he arose and followed the Lord, and then spread a feast for Him.

This was joy and liberty. And Jesus sanctioned it. He sat at Matthew's table. This was done suddenly, it is true. But though *sudden* it was not *premature*—though *unbidden* it did not remain *un-sanctioned*. The Eunuch, in his day, went on his way rejoicing, and that rejoicing, like this of Matthew, was early and sudden, but it was not premature.

And in Matthew there was light, and the mind of Christ, as well as liberty and the joy of Christ. He seated at the same table the publicans and sinners who had been following Jesus—the very people who had brought the Lord of Glory from heaven, and the very people whom the Lord Himself will have at His own table in the day of the marriage-supper; a company of sinners redeemed and washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Matthew thus justly and beautifully understood the mind of Christ. He *knew* Him, though he had but just then been introduced to Him. Like the dying thief. For a short moment is time enough to carry the light and liberty of Christ into the dark and distant heart of either a thief or a publican.

Matthew was in Christ's presence *in joy*. He

was a child of the bridechamber. He feasted the Lord. The King was sitting at his table—because, in spirit, Jesus had already brought Matthew to his banqueting-house. This was the time of “the kindness of his youth,” or, “the love of his espousals ;” and in that joy, he had risen up, left all and followed Christ. The world might, therefore, be to him, “a wilderness, a land not sown” (Jer. ii. 2) ; but with Jesus he feasted. The word of power, the invitation of grace, he had listened to, and to his soul it had been “a feast of fat things,” wine and milk of the King’s providing. It was as a bridegroom, as a lover of his soul, Matthew had apprehended Christ, and was now entertaining Him at his table ; and because of this new-found liberty and joy, Matthew is among the children of the bridechamber, a new bottle with the new wine in it.

Neither Moses, nor John the Baptist, could have made such a bottle as this. The word of Christ, heard in the light and energy of the Holy Ghost, could alone have provided it. On Him only, all the vessels of the Lord’s house hang, the “flagons” and the “cups.” The Pharisees and the disciples of John do not even understand this. The one object to the feast *with sinners*—the other, that the feast is not a *fast*. The legalist and the religionist, neither of them, can brook the publican’s, that is the sinner’s, feast. The elder brother complains of the fatted calf. The music and the dancing, as the cheerful sound reaches him in his outside place,

vex him—as the sight of the table and the company in the house of our Levi, irritates the Pharisees as they look on and will not sit.

The good Lord, however, vindicates both the feast and the guests. He lets be heard, there on the spot and at the moment, that He had come to gather such a scene. And He thereby vindicates the host as having done the part of a child of the bridechamber, and as having done it well.

A simple sweet story of grace! Would that one's heart realised the joy that the mind is tracing! Jesus found a publican, a sinner, just at his place in this wretched self-seeking world; he took him up at once, made him a new bottle, and filled him with new wine, like the Samaritan at Jacob's well. She was taken up just *as* she was and *where* she was; and, as another child of the bridechamber, she was sent on her way rejoicing. The world will "fret itself," and "be driven to darkness," as the prophet speaks. The heart of the Pharisees is rent by vexation at such a sight. The publican's feast is lost upon them, the new wine is spilt; as the Lord adds, "No man putteth a new piece of cloth upon an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse: neither do men put new wine into old bottles, else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish."

But then, days of absence, and therefore days of sorrow of heart, were to come, after these feast-days of His presence; but they had not come *then*.

That day in Matthew's house was "one of the days of the Son of Man." But the heart that can feast a present Jesus will mourn an absent Jesus. The children of the bridechamber will fast during the Bridegroom's, absence, because He is dear to them. It is not the Pharisee's fast of religious service and merit, but the fast of a heart that has been weaned away from other objects, and for the present has lost the presence of its own.

The Wise Virgins are as children of the bridechamber, fasting while the Bridgroom has not as yet returned. The oil in their vessels tells us that they are waiting and watching for Him, with hearts separated to the desire of His return; and the Matthew who, upon the revelation of the Lord to His soul and in His presence, could spread a table, would be the Wise Virgin that would wait and watch, in separation and desire, during His absence. The oil in the vessel would well suit the soul that in other circumstances had spread the table.

It is not from *experience* but from *desire* only, one's heart traces the path of a child of the bridechamber. Of such a soul some of us will say, "I see from far the beauteous light." There are occasions and seasons when the state of the affections to Christ are sorrowfully discovered; and sure I am, we need more *earnest* eye for Him. Our look at Him has need to be a nearer one, more fixed and personal. Our sight of Him is too commonly conducted as by the light of others. We are

prone to have Him in *company*, in the reflections and by the help of the scene and circumstances in which we place ourselves. I covet a more *earnest* look at Him ; a look that can reach Him very closely and personally, without aid, or countenance, or company. The single eye knows Him *only*, the earnest eye enjoys Him *deeply*.

Mary at the sepulchre had it, when she could pass by the shining ones, while looking for Him. The sinner of the city had it, when she could let the scorn of the Pharisee pass over her without moving her. The Samaritan had it, when she could forget her water-pot ; and the Eunuch, when he went on heedless of the loss of Philip. Our Matthew had it. And it is this which not only *realizes* Christ, but puts Him in His due supreme place, and *chiefroom both of attraction and authority*.



## PAUL : A GOOD CONSCIENCE BEFORE GOD.

( *Acts xxii.* )

The Holy Spirit often puts Paul forward because in him are manifested the ways of the heart, and this under grace. He displayed a patience truly admirable in caring for the church. We can sound the ways of God and of the human heart in the history that the Holy Spirit has given us of Paul. He had an immense activity and great force of character. This chapter contains circumstances which shew what a good conscience before God is.

If the conscience is not good, the Holy Spirit is grieved, and some, having put it away, have even made shipwreck concerning faith. If a child has offended his father, he is no more at ease before him, and cannot open his heart.

In the history of Paul we see his conversion in verses 3-16. Then he is in a trance or ecstasy (vs. 17-21), in which the Lord commands him to depart from Jerusalem. It is for Him to regulate these things. Paul in his answer says to the Lord that he is precisely the man suited to bear witness for Him at Jerusalem. I have persecuted Thee, and they know it; will they not see in me the efficacy of Thy grace? Such was the reasoning of Paul. But the Lord takes no account of it.

That which strikes one most is that Paul recalls to the Lord all his iniquity; and this, because his conscience was perfectly purged before God. It is necessary that it should be thus if one would dare to speak to God in detail of all our offences, of all our sins. There is a false repose in a child of God when the conscience is not perfectly good and opened out before God. Paul replaces before the eyes of the Lord all the detail of his sin. He does not confine himself to saying, Thou knowest all; he puts all before God, without having the idea that anything can be imputed to him. He talks about his sins as of an affair irrevocably settled. He can even present these sins as being a motive for an apostle, for bearing testimony to Jesus in Jerusalem. Paul reasons with the Lord as a person with his intim-

ate friend. This is what Ananias also does (Acts ix. 13-16).

When God has purified the conscience for us by His perfect grace, the interests of Jesus are ours. Jesus is no longer our judge; He has taken our sins, He has united us to Himself, having taken our cause in hand. Instead of seeing in Jesus our judge, we see in Him a friend. Instead of being affrighted at Christ, we are full of confidence in Him, because we are assured of His love. There is in the heart a complete change.

The reasoning of Paul was true, as we see in 1 Timothy i. 15. God had prepared Paul in that he had been the greatest enemy of the Lord Jesus, and chief of sinners; because if Paul had spoken of other things than God's righteousness by faith and man's perfect pardon on believing God's testimony concerning His Son, his mouth must have been closed.

Peter was prepared by denying Christ, which is even worse than being His enemy. That closed his mouth for every other thing than preaching grace. They had, the one and the other, a profound conviction of sin. If we would be strong and bear testimony to grace, we need to have the sense of the evil whence God has taken us up. If the occasion presents itself, we can speak before men of our sins, provided that all has been laid clearly before God. The Christian converts at Ephesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit, brought their books of magic and confessed all their actions. If the love of God is



shed about in our hearts, we have more shame for our sins before God than before men. To have a good conscience we must keep the conscience pure. Paul exercised himself to have in everything a conscience without offence toward God and man. When we have grieved the Holy Spirit, we do not feel the love of God in the same way. A conscience defiled cannot be at its ease before God; and when God enters, there are dark corners that one hides from Him. Impossible then to have that perfect confidence in reasoning with God as with a friend (see 1 John iii. 19-21). If we have beforehand the sense of our feebleness, we shall be forced to seek strength in God.

Can we with boldness recall before God all we have thought, said and done? To be unable to do so, is not to be in the presence of God; to do so is to recall to God His immense grace in having pardoned us. Without Christ, who would venture such things? Sin hidden corrupts the heart, hardens the conscience, and renders us blind and proud. It is of all moment for us that our conscience should be entirely emptied before God. We can afterwards forget these things; we shall not be judged because of it. Be faithful in this sense—to have a pure conscience before God and men.



FRAGMENT.—The presence of God Himself, a Man amongst men, changed the position of everything.

## CANAAN AND THE ARMOUR OF GOD.

(*Read Ephes. vi. 10-20*).

It might seem strange at first sight that in this epistle, where there is the fullest unfolding of the privileges of the children of God, *conflict* should be brought out ; but we are often not aware of the character of the conflict from not knowing our privileges. Here it is found we are specially in conflict, and in a conflict that is neither known nor got into until we realize the privileges which *this* epistle specially unfolds.

In Galatians there is conflict, but it is a conflict between flesh and Spirit—the flesh lusting against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh ; but in Ephesians it is *not* flesh, but spiritual wickedness in high places (or “ wicked spirits in the heavenly places ” margin). We *have* to overcome flesh, and there is a very close connection between these two conflicts ; still they are distinct.

In Ephesians it is a new creation. Christ has ascended up on high—“ He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.” So completely has He taken us out of the power of Satan that He can make us the vessels of His service. He has taken us out of the world, and then sent us into it ; and if we thus stand associated with Christ (which is the privilege of every Christian, though all do not *realize* it), we must expect all the conflict associated with the place into which we are brought. In *proportion* as we *realize* that we are the vessels

of heavenly service, we get this *special* character of conflict.

You cannot cross Jordan without finding the Canaanite and the Perizzite in the land. There are the trials and perils of the wilderness, which test our hearts—all know more or less of the weary way testing our hearts and discovering what is in them ; but wilderness experience is not the same as conflict in the land. When Joshua got into the place of the privileges of the people of God, he was *in* the place of conflict. God has set Christ as a Man in the glory, because He (as a Man) has perfectly glorified God as to sin. Christ has not only died for our sins, but we have died with Him (dead with Christ is what Jordan is), and we are raised up and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus ; thus associated, *dead* and *risen*, with Him, we are brought into the place where all the conflict is. It is most valuable and precious to get *distinctly* hold of this. Many a Christian has not realized it. There is many a one still in Egypt, holding the value of the blood on the door-posts, but knowing nothing of the deliverance accomplished at the Red Sea. Israel had to stand still and see the salvation of *God* ; this answers to the death and resurrection of Christ. I am out of Egypt ; the *judgment* which fell on the Egyptians has *saved me*. God has raised up Christ and given Him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God. Just as every poor sinner has been driven out of the earthly paradise because *sin* is complete

in the first Adam, so am I taken out of this world into the heavenly paradise in the last Adam because *righteousness* is complete. God raising up Christ and giving Him glory proves that the question of sin has been all settled in Christ on the cross, and in virtue of this He is sitting where He is, at the right hand of God. The passage through the wilderness is to humble and prove us. Our perseverance is tested by God leading us through the path in which Christ was found implicitly faithful. Israel went through that great and terrible wilderness where were the fiery serpents and scorpions and drought, where there was no water. God brought them water out of the rock of flint, fed them with the manna to humble them and prove them, to do them good at their latter end. They come to Jordan, they pass it, they get into the land, they eat the old corn, and the land is theirs.

In the wilderness and Canaan we get two characters of Christian experience—one, the life down here; the other, the position in the heavenlies. We are not only a testimony to the world, but also to principalities and powers in the heavenlies—"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God." He "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places;" but though that is all true as to *title*, as to *fact*, the Canaanite and the Perizzite are still in the land to dispute the possession. We have our place in the power of the Spirit of God.

Christ having gone before, our place is sure to faith ; but the Canaanite is not yet destroyed—Christ's enemies are not yet put under His feet, so conflict characterizes the place of the Lord's redeemed people. When Joshua got into the land, he met a man with a drawn sword. Fighting was to characterize their possession of the land, and when Joshua asks, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" the answer was, "Nay, but as Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." They were the redeemed of the Lord—the Lord's host—so completely the *Lord's*, that He uses them as His servants in conflict to subdue His enemies.

They must "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might," and they cannot fight the Lord's battles if the flesh is at work. With an Achan in the camp there can be no victory, and therefore we must be *practically* dead to fight successfully ; not merely reckoning ourselves dead, but be always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our body.

Paul, as a servant, always carried with him the sense of this, not as a title merely, but "Paul" was kept completely down, *always* bearing about in his body the dying of Jesus ; nothing of Paul appeared, it was Jesus only. As soon as they crossed the Jordan (Jordan is death and resurrection with Christ), they were circumcised—death is practically applied ; and in like manner after they had crossed the Red Sea they had to drink of the

bitter water—really the salt water ; they had been *saved* by it, they must now drink it. “ By these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit ” (Is. xxxviii. 16).

As soon as we get in heavenly places we get the “ old corn ”—we find Christ there, we feed on Him ; but we have to be circumcised, *practically* putting off the body of the flesh. Israel got into the land, and had to be circumcised ; their *title* they knew, but they had not taken the ground of being practically dead and risen (from Egypt). If a man is practically dead and risen, what has he to do with this world ? A man dead, and thus taken out of the world, has to go through the world and live in it again if God so will it. We have to run across the wilderness to glory. As one associated with the Lord, I am the witness and testimony to the world of what a *heavenly* Christ is. I am to be an imitator of God. I shall be seeking other souls to enjoy it with me. If we are endeavouring to serve the Lord, shall we not find hindrances ? if seeking to maintain the Lord’s people in the place of fidelity to all this, do you think Satan will let you alone ? There will be the wiles of Satan to get saints into his power, and we have to withstand his stratagems even more than his power.

Infidelity, superstition in its various forms, are opposed to us, consequently we need the whole armour of God the *moment* we come in. We shall not get through in our own strength ; we need the strength of the Lord, and the power of His might ;

we need the *whole* armour, not *one* piece must be wanting. The armour must be of God, human armour will not ward off the attacks of Satan ; confidence in that armour will engage us in the combat to make us fall before an enemy stronger and more crafty than we. Let us see what this complete armour is.

“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with *truth*.” This is the first thing, looking at what we call the *subjective* part. Our *state* comes first, and there is no divine activity *until* the heart is perfectly in order. The loins are the seat of strength when duly girt, but represent the intimate affections and movements of the heart. The figure is taken from the habits of the country where these instructions were given ; they wore long garments, which hindered their working unless girded up. We get the expression in Job xxxviii. 3, “Gird up now thy loins like a man ;” that is, to see what he had to say to God. It is the power of truth applied to everything that takes place in the heart ; it is not doctrine, but truth *practically applied*. The Lord said, “Sanctify them through Thy truth : Thy word is truth.” God has sent into the midst of the world all that can judge man according to what God is. Christ is the centre of the word ; He was the light of the world, He revealed the thoughts of many hearts. He was here as a man, and revealed what God was, and the world was judged by it. He comes, and brings all that is divine and heavenly in a man (Christ) in direct

contact with all that is contrary to God in this world. Satan, as the God of this world, led man against Christ. Some fancy that he has ceased to be the god and prince of this world; but though the cross broke his title, it was not *until* the cross (where man openly ranged himself under Satan against God) that he became its *prince*. Truth came into the world—Christ Himself, *the* truth. The truth of God brought right to men's hearts discovers their thoughts and intents. Now, when I get this word *effectually* applied to me, I get the *girdle of truth*.

When all that God has said in His word, and the unseen realities He reveals, have their true force and application to my heart, my loins are *girt*, my garments are not dragging in the mire of this world, my thoughts are not wandering, and the condition of my heart is, so to speak, tucked up ready for service, whatever that may be. We do not get into this conflict until we get into this place. We get the conflict of the old man, but that is Egypt. In order to get the victory over Satan, and carry on the Lord's battles, I must realize my position according to the truth, just as Israel overcame by realizing the promises of God.

First thing of all, my heart must be completely tested and subjected to a *heavenly* word. The Lord said, "No man hath ascended up to heaven." Christ brings this heavenly truth before us, and says, Does what is in your heart correspond with this? When this word becomes a positive



delight to us, we get the taste and appreciation of heavenly things—the things that are lovely, and of good report—which He has brought to us. I get on the one hand judgment of all flesh in me, and on the other the blessedness of what Christ is. Wherever the loins are girt about with truth, there will be confidence of heart, and the soul will be steadfast, there will be no turning back in the conflict to judge ourselves ; our souls, so to speak, will be naturally with God, there will be occupation of heart with Christ, and there will be the Holy Ghost taking of the things which are Christ's, and showing them to us.

The result of this girding of the loins is, that a man's *condition* is the effect of truth. It was Christ's condition. He *was* the truth, and my condition will be like Christ's in proportion as the truth is in effect on my heart ; the affections and heart right, I pass through the world in spirit with Him. "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the *breastplate* of righteousness." All this, mark, is practical righteousness ; we do not want armour with God, we want it against Satan.

If I am an inconsistent man, going to serve God without the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left—without practical godliness—Satan will be sure to bring it up. In preaching, for instance, if your walk is not consistent, the world will say you are no better than they, and Satan will then have power against you.

If you are walking according to Christ because your heart is according to Christ, you have on the breastplate of righteousness ; but unless a man has a good conscience, he will be a coward, and afraid of being detected. With a good conscience we can go on boldly ; the condition of the soul where Christ is revealed is truth, and the walk of the man is all right—there is nothing for Satan to lay hold of. The loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, I have then to see that my feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. I pass through the world with my feet shod. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace.” In this path there is no selfishness ; selfishness is for maintaining its rights, but that is not having my feet shod with peace. Self is subdued if I am following Christ. “Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.” Learning of Christ, He carries peace with Him—the soul is at peace with God, the conscience at rest, His feet are shod with peace, and He carries through the world the spirit and character of Christ.

He has on the breastplate of righteousness. What was the path of the blessed Lord? There was nothing in question as to His state? He went untouched with all that man could bring against Him ; His feet were shod. so with him who follows Christ ; he can bring out the spirit and character of Christ wherever he goes. It may raise

hatred, as it did with Christ—His perfect love brought out the hatred of man ; but a subdued, godly, upright man will be a peaceful man in passing through the world, and although man may not speak peaceably to him, as much as lieth in him, he is to live peaceably with all men. Thus we get it in both aspects—the path is characterized by the spirit of grace and peace, and there is righteousness and truth. The state of the heart first right, loins girt with truth, righteousness for a breastplate, and feet shod with peace, the soul subjectively right, I can then take up the *shield of faith*. Subjectively right, I have not to think of myself. A man walking with nothing on his conscience is free ; if not walking right, he will be occupied with himself. The mere existence of an evil nature does not suppose a bad conscience, but *yielding* to it does. We are not told to confess sin, but *sins*. It is easy to confess sin, easy to say, “I am a poor sinful creature,” but that generally is to excuse *sins*. I have failed to keep the flesh down. Of course I can never say I have no sin, but if I am not bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, *practically* dead, the flesh will surely play me false. We want these first three elements of the armour, and then we have not to think about ourselves. Practically in the light, as He is in the light, the heart right, I then get the *shield of faith*, wherewith I shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. This shield supposes I can look up with entire blessed confidence in God.

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. . . . He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust : *His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.* Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night ; nor for the *arrow* that flieth by day.”

God is above Satan. Satan may shoot his arrows, but they cannot break through the shield of faith. In Christ the victory has been won in man and for man. Satan did his worst against Christ—first to seduce and afterward to deter Him—but he was *completely* overcome. All the power of Satan is broken and gone. Christ has gone through death and conquered him who had the power of death. Christ has not only put away our sins, but as a man standing for us, He has completely overcome the devil. We are not told to overcome, but to “resist” the devil, and he will flee from us. If resisted, he meets Christ in us, and runs away. Human nature cannot resist, it will acquiesce. It is not a question of power on our part, but of simple faithfulness and looking to Christ ; it is not that we are strong, but strength is made perfect in weakness. What was ever so weak as Christ—Christ crucified through weakness ? but then the weakness of God is stronger than men, and the foolishness of God is wiser than men. Nothing could be more weak and foolish in man’s eyes than the cross, but we know, nevertheless, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Whenever we are content to own ourselves weak, there is the strength that enables us to overcome. Satan is very subtle. If Satan deals with man (apart from God), it is all over with him. How is it possible that wise and learned men of this world give way to such follies as ritualism and the like? Satan, more clever than they, is behind it all, and laughs to see them trusting their own wisdom. The simple soul that has his heart right *cannot* go wrong. Satan has no kind of power while the soul is walking in obedience, that is the secret of it all. If walking inconsistently, the shield of faith will be down, and I shall be open to all the fiery darts. There should be that blessed confidence in God which reckons on Christ having completely overcome the world and the devil, and that all the power of evil now in the world will soon be put down. *We* are to be exercised in the conflict. The Lord has said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation ; but be of good cheer : I have overcome the world."

We have as yet no activities brought out ; so far it is defensive. The defensive armour comes first. We are slow to understand this, and we often get into activities when we ought to be quiet. The shield is defensive. Satan is active. The Lord may bless and help us, in His grace, but there are many who get into activities without knowing themselves. The helmet of salvation is still defensive ; we have the conscious, blessed, and full certainty of being in heavenly places in

Christ—the soul walking in the full confidence that I have Christ there, who has delivered me out of the power of the devil. Christ has fought my battle, and overcome. I can hold my head up, because I have got salvation. The blessed certainty that I am in Christ and Christ is for me is my *helmet*. I can now be active. Having judged the flesh, godly in walk, peaceful in my path through the world, with confidence in God, and salvation assured, I can take up the sword of the Spirit—I can fight, sheltered in the inner man, and shielded from all attacks from without. I take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. We do not always look to see that it is so—that there is nothing between God and our souls, so that He is *practically* with us in the conflict. Are we walking in the practical sense of God being with us? If there is an Achan in the camp, as there was with Israel, God will not go up. It is of all-importance we should be clear as to this. Paul kept under his body, and brought it into subjection. If we are to be active in the service of the Lord, we must go out from the presence of the Lord according to what His presence gives. Paul said, “Herein do I exercise myself, to have *always* a conscience void of offence toward God and men.” Always self-judgment, always keeping close to God, and *then* you can go out in service to others ; not always, perhaps, in public ministry, but in the path of every-day life.

You will have the secret of the Lord with you,

the consciousness of God with you, clearness of judgment, and not distracted or dismayed by half a dozen thoughts. You have the *secret of the Lord*; going on quietly, it may be, but going on with God. Then comes, no matter how active I may be, the inward preparation—"praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." We have had the inward affection and the sword of the Spirit, but now it is entire dependence—the word of God and prayer. These two things are found running together through Scripture: *the word of God and prayer*. Mary sat at the Lord's feet and heard His *word*. The Lord said, "Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." In the next verses, the Lord teaches His disciples to *pray*. When deacons were chosen, the reason assigned by the apostles was that they might give themselves continually to *prayer* and to the ministry of the *word* (Acts vi.). When there is to be service carried on against the wiles of the devil, half the battle is to be fought out in God's presence beforehand in *prayer*. When the prince of this world came to the Lord in the garden of Gethsemane, he found Him agonizing in prayer. Peter slept while the Lord prayed: the result was, that Peter denied Him, but the blessed Lord witnessed a good confession.

Nothing can, or ever will, take the place of that earnestness in prayer: if we are to have God with us, we must pray. It is marked by perfect calmness. If we have God with us, we must be with God, who is sovereign in love and goodness, and has associated us with His own interests. Does not my heart yearn after the conversion of poor

sinner? do I not pray that hearts may know more of Christ? that saints may walk more faithfully? God desires this, and He has given us a path in the world associated with His interests. There is to be perseverance and supplication for all saints. If I see a soul in danger of going astray, I go with all perseverance and supplication to God about him : my heart is in it.

The very same word used of the Lord in Gethsemane is used of Epaphras, who laboured fervently in prayer (Col. iv.). It is conflict of heart. He craves the blessing of God with all his heart—craving for it earnestly, and entering into it because it is in the interests of God in the world. This has to be carried on in opposition to Satan, who will bring all his craft and power against us. We have consequently to be with God. What a blessed thing to know that I get power and wisdom from God, grace and wisdom in practice ! If I use a sword, I must get wisdom for it. What a place of blessing it would be if we were all practically with God !

For our own souls it is so helpful, because prayer is the expression of entire *dependence*, but at the same time of *confidence* in God. A person like Paul, in weakness and trembling, fightings without and fears within, going about getting victories ! He says to the Corinthians, " I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." It is always good to be conscious of weakness provided there is faith in God. Constant dependence is the constant expression of faith in God ; the soul goes to God with God's affairs, we realize how much they are our own. The blessed Lord has gone down into the dust of death. Satan's power was exercised to the fullest, but it was all broken. He comes up again and sits at the right



hand of God, takes His people, whom He has completely delivered from the hand of Satan, and uses them for conflict against him—the instruments of His service in the world—a wondrously blessed place if we only knew how to hold it—blessed to be made the Lord's host against Satan. The more you are in the forefront of the battle, the more you will be exposed to the fiery darts. The more you bear testimony to God's thoughts, God's mind, the place the saints have in God's mind, the more you will be the object of Satan's attacks. You will necessarily be exposed to more snares and dangers than those who lag behind, and there is no place where dependence is more needed and felt.

There is more strength provided for those in the forefront to bear witness to Christ's title against Satan, and Satan will never let it pass without opposition. When I have all the armour on, and come to wield the sword, I am not to be thinking of the armour, but of God and His purposes, "watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." Oh, how little we know of this! Supposing we pass through a day, was all that happened turned into prayer? If I am walking maintaining Christ's cause, it all turns to prayer. It is a wondrous test of the state of our souls. Do you think you can intercede much for others? Do you find earnestness in intercession for all saints? Is my heart so in the interests of Christ that I can have a lasting and continual interest for others? If my heart is in a bad state, and the presence of God is revealed to me, I think of myself—I am not free to intercede for others. "And for me," says the apostle, "that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly . . . as I ought to speak." How is it with us, beloved friends? It is an amazing blessing to

be doing this, but we cannot if our own souls are not right—if I am not in the presence of God. As far only as I keep on this armour, I am useful ; all is founded on being in a settled place before God. The blood on the door-post, the Red Sea crossed, Jordan passed, circumcised, and the reproach of Egypt rolled away—*then* comes conflict in the land ; all is founded on redemption.

Be assured we shall meet the wiles of Satan. Our own state and conscience are easily detected if our hearts are simple in the truth. It is not that we are to be learning Satan's wiles, but if our hearts are simple, we shall be more than a match for him. Satan is a good deal cleverer than we are, and wherever redemption is not fully known, there Satan plays his tricks. The moment that redemption is really believed in, all the systems of superstition so prevalent in the world are gone. You may have old things lingering, but you will never find a person under the power of superstition who has the consciousness in himself that Christ has died and suffered for *him*. We see wise and learned men going away to ritualism, and the devil behind it all ; but the moment redemption is really known, the devil's power is gone. The system of ritualism proceeds on the footing that Christ can have to say to man in the flesh that he is not lost and dead in his sins, and consequently a complete and accomplished redemption is denied. The moment I have my soul established in Christ, this snare of the devil will not prevail. A man may know the truth of the incarnation, and may speak more beautifully of the person of the Lord than even Christians, but all the time be ignorant of redemption. I have the witness of Christ in me ; I know Christ. They may try to persuade me that Christ is such and such, but I *know* Him ; I

have got Him ; He dwells in my heart, so that I am not to be turned by such follies as ritualism and the like. The Lord keep us in a constant sense of dependence, in a sense of what He is, dependent on Him every moment, that we may never get out of the presence of God, for when we are out of His presence there is danger.

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## THE CONQUEROR.

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The Lord God, of old, entered on His rest, or Sabbath, as Creator. He had ended His work, and on the seventh day He rested. We know that this Sabbath has been lost by man, and the rest of God disturbed.\* We know, also, that another rest, or the keeping of a Sabbath, is in prospect (Heb. iv.). In what character, we may ask, will it be entered ?

Scripture tells us, by a Conqueror (see Ps. xlvii.-xlvi. ; xcii.-c. ; Rev. xix.). These Psalms, etc., intimate that the Lord had just displayed Himself as a Man of war, stilling the noise of waves or the tumults of the peoples, and was now keeping the Sabbath of a Conqueror, or enjoying a *triumphant* rest.

David making way for Solomon is the type of this. Solomon was the *Peaceful*—a name which implies not abstract rest, but rest after *conflict*.

In such a dignity the Lord enters His second rest, or Sabbath. The first had not been the rest of the Peaceful. It was the rest simply of the Creator—of One who had ended a work. It was not a *triumphant* rest. It was not a rest that bespoke previous glorious warfare. It could not have had the presence of a Conqueror to adorn and gladden it.

But still more. Heaven has anticipated this joy and this ornament; for it has already received a Conqueror. Jesus is there in this character, though never till He ascended had heaven known such a character. The Lord God had filled the heavens, and the angels that excel in strength had attended. Some may have been cast down who kept not their first estate, and others have sung together, as when the earth's foundations were laid. But never, we may say, had a Conqueror been there till Jesus ascended. But He, through death, had destroyed him that had the power of death (Heb. ii. 14); He had led captivity captive (Eph. iv. 8); He had made a show of principalities (Col. ii. 15). After the type of Samson, He had borne the hostile gates to the top of the hill. He had overcome ere He sat down on the Father's throne (Rev. iii. 21). The grave clothes had been left in the empty sepulchre (John xx. 6, 7). As *Conqueror*, therefore, Jesus ascended. Heaven had already known the Living God, but now it had to know the Living God in victory. The Lord returned as in triumph, and filled heaven with a new song, "The Conqueror's Song." And in spirit this song is sung every day by all the saints now gathering.

And we enter heaven and the Kingdom as conquerors also. "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!" (Rev. iii. 21). We rise as shouting, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is *thy* victory?—thanks be to God, which giveth *us* the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" (1 Cor. xv. 55-57). This is the language of conquerors, as the rising ascending saints will be in their day and way and measure—as their ascended

Lord has already been in His day and way and measureless glory.

It is the Kingdom of *Conquerors* that is to be thus displayed and established; and it will be therefore an *irreversible* Kingdom. Unlike the Garden of Eden; for Adam entered it in order to be assayed—that the serpent might try a question with him, and put creature integrity to the proof. The Kingdom is to be entered and taken by conquerors—by those who *have been proved*, and not who *are to be proved*.

And the earthly places will be of the same character, for Israel will already have been proved, and refined, and brought forth, and stablished in the faith of the victory of Christ; they will have been already made His “goodly horse” and “weapons of war” (Zech. x. 3; Jer. li. 20).

This is, indeed, “a new song,” the Conqueror’s song: and heaven and earth will witness and celebrate it; their *history must have taught it to them*.

The old song, like the old work, was not a Conqueror’s. The Morning Stars sang over the work of Creation; but that was not, as I have said, a Conqueror’s work. It was not victory, but creation. It was not glorious peace after warfare, like Solomon’s, but simply rest and refreshing after labour. And therefore the song of the Morning Stars—the old song—was according to that, simple joy over the grand foundations of the earth being laid. But the song which ushers in the Kingdom will be that of Conquerors, and thus new in its strain and burthen. The first “corner-stone” was simply “laid” by a Creator (Job xxxviii. 6, 7), and angels sang: the second “Corner-stone” shall be brought in as Victor, and Israel shall shout !!! (Ps. cxviii.).

## COMING !

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“ *What I say unto you I say unto all, WATCH.*”—  
*Mark. xiii. 37.*

It may be in the evening ;  
     When the work of day is done,  
 And you've time to sit in the twilight  
     And watch the setting sun,  
 While the long bright day dies slowly  
     Over the sea,—  
 And the hour grows quiet and holy  
     With thoughts of Me,—  
 When you hear the village children  
     Passing along the street,  
 Among the thronging footsteps,  
     May come the sound of My feet.  
 Therefore I tell you “ Watch !”  
 Let the door be on the latch  
     In your home—  
 For it may be through the gloaming  
     *I will come !*

It may be in the midnight :  
     When 'tis heavy on the land,  
 And the black waves lying dumbly  
     Along the sand ;  
 When the moonless night draws close,  
 And the lights are out in the house ;  
     When the fire burns low and red,  
 And the watch is ticking slowly  
     Beside the bed ;—  
 Though you sleep tired on your couch,  
 Yet your heart must wake and watch  
     In the dark room,—  
 For it may be that at midnight  
     *I will come !*

It may be at the cockcrow :  
 When the night is dying slowly  
     In the sky ;—  
 And the sea looks calm and holy,  
 Waiting for the dawn of the golden sun  
     Which draweth nigh ;  
 When the mists are on the valleys shading  
     The rivers chill,  
 And my morning-star is fading, fading  
     Over the hill :—  
 Behold I say unto you “ Watch ! ”  
 Let the door be on the latch  
     In your home,—  
 In the chill before the dawning  
     *I may come !*

It may be in the morning :  
     When the sun is bright and strong,  
 And the dew is glistening sharply  
     Over the little lawn ;  
 When the waves are laughing loudly  
     Along the shore ;  
 And the little birds are singing sweetly  
     About the door ;  
 With the long day's work before you,  
     You are up with the sun,  
 And the neighbours come to talk a little  
     Of all that must be done ;  
 But remember, I may be the next  
     To come in at the door,  
 To call you from your busy work  
     For evermore !  
 As you work your hearts must watch,  
 For the door is on the latch  
     In your room—  
 And it may be in the morning  
     *I will come !*

So I am watching quietly  
     Every day :  
 Whenever the sun shines brightly  
     I rise and say,  
 " Surely it is the shining of His face "—  
 And look unto the portals of His High Place  
     Beyond the sea ;  
 For I know He is coming shortly .  
     To summon me.  
 And when the shadow falls across  
     The window of the room  
 Where I am working my appointed task,  
 I lift my head to watch the door and ask  
     If He is come—  
 And the spirit answers softly,  
     In my room :  
 " Only a few more shadows  
     *And He will come !* "



## THE COMING OF THE LORD THAT WHICH CHARACTERIZES THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.



I purpose to take up a subject which I feel to be deeply important—the coming of the Lord Jesus ; and to take it up, not proving it as a doctrine, but showing that it was originally a substantial part of Christianity itself. The groundwork is Christ's first coming, and His atoning death ; but when we look beyond the foundation, then we see that the coming of the Lord Jesus is not merely a bit of knowledge, but a substantive part of the faith of the church of God, and that on which the moral state of the saints, and indeed of



the church of God, depends. You will see, in going through the passages which I will now quote, that it connects itself and is mixed with every part of Christianity, characterizes it, and connects itself with every thought and feeling of the Christian. A person could not read the Scriptures with an unprejudiced mind without seeing it.

I take conversion : people say, what has that to do with the Lord's coming ? That is part of what they were converted to : "to wait for God's Son from heaven." This waiting for God's Son from heaven characterized their conversion ; they were converted to serve God, surely ; but, also, "to wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. i. 10).

There are two subjects with which Scripture is occupied, when personal salvation is settled : one is the sovereign grace, which makes us, redeemed from sin, like Christ in the glory : this is the blessed portion of the church of God ; and the other is the government of God in this world. (Deut. xxxii. 8.) "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people[s], according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is His people, Jacob is the lot of His inheritance." There we get, in the government of the world, Israel as the centre. Israel would not have Christ, and so was set aside for the time. God's throne was taken from Jerusalem at the Babylonish captivity, but a remnant was spared and brought back, that the king

might be presented to them ; but Him they refused, and are now set aside till His return. There are only sixty-nine weeks of Daniel definitely\* fulfilled. The last week is not fulfilled ; it is not come. So as to the great feasts. You have got the Passover fulfilled : " Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us ;" and the feast of Pentecost has its fulfilment in the descent of the Holy Ghost ; but the feast of Tabernacles is not fulfilled at all : you have no antitype yet whatever. But here the other blessed work of God comes in, that meanwhile God is calling out poor sinners to have a part with His Son, and be like His Son ; for we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He may be the First-born among many brethren. He has taken us poor sinners to have us in the same glory as His Son. That is another thing from prophecy, which gives us the portion of this world and the Jewish people. When He shall appear, we shall appear with Him in glory.

The Christian's position as to the coming of the Lord is, that he is waiting for Christ to come according to His promise. People say He comes at death. I reply, Do you make death the same as Christ ? If this were the case we should have him coming hundreds and hundreds of times, whereas

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\*Christians know that half the last week is passed, comprising the time of the ministry of Christ. But for unbelief only sixty-nine are passed. Hence the covenant is made for a week. But God only counts from the beginning of the last half week, a time, times, and half a time.

we only read of His coming twice. (Heb. ix. 28.) Shall I tell you what will happen when Christ comes? Resurrection! This is quite a different thing from death. The coming of Christ is, for the saint, to be the end of death—exactly the opposite. I believe nobody can find a trace of the thought in Scripture that Christ comes at death. Instead of Christ's coming being death, it is resurrection; we go to Christ at death, it is not Christ who comes to us. Blessed it is "to depart and be with Christ;" "absent from the body, present with the Lord." But I am to show that this thought of the coming of Christ mixes itself with and characterizes every part of Christian life.

In the first place we have it in *conversion*, as already said. They were converted to wait for God's Son from heaven. I will turn to other passages in support of it, but I will go through Thessalonians first. In the 2nd chapter of the 1st epistle, at the end, the apostle speaks of what his comfort and joy in service were. He had been driven away by persecution from the midst of the Thessalonians, and writing to them speaks of his comfort in thinking of them. But how? "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?" He cannot speak of his interest in them and joy without bringing in the coming of the Lord Jesus. Again, as regards holiness (chap. iii. 12, 13): "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love . . . to the end

He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints." As to the death of a saint, they were so thoroughly looking for the Lord that if a person died they thought he would not be there, ready to go to meet Him. They were wrong in this, and the apostle corrects their mistake. But now people say, when a saint dies, we shall go after him, we shall follow him. Here there is not a word about it. Suppose I were to go and say to a Christian now, who had lost some one dear to him, "Do not be uneasy, Christ will bring him with Him," he would think me wild, or find it utterly unintelligible; and yet that is the way the apostle does comfort them: "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" (chap. iv). He then shows the way He will do it: "We which are alive . . . shall not prevent them which are asleep." "Prevent" is an old word for anticipate or go before. The first thing the Lord will do when He descends is to raise the sleeping saints. He is going to bring them with Him. If they have fallen asleep in Him, their spirits will have been with Him meanwhile; but then they will receive glory, be raised in glory, be like Him, and, going to meet Him in the air, will be for ever with Him; and when He appears He will bring them with Him, and they will appear with Him in glory. You get it in a general way in the 5th chapter, where he desires their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto

the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This hope, then, is a part of the Christian state in every aspect. Conversion, joy in service, holiness, a believer's death, the goal of blamelessness, all are connected with the coming of the Lord.

Turn now to Matthew xxv. The wise virgins take oil in their vessels, but they all go to sleep and forget that the Bridegroom was coming. But what I have specially to inquire here is, What was the original calling? The statement, clear and positive, is, that they went forth to meet the Bridegroom, but while He tarried they "*all*" slumbered and slept—they all forgot His coming, the wise as well as the foolish. They got into some comfortable place; bivouacking in the open air is not comfortable to the flesh. But at midnight the cry is heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom!" The thing that roused them up from their sleep was the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom!" The original object then of the church was to go to meet Him who came; but even true believers forgot it. And, further, what awakes them from their sleep is their being again called out to meet Him at His coming. Then you get in "the talents" the same thing in regard to service and responsibility: He takes His journey and tells them, "Occupy till I come."

Another very striking fact as to this truth is, it is always presented as a present operative expectation. You will never find the Lord nor the apostles speaking of the Lord's coming, with the

supposition that it would be delayed beyond the life of those to whom they spoke. It might be at cock-crowing, or in the morning; but they were to be waiting for God's Son from heaven. In the parables referred to, the virgins who went to sleep were the same virgins as those who woke up; the servants to whom the talents were entrusted, were the servants who rendered an account of them at His return. We know centuries have passed, but He will not allow any thought of delay. "In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching." Again, what was the cause of the church's ruin? It was, "My Lord delayeth His coming." It was not saying, "He will not come;" but "He delayeth His coming." Then the servant began to beat his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; and this brings on his judgment. If the bride loves the Bridegroom, she cannot but wish to see Him. Her heart is where He is. When the church lost this, she settled down to enjoyment where she was; she got worldly; she did not care about the Lord's return.

Turn now to Luke xii., and you will find how his waiting for Christ characterizes the Christian, and therewith the serving Him while He is away. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." They were to have their loins girded, their lights burning. Such was the characteristic of a Christian. They were to be as men that waited

for their Lord, to open to Him immediately ; their affections in order and full profession of Christ, but watching for their Lord's return. It is not merely having the Lord's coming as a doctrine. The blessing rests on those who are *watching*, "like men that wait for their Lord." "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find *watching*." They must be girded, and have their lights bright while He is away, and *watch* for His return ; and then He makes them sit down to meat, and girds Himself, and comes forth and serves them. *Now* they must be girded and watch ; our rest is not here. "But," says the Lord, "when I have things all My own way, you shall sit down to meat, and I will gird Myself and come forth and serve you. I will make you enjoy all the best that I have in heaven, and I will minister it to you ; only be found *watching*."

Christ is for ever in grace a servant according to the form He has taken. He is girded now according to John xiii. They would naturally think that if He were gone to heaven in glory there was an end of His service to them ; but He tells them, "I am going away ; I cannot stay here with you, yet I cannot give you up ; but as I cannot remain on earth with you, I must make you fit for Me in heaven. 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.' " It is water here, not blood. "He that is washed (or, more correctly 'bathed') needeth not, save to wash his feet." Life giving conversion, as well as salvation, is fully wrought ; but

if we pick up dirt in the way, even as to communion and the walk, grace and advocacy are there to wash our feet and have us practically fit for being with God where Christ has gone. Growth there is, or ought to be ; and, as to the unchangeable cleanness of the new man, this is certain. But if I have not been watchful, I shall pick up dirt in my path. I cannot have this in heaven, nor in communion with what is there ; and the Lord says in effect, "I am not going to give you up because I am going to God and glory, and so I must have you in a state suitable to that, and washed as you are (though not all, for Judas was there), keep you fit, restoring you when you fall. But you must be watching while I am away."

It is a comfort to me to know that all the virgins woke up in time, and I believe all His saints will wake up before the Lord comes. The difficulty to the heart in looking around is that so many do not receive it. But the true service of the Lord is connected with watching. That is the state to which the blessing and the heavenly feast are attached. Then you find another thing—serving while He is away ; and the result of this is, "Of a truth I will make him ruler over all I have." It is far better to eat, as is said of Israel, of the finest of the wheat, and that in the Father's house ; but if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him. With the serving in His absence, I get the ruling ; as the heavenly feast with watching. The Lord then goes on to what we



had in Matthew, the saying, "My Lord delayeth His coming."

What the Lord is pressing as to *watching* and *serving* is, "I am coming again. You must be watching for Me, as men that wait for their lord." That was to be their character as Christians. Supposing all the people in this town were actually watching, waiting for the Lord from heaven, not knowing the moment He would come, do you think the whole town would not be changed? A person once said to me that if everybody believed that, the world could not go on at all; and the Christian cannot, in a worldly way.

If people were waiting for the Lord from heaven, the whole tone and character of their life would be changed. I may have the doctrine of Christ's coming, when I am really not looking for Him; but I should not like to be heaping money together when the Lord comes. I should, if possible, huddle it away out of His sight.

Turn now to Philippians iii. Paul was running a race. "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark (or 'goal') for the prize of the high calling (or rather 'calling on high') of God in Christ Jesus." And how does he speak of Christ at the close of that chapter? "Brethren, be followers together of me . . . for our conversation" (our living association) "is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ," etc. He had

seen Christ, and would not be content till he was like Him in glory. To be with Him then, was, no doubt, far better ; but it was not the goal of his heart. People talk of going to glory when they die. There is no such thought in Scripture as being in glory, when we depart to be with Christ. Most blessed and happy to be with Him ! This I would surely press ; but it is when He comes that He will change these vile bodies (or rather 'bodies of humiliation') and fashion them like unto His glorious body (or rather 'His body of glory'). I am waiting till I get my body changed, to be like Christ in glory ; and, what is more, Christ is waiting too.

The Lord's coming affects all the truths of Christianity. Christ is not now on His own throne at all. He is sitting now, according to the word in Heb. x. (and also in Psalm cx.), at God's right hand, sitting on the Father's throne, as He says Himself in the promise in Laodicea. He has settled the question of sin for them at His first coming, and they have no more conscience of sins ; they are perfected for ever. And to them that look for Him shall He appear a second time without sin unto salvation. He is expecting in the heavens *till* His enemies be made His footstool. Why does He say " His enemies" ? Because He is sitting down after He has finished all for His friends ; that is, those that believe in Him. Have all your sins been put away out of God's sight ? If not, when will it be done ? That you grow in hatred

of them all---all right ! But if they are not borne and put away on the cross, when will it be done? Can you get Christ to die again? Can you get anyone else to do it? If it is not done, it will never be done at all. Beloved friends, if the work is not finished, it will never be done at all. But it is done, and therefore He says, the worshippers once purged "have no more conscience of sins . . . For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." (Hebrews x. 2, 14.)

If you look now at Col. iii., you will find the same thing in its full result held out as our hope. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." The first promise He gave the disciples when going away was His coming again. Do not be troubled (as they naturally would be on losing the One for whom they had given up all), I am not going to be all alone in My Father's house. There, there are many mansions, I am going to prepare a place for you. Do not be uneasy, I cannot stay with you, so I must have you up there with Me; and the first thing is, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself." It is not one by one by death, but by resurrection for the dead, and change for the living, His actual coming to receive them, raised or changed, to be with Himself where He was gone, and like Himself, that we shall be in glory with Him.

Again, at His departing from His disciples left down here, what was the last they saw of Him?

They saw Him go up before their eyes, and the angel said to them, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner." His coming is wrought into the whole texture of the Christian life.

What is Scripture's last word? "Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." In the same way you get it at the beginning (of Revelation), with warning and threatening, Jesus Christ, Faithful Witness, the First-begotten, etc. "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him." Then at the end (prophetic instructions are over, I do not enter into them), "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel," etc. "I am . . . the bright and morning star." Now I get what these saints who were watching, and those only, see. There is no star to be seen when the sun is risen; they see the morning star while it is yet early dawning, for the night is far spent, the day is at hand. Here He calls Himself "the root and offspring of David; the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come." If the bride has got the sense of being the bride of Christ, she must desire to be with the Bridegroom; there is not proper love to Christ unless she wants to be with Him. Abram said of his wife, "She is my sister;" then the Egyptians—the world—took her into their house.

I just add that you get here the whole circle of the church's affections. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come" (this is to the Bridegroom); "and

let him that heareth say, Come." That is, the Christian who has heard the word of his salvation joins in the cry. Then those who thirst for some living water are called to come. The saints of the church can say, though they have not yet the Bridegroom in glory, that they have the living water, and so call, "Let him that is athirst, come," and then address the call universally, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." This they have, though not the Bridegroom. What I find then is, that in the word of God the thoughts and feelings and conduct and doings and affections of Christians are identified with the coming of Christ. Take all these things, and you will find that they are all identified with the coming of the Lord.

Take the first epistle of John, chapter iii., "Behold, what manner of love," etc. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God" (that is settled), "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." Beloved friends, we are "predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son." This is what God has purposed for us. When are we to be like Christ in the glory ? When He comes. It is not when a person dies, and the spirit goes to be with Christ ; for then he is like Christ when Christ was in the grave ; and I do not want to be like Christ when Christ was in the grave. But if I die I shall be like Christ as to that, but this is not what I want,

though blessed in itself. I want to be like Him in the glory. When will that be? When He comes. He will change our vile bodies (or 'bodies of humiliation'), and fashion them like to His glorious body (or, 'body of glory'); so here it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but when He shall appear we shall be like Him. Now mark the practical consequences upon the man that has been in his faith brought up to God's purposes: "He that hath *this* hope in Him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure." I know I am going to be perfectly like Christ in the glory, therefore I want to be as like Him as possible down here. You find here again what the Holy Scriptures are explicit in teaching, that holiness also is always referred to conformity to Christ in glory. I shall have that likeness to Christ in glory, and nothing else is my standard. You will find one passage already quoted, "To the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints." The perfection of the Christian is to be like Him when He comes. What again I find as to Christians in 1 Cor. xv. is, "It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory." We have the blessed assurance that accompanies true assured hope of the first resurrection and its results.

We shall be perfectly like Christ when we are raised from the dead. We give an account of ourselves, but it is when we are like the Person to

whom we are to give an account. The full efficacy of His first coming has been lost, and therefore people are not comfortable when thinking of His second coming. But for the saint "Christ is the first-fruits, then they that are Christ's at His coming." Is Christ the first-fruits of the wicked? Surely not. Just as Christ's resurrection was the public testimony of God's approval of Himself and His work, the resurrection of the saints will be a testimony of God's approval of them as in Him. As we find in Luke xx. 35, 36. "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: but are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection?"

Could anybody show me a single passage about a general resurrection? There is no such thought in Scripture. You get the 25th chapter of Matthew quoted for it, that the goats and sheep represent the two classes; but He has come in His glory down here. He is not sitting on the great white throne, before which heaven and earth flee away. Here He is come, and sits on His throne. When He does come, and sits there, He gathers all the Gentiles—the nations—to judge them. It is the judgment of the quick or the living. You have three sets of people, not two; and you have nothing of resurrection. You have sheep, goats, and brethren. (Matt. xxv. 40.) So far from its being

a general resurrection, there is no reference to resurrection at all ; it is quite a different subject. Further, the only question is, How have they treated his brethren? The ground of judgment does not apply to ninety-nine out of a hundred of those who are to be judged, if it were a general judgment. Those that have had the testimony of the kingdom before He comes to judge the quick will be treated according as they have received God's messengers, but such only are in judgment.

And now the point I return to is, that the coming of the Lord influences and forms the whole life of the Christian. You cannot separate anything in the whole course and ways of the Christian from the coming of the Lord Jesus ; and there are but the first coming, and the second coming. He has appeared once in the end of the world, and to them that look for Him shall He appear the second time unto salvation. It is true that He comes and dwells in us ; but we speak with Scripture of actual coming. If you take holiness, or service, or conversion, or ministry, or a person who has died, they are all connected with Christ's coming. He warns them to be found *watching*.

I might quote other passages, but I have quoted enough to show that the Lord's coming is connected with everything in the Christian life. When we see Him as He is, then, and then only, shall we be like Him, according to God's purpose. And now I only ask, Are you waiting for God's Son from heaven ?



His bearing the sins of many is the only ground of hope for any sinner ; that is, the finished work which enables us, through faith, to look for Him when sealed by the Holy Ghost. Then, I say, what am I waiting for? I am waiting for God's Son from heaven. Can you say, " I am watching for Christ " ? I do not know when He will come. " Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching." I do not ask you, " Do you understand about the coming of the Lord ? " To wait for Him was the thing they were converted to. The thing that woke the virgins up was, " Behold, the Bridegroom ! " Are you actually waiting for God's Son from heaven? Would you like Him to come to-night? Peter explains the delay. He says His long-suffering is salvation, not willing that any should perish. What would you think if He were to come to-night? Would it just be what your soul was looking for? I am going to sit down to table, and He is going to gird Himself and come forth and serve me. People think that it would stop the gospel to be waiting for God's Son from heaven. Did the acceptance by Noah of God's testimony about the deluge stop his preaching? Far from hindering, it was what gave edge to all. May the Lord give us to be ready when He comes—found *WATCHING FOR HIM.*

## JESUS EVER NEAR.

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*"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."  
(Heb. xiii. 5.)*

O JESUS CHRIST, the Saviour,  
We only look to Thee ;  
'Tis in Thy love and favour  
Our souls find liberty.  
When Satan seeks to sift us,  
And shipwreck we might fear,—  
'Tis this o'er all will lift us,  
That *Thou* art ever near.

Yes, though the tempest round us  
Seems safety to defy ;  
Though rocks and shoals surround us,  
And billows swell on high—  
Thou dost from all protect us,  
And cheer us by Thy love ;  
Thy counsels still direct us  
Safe to the rest above.

There with what joy reviewing  
Past conflicts, dangers, fears,—  
Thy hand our foes subduing,  
And drying all our tears,—  
Our hearts with rapture burning,  
The path we shall retrace,  
Where now our souls are learning  
The riches of Thy grace.

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## LAW AND PRIESTLY GRACE.

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*(Numbers xvii., xx.)*

Putting these two chapters together, we see the grace of God in priestly government, to bring His redeemed through the wilderness, and also the contrast between law and priestly grace.

This grace is drawn out by Israel's sin ; but grace does not, of course, allow sin. Law could not bring the people into the land. Law must have kept the whole nation out, except Joshua and Caleb, who followed the Lord fully. We see its actings in chapter xvi., in the judgment that fell on Korah and his company. If when redeemed we were put under the law, we should be no better off than before. Still, God cannot allow sin. Neither could He give the people up ; for had He not redeemed them ? as Moses pleaded with Him (Num. xiv. 13-16), "And Moses said unto Jehovah, Then the Egyptians shall hear it (for Thou broughtest up this people in Thy might from among them), and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land . . . saying, Because Jehovah was not able to bring this people into the land which He swore unto them, therefore He hath slain them in the wilderness." He cannot give them up ; He cannot allow sin, and therefore He brings in priestly grace to meet the difficulty. To take away their murmurings, He does not use the rod of Moses, but that of Aaron. The rod of Moses could only judge them for their sin, and thus take away their murmurings by *judgment*. But Aaron's does it by priestly grace.

God makes it very manifest by whom He will act. Aaron's rod is chosen out of the twelve, and the remarkable sign of its blossoming and yielding fruit, shewed that priesthood was connected with life-giving power, as well as with intercession. Both are needed to uphold them, and to raise them when failing. "The last Adam was made a quickening spirit." This is the care and authority by which we are led through the wilderness. God will allow no other, and no other would do. The priesthood of Christ alone can carry us through.

It is the rod of authority too ; for " Christ is a son over His own house." But we see that unbelief cannot avail itself of this. " And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish. Whosoever cometh anything near unto the tabernacle of Jehovah shall die : shall we be consumed with dying ? " (xvii. 12, 13). God had shewn them that there was this grace, and they ought to have trusted in it, especially as they had seen the power in Aaron's remaining in among the congregation, and staying the plague. They had ground for full assurance ; but unbelief prevailed. They were insensible to the value of the priesthood, and their conscience was still under law. For they did not know God, though at the very moment He was acting for them in priestly grace.

The circumstances of chapter xx. put them to the test : the outward power, too, that had brought them out of Egypt was passing away from their minds. Miriam, the expression of it, had died. When apparent power decays, faith is put to the test. Afterwards Moses passed away too. Unbelief does not get the refreshment that faith does. There is no water. They were in a terrible state of mind—wishing they had shared the judgment that had fallen on their brethren ; for there was no confidence in Jehovah. Yet they called themselves the congregation of Jehovah. They had the pride, but not the comfort, of it. Moses and Aaron fell on their faces. There seemed no remedy. But Jehovah appeared. He was the only remedy. And He makes Aaron's rod the means of the application of that remedy. It had already been appointed before the occasion for its exercise occurred. There was real need, and God never denies this. He never says it is

not real need ; but He will have us go to Christ to meet the need. It was not to be Moses's rod, for then it must be judgment. Nor was the rock to be *smitten* again. That water could be had now without smiting the rock was the result of its having been smitten before by the rod of judgment.

So it is with us. Everything comes to us through Christ's *having been* on the cross ; and we do not need the cross again, but the priestly work. It was now, "*Speak* ye unto the rock before their eyes, and it shall give forth his water." Speak the word only, and the water shall flow. All things are ours ; we draw nigh now, not for acceptance, but to have our need supplied. In verses 9, 10, we see that Moses was vexed, and spake unadvisedly. He could not rise to the height of God's grace ; and that was why he could not enter the land. He was in a better mind the first time Israel murmured. Then he said, "Your murmurings are not against *us*, but against Jehovah" (Ex. xvi. 8) ; now he says, "Must *we* fetch you water out of this rock?" setting up Aaron and himself, and using Jehovah's authority to do it. He *smites* the rock too. There would really have been more glory to Moses if he had *spoken* instead of smiting, but he did not see this.

God called Aaron's rod "*the* rod." The other was set aside. They were never under that rod again. It is Christ for us, or nothing. Any other principle must have dealt with them as with Korah. It is only a *word* now, and every blessing flows. To smite the rock again would be the same as saying, because we fail Christ must die again. It is denying grace to say that anything is needed now except intercession. To "sanctify Him" would be to give Him credit for all that He is, as He has revealed Himself. To "sanctify Him in

our hearts" is to attach to Him all that He is. But Moses did not do this. He did not count upon God's grace, which was all that was needed. But does God stop His grace because of this? Does He stop the outflowing of the water to quench their thirst? No, He does not! If Moses failed to sanctify Him before the people, He will only the more sanctify *Himself* before them. He comes in Himself when the one who should act fails. Just as when the disciples, who ought to have been able to cast the evil spirit out of the child, failed in doing so, Jesus, coming down from the mount of transfiguration, said, "Bring him to Me." It was wrong that they could not cast him out, but His own personal interference was gained through it. He gives the people the water they need, in spite of Moses's unbelief and their murmuring. *He* will act according to the rod of His appointing, if *Moses* does not.

Thus Christ never fails in carrying on that which as Priest He has undertaken. Israel should have walked under the power and comfort of that rod. They saw the blossoms and the fruit, and should have counted on it. If there is anything we want, and we doubt of getting it, because we say we do not deserve it, that is putting ourselves under law. It is forgetting that there is "the rod;" and that it is, "speak the word only." God takes away the murmurings by grace. He deals with all our evil, as His children, in grace. Look at Peter's case. Was it because he repented that Jesus prayed for him that his faith should not fail? We know it was not. And was it because Peter wept that the Lord turned and looked upon him? It was afterwards that he wept. When we do wrong, priestly grace acts for us, and obtains for us grace to see, and con-

fess, and put it away. Christ probes the heart of Peter, but does not leave him in the evil. This is the privilege of His children. Grace sends the gospel to the world. Grace gives priesthood to the church. It all originates in God. If I sin, it is not I who go to the Priest, but He goes to God for me. It is not said, If a man *repents*, but it he *sins*, "we have an advocate with the Father." When, through the action of priestly grace, a sense of my sin is given me, I go to God for strength against it. It is He who obtains that for me which brings me back to God. All this is the fruit of His unsolicited grace. It was God who appointed the rod. He is "the God of all grace," in spite of all our evil; and when we see it we are confounded. Carrying us through the wilderness is as much grace as redemption and forgiveness. Even when Israel strove with God, He was "sanctified in them." It is very sad to have "Meribah" (chiding, or strife) written on any part of our history—sad as to us—but He makes it an opportunity for His grace. *They* get just what they want, though Moses is shut out from Canaan. He would make them know the extent of His grace. Another time grace might act in a different way—in chastening, perhaps, if needed; but this taught them what the character and extent of the grace was. Just the same grace that spoke in Isaiah xliii. 22: "Thou hast been weary of me." I have not wearied thee, but "Thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities." What language for God to use! Yet He goes on: "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake" (vs. 24, 25). Nothing can make us more ashamed of our unbelief than this astonishing grace. And all because of Christ. Nothing makes us hate sin like this.

## TWO WARNINGS AND AN EXAMPLE.

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*(Substance of a Lecture on Matthew xxvi.)*

We have here—an example in the case of Jesus, and two warnings in Peter and in Judas.

In Peter we may learn the weakness, and in Judas the dreadful wickedness, of the flesh. We get in Jesus what we should aim after.

In Judas we see the mere professor, in Peter the saint sifted. All three are before us in a time of searching trial, and the result of trial is seen in each.

We ought to remember that now we who are believers have received the Holy Ghost, which Peter had not when he denied the Lord ; yet, having the Holy Ghost, we may still learn a lesson from Peter's flesh. And is not the entire worthlessness of the flesh among the last things we learn ? In Peter we see what the flesh is.

There is no real living upon the hope of the glory, except in the measure as the flesh is mortified and brought under subjection.

I would dwell, first, upon Judas's apostasy. He had all the appearance to men of being as the other disciples ; he had companied with the Lord, he had been one of those sent forth to preach the gospel and work miracles ; but his conscience never was before God. He might have truth in his understanding (and, indeed, the understanding does not generally receive truth so readily where the conscience is affected). Again, Judas could



not have walked three years with Jesus, and seen His grace and not have had his affections moved. But then his conscience had never been brought into exercise before God. So it is with many. If we watch the saint receiving truth, we shall often find him slow of apprehension. There is something to be judged before God ; something which condemns him, and which involves sacrifice. For instance, we see most clearly that the precious blood cleanses from all sin ; but only let us commit sin—and how slowly do we apprehend that blessed truth so as to get the comfort of it ! In the latter case the conscience is at work. In like manner the affections of the unconverted may be moved—a great company of women followed Christ at the crucifixion, bewailing and lamenting Him ! So we read of “ Anon with joy receiving, and by and by (or ‘ anon,’ for it is the same word), when tribulation arises, turning away.”

The natural man wants something to satisfy self before God ; and, until he has done with himself, he will be looking for a certain measure of righteousness before God. He may have been, in connection with this want, instructed in the gospel, and thus the understanding may be clear, and the affections moved ; but, unless the conscience be bare before God, there is no *life*.

Judas loved money—no uncommon lust. And the love of money in a saint now-a-days is as bad, or worse, as being done more in the light.

There was sin in Judas's nature : which sin

shewed itself in the shape of the love of money. The next thing was, Satan suggesting a way of gratifying this lust, for he loved money more than he loved Jesus. And now we find the result of outward nearness to the Lord while the conscience is unaffected :—it was to make Judas reason upon circumstances. He thought, probably, the Lord would deliver Himself, as He had done before ; for, when he found it not so, he threw down the money, and said, “ I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.” He continues in this nearness to Christ, until, thirdly, we read that “ after the sop Satan entered into him.” In the condition of hypocrisy he gets his heart hardened ; and then Satan gets between his conscience and all hope of pardon. Many a natural man would not betray his friend with a kiss, as Judas soon after did. His nearness served to harden him ; and he actually took the sop from the hand of the Lord ! Even natural feeling was silenced. So it is when the unconverted man gets into a similar position. He becomes more vile than ever. His heart is hardened. Hypocrisy, and at length despair, ensues. Such is the flesh and its end. And the flesh cannot be bettered by ordinances, even where Christ Himself is. Such is the flesh—I can hardly say, when left to itself, for man is never left to himself, he is never really independent. He has the will to be so ; therefore he is perfectly a sinner, but if disobedient, he is servant to his lust, “ disobedient and deceived, serving divers lusts

and pleasures," and slave to Satan. A natural man has a conscience and shame. He will not do in the light what he would in the dark. But the outward form of Christianity, where it has not touched the heart, only makes this difference, that his conscience is seared, and he is only more subtly the slave of Satan.

I now turn to the contrast afforded by what is seen in Peter with what is seen in our blessed Lord. In Jesus we see the obedient, the dependent One, expressing His entire dependence by His praying. And there was seen an angel from heaven strengthening Him. He felt the weakness which He had given Himself up to bear ; He was "crucified through weakness." "All my bones," He says, "are out of joint ; my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels." "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death ; tarry ye here and watch with me." So in the earlier temptation, we hear Him answering the devil out of the word of God. Jesus might have sent Satan away by divine power, but this would have been no example to us. So, in this chapter, we see the Lord praying !

If you compare what Peter is doing with what the Lord is doing, you learn the secret of Peter's weakness and the Lord's strength. What was the effect of trial upon the weakness of Peter's flesh ? He had said, "I will go with thee to prison and to death ;" but the Lord has to say to him, "could ye not watch with me one hour ?" They

were sleeping for sorrow. Here was neither prison nor death ! " Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation " (not merely that there be no transgression). Peter entered into temptation ; Jesus never did at all. Yet the trial was far greater to Jesus. Jew and Gentile were against Him, and behind them the power of Satan. " This," said He, " is your hour, and the power of darkness," and again, " my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Where does He take all this ? The Lord does not sleep and seek to forget His sorrow. He goes and prays to the Father. His eye rested not on the circumstances to think of them. He looked to His Father. Not that He did not feel ; for He said, " Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." It was weakness here as man, and that is real strength.

Remember, if we are in entire dependence, the temptation does not meet *us* at all. Jesus does not say, " shall I not go through all these trials ? " but " the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ? " He does not see Pilate or Judas in it ; it was not Satan that had given Him the 'cup, but His Father. So with us ; if in a frame of entire dependence, temptation does not touch us at all ! Trial comes ; but, like Jesus, we can say of it, " the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ? " Every trial becomes a blessed occasion for perfecting obedience, if near God ; if otherwise, a temptation ! Jesus was walking with God. It was not that He did not

feel weakness. "Tarry ye here, and watch with me," shews the weakness of human nature fully felt. As in Psalm xxii. 14, referring to the cross, He says, "I am poured out like water, all my bones are out of joint : my heart is like wax ; it is melted in the midst of my bowels." And yet He shrank not from suffering alone when love to His disciples called for it. "If ye seek me, let these go their way." But being in an agony, He prays the more earnestly ; it drives Him to His Father ; and that before the trial comes. Then what is the next thing ? When the trial actually comes, it is already gone through with God ! He presents Himself before them, saying, "whom seek ye ?" as calmly as if going to work a miracle. Whether before Caiaphas or Pontius Pilate, He makes a good confession ; owns Himself Son of God before the Jews, and King before Pilate !

How comes this difference ? In the first place, with Peter the flesh is sleeping ; he goes to sleep to get rid of the pressure of circumstances. Peter has not gone through the trial with the Father. At the moment when Jesus is going to be led away, the energy of the flesh wakes up, and Peter draws the sword. The flesh has just energy enough to carry us into the danger where it cannot stand—that energy deserts us then. How little real communion is here ! When Christ was praying, Peter was sleeping ; when Christ was submitting as a lamb led to the slaughter, Peter was fighting ; when Christ was confessing in suf-

fering, Peter was denying Him with cursing and swearing. This is just the flesh : sleeping when it ought to be waking ; in energy when it ought to be still ; and then denying the Lord when the time of trial comes. With Christ it was agony with the Father, but perfect peace when the trial came. Oh, if we knew how to go on in all circumstances in communion with the Father, there would be no temptation that would not be an occasion of glorifying Him !

The great thing was, Peter had not learned what the flesh is ; he did not keep in memory the weakness of the flesh ; and thus the condition of dependence was hindered. He seems to be sincere in wishing to own the Lord Jesus and not deny Him. There was more energy of natural and very true affection in Peter than in those who forsook the Lord and fled. He really loved the Lord. Peter fails, not from self-will, not from willingness to sin, but through the weakness of the flesh. In Christ there was no possible moral weakness, because He always walked in the place of weakness in communion with His Father. Jesus goes—through agony itself—with the Father. Peter fails, though but the shadow of temptation comes to him. All Peter's fall began by want of dependence, and by neglecting prayer. We must be watching "unto prayer ;" not merely ready to pray when temptation comes, but walking with God, and so meeting it in the power of previous communion and prayer. Without continual prayer,

and constant sense of entire weakness in self, the more love to Christ, and the more good-will to serve Him are in a saint, the more certainly will he, by that very good-will, be led into the place in which he will dishonour Christ! The other disciples that fled did not so much dishonour the name of their Master as Peter did.

It was thus Peter had to learn the evil of the flesh. Jesus, on the contrary, ever walked in the confession of dependence—always praying. And what use did the Lord make of His knowledge of Satan's purpose to sift Peter? He prayed for him! The more knowledge, dear fellow-believer, the more prayer! "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." As the result of this intercession, Peter learnt the evil of the flesh more deeply than the others, and was able to "strengthen his brethren."

We are incapable of ministering truth to our brethren unless we are conscious of weakness in ourselves. Without the prayer of Jesus, where would Peter have been? He was running nearly like Judas. Oh, what a blessed thing to be kept in entire consciousness of our weakness, instead of running on like Peter into a place where we cannot stand! How good to be afraid to take a single step without the Lord's guidance! The flesh is ever playing us false—it is good for nothing. The effect of keeping it in the Lord's presence is to have done with it—to be cast on the Father. There is no wisdom that will stand us in

any stead but the wisdom that is from above. The Lord knew what the flesh was, and what Paul needed, when he had been caught up into the third heaven. To be taken up into a fourth? No; but a messenger of Satan to buffet: that is, he needed to be brought down. There is the thorn in the flesh given him; there is to be the consciousness that the flesh is worth nothing.

We may notice that there are three ways of learning the power and wretchedness of the flesh: prior to peace, often in desperate struggles (for knowledge and conscience are distinct things); when we have peace before the Lord in prayer and communion, not daring to take a step till He leads us, and then He is glorified in us in grace and obedience, whatever the trial; or in the bitter experience in which Peter learned it, when flesh is not judged in communion with God. This last will be the way, so long as we are judging of things instead of judging ourselves. When we are faithfully judging ourselves and walking with God, we shall enter into no temptation. Trial may come, but there will be full preparation to meet it; not that we may be able to say, "now I am prepared for this or that temptation." We are in no certainty from one moment to another as to what trial may be coming; but we shall have the strength of God with us in it. Therefore our only safe place is watching and prayer—yes, prayer before the assault—prayer that may amount to agony; for so Jesus prayed!

We must expect to have our souls much exercised; often, it may be, when trial is there, casting about as to why this trial is sent. It may be for a fault; it may be for some careless or hard state of soul. It may be, as Paul's, to keep down the flesh; it may be preparatory to some coming



conflict. But in these exercises of soul we must keep before the Lord : then, when the trial comes for which the Father has been training us, there will be perfect peace. The Lord will make you bear in spirit with Him, when exercised, the burden which He will make you bear in strength in the battle. Do not shrink from inward exercise ; settle it with Him. There is no limit to our strength for obedience when our strength is the Lord's.

“ If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” None of our souls can estimate what that cup was for One who had dwelt essentially in the Father's love ; but the most spiritual will most acknowledge it. Then holiness itself was made sin ; no one gleam of light on the soul of Jesus. At the thought of it, when pressed by Satan on His soul, we see Him sweating as it were great drops of blood. He did not think lightly of sin ! The Prince of life was brought into the dust of death : “ All thy billows passed over me.” At the cross Jesus bore what you (who are believers) will never be called to bear. Beware of denying Him. Many do so in detail who in the main acknowledge Him. Our happy privilege is, not to be occupied with the trial as a trial, but to see in every trial an opportunity of obeying God, and to say of each, as Jesus did, “ The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ? ”

“ NOW UNTO HIM THAT IS ABLE TO KEEP YOU FROM FALLING (‘ STUMBLING ’), AND TO PRESENT YOU FAULTLESS BEFORE THE PRESENCE OF HIS GLORY WITH EXCEEDING JOY, TO THE ONLY WISE GOD OUR SAVIOUR, BE GLORY AND MAJESTY, DOMINION AND POWER, BOTH NOW AND EVER ! AMEN.” (*Jude 24, 25.*)