

THE REMEMBRANCER

*A MAGAZINE FOR THE LORD'S PEOPLE
PUBLISHED MONTHLY
("IF THE LORD WILL.")*

"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."

2 PET. i. 12, 13.

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JANUARY,



1912.

PRESSING FORWARD.

Philippians iii.

From every terror shelter'd by the cross,
Free, disentangled from all earthly things ;
Most gladly laying all aside as dross,
That I might soar with unimpeded wings,

Through faith's dominions, where no moth corrupts
The peerless treasure-store laid up for me ;
Where no rude blast of this life interrupts
The soul's communings, blessed Lord, with Thee,

Amid the tumults of this wilderness,
How calm, how happy dost Thou keep my soul ;
But more of Thee I'd know, still closer press,
And hasten forward to my heavenly goal.

2

Oh ! may it be my daily joy to tell,
That *I*, by *nature* such a worthless thing,
Am by *Thy grace*, not only saved from hell,
But made a child, co-heir, a priest, and king,

A worshipper and *witness*—here I fall,
And own my failure, with the church of God :
How weak our testimony, after all .
The grace and patient care on us bestow'd !

Well may we long for the eventful day,
(While mourning o'er our manifested dearth)
When Thou shalt have the universal sway,
And reign in glory o'er a ransomed earth !

“ *A weight of glory !* ”—what a sweet relief,
Amidst the sufferings of this present time ;
Well may we call our light afflictions brief,
As we compare the joys of yonder clime.

The bodies changed—the fashioning Thine own,
According to the working of Thy power ;
And Thou, who wrought redemption's work alone,
Wilt bring us safely to the promised hour.

“ *A weight of glory !* ”—what a scene of bliss
Lies stretched before my soul, in light divine—
But, oh, the sweetest of my joy is this :
The Lord and centre of it all, is *mine !*

As on the threshold of another year I stand,
And joyously look upward through the gloom
Which canopies the earth on every hand,
My fervent spirit cries,—“ LORD JESUS, COME ! ”

3

“THERE REMAINETH THEREFORE A REST TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD.”

What a difference between the rest of God in creation, and the rest that remains! There is no doubt God was glorified as a Creator, and all was very good, but as we know, was fallible and is fallen. It was the responsible creature, not the purpose and full effect of the heart of God. But God's rest that remains will be, when the full love and purpose of His heart has its effect accomplished, and that before Him, and He sees those before Him who, partakers of the divine nature, He knows enter into it. There is fellowship, and His Son, centre and Head of it all, is fully glorified according to His purpose; the One in whom and by whom all His counsels in glory are made good, and He Himself displayed, the Image of the invisible God, the First-born of every creature, and in the nearer place, First-born among many brethren, and Head of the body, the church; the Head of the new thing in which God is perfectly glorified, satisfied, and for ever. And we enter into this rest holy and without blame before Him in love; satisfied, too, that Christ the Son, put to shame for us, is perfectly glorified, and that all the saints are what He would have them, perfectly to His glory. Our hearts satisfied

and knowing that we are perfectly to His glory, by His own grace, to the praise of His glory. It is a perfect rest, where we shall be free to think only of HIM and think together.



PRESSING TOWARD THE MARK.

“One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

I

On, O beloved children,
The evening is at hand,
And desolate and fearful
The solitary land.
Take heart! the rest eternal
Awaits our weary feet;
From strength to strength press onwards,
The end, how passing sweet!

Lo, we can tread rejoicing
The narrow pilgrim road;
We know the voice that calls us,
We know our faithful God.
Come, children, on to glory!
With every face set fast
Towards the golden towers,
Where we shall rest at last.

It was with voice of singing
We left the land of night,

5

To pass in glorious music
Far onward out of sight.
O children, was it sorrow?
Though thousand worlds be lost,
Our eyes have looked on JESUS,
And thus we count the cost.

The praising and the blaming,
The storehouse and the mart,
The mourning and the feasting,
The glory and the art,
The wisdom and the cunning,
Left far amid the gloom;
We may not look behind us,
For we are hast'ning home.

Across the will of nature
Leads on the path of God;
Not where the flesh delighteth
The feet of JESUS trod.
O bliss to leave behind us
The fetters of the slave,
To leave *ourselves* behind us,
The grave-clothes and the grave?

To speed, unburdened pilgrims,
Glad, empty-handed, free;
To cross the trackless desert,
And walk upon the sea;
As strangers among strangers,
No home beneath the sun;
How soon the wanderings ended,
The endless rest begun!

We pass the children playing,
For evening shades fall fast;
We pass the wayside flowers—
God's Paradise at last!

6

If now the path be narrow
And steep and rough and lone,
If crags and tangles cross it,
Through grace, we will press on.

We follow in His footsteps:
What if our feet be torn?
Where His have marked the pathway—
All hail the briar and thorn!
Scarce seen, scarce heard, unreckoned,
Despised, defamed, unknown,
Or heard but by our singing
On, children! ever on!

II.

*“Let us run with patience the race . . .
. . . Looking unto JESUS . . . Con-
sider HIM!” . . .*

Come, children, on and forward!
With us the Saviour goes;
He leads us, and He guards us
Though thousands be our foes:
The sweetness and the glory,
The sunlight of His eyes,
Makes all the desert places
To glow as Paradise.

Lo! through the pathless midnight
The fiery pillar leads,
And onward goes the Shepherd
Before the flock He feeds;
Unquestioning, unfearing,
The lambs may follow on,
In quietness and confidence
Their eyes on HIM alone.

7

Come, children, on and forward !
We journey hand in hand,
Let each one cheer his brother
All through the stranger land ;
And hosts of God's high angels
Beside us walk in white ;
What wonder if our singing
Make music through the night ?

Come, children, on and forward !
Each hour brings nearer HOME !
The pilgrim days speed onward,
And soon the last will come.
All hail ! O golden city !
How near the shining towers !
Fair gleams our Father's mansions :
That radiant home is ours.

On ! dare and suffer all things !
Yet but a stretch of road,
Then wondrous words of welcome,
And then—the Face of God !
The world—how small and empty !
Our eyes have looked on HIM ;
In our hearts the Day-Star's risen
And all below grows dim.

To the bright scenes of heaven
Our JESUS leads His own,
The Mightiest, the Fairest,
CHRIST ever, CHRIST alone.
Led captive by His sweetness,
And dowered with His bliss,
For ever HE is ours,
For ever we are HIS !



“WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT.”

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Heb. xi. 1.)

“We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen : for the things which are seen are *temporal* ; but the things which are not seen are *eternal*.” (2 Cor. iv. 18.)

“As it is written, ‘Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.’ But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit : for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. . . . Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God ; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” (1 Cor. ii. 9-12.)

Let us meditate a little while on what Scripture teaches of heavenly and earthly places and peoples in the days of the coming glory, as well as on the wondrous intercourse between them and some of the joys and beauties *peculiar* to each of them.

To rise and meet the Lord in the air is the hope which is the most immediately upon the heart of the believer. Then the going with Him to the mansions in the Father’s house. As He says, “I will come again, and receive you unto Myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also.” And that house will

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give exercise to all those family affections which the heart so well understands. The Father will be there, and the First-born among many brethren, and the many brethren themselves. And to extend these relationships, and awaken affections to the full, there will be the marriage there, and the now espoused or betrothed church will become the bride of the Lamb. (Rev. xix.)

There are scenes of glory also, and occasions of other joy accompanying this. In those heavens there will be the "Holy Jerusalem," the dwelling of the saints as a royal priestly people, the place of *government* and of *worship*. And there will be the Tree of Life, and the River of Life, and the Light, and the Throne of God and the Lamb. And the saints will be there as harpers (not having cymbals and timbrels of merely *human* skill, fitted to raise the joys of earth (Ps. xcviii.),) but having "harps of God," instruments of *divine* workmanship, fitted to awaken melody worthy of heaven itself. And the enthroned elders will be there, casting their crowns before the throne, and the angels delighting to ascribe all power and authority to the Lamb that was slain.*

* Another once observed, that the moment of highest rapture in heaven is not when the saints *wear* their crowns, but when they *cast them down* before the throne. Rev. iv. 10.

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And throughout all this time there will be nothing to trouble or to hinder. As on earth, in those days, "nothing will hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain," so, in the heavens there will be no entrance "to anything that defileth, &c." (Rev. xxi. 27.) There can be no enemies, for they have been judged; no serpent, for he has been bruised under foot (Rom. xvi. 20). There will be no weariness of heart, no coldness or dullness of soul, no fainting of spirit; but the servants will serve Him. Nothing that savours of darkness or distance will be there, no need of artificial light, "for the glory of God doth lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof:" everlasting joy and worship will be there.

This heaven, too, will be one scene of God's own rest or sabbath; and the saints, in their measure, tasting the same refreshing, will dwell in that rest in bodies fashioned like unto Christ's body of glory (Phil. iii. 21). They shall be like Him, in His glory, seeing Him as He is. They shall "shine forth ['be resplendent'] as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matt. xiii. 43.) In mind, body, and estate, they will be conformed to the Beloved. And there will be the seeing or understanding of all the previous revelation of God, not as through a glass, darkly, but as face to face, knowing

even as we are known. And there will be the white stone; the hidden manna; the morning star; the white robes, wherein to stand before the throne of God; the white garments, wherein to walk with the Lord through the dominions; and the white raiment, wherein to sit on their own thrones. (Rev. ii., iii.) All these will be ours then.

But this leads to a Scripture which is very rich in notices of heavenly joy and glory. I mean Rev. ii., iii. The promises there made will be found, I believe, to unroll before us, in holy and exact order, the things which await the saints of the heavens in those coming days.

EPHESUS.—“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

Those outside shall have the *leaves* of this same tree for healing (Rev. xxii.), but the saints of the heavens shall have more—the very fruit of the tree itself, gathered, as it were, immediately from it, where it grows in the midst of God’s own garden; not the fruit brought to them, but gathered by their own hands* off the very tree. Strong intim-

* Precious as the above is, do we not gather from Scripture something more precious than the thought of “gathering by our own hands,” and that also which brings out the wondrous heights and depths of the love and the riches of the grace of HIM who

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ation of the freshness, the constant freshness, of that life which is theirs. As Jesus says (and what can pass beyond such words?), "Because I live, ye shall live also." Here, in this promise to Ephesus, is the tree of life partaken of immediately by the heavenly saints. For this is their portion, to receive life from the very fountains and roots themselves, and there also to feed and to nourish it.

SMYRNA.—"Be thou faithful unto death,

(GOD, over all, blessed for ever!) took the Servant's place and, refusing to go out free, "*plainly* said, 'I love my Master, my wife, and my children,' (Ex. xxi. 2-6), and became a Servant for ever." When here on earth, He said (Luke xxii. 27), "I am among you as He that serveth." After His resurrection, some of the disciples, led by Peter, having gone back to their fishing, Jesus appeared to them, and, standing on the sea shore, spoke to them. When they were come to land there was already a fire of coals there and fish laid thereon and bread, Jesus then cometh and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise, showing them that He was still among them as He that serveth (John xxi.). Now if we turn to Luke xii. 36, 37, we learn that, after returning from the wedding, He still maintains the character of the Servant (love delighting to serve); and as if it were almost impossible to believe begins emphatically, "*Verily* I say unto you, that He shall *gird HIMSELF*, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and *serve them*." O! blessed Master give us each and all to know more and more what it is to sit at Thy feet and learn of Thee! Ed. "R."

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and I will give thee a ['the'] crown of life.
 . . . He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

This is something beyond what had been said to Ephesus. Life was regarded as *imparted* in its richest form to Ephesus; but here it is looked at as *gained* by Smyrna. For Smyrna was sorely tried. Some were cast into prison, and all of them were in tribulation. They were to suffer many things, but they are promised, on being faithful unto death, a [it is really "the"] crown of life. As James in like manner speaks, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." Here the crown of life is promised to them who endure trial. And this is beautiful in its season. The Lord delights to own the faith of His saints; and if they have shown that they loved not their life in this world unto death, it shall be as though they had gained it in the world to come. Life shall be a crown to them *there*, as the glorious reward of their not having cared for it *here*.

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

We have another source of joy disclosed here. *Life* is possessed, and that abundantly and honourably, as we saw, at Ephesus and Smyrna ; but there is here the promise of another joy—*the sense of the Lord's personal favour and affection* : communion with Him of such kind as is known only by hearts closely knit together in those delights and remembrances with which a stranger could not intermeddle. This is here spoken of to the faithful remnant in Pergamos. They had held His faith in the midst of difficulties, and clung to His name ; and this should be rewarded with that which is ever most precious—tokens of personal affection, waking the delightful sense and assurance that the heart of the Lord is knit to their heart. He will, as it were, kiss the saint “with the kisses of His mouth ;” or, in the midst of it all give that pledge which shall speak of it. It is the *hidden* manna which is here fed upon ; and the stone here received has a name on it, which *none know but he who receives it*. This expresses individual affection. It is not public joy, but delight in the conscious possession of the Lord's love. How blessed a character of joy in the coming days is this ! *Life* possessed in abundance and in honour we have already seen at Ephesus and Smyrna ; but here, at Pergamos, we advance to another

possession—inward joy rather than outward glory as yet, the blessed certainty and consciousness of the Lord's *personal affection*.

THYATIRA.—“He that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of My Father; and I will give him the Morning star.”

Here we reach *public scenes, scenes of power and glory*. This is not merely life, though enjoyed never so blessedly, nor simple personal affection and individual joy; but here is something displayed in honour and strength abroad. Here are power and glory in the first character in which the glories of the saints are destined hereafter to be unfolded; i. e., in their being the companions of the Lord in the day when He comes forth to make His enemies His footstool; or, according to the decree of the second psalm, to break them with a rod of iron, to dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel. This will be His power just as He takes the kingdom. This will be His ridding out all that would have been inconsistent with the kingdom. This will be the girding of the sword upon the thigh, like David, ere the throne be ascended, like Solomon. (Ps. xlv.) It will be the Rider's action, ere the

reign of the thousand years begins. (Rev. xix.) And in that exercise of power, and display of glory, the saints (as we are here instructed and promised) shall be *with Him*. This is blessed in its place, and given to us in due season; for *after the life*, and the *personal, hidden joy*, the *public glories* begin to be ushered forth.

SARDIS.—“They shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.”

This is a stage onward in the scenes of glory. The vengeance has been taken, the sword of Him who sits on the white horse has done its righteous service, the vessels of the potter have been broken, and the kingdom has come. JESUS here promises to His faithful ones that He will confess them before His Father and His angels. This is not redeeming them from judgment, or saving their souls (as we speak), but *publicly owning them before the assembled dignities of the kingdom*. He promises them that they shall walk *with Him* in white, for they are worthy. That hand which now in grace washes their feet, will then take hold of them in holy, happy intimacy, and own full

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companionship with them in the realms of glory. They shall *walk* with Him.

What a character of joy is this! To be *publicly* owned, as before (as we read of Pergamos) privately and personally carressed. In how many ways does the spirit of God trace the coming joy of the saints! The life, the love, the glory, that are reserved for them; the tree of life, and its crown too; the white stone, carrying to the deepest senses of the heart the pledge of love; and then companionship with the King of glory in His walks abroad through His bright and happy dominions. But even more than this the same Spirit has still to tell.

PHILADELPHIA.—“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name.”

We have just seen the heir of the kingdom as the companion of the Lord of the kingdom, abroad in the light of the glory, walking there in white with Him, owned before the Father and before the angels. Here the promise is, that *the faithful one shall have his place in the system of glory*

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itself, that he shall be of that glorious order of kings and priests who shall then form the character of the scene, each of them being a pillar in the temple, and each enrolled as of the city. High and holy dignities! Each of the faithful ones filling his place in the temple and the city, a needed member of that royal priesthood then established in their holy government in the heavens, where the New Jerusalem abides and shines. What honour is put on them here! Owned *abroad* in companionship with the Lord, walking through the rich and wide scene of glory; and also owned *within*, as bearing, each in himself, a part of the glory, every vessel needed to the full expression of the light of the New Jerusalem, and formed as the vital part of the fullness of Him that filleth all in all! A king and a priest, each of them occupying his several rank and station in the temple and the city, the Salem of the true Melchisedec. What a place of dignity! Surely love delights to show what it can do and will do. If we had but hearts to prize these things, chiefly because of their telling us of this love which has thus counselled for us! For what higher, happier thought can we have, even of glory itself, than that it is the manner in which love lets us know what it will do for its elect one. Poor, poor *heart*

that moves so little at these things, while the *mind* stirs the conception of them!

LAODICEA.—“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.”

Here *the highest point of glory is reached*. This is the bright and sunny elevation up to which this passage through the joys and honours of the kingdom has conducted us. Here the faithful one enters into the joy of his Lord, sharing His throne; not only owned by Him abroad, and established with Him within, walking in white with Him, or fixed as a needed and honoured portion of the great system of royal priesthood, but with Him seated in the supreme place.

Exceeding great things have surely passed before us in our meditation on this wondrous Scripture, Rev. ii., iii. The tree and crown of life—the white stone—the morning star—the walking abroad with JESUS through the realms—residence in the temple and city—a place on the throne itself! Surely, if JESUS Himself be prized, then will all this be welcomed by us. And then, as we are further told, the joy of dispensing to the earth the streams of that living river, and the leaves of that living tree, which rises and grows in our heavens (Rev. xxii.); with access, moreover, to the ladder which

lies between the upper and lower regions (Gen. xxviii. 12; John i. 51), in order to do the business of the kingdom, in conscious royal dignity, and full priestly holiness.

The glory also shall be revealed *in us*, each saint shall bear it or be a vessel of it, and each of them shall be a child of light and a child of the day, and each a son of glory, glorified together with Christ, so as to join with Him in shedding light, beyond that of the sun or the moon, upon the creation beneath, that the present earnest expectation of that creation may be satisfied in the then "manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. viii.)

"And they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads." They shall be intimately near Him, speaking face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend, without fear or suspicion, for their title shall be signed and sealed as with His own hand. He will have appropriated them to Himself; and this they shall know, because His name shall be on them. And there, as within all veils, they will walk in their heavenly temple, and gaze on their LORD, and love, and wonder, and adore!!!

There is effulgence bright,
Saviour and Guide, with Thee
We'll walk, and in Thy heavenly light
Whiter our robes shall be.

"OCCUPY TILL I COME."

LUKE xix. 11-27.

Few portions of Scripture contain fuller instruction as to God's present ways than this parable. Its object is disclosed in the opening verse, where we learn that Jesus spoke it "because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." Just afterwards, as He entered Jerusalem, His disciples hailed Him as King, saying, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord." (v. 38.) They expected, as the two disciples on the way to Emmaus declared, that He would at that time "have redeemed Israel" (Luke xxiv. 21), and that the kingdom of God would thus be manifested. We see, indeed, from Luke xvii. 20, 21, that the kingdom had already *come*, but it was not yet with outward show or "observation." It was even then "among" them, but neither then, nor now, as a visible kingdom, recognizable by the world. The real "children of the kingdom" may recognize it in its present hidden form; others in Christendom may acknowledge it as a kingdom in word, but with no true sense of God's sovereignty. The rest of the world can see in it nothing but a religious profession, with no character of a kingdom about it.

While, then, the kingdom of God, in the veiled form in which it now exists, had already *come*, it had not then, nor indeed has yet, *appeared*, or been *manifested*, and it was to check the eager anticipations of the disciples as to its immediate appearance that this parable was spoken. In it, therefore, the Lord details what is to happen before that appearing for which they were looking should take place. He Himself, seen here under the figure of the nobleman, was to go into a far country—in fact, to leave the world for heaven—there to receive the kingdom, and having received it, to return. Meanwhile, those who denied His rights—the Jews especially, but also the world as a whole—not only rejected Him in person while here, but “sent a message after Him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.” (v. 14) Such a message was the stoning of Stephen, and the persistent refusal to hear the testimony of the apostles and of the Holy Ghost after Christ’s departure. This is, and has been, the attitude of the world as a whole, and of the Jews in particular, towards JESUS since He “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;” and this will be their attitude as a nation till He comes again. He will then return, having had the nations given Him as His in-

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heritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession; and those who would not that He should reign over them will be dealt with in judgement.

But between His departure and His return there is, besides the citizens who rejected Him, another class of persons called His servants. These, though left among the citizens, are clearly of a different class. They are in the city to care for their Lord's things entrusted to their charge. While the citizens reject Him as their King, these own His authority; while the citizens have no thought of His return, these occupy till He comes. These servants, then, represent Christendom, those who, in name at least, acknowledge the authority of the rejected Lord. Is it not startling to contrast this picture of the responsibility of the Christian professor with the thought which even true believers commonly cherish as to their place in the world? What is spoken of here is no limited class, specially set apart as ministers or servants. The responsibility pointed out is the common responsibility of Christendom; and surely it is impossible to look at Christendom in the light of the responsibility here disclosed, without a sad sense of its utter failure to execute the charge with which it has been entrusted. Nevertheless, the responsibility of the pro-

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fessing "Christian world" is to occupy for Christ till He returns; and according to this responsibility it will be judged.

By the mass indeed of nominal Christians the charge is simply disregarded. If the pound is not simply thrown away, or the very name of Christian abandoned, this is all that can be said. Hard thoughts of God are entertained; His gifts forgotten or despised; His demands regarded as unreasonable exactions. He is looked upon as "an austere man," taking up what He had not laid down, reaping what He had not sown. And yet man, with his usual inconsistency, while judging God as exacting more than is due, has taken no pains to earn, as it were, anything for Him. He is therefore judged out of his own mouth, and condemned as an unprofitable servant.

Leaving, however, the sad case of mere professors, let us ask to what extent we answer to the view here presented of the believer's responsibility. To how many true Christians is the thought present, "I am here for Christ, in charge of His interest in the scene where He has been rejected"? What would the world appear to one who had this conception of the place he was called upon to occupy? The cross, as the means by which sins were put away, is of course valued by all real believers, and in

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this sense they can and do glory in it. But Paul gloried in it for another reason, and saw in the death of Christ another aspect. To him that death was not only deliverance from sins, but deliverance "from this present evil world." To him that cross was not only the place where sin had been judged, but the means by which "the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." He saw in the death of Christ the death of all, "and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again." What complete separation from the world, what complete devotedness to Christ, do we see here! And yet this is only what becomes one who, in the light of Christ's own words, realizes the place he is responsible to occupy in this world. For must there not be a complete separation of heart and feeling between the servant who is truly occupying for Christ, and the world which has rejected Him? "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

It may be urged indeed that the citizens here do not represent nominal Christians who constitute the world around us. This is true; but if nominal Christians have become just as much "of the world" as the

heathen, if Christ's lordship is just as little practically admitted among them as in the rest of the world, is the call for separation any the less urgent? Is the world any more allowable because it takes the name of Christ, while practically it disowns and rejects Him? If there is one rule of separation in Scripture more stringent than another, it is the separation from those who, while called by Christ's name, are walking in an ungodly fashion. If there is one scene over which judgment is impending with more fearful gloom than over any other, it is over this very Christendom which, on account of the privileges it has enjoyed, and the sad use it has made of them, is held as especially guilty in God's sight. The principle of separation, therefore, applies even with greater force to the believer in the world of Christendom around him at present than to the believer in the midst of Jews and heathen.

What the Lord desires in His people is **WHOLE-HEARTEDNESS FOR HIMSELF**. This does not imply separation from the ordinary occupations of the world. But the question is, whether these occupations entangle the heart and become our objects? or whether, while pursuing these occupations, the heart is still free for Christ? Is getting on in the

world what fills our thoughts? or are we, while providing things honest in the sight of all men, really living among men and before men as those *who are not their own, but bought with a price*—as those who, being *constrained by the love of Christ*, are seeking, however feebly, to live, not unto ourselves, but unto HIM WHO DIED FOR US and rose again? Few, of course, are called upon to *preach* Christ, but all are called upon to *live* Christ. And to live Christ involves taking His place in relationship to the world. “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” (John xvii. 16.) It is easy to put imaginary cases, and to ask where the line is to be drawn. The heart that is in communion with Christ, though it may not know how to lay down principles, will distinguish readily enough what will suit Him, and what would grieve His Spirit. Indeed it is only Christians who are anxious to mix with the world that have any difficulty in the matter. The world quickly enough discerns what is consistent and what is inconsistent in a Christian, and estimates without difficulty the value of the testimony given by a worldly believer. If the heart is really true to Christ it will unconsciously bear witness to Him, and separate from the world which

knows Him not. The spirit and objects of the world cannot have a place in the soul that is filled with Christ. The pursuits and riches of the world will appear worthless to him whose affections are set on things above.

The character of the *true* servant will show itself in various ways. If to serve Christ is really the object, His own word and directions will be the rule of service. Who could suppose the servants of the absent Lord taking counsel with the citizens that had cast Him out, as to how they should care for His goods? Is it any better when believers go to the world, or resort to worldly principles, worldly wisdom, and worldly alliances, in the hope of furthering the cause of Christ? The power is of God, who does not need our wisdom as to the mode of carrying on His own work, but who does demand our obedience as servants. No truth is more needed at the present moment than that of THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE WORD OF GOD. Whatever, under the name of service, is not built on this foundation, is not service such as the Lord owns. There may, of course, be earnestness and truth of heart, which the Lord does own, even where much is added which He could not sanction; but in these cases

His blessing is on what comes from Himself, not on what comes from the flesh and the world.

There is another thing which will mark the true servant. He will be waiting for the coming of his Lord. If the heart is really estranged from the world and set on heavenly things, what expectation will bring such blessedness as the thought of the Lord's return? The idle servant, whose heart was full of hard thoughts about his Lord, could of course entertain no bright hopes in connection with His coming again. To him the thought must necessarily be unwelcome. But what joy would the prospect bring to the heart of the faithful servant who had been living and labouring for Him during His absence! Are our hearts thus waiting and longing? *Are we occupying* FOR CHRIST, during His absence, seeking to act in obedience to His word, waiting in joyful anticipation for His return?



FAITH.—There is always strength in looking to God, but if the mind rests upon the weakness otherwise than to cast it upon God, it becomes unbelief. Difficulties may arise, God may allow many things to come in to prove our weakness, but the simple path of faith is to go on not looking beforehand at what we have to do but reckoning upon the help we shall need and find when the time arrives.

It was no matter to David whether it was the lion, the bear, or this giant of the Phillistines; it was all one to him; for in himself he was as weak in the presence of one as in the other, but he went on quietly doing his duty, taking it for granted that God would be with him. This is FAITH.

PRACTICAL RESULTS FLOWING FROM THE WORD OF GOD WORKING EFFECTUALLY.

Read I THESSALONIANS i.

Scripture speaks of those who derived no profit from the glad tidings which they had heard proclaimed, telling us the reason why, viz., that the word they had heard *was not fixed with faith* (Heb. iv. 2). How different it was with the Thessalonian saints to whom the apostle says, "When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in *you that believe*." (Chap. ii. 13.) Consequently what great power of work is shown forth in this first chapter! It brought persecution, but the word had power in them. The world's hatred of them was a proof that there was testimony to the truth. There was the witness of it constantly brought before others, as well as that there was this inward life in power. There was faith, hope, charity (or "love") (ver. 3), these three great elements of the power of life in exercise. They were laying hold of things unseen: this was faith. They were waiting in hope of what was to come. And there was the activity of love. They were not going on listlessly, but there was divine energy manifested in their every day

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life. When patience was exercised, it was the "patience of hope," and what they had to do was done in faith. How strong a link this was between them and every other Christian! When the living power was seen, they were recognized as God's children: the stamp of God was upon them. We know that divine counsels and thoughts of grace were the spring of it all; but there was that which could be seen.

The word was in the Holy Ghost on hearts, and not in word only, for there was power. There must be unhesitating confidence in the things laid hold of; then there is power. If I say merely, "I suppose these things are true," this is not assurance. But they received the gospel "in much assurance." The result was complete distinctness from the world, which became their enemies. This was not the most pleasant part: they had "much affliction;" but then there was also "joy in the Holy Ghost." To the Corinthians he says, "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."

These Thessalonians were living in another world after the word came to them in power. There was a divine spring in them that nothing could touch. In other places they might be getting on more quietly; but there was power here, and all they did was

connected with God: all was done under God. This is what we have to seek. Then the testimony went forth, they scarcely knew how; but people saw there was this link with God. They did not trouble themselves about what was said of them. "Your faith to Godward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves show of us," &c. That is, the world became a constant witness of what Paul's preaching was. It could be seen from the conduct of those who received it.

If we were all thoroughly faithful, the world would begin to talk about it, and there would be persecution, no doubt. "Let your light so shine before men," &c.; not, let your good works shine, but "your light." "Holding forth the word of life," &c. They saw not only what the Thessalonians were doing, but they took knowledge of the new truth Paul was preaching to them. They "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven," &c.

First, there was a total break with all they were going on in before. Not only did they abandon all the wickedness the heathen were living in, but next they "served the living and true God." They had a new centre of all they did. They "turned to God," the living God. "They turned . . .

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from idols." The characteristic of these was something for and suited to the flesh. Men were looking to that which the flesh likes, and averting what the flesh did not like. There was no connection with God, nor link for the conscience in having to do with idols; but license for lust, and all that is agreeable to the flesh. There are those now who look to their idols to help them TO PLEASURE AND MONEY; there is no moral difference between stocks and stones, and what is of a more refined kind in our day. The Thessalonians turned to God, who *gives perfect present blessedness*. He is a true God for the conscience as well as for the heart. The world at once sees if God is the centre of a person. The heart is not morbid, but thoroughly happy in God—has perfect satisfaction in Him. This is what makes such a difference in life. When a man is happy—happy in that which is eternal, what he cannot be deprived of, and which prevents his desiring other things—this is the spring of all he has to do—THE GLORY OF GOD, whether eating or drinking or whatever he does.

Besides this new spring and centre for the present, there is something else waited for which gives a form and character to this blessing, "waiting for His Son from heaven." A most extraordinary thing to do! Waiting

for God's Son! That is, all our hopes are clean outside of this world. Do not expect anything from earth, but look for something from heaven; and this, God's Son Himself, "even JESUS which delivered us from the wrath to come." This forms a background in all this scene. There is a wrath to come to get out of. Not merely was man to be judged, but the whole scene was to be judged. When Christ returns to this earth, it will be to judge it; and they had nothing to say to the judgment. They were looking for Christ. They knew there was wrath coming, but they had nothing to say to it. Those who were looking for Christ were entirely delivered "from the wrath to come." This gives a very distinct position to the Christian. There is very little depth of doctrine among the Thessalonians; they were only just converted: this letter was written to them directly after. But there is a great deal of *the present living power of faith*; "Your faith groweth exceedingly." (2 Thess. i.) Truth, when a person is walking in the spiritual joy and energy of the Holy Ghost after being newly converted, is very different from people holding dry doctrine merely. Here is the historical fact of wrath passed. At Christ's first coming He had taken up the whole question of wrath; and they had turned to God who had laid all

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their iniquities on another. A divine Person who had taken all upon Himself—put all away entirely. All the question is totally and finally settled: sin is borne once, and He who bore it is raised from the dead. This is what proves my sins are put away. The fact that God “will judge the world by that Man whom He hath ordained,” (Acts xvii. 31), is what gives me the consciousness of being entirely free from it, because it proves that He is risen from the dead.

This sets me in perfect freedom; and it does more, because it links me up with Christ in heaven. I know He is coming. Why? Because I know Him there. This divine Person before my mind—this Christ—this Man who has died—been interested about me—died for me. He is waiting in heaven. It is now “the patience of Christ.” (2 Thess. iii. 5, marg.) He is expecting until His enemies are made His footstool. So we are waiting. Our interests are entirely linked up with His, and so we are waiting for Him, while He is waiting to come.

There are three ways in which Christ's coming is put before our souls in Scripture. First, it is the fulfilment of our hope. We are waiting: our bodies to be raised, and we are to see Him and be like Him. This gives

a strong living link that takes the heart out of present things—one Object before our souls, a living Man (but God's own Son) who is coming again. We are really waiting for something: for what? For this Person who has SO LOVED US. This is connected with two great systems: the government of God, and the Church of God.

Government under Christ is going to be set up. All things are to be put under His feet. This applies to the appearing of the New Testament, the day of the Lord, if you look at it as to wrath—"brightness of His coming." I shall be happy long before that. Why then do I long for His appearing? Because Christ will then have His rights. It will be the setting up of divine power in goodness. This will be the liberty of *glory*. We have the liberty of *grace* now, but not His glory. We wait for that. The great centre of all is Christ taking His rights. He has not these now. He has all His personal glory; but He will come in His own glory and in His Father's and of the holy angels. That is the heavenly part of the government of God, but there is this on earth also. It will be the manifestation of God's power to put everything in order where Christ has been crucified and cast out.

Government also applies to the Church

(saints). Are we not under government? To be sure we are responsible. If we know to do good and do it not, we are guilty. We are to walk even as He walked. He was the display of divine life in man. Not merely is there in Him the perfectness of a man before God; but the perfectness of God before man: therefore His example is far more than the law for us. Another thing is the Holy Ghost given. We are responsible for gifts bestowed by the Holy Ghost (as in the parable of the talents). If I have any service as a Christian, I must do it or I shall be chastened. He may take away what He has given if I do not use it. All this is connected with government. As His sons we are all alike saved; liable to judgment as regards our wrong ways, but in blessedness. The "day of the Lord" will be deliverance for all those waiting for Him. There will be the display of all previously gone through. We come with Him. We always find responsibility connected with the appearing.

Another, third, thing, entirely distinct, is connected with the Church's proper blessedness. He has taken it up and given it that same place as Himself. We are wrapped up with Christ as part of Himself—entirely outside, or rather inside, the question of His kingdom. No question of government as to that, but *the outgoing of the heart of Christ*

—*loved as Himself*. It is connected with this we are caught up to meet Him—His heart identified with mine—not a thought moving His heart that does not touch mine. This promise is given us in John xiv. “I will come and receive you.” There is no thought of anything to do with the world, judgment, or government there, but one single thing, “I will come again and receive you unto Myself.” The secondary and inferior thing is the inheritance we shall have.

Caught up into the Father’s house first, we get “the inheritance as Christ, and with Christ.” “We have borne the image of the earthy,” and “we shall also bear the image of the heavenly ;” no question of degrees of blessedness or rewards, but *all* conformed to His image—He the “Firstborn of many brethren.” The next thing is, we come into the Father’s delight, as Christ is—loved with the same love as He is (the full enjoyment in immediate presence) ; it is given us now in spirit—“loved them as thou hast me.” (John xvii.) We shall enjoy this blessedness along with Christ Himself, and be with Him for ever. “So shall we ever be with the Lord.” (I Thess. iv.)

There is, of course, a great inheritance, but not a word is here about that, “Comfort one another with these words.” There is rest in this prospect. We cannot help

resting there; and when He comes, we shall come with Him. Our joy is to be with Himself. We shall be displayed, but that is not our proper joy. The church's and saints' place (I speak of the Church, including all the members together, and the saints individually for themselves) is associated with Him as His body, and to be with Him when all is displayed. If we have entered into the reality of His love, and our union with Him, it is the great joy and delight of our hearts to think of being *with* HIM.

The consequence of all this is, that when He comes forth the Church, (as "the armies which were in heaven") comes with Him. They must be with Him before they come with Him. How have they got with Him? When He rises up from His present place, we shall go too. He is now hid in God, so are we. He is our life. When He shall appear, we shall also appear with Him in glory. He comes out, the Rider on the white horse, and we come with Him. We have the same portion as Himself. We are still waiting; but He is coming to take things into His hands. At His appearing everything must be in order. He cannot be in a world where all is disorder, and going on in wilfulness. That will be "the day"—the display of His power; but besides and within this we have our own portion.

We love His appearing, but we love Himself better. Therefore we wait for Him to take us to Himself. If our hearts have known what Himself is, we cannot confound His taking us to Himself, with His appearing. We are "members of His body." "Our life is hid," etc. He is to take us up to the Father's house, the fulness of His own blessedness—with Christ; the blessed outshining of His Father's love connects itself with the Church's position. All through there is an identity of blessedness with Christ in life, hope, object, etc. If this hope is let into the heart, there must be a break with the world. I cannot be waiting for God's Son from heaven if I am expecting wrath; and I cannot be waiting for God's Son from heaven if I am linked up with the world. If this world is the scene where my heart is building itself up, if I have an object in this world, Christ will spoil it all.

Suppose God said, "To-night," etc.; would you say, "That is what I want"? If not, there is something between your affections and Christ.

No trial can touch a person who has Christ for his all. He may have lost this or lost that; but if he has Christ he has that which he cannot lose.

“THE OFFENCE OF THE CROSS.”

(AN EXTRACT.)

Rationalism and Ritualism are the two great enemies of the cross. The first epistle to the Corinthians touches on the one; the epistle to the Galatians deals with the other. A gospel which pays court either to man's reason or man's religion will never fail to be popular. Well versed, no doubt, in Greek philosophy, and no careless student of human nature, Paul might have drawn all Corinth after him had he gone there “with excellency of speech or of wisdom” in announcing the testimony of God. But just because the Greeks were wisdom-worshippers, he turned from everything that would pander to their favourite passion, and became a fool among them, a man of one idea, who knew nothing “save Jesus Christ, *and Him crucified.*” The enthronement of Christ on high, and the glories of His return, are inseparable from the Christian's faith; but in Corinth it was *the cross* the apostle preached: the cross in all its marvellous attractiveness for hearts enlightened from on high, in all its intolerable repulsiveness for unregenerate men (1 Cor. i. 17, 18, 23; ii. 1-6).

With the Galatians it was against the *religion* of the flesh he had to contend. He

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testified to them that if they were circumcised Christ should profit them nothing (Gal. v. 2). How was this? Had grace found its limits here, so that if any transgressed in this respect they committed a sin beyond the power of Christ to cleanse? Far from it. Grace has no limits; but there are limits to the sphere in which alone grace can act. Circumcision in itself was nothing; but it was the mark of and key to a position of privilege under covenant utterly inconsistent with grace. "The offence of the cross" was, that it set aside every position of the kind; not that it brought redemption through the death upon the tree, but that because it so brought redemption all were shut up to grace. If Paul had so preached Christ as to pay homage to human nature, and respect and accredit the vantage-ground it claimed by virtue of its religion, persecution would have ceased, for the cross would have lost its offence (Gal. v. 11; vi. 12).

Oh for power to preach the cross of Christ! so to preach that cross that it shall become a reality to all, whether they accept it or despise it; that men who never were conscious of a doubt, because they never really *believed*, shall see what priests and soldiers saw, and the rabble crowd that mocked His agonies, and seeing shall exclaim, "It is impossible that this can be the Son of God!" that some again shall see what John and Mary witnessed, and gazing, shall cry out, with broken hearts, in mingled love and grief, "My God, was this for me?" and turn to live devoted lives for Him who died for them and rose again.

THE DISTINCT CHARACTER OF THE SEVERAL WRITINGS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

"Have an outline of sound words, which [words] thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which [are] in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. i. 13. New Trans.)

In spiritual subjects, there is need of much distinct converse in them to be able to present them primarily and vividly, so as to lead the way to fuller investigation of the divine mind.

The expression of one's own thoughts, and and the acting so as to awaken similar thoughts in others, I find by experience to be two very different things; and the latter to be a rarer and more self-denying attainment than the other. By God's Spirit alone can it be done in power. I shall state, as simply as I can, the thoughts, and leave their development where chiefly they will be found of value in the daily course of Christian reading.

I allude to this—I believe that the Gospels are by no means mere concurrent and coincident testimonies to Christ, and valuable simply as corroborative one of the other. Of course they are so, nor do I despise this positive help to the acknowledgment of the instrument and standard of faith—the written word. But the believer, acknowledging this as his foundation, seeks for the enlargement of heart which the fuller and more complete apprehension of that word may give him. I believe them to be (recognized as true and all bearing wit-

ness to the same great facts, and showing thus their unity) the testimony of the Holy Ghost to distinct characters, in which the One Person they bear record of was revealed, and which He filled. All fulness dwelt in Him, not only of the Godhead bodily as to His person, but the accomplishment of every character in which He could meet the requisition of God from man, and man's necessities, or satisfy the testimony of the Holy Ghost in the word of old, as exhibiting the divine glory. He came in "by the door," so that to Him the porter should open; and thus He became "the door," the only door in or out to all else.

Now the Gospels generally fill up their peculiar place in their witness in this respect; they fill up the place of representing JESUS from His birth to the resurrection, sealed by His ascension into heaven, wherein He became properly the second Adam—the spring from which all the ministration of the living word flowed, and on which it was established—and the testimony of the righteousness of God set forth as His glory to be revealed. That is, all that JESUS was, is that which will be exhibited in glory: we see its substance, its texture, the beautiful order of all its filaments in His unglorified state; yet is He none of these things which He is meant to be, that is—save to faith. The glory exhibits it to the world. The artist skilled in the composition of the structure can see the exquisiteness of its parts—the nicely adapted arrangement of the materials—the perfect wisdom with which it is composed. Its presenting as a whole to

the world will give the whole result externally.

He was the Son of man in all the varied moral truth which that name conveys; He will be the Son of man in glory. He was the Messiah in all the requisitions and gifts which had been appointed, and even recorded by prophets; He will be Messiah in the reign of His glory. He was the Son of God in His person, as conversant in the world; He will appear in His glory as Son. As the potter's work goes in with all with which it will come out, yet would the eye unpractised see nothing of its beauty—none but the potter could see it; so none but One eye, and those taught of Him, can see the exquisite beauty which was in all this fulness of JESUS, or understand the beauty and glory and true majesty, in which He shall be revealed when every eye shall see Him. They “saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him;” yet He was but cast into the fire that He might come forth to their astonishment with all the beauty which God could set upon Him—“His Father's glory and His own”—the glory of administered power, in the glory, the results of grace—“to be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believed.” Nothing can exceed the delight and profit I apprehend, through perception and connection of this glory of what JESUS was, in the veiled perhaps, but heightened and beautiful order of all His character in grace, with the glory in which it shall be revealed in the day of His appearing to His saints and the excellency of His kingdom.

The testimony and ministrations founded on these great truths, as building the church upon them belong to the Epistles and the subsequent contents of the New Testament, and not to the Gospels, whose office it is to state the facts, and develop in conversations the universal truths on which it is founded.

Now, there are three great characters besides His personal biography, in which the Lord is set forth: as the Messiah; as the new Man known in the moral character of the divine nature which God required, the second Adam; and, which is the climax of them all, His personal glory from which all flows as Son of God. First, His character properly Jewish; secondly, that in which it was co-extensive with the term man, and applied itself to this as coming from the hands of God; thirdly, that in which it was paramount to either, His personal association with the Father of Glory as the Son of God, in which the value was attached to the others; and the power of quickening, in which alone they could have unity, was established and verified.

This, I say, (as establishing promises, exhibiting grace, and founding the stability of both, in the person of Him in whom they were fulfilled, with the personal grace and graciousness of His conversation and ministry in the world,) forms the respective subjects, more especially of the four Gospels. We find them exhibited in John xi., xii.; that is, the Saviour exercised or owned in them by His power and the ordering of the divine counsels on His rejection by the Jews.

Chapter xi., exhibits His resurrection power after that rejection "for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." Chapter xii., His kingship over the Jews as the Son of David; and, secondly, His headship over the Gentiles, His standard of conversion and attractive power in death, in that which took place in the desire of the Greeks to see JESUS.

Of the first of these characters which I have mentioned, Messiah, the Lord's connection with the Jews, Matthew is the appointed witness. Of course, the same truths are recognized everywhere. Luke exhibits our Lord in His converting character, and detecting in moral principles the inconsistency of man's estate with the divine character. John eminently presents Him in His person and Sonship. Matthew, as fulfilling the law and the promises, "the minister [as the apostle speaks] of the circumcision for the truth of God:" Luke as a witness of what is in man, and of the openness of the Father's house, and the love of the Father's heart to them that return, to the returning prodigal, "that the Gentiles should glorify God for His mercy." John tells us "that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and was God; and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father full of grace and truth." I believe the notice of this conduces exceedingly to the understanding of the different Gospels.

The evidences of it are some of them obvious, others more from use. We have

one immediate one in the genealogies: traced in Matthew, to the sources of Jewish dispensation, David and Abraham; in Luke, to Adam, the Son of God. Again, if anyone will compare the first two chapters of Matthew and Luke, they will see how completely the one is appropriately Jewish; the other presents us with the Child,* one who "grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

Another thing is remarkable; it will be found on examination, that, except in the positive necessary facts of His birth and death, Luke states circumstances, not according to their chronological order, but according to their moral connection; hence affording a most important link of interpretation. This is so, not merely in unconnected facts, where it is obvious, but even in the temptation in the wilderness. The sermon on the Mount, the character of the parables, of which Matthew xiii., and Luke xv., may be taken as the types, all confirm and illustrate the position I am taking; and this is the real interpretation of the different language used in parallel passages. In one, the Holy Ghost preserved what bore upon the subject of one Gospel; in the other what bore upon that of the other, and gave what the church needed and God pleased: if all had been given, "the world could not have contained the books." (John xxi. 25.) The whole of Luke vii., viii., illustrate in a

*Till, His birth however. there is no allusion to anything but Jewish hopes; the passage which seems so is a mistranslation—"to you and all people" should be "to you and to all the people." (Luke ii. 10.)

string of circumstances the moral application of facts. A comparison of the closing scenes of our Lord's intercourse with His disciples and the Jews, and the prophecies consequent thereupon, further remarkably illustrate the difference.

In Matthew is given the full development of Jewish dispensation, and this so much so, that I could not apply any of the statements in Matthew xxiv., or the like to Gentile circumstances; whereas Luke explicitly opens the door, and brings them into the scene, as may be seen in the close of chapter xxi. Whence also, I believe he introduces "all the trees," the fig-tree being the specific emblem of the Jewish corporate nationality. The close of the Gospel of John is equally distinct, or more evidently so in its character. But I do not feel in this synoptical view, that I need enter into any explanation of the Gospel of John. It is evident upon the face of it, that the Person of our Lord, as paramount to dispensation, though as coming subject to it, is its declaration.

The Gospel of Mark I believe to be the declaration of the personal ministry of our Lord, "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God," and the circumstances of that ministry, to trace from circumstance to circumstance the character of minister in our Lord, His personal character, not in broad facts or prophecies the Messiah-ship, the faithful and true Witness, the Lord from heaven, the Son of God, one with the Father, but He who was all these become the patient considerate Servant, in actual ministry of those with whom He was

conversant. Hence it commences with His ministry or baptism, giving no account of His birth.

When I retrace all the enjoyment which I have had through the Spirit of grace, and of God, in that from which these observations are drawn, the studying our Lord in them, I am doubly conscious how little they can in any sort convey to another the resources of that enjoyment; nor indeed can this be. All I can hope is, that they may be instrumental in leading the minds of others into the same sources or streams, in which the infinitude, the unspeakable infinitude, of divine grace flows from and in HIM in whom they are all concentrated, and concentrated for us, even JESUS the Lord, in Whom "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." It is in communion with Him in the word, that these blessings are found; and communion whose depth, whose height, is never reached, but the fulness is ours, and that in the very peaceful strength in which He has adapted Himself to us. May He open our mouths in the understanding of His praise. It is this, after the establishment of our faith in the great truths of the Epistles, explanatory truths, that leads us back to the Gospels, to enter into and dwell upon the blessedness and fulness of Him in Whom all the truths have their centre and accomplishment.

While my own mind rests specially on the Gospels in this view, as illustrating the person of our Lord, I add a short synoptical view of the books of the whole New Testament, which will, at the same time, strength-

en and confirm the remarks I have made upon the Gospels. It appears to me to be a presenting of Christ, the subject-matter of the faith which is in Christ Jesus, from His incarnation, which associates Him with David, and Abraham, and Adam, and presents Him as the substantiation of the mind of God, of which they are but prefigurements, though real ones, to the time when He shall return again—His second coming—when He shall illustrate all that He is in power. Hence, in the Gospels, we have all that He was traced to Adam, David, Abraham, the Word of God, and shown forth in ministry with the great facts on which the testimony of the Gospel was founded.

In the Acts we have the founding of the church of Christ stating His resurrection and ascension, on which the Jewish and Gentile Church is built, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit—the Acts not of the apostles, but of the apostles Peter and Paul (though recognizing of course the others, particularly those who seemed to be pillars), that is, of the apostles of the circumcision and uncircumcision the ordering of the church by the deacons; the subministration by evangelists, deacons “who have purchased to themselves a good degree and great boldness in Christ Jesus;” the general diffusion of the word of the gospel by all the faithful preaching (Acts viii. 4); and the foundation of the Gentile church, more particularly so called, on the ascended glory of Christ, that it might be “Christ in them the hope of glory” (Col. i. 27), with the ordering by the Spirit of all their labours.

We have, then, in the Epistles, the ordering and care of the church and churches of Christ thus planted, in their various necessities, arising from the weakness of men, and permitted thus to arise that we, "upon whom the ends of the world are come," might have the answer, the rescript of God upon the case. In the Epistle to the Galatians, we have the great basis laid of justification by faith, and its connected doctrines, to the exclusion of all judaizing to such an end. In the Romans we have a whole body of divinity in the way of dispensation, justly coming first, to chapter viii., developing all that was short of "no condemnation"—stating the whole of the christian position in chapter viii., on the basis of thanksgiving for Christ; and from chapter ix. out, tracing the positive dispensations of God ordered beforehand, and resulting therefrom, closing with practice and a résumé of the whole dispensation. In the two Epistles to the Corinthians we have the internal order and management of a church by the Spirit of God in the apostle. It would appear as if there had been no elders, that we might have direct from the apostle the arrangements necessary and pleasing to God for the purposes of the divine order; at least, elders do not at all appear throughout the books, but the directions are immediate to the church. I think this is a remarkable and singular providence; to us at least it is so, and worthy of notice. For surely no goodness and provision for our weakness and folly is singular with God; boundless, multiplied, have they been. There are some

who would despise it, as of little or no profit for the purpose for which it is given. What else is it for? I can conceive nothing more base than, having by perverseness disabled one's self from the use of means which God has provided, to turn round and say the means are deficient, without a symptom of humiliation for the real cause.

The Ephesians and Colossians bear many stamps of identity of purpose, but they are very beautifully distinct. They both follow up the dispensation into its fulness; but the Ephesians views it in the glory, the conferred or predestinated glory of the body—the Son's; the Colossians looks at the fulness of the Head of the body, as constituting that, through which the whole is brought into this order in and by the Head. The Philippians I would give as depicting the affectionate interchange of love in the intercourse between the parental apostle and his beloved and attached churches. Thus he unfolds his hopes, for in this way does the doctrine come out, and leads them in the same healthful train, opening the blessed truths to them, and so of his estate and thoughts of theirs.

The two to the Thessalonians are the building up of the church in the great doctrine of the Lord's second coming, as an immediate and protracted expectation and hope, and the result of this special apprehension of it in the very healthful state of the church. These epistles afford very full doctrine on the subject, and guard against the only prejudices which the vanity or wit of man could form out of it or abuse. I

need hardly say, that Timothy and Titus are the ordering of the church, as to its government and management by those set over it in the Lord (justly coming last with others first), the character of those appointed, and the use and service of such a ministry specially in guarding against evil, with all the absolute or external arrangements of the ministry and its dependencies, and the manner of using it. Its importance will be fully noticed by the service it is applied to, and its abuse at the present day. Its uniformity of character is given by adding the Epistle to Titus, and variety of use according to the circumstances in which it is placed. In Philemon we have the evidence of that minuteness of care, apostolic care, which recognizes the ordering of an individual's concerns, and what would now be so multifariously despised—the church in a house.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is an instruction to the church, not an apostolic address to a church as such, of the way in which the types of the Old Testament were fulfilled in Christ, and how He was the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, answering to Moses and Aaron, but after another order; and how, consequently in this also (as with the saints of old) it was a dispensation of faith, and we must therefore “go forth to *Him* without the camp,” as well as be strangers in the world, while Christ is on high. Thus we see how the Church, being built and ordered by a wise master builder under JESUS, closed by this important testimony to the Hebrews, carrying forth the principle of faith to them and bringing in all the

value of their ministrations to us in JESUS as that principle of faith.

We have, however, some further developments of the mind of God before we close, but by other hands, that these pillars might all prop up the beauteous arc of God's canopy of heaven over the Church, the shield of order and beauty. The Epistle of James is the order of righteousness, the test of church order as a moral question, the statement of practical wisdom and righteousness, with a "Show me." This is the Church's part. "The Lord knoweth them that are His" the other side of the seal, not the sovereign claim and authority, but the order and recognition of His power and character. "Let everyone that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." This latter part James the just administers in its principles; and the principle of its application "show me," first in purity, secondly in goodness or mercy; while the sovereignty of the Lord is fully recognized and declared. It is then church righteousness and order, I mean in its principles. This fully explains the reasoning of the Epistle, and the comparison with the reasoning of the Apostle Paul: one giving the root; the other the manifestation. If taken not as acts of faith, the works James refers to were bad works—one the slaying a man's son, the other betraying a person's country.

Peter's Epistles, or to speak more properly, the instruction of the Holy Ghost by Him, gives us further light. They show, though there is but one body in glory, the continuing care in ministration of the gra-

cious and unchanging God over the Jews, "the strangers scattered ('sojourners of the dispersion') among the Gentiles, where they thought our Lord spoke of going and losing Himself—for such are the persons addressed in the first Epistle. His great thesis is the resurrection, and leading the believing Jews in this to their right place in faith, and showing the appearing again of JESUS to be the great time of bringing in the promises by it; that the remnant were the chosen people who had not stumbled at the stumbling-stone, but had, according to the word of the Lord testifying of His own resurrection in Psalm xxxiv., "tasted that the Lord is gracious;" identifying Jesus and Jehovah the stone of stumbling, but of preservation—the Lord of Hosts Himself but for a sanctuary. The whole of the Epistle is addressed to the Jews, or rather to the two houses of Israel or their remnant, and pleads the resurrection and patience. The order and dispensation and the parenthetical character of this are very distinctly drawn in from verses 10-13 inclusive, of chapter i. The second Epistle, though savouring of that character of ministry in all its motives and argumenta, is general in its address "to them that have obtained like precious faith with us," more particularly however embracing Israel in the Apostle's mind, as we may see in chapter iii. I. It declares the judgment on apostasy, stating the adequacy of supply or the means of preservation in the memorial of the written word, founded on the faith of the seen and coming Jesus, and the instruments

of that apostasy, false prophets and teachers, the character of it, and the remedy in that great subject which he had presented before them—the coming of the Lord, which is here presented to the apostates in the character of judgment, “the day of the Lord.” And he exhorts them to diligence, that they may be found of Him coming, to be in that day without spot and blameless.

In the deeply interesting Epistle of John we have the intrinsic evidences of the power of Christianity as flowing from God; its essential and internal abiding character; our strength in it, as giving fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ; and hence in the knowledge of His love, or rather of love, by that which has brought us into this fellowship, security against the haughty assumption of anti-Christian seduction, in the assurance which flows from that fellowship, and is conscious that it is already in that which is falsely assumed to be presented, or which we may be charged with being without; while this, characteristically presented in its necessary fruits, guards against deception on the one side and the other. This is effected (first on declaring its source in chap. i.) by the two personal evidences, He laid down His life, “by His spirit dwelling in us;” and external as a guard against the assumption of others and the denial of our own righteousness, by keeping His commandments, and loving brethren. The unity of the testimony to Christ’s glory, in the Spirit, the water, and the blood, is there stated; and the internal and external witness distinguished; one,

the blessing of the believer: the other, the condemnation of the world; closing with the general contrast "we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness," [or, 'in the wicked one.'] "We know that the Son of God is come, and He hath given us an understanding:" the next point is, "to know Him that is true;" and the next, "we are in Him that is true, even His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." He is the "true God and eternal life." Amen. All else is but "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

How blessed is the testimony that in JESUS we are in the true God, and—which is our interest, and blessing, and everlasting comfort in it—eternal life in Him! In JESUS we have eternal life, and in association with Him are thus capacitated for understanding and enjoying all that is in Him the Lord and true God. In the second and third Epistles we have the individual, living, and faithful care of the Spirit in the apostle against any falling into the seduction of losing the true doctrine of Christ: whoever fails here, that is, abides not here, has not God; and direction for the uncompromising boldness in rejection of such as partake of his evil deeds; the directions being, in the one, not to receive seducers, or we are partakers of them; in the other, to receive faithful witnesses of truth, because in them we are partakers in the truth. Both rest on this, "walking in the truth;" they are the details of Christianity, such as develop themselves in service.

Jude returns to the apostasy, but in a more generic character, that is in its princ-

iple, tracing it as developed from Cain ; its address, therefore is universal. Further, all ungodliness is shown to be apostasy in character ; while the force of it through false teachers is shown in 2 Peter ii. The Epistle, though short, is full of depth and beauty of moral power, though severe as needing it in its character. Nevertheless nothing can be more full of gracious beauty than the directions for our portion, till the mercy comes which holiness is taught to expect ; for as the Lord's first coming is grace to sinners, so His second is glory to saints, and destruction to all those who have heard and not known His name. The Lord hasten it in its day, and us to it !

How fitly the Revelation fills this up and closes this book, I need hardly say, The apostasy has been shown previously to have come in, the tares sown among the wheat. This closed the care of apostolic ministry, and fitted in, as it were, to the great final apostasy. The Lord is therefore shown at once judging in the midst of the churches : and in His own immortality of glory and holiness on His Father's throne, in the intermediate time, governing till He comes forth in His power, and ordering all things for His church ; "making all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose ;" ending with the perfection of the blissful state, the heavenly Jerusalem come down, and the joy of the whole earth thus blessed in communion with it, sorrow gone from before the presence of God, where it never can abide, when He comes forth in

power; and in power He does then come forth, and no evil remains before Him. Meanwhile the church is comforted with seeing the Lord cognizant of all the troubles and circumstances through which she is to pass, and is ready to join in the cry of the apostle with which he closes the Book of God's testimony, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." The first part of the book gives the care of the Lord; the second, the character of the apostasy, and of course how it resulted in judgment. Thus the dealing begins with judgment at the House of God, and ends with judgment on the ungodly and sinners—two distinct classes; and then blessing from Him from whom the book, the testimony came.

I do feel, in writing thus rapidly (I trust for the profit of the church), the extreme solemnity of the truths, thus by the mercy of our God brought before us, that we might enjoy the blessings which are their result. To HIM whose it is be all the glory and praise; and may He keep us, adding of His grace in our ways, "that an abundant entrance may be ministered to us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."



ERRATUM.—On 5th line of article commencing page 30 (February "Remembrancer"), for "*fixed*" read "*mixed*."

WAITING FOR THE GLORY

I'm waiting for the glory :
Are your thoughts with me too ?
It is the old, old story,
But all most sweetly true !

I'm waiting for the glory :
JESUS Himself is there ;
He's gone on high before me,
Calls me with Him to share.

JESUS, the Lord, did love us,
Will love us, to the end ;
And lifts our hearts above us,
To love that will not end !

For the day is nearing, nearing,
When we shall see His face ;
Each step the way endearing,
Which leads to that blest place.

For JESUS comes with power,
To change these bodies vile,
Or raise them, in that hour,
From where they rest awhile :

Then shall His soul's deep travail
Find its love-fraught reward ;
Nor joy, nor promise shall fail,
With Him, like Him, their Lord !

But who's this all-glorious Lord,
To Whom each knee doth bow ?
The Sorrower, once abhorred !
The Lord in His glory now !

Art waiting for the glory ?
Thy thoughts go with me, too !
Yes ! 'tis the old, old story :
But all most sweetly true !

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THE HEART TRULY WON, AND CONFIDENCE FULLY RESTORED.

Ephesians v. 17-21.

One thought was particularly on my mind in reading this portion—the astonishing grace implied in such an exhortation as this: “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This is not a mere *duty*. I need not say we cannot deny the duty part; but it is evident that the Holy Ghost supposes that the saints will feel and understand it is rather the directing of the heart than the exacting something from it. There is great difference between these two things; so legal are our hearts naturally, that even with the knowledge of God we have, we are apt to clothe the words of our God to us under the form of a law to which we have to bend, instead of seeing that such being the goodly portion God has given us, this thanksgiving always for all things is naturally the expression of the heart taught of the Holy Ghost. It is indeed pure unbelief, wherever the heart is not thus able. The hindrance lies here: we can readily acknowledge that if God were giving us nothing but what we could see and own as the fruit of His love—Christ, and the Holy Ghost to make Christ known—

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that then we can thank Him for all things, for *Himself*—He has created us for Himself.

The exhortation in Colossians is, “Whatever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.” But here the Holy Ghost goes much further. “Giving thanks always, for all things, unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is not giving thanks in all things that we do. It is more. No matter what God does, or permits to be done, I am entitled by faith to receive it as a blessing to my soul, and for this therefore give thanks, having full confidence in His love, knowing that,

“ His love is as great as His power,
And knows neither measure nor end ! ”

Whatever the trial may be, disappointment, scorn, detraction, the thousand influences that come from an evil world : it is not that I am to thank for these, but for *the blessing that God, my Father, designs for me through them*. We are called of God to be outside the camp with JESUS. We find things there to try our faith, things that test us, whether we have come out for one another, or because of certain truths received and enjoyed in common; or whether it is that we may be where JESUS is, sharing HIS re-

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proach, having fellowship with HIS sufferings. And if we see that *God* has *given* us this portion (see Phil. i. 29 ; I Pet. iv. 13, 14), we can say that *God Himself could not have given us anything better* ; His own heart is the source and measure of our blessing, and “ His riches in glory in Christ Jesus,” (Phil. iv. 19) that which He has before Him to draw upon when supplying our need. He has not called us out to a partial blessing, but to a complete one. He calls us to enjoy what He is to us in JESUS—to learn His love more and more. He is leading on His saints in this : that through which we learn it, involves the crushing of nature, the denial of self, and if there is one single thing, however small, in which we should like to have a little reserve, it is the very thing we have to pass through and yield. For God desires we should know our full blessing. If we are looking after the well-watered plains, as Lot did, we may be suffered to get them, but there we shall have sorrow, as Lot had. And we see cases like his now. Indeed for one Abram we see fifty Lots.

But when the heart is made up to cleave to JESUS, let what will come ; where Christ is known as the portion now for us, for walk as well as for salvation, God would have us to know not only that He has

written this, but there is not one word that He will not make good to the heart that desires it. God has sent the Holy Ghost to be in us, and what can there be beyond the power of the Holy Ghost? The flesh? Whatever the strength of the flesh may be, the Holy Ghost is stronger. There is no such thing as that we *must* fail. It is not so in the mind of God. There are not certain things in which we may not expect to get the victory. Therefore the Lord grant that in looking at Christ we may always have good courage that this word may be before our hearts continually, by night and by day, whenever we are able to think at all. God would have our hearts to enter into this goodly portion, that there is not one thing He allows about us, but what He turns into a stream of blessing, if we only look at it in the presence of JESUS.

What fills my heart with gladness?

'Tis Thine abounding grace!

Where can I look in sadness,

But, JESUS, on Thy face?

My all is Thy providing,—

Thy love can ne'er grow cold;

In Thee, my Refuge, hiding,

No good wilt Thou withhold.

THE SPIRIT, NOT OF FEAR, BUT OF POWER.

2 Timothy i. 3—8.

Such exhortations are never given unless there are circumstances to require it. They are intended to meet some tendency in the flesh, that we may guard against it in the Spirit. It is well to remember how the Lord deals with us, just as we are; how, in all His ways, He takes into account the circumstances we are in, and does not, like philosophy, take us into other circumstances.

With regard to our cares and trials, Christ does not take us out of them. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world." While He leaves us in the world, He leaves us liable to all that is incident to man; but, in the new nature, teaches us to lean on God.

The thought with us often is, that, (because we are Christians) we are to get away from trials; or else, if in them, we are not to feel them. This is not God's thought concerning us. The theoretical Christian may be placid and calm; he has fine books and nice sayings; but, when he has something from God to ruffle his placidity, you will find he is a Christian more conscious of the difficulties there are in the world, and of

the difficulty of getting over such. The nearer a man walks with God, through grace, the more tender he becomes as to the faults of others; the longer he lives as a saint, the more conscious of the faithfulness and tenderness of God, and of what it has been applied to in himself.

See the life of the Lord Jesus: take Gethsemane, what do we find? Never a cloud over His soul, uniform placidity. You never see Him off His centre. He is always Himself. But take the Psalms, and do we find nothing *within* to break that placidity? The Psalms bring out what was passing within. In the Gospels, He is presented to man, as the testimony of the power of God, with Him, in these very things that would have vexed man. He walked with God about them; and so we find Him in perfect peace, saying with calmness, "Whom seek ye?"—"I am He." How peaceful! How commanding! (for peace in the midst of difficulties does command.) When by Himself, in an agony, He sweat as it were great drops of blood; it was not placidity because He had not heart-feeling within. He felt the full trial in spirit; but God was always with Him in the circumstances, and, therefore, He was uniformly calm before men.

We are not to expect never to be exercised, or troubled, or cast down as though

we were without feeling. "They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." He thoroughly felt it all. The iron entered into His soul. "Reproach," He says, "hath broken my heart." But there is this difference between Christ in suffering and affliction, and ourselves; with Him, there was never an instant elapsed between the trial and communion with God. This is not the case with us. We have first to find out that we are weak, and cannot help ourselves; then we turn and look to God. Where was Paul when he said, "All men forsook me?" His confidence in God was not shaken; but looking around him, by the time he got to the end of his ministry, his heart was broken because of the unfaithfulness. He saw the flood of evil coming in (Chaps. iii., and iv.), and the danger of Timothy's being left alone, looking at the evil, and feeling his own weakness; and so (lest Timothy should get into a spirit of fear), he says, "Stir up the gift of God that is in thee . . . for God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou, therefore, ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." If we have got the spirit of fear,

this is not of God. for God has given us the spirit of power. He has met the whole power of the enemy in the weakness of man, in Christ; and Christ is now set down on the right hand of the majesty on high. "Be thou a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God." What! a partaker of afflictions? Yes. Of deliverance from the sense of them? No; a partaker of afflictions that may be felt as a man, but "according to the power of God!" This is not in not feeling the pressure of sorrow and weakness. Paul had a "thorn in the flesh," (2 Cor. xii.); and did he not feel it think you? Aye, he felt it daily; and as a "messenger of Satan to buffet him" withal. And what did he say? "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities [in those things in which I am sensibly weak], that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

The power of God, coming in on our side, does not lessen the feeling to us; but we "cast all our care upon Him, for He careth for us." Not that at the very moment we refer it to God we shall get an answer. Daniel had to wait three full weeks for an answer from God; but from the first day that he set his heart to understand and to chasten himself before his God, his words were heard. (Dan. x.) With us the first

thing often is to think about the thing and begin to work in our own minds, before we go to God. There was none of this in Christ. "At that time, Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father," &c. (Matt. xi.) We weary ourselves in the greatness of our way.

"Be careful for nothing." (Phil. iv. 6.) That is easily said. But what! not be careful about the state of the church, or about the pressure of a family? &c. "Be careful for nothing." Whatever produces a care in us, produces God's care for us; therefore "Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." So, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus." Not your hearts keep the peace of God; but the peace that God Himself is in, His peace, the unmoved stability of all God's thoughts, keep your hearts. Further, when not careful, the mind set free, and the peace of God keeping the heart, God sets the soul thinking on happy things. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest—just—pure—lovely—of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things which ye have both learned and received, and

heard, and seen in me, do : and the God of peace shall be with you." God is there the companion of the soul ; not merely " the peace of God," but " the God of peace."

When the soul is cast upon God, the Lord is with the soul in the trial, and the mind kept perfectly calm. The Spirit of love—the Spirit of Christ is there ; if thinking of myself, this is the spirit of selfishness.



OBEDIENCE—THE SAINT'S LIBERTY.

Hebrews xiii. 17-25.

The spirit of obedience is the secret of all godliness. The spring of all evil from the beginning has been independence of will. Obedience is the only rightful state of the creature, or God would cease to be supreme—would cease to be God. Wherever there is independence, *there* is always sin.

This rule, if always remembered, would wonderfully help us in guiding our conduct.

There is no case whatever in which we ought to do our own will ; for then we have not the capacity either of judging rightly about our conduct, or of bringing it before God.

I may be called upon to act independently of the highest authority in the world, but it ought never to be on the principle that I am doing my own will, which is the principle of

eternal death. The liberty of the saint is not license to do his own will.

An entire self-renunciation (and this goes very far when we know the subtlety of the heart) is the only means of walking with the full blessing that belongs to our happy position of service to God, our brethren and mankind.

If anything could have taken away the liberty of the Lord Jesus, it would have been the hindering Him in being always obedient to the will of God. All that moves in the sphere of man's will is sin. Christianity pronounces the assertion of its exercise to be the principle of sin. We are sanctified unto obedience (1 Pet. i. 7); *the essence of sanctification is the having no will of our own*. If I were as wise (so to speak) as Lucifer, and it administered to my own will, all my wisdom would become folly. True slavery, is the being enslaved by our own will; and true liberty consists in our having our own wills entirely set aside. When we are doing our own wills, *self* is the centre.

The Lord Jesus "took upon himself the form of a servant" and "being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii. 7, 8.) When man became a sinner, he ceased to be a servant;

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though he is, in sin and rebellion, the slave of a mightier rebel than himself. When we are sanctified we are brought into the place of servants, as well as that of sons. The spirit of sonship just manifested itself in JESUS, in doing the Father's will. Satan sought to make His sonship at variance with unqualified obedience to God: but the Lord Jesus would never do anything, from the beginning to the end of His life, but His Father's will.

In Heb. xiii. the spirit of obedience is enforced towards those who rule in the church, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves." (v. 17.) It is for our profit in everything, to seek after this spirit. "They watch for your souls," says the apostle, "as they that must give account." Those whom the Lord puts into service He makes responsible to Himself. This is the real secret of all true service. It should not be the principle of 'right' that guides, either those who rule, or those who obey. They are servants, and this is their responsibility. Woe unto them if they do not guide, direct, rebuke, etc.; if they do not do it, "the Lord" will require it of them. On the other hand, those counselled become directly responsible to "the Lord" for obedience.

The great guardian principle of all con-

duct in the church of God is *personal* responsibility to "the Lord."

No guidance of another can ever come in between an individual's conscience and God. In Popery this individual responsibility to God is taken away. Those who are spoken of in this chapter, as having the rule in the church, had to "give account" *of their own conduct*, and not of souls which were committed to them. There is no such thing as giving account of other people's souls: "every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." (Rom. xiv.) Individual responsibility always secures the maintenance of God's authority. If those who watched for their souls had been faithful in their service, they would not have to give account "with grief," so far as they were concerned; but still it might be very "unprofitable" for the others if they acted disobediently.

Wherever the principle of obedience is not in our hearts, all is wrong, there is nothing but sin. The principle which actuates us in our conduct should never be, "I must do what I think right:" but, "I ought to obey God." (Acts v. 29.)

The apostle then says, "Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly," (ver. 18.) *It is always the snare of those who are*

occupied with things of God continually not to have a "good conscience." No person is so liable to a fall, as one who is continually administering the truth of God, *if he be not careful to maintain a "good conscience."* The continually talking about truth, and the being occupied about other people, has a tendency to harden the conscience. The apostle does not say "pray for us, for we are labouring hard," and the like; but that which gives him confidence in asking their prayers is, that he has a "good conscience." Where there is not diligence in seeking to maintain a "good conscience," Satan comes in and destroys confidence between the soul and God, or we get into false confidence. Where there is the sense of the presence of God, there is the spirit of lowly obedience. The moment that a person is very active in service, or has much knowledge and is put forward in any way in the church, there is the danger of not having a "good conscience."

It is blessed to see the way in which, in verses 20, 21, the apostle returns after all his exercise and trial of spirit, to the thought of God's being the "God of peace." He was taken from them, and was in bondage and trial himself; he enters moreover into all the troubles of these saints, and is extremely anxious evidently about them;

and yet he is able to turn quietly to God, as "the God of peace."

We are called to peace. (1 Cor. vii. 15.) Paul closes his second epistle to the Thessalonians with, "Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always by all means." There is nothing that the soul of the believer is more brought to feel, than that he has "need of patience" (Heb. x. 36); but if he is hindered by anything from finding God to be "the God of peace," if sorrow and trial hinder this, there is the will of the flesh at work. There cannot be the quiet doing of God's will, if the mind be troubled and fluttered about a thousand things. It is completely our privilege to walk and to be settled, in peace; to have no uneasiness with God, but to be quietly seeking His will. It is impossible to have holy clearness of mind, unless God be known as "the God of peace." When everything was removed out of God's sight but Christ, God was "the God of peace." Suppose then that I find out, that I am an utterly worthless sinner, but see the Lord Jesus standing in the presence of God, I have perfect peace. This sense of peace becomes quite distracted when we are looking at the ten thousand difficulties by the way; for, when the charge and care of anything rests on our minds, God ceases *practically* to be "the God of peace."

There are three steps :

1st. The knowledge that Christ has "made peace through the blood of the cross." (Col. i. 20.) This gives us "peace with God." (Rom. v. 1.)

2nd. As regards all our cares and troubles, the promise is, that, if we cast them on God, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Phil. iv. 6, 7.) God burdens Himself about everything for us, yet He is never disturbed or troubled ; and it is said, that His peace shall "keep our hearts and minds." If Jesus walked on the troubled sea, He was just as much at peace as ever ; He was far above the waves and billows.

3rd. There is a further step, namely, He who is "the God of peace" being with us, and working in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure. (See vers. 20, 21. The holy power of God is here described as keeping the soul in those things which are well pleasing to Him, through Jesus Christ.

There was war—war with Satan, and in our own consciences. That met its crisis on the cross of the Lord Jesus. The moment He was raised from the dead, God was made known fully as "the God of peace." He could not leave His Son in the grave ; the whole power of the enemy was exer-

cised to its fullest extent ; and God brought into the place of peace the Lord Jesus, and us also who believe on Him, and became nothing less than "the God of peace."

He is "the God of peace," both as regards our sins, and as regards our circumstances. *But it is only in His presence that there is settled peace.* The moment we get into human thoughts and reasonings about circumstances, we get troubled. Not only has peace been made for us by the atonement, but it rests upon the power of Him who raised up Jesus again from the dead ; and therefore we know Him as "the God of peace."

The blessing of the saint does not depend upon the old covenant to which man was a party, and which might therefore fail ; but upon that God who, through all the trouble and sea and the power of Satan, "brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus" and thus secured "eternal redemption." (Heb. ix. 12 ; xiii. 20.)

All that God Himself had pronounced as to judgment against sin, and all the wicked power of Satan, rested on JESUS on the cross ; and God Himself has raised Him from the dead. Here then we have full comfort and confidence of soul. "Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," argues faith,

(see Rom. viii. 31-39), for, when all our sins had been laid upon Jesus, God stepped in, in mighty power, and "brought again from the dead that Great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." The blood was as much the proof and witness of the love of God to the sinner as it was of the justice and majesty of God against sin. This covenant is founded on the truth and holiness of the eternal God having been fully met and answered in the cross of the Lord Jesus. His precious blood has met every claim of God. If God be not "the God of peace," He must be asserting the insufficiency of the blood of His dear Son. And this we know is impossible. God rests in it as a sweet savour.

Then as to the effect of all this on the life of the saint, *the knowledge of it produces fellowship with God and delight in doing His will.* He "works in us," as it is said here, "that which is well-pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ."

The only thing that ought to make any hesitation in the saint's mind about departing to be with Christ is the doing God's will here. We may suppose such an one thinking of the joy of being with Christ, and then being arrested by the desire of doing God's will here, (see Phil. i. 20-25.) That assumes confidence in God, as "the God of

peace," and confidence in His sustaining power whilst here. If the soul is labouring in the turmoil of its own mind, it cannot have the blessing of knowing God as "the God of peace." The flesh is so easily aroused, that there is often the need of the word of exhortation, "I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation," (ver 22.)

The spirit of obedience is the only spirit of holiness. The Lord give us grace to walk in His ways.

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"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold! TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE, AND TO HEARKEN THAN THE FAT OF RAMS!! For *rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.*" (1 Sam. xv. 22, 23.)

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"Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and *doeth* them, I will show you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built a house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.

But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation, built a house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great." (Luke vi. 46-49.)

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." (John xiii. 17.)

81

THE "MAN OF SORROWS."

"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. viii. 9.)

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 ;

82

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.

83

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,

* * * *

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,

84

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 proved
What in thy heart is found ;
By grace divine unmoved,
By self in fetters bound !

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

85

In death, obedience yielding
To God His Father's will,
Love still its power is wielding
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.

“HE THAT DESCENDED.”

EPHES. IV. 10.

“My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” (Is. lv. 8, 9.)

Such is one great oracle of God. “The word of God is living.” It is the word of Him who “knows what is in man.” “With God there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning ;” but among the great variety of the human family, savage or civilized, bond or free, religious or philosophical (the Jew and the Greek of the apostle), man is found in contrariety to God both in his thoughts and in his ways.

Let us take the thoughts and ways of man in reference to the very end of his being. His end and object is himself. He thinks and acts from himself and for himself. But is this God’s object in creating man ; or, indeed, any creature ? Is it not that God may be glorified—that the Creator who is blessed forever, may be seen—not that the creature should rob Him of His glory ? This end, indeed, has not, in the case of man, been secured by creation, but it is secured by redemption. He who is redeemed to God acknowledges the glory of God as Creator, just as he who is justified freely by grace

acknowledges the integrity, sanctity and righteousness of the law. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou has created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." (Rev. iv.).

The contrariety between God and man was conspicuously shown when the Lord Jesus, God manifest in the flesh, walked and conversed with men on this earth. "He was a sign spoken against, that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed" (Luke ii. 34, 35); and as He furnished the occasion for bringing out the thoughts of the hearts of men, so He took the opportunity of setting over against them the thoughts of God. There was an inveterate thought in the hearts even of His own disciples, with respect to greatness. At one time they asked Him plainly, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (Matt. xviii. 1). At another time, "They disputed among themselves who should be the greatest." (Mark ix. 34). On a third occasion, two of them sought of JESUS the honoured place of sitting on His right hand and on His left, in glory. (Mark x. 35-45). These several instances furnish the occasion of bringing out the thoughts of God with respect to greatness. The "little child" is set in the midst of the disciples, as the embodiment of the thoughts

of God with respect to greatness. The doctrine is taught that "the chiefest among them shall be servant of all." The doctrine is confirmed by the example: "For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

The leading thought of the day is the elevation of man. Whatever may be the fact, the thought is not that of a few leading minds controlling all others, but such an elevation of the common mind as shall control all things. Is this the thought of God? Is this the way of God for the real exaltation of man? Is this the way of God for man to attain happiness? On the contrary, it is the subversion of the way of God; it is antagonism to the thought of God in the Gospel of His grace; it is the prelude to the last grand anti-christian confederacy, resulting in visible discomfiture, "by the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." (Rev. xix.).

As JESUS Himself, in His ministry, was repeatedly contradicting the thought of greatness which His disciples entertained, so the doctrine of the humiliation of the Son of God is presented to us both as the law and example of real greatness. Self-exaltation is the thought of man as to greatness, and the way in which he seeks happiness. "He

that descended," is the thought of God. It is through Him "that descended" that the alone way is found to real greatness, even to the highest exaltation to which it is possible for God to elevate a moral and intelligent creature.

"He that descended." "I am the Lord: that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another." This is not less true with respect to the glory due to Him, as "He that descended," than it is with respect to the glory due to Him as the alone Object of worship. This glory is singular—it belongs to ONE alone. The archangel cannot trench on this prerogative glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, for He is as essentially separated from Him that created him as man himself. The archangel could not stoop to take on him "the form of a servant," because the condition of a servant was the condition of his being. Such a stooping was only in the power of ONE "in the form of God." This was His glory—"He that descended." On this point JESUS largely insists in His teaching; a rich sample of which we find in John vi.

The Lord graciously seeks, from the miracle of the loaves, to find a way to their hearts for the reception of that bread which endureth unto eternal life, of which the manna which sustained their fathers in the wilderness, was a beautiful, yet but faint,

shadow: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you *the true bread from heaven*. For the bread of God is *He which cometh down from heaven*, and giveth life unto the world." Again, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out, *for I came down from heaven*, not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me." The Jews then murmured at Him, because He said: "I am the bread which *came down* from heaven." They stumbled at the doctrine of the first stage in His humiliation: "He that descended." They thought they knew as much of His birth and bringing up as they did of Moses. They could not see the beauty of His humiliation: "There was no beauty in Him that they should desire Him." The doctrine is dismissed by the thought: "Is not this JESUS, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? But JESUS leads them on in His doctrine to another stage in His humiliation; its crowning glory; reiterating the doctrine that "He descended," but connecting it with eating His flesh and drinking His blood, which led not only the Jews to strive, but to the turning back of some of His own followers." I am

the living bread *which came down from heaven*; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever, and the bread that I will give is *my flesh*, which I will give for the life of the world." But in teaching this other step in His descent, He connects it with His ascent. "When Jesus knew in himself, that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?" "He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." (Eph. iv. 10).

It was at the moment Judas went out and the cross was vividly before Him, that Jesus said: "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him." He was about to enter on a glory counselled and settled in eternity, but manifested in a moment of time; a glory only discernible by the persons of the Godhead till it was actually accomplished, and then only seen by those taught of the Holy Ghost, the Glorifier of JESUS. This glory JESUS cannot give to another, neither dare any other take it to himself. It is only regarded as a disgrace rather than a glory, till the Spirit reveals its truth to the soul. But it is a glory which of necessity implies His own proper underived personal glory. Who but

the Son of the living God, One essentially divine, could say, "and the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world? Apart from the divinity of His person, it was only reasonable for the Jews to say: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Again, who but One truly divine could say: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." It was the glory of JESUS (having life in Himself, and able to impart it to others) to descend under the power of death, that He might rescue others from its power, and show that it was impossible for Him to be holden of death. Nor is this all. He laid down His life in obedience to the will of His Father, and there was in the death of JESUS that singular and distinctive glory, that independence and obedience met together in it. "I lay it down of myself." "This commandment have I received of my Father." "Angels, that excel in strength, do the commandments of the Lord, hearkening unto the voice of his word." This indeed is their glory. But angels are not independent beings: they are upheld as creatures, and

obedience is necessary to their condition. But obedience is that into which the Son humbled Himself. It was His glory to do so, and God was glorified in Him. It is the glory of His humiliation which reached its utmost limit in the cross, which brings forth in such prominence the name of JESUS the *only* name under heaven given among men whereby there is salvation," and at the same time the "name which is above every name" in heaven, the honour of which all must eventually acknowledge, if not in salvation, assuredly in judgment. It is as the only Saviour, that JESUS says: "For mine own sake, even for mine own sake will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another." (Is. xlviii. 11). The Holy Ghost glorifies JESUS in testifying to His sufferings and the glories which followed them. The true doctrine of the cross is inseparably connected with the essential glory of the Person of the Son; but it is very possible to maintain a true confession of His Person, apart from the true doctrine of the cross. It is to this doctrine the Spirit testifies, and invests the familiar fact of the crucifixion of Christ with such a meaning and interest, that it may be justly said of it, "what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into man's heart to conceive, God

has revealed to us by His Spirit." The acknowledgment of the fact of the cross apart from the doctrine of the cross, is as truly a subversion of the gospel, as the denial of the true divinity of the Lord Jesus. He will not receive the acknowledgment of the glory of His Person, save to exercise judgment, where the glory of His humiliation is not acknowledged. The preaching of the cross not only sets forth the only way by which a sinner may find remission of sins, peace with God and access to God, but is so essentially connected with the glory of JESUS, that contempt of it is treated as trampling under foot the Son of God. The doctrine of the cross is the special test of our standing before God—to the religious, after the Jewish caste, it is a "stumbling block;" to the philosophical, after the Grecian school, it is "foolishness;" "but to the called, it is the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i.).

"The heavens declare the glory of God;" they set forth to our senses the power of God and the wisdom of God; and were it not for sin, which has alienated the mind from God, they would carry universally the demonstration of God's eternal power and Godhead. But man, as a sinner, needs another kind of demonstration, even "the demonstration of the Spirit," who shows to

an awakened conscience, "the power of God and the wisdom of God" in the humiliation of JESUS. Until there be such demonstration of the Spirit, however clearly it may be supposed that God is read in His works, He is not known as the Creator, "*blessed for ever.*"

The difference between the apostle's determination to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and *Him crucified*, and the popular creed that Christ *was* crucified, is an essential difference. In the last, credit is given to a well-attested historical fact, but the apostle's expression comprises the wide range of the thoughts and ways of God. And when these thoughts and ways are brought out in their great results, it is the triumph of "Him that descended;" it is the victory of the Lamb slain. "Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood."

When once the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, as "He that descended," is perceived, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that there must be a new thought, a new way, and a new order of greatness, corresponding with the glory of the humiliation of JESUS. The human order of greatness is an ascending order. It is the development of the power of mind over matter, so that men themselves are startled at the greatness of their achievements. Every step in advance

only makes way for further progress. Men think, speak, and act, as though impossibility was to be blotted out of their vocabulary; but their thoughts and ways are in direct antagonism to the thoughts and ways of God. They are "labouring in the very fire, and wearying themselves for very vanity: for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Hab. ii. 13, 14). It is not the glory of man, but the glory of God, which is to prevail. In vain are men contending against the purpose and counsel of God; for "the Lord of hosts hath purposed to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth." (Is. xxiii. 9). It is a fearful thing to be found striving against God. We may have marvelled at the stout-heartedness of Pharoah in refusing to humble himself before God. But when men refuse to submit to the righteousness of God, by going about to establish their own righteousness, it is only another form of stout-heartedness and of insubjection to God. And if God has declared. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is *from above and cometh down* from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (Jas. i. 17), and men are seeking good and perfection by exalting themselves, the issue

of such a conflict between God and man, must be as terrible as it is certain. It is to such an issue that all things are now rapidly tending.

There is a wisdom, "earthly" in its origin, and a wisdom "that descendeth from above" (Jas. iii.). The earthly wisdom "has sought out many inventions" (Eccles. vii. 29), but nothing "perfect" results from it. It does not satisfy the craving of man, as a creature; it cannot pacify the conscience of man as a sinner. It is "the good and perfect gift, that cometh down from above," which alone effects these ends. It is JESUS Himself, the unspeakable gift of God, comprehending in Himself, and in that which He hath wrought, that which satisfies the soul, gives peace to the conscience, and access with confidence into the presence of God. It is He who testified, "I am from above, ye are from beneath" (John viii. 23), who alone could say, "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John vi. 35). This is the divine order—the perfect One *coming from above*—this is the alone order of exaltation. According to this order, "he that exalteth himself shall be abased" (Lu. xiv. 11). He that exalteth himself is traversing the divine order; he is spurning the good and perfect gift; he

stands before God as a sinner, under the increased condemnation of "sitting in the seat of the scornful" (Ps. i. 1). He is still attempting to attain blessedness by the *ascending* line, when the coming down of the Son from heaven, and His further humiliation in the death of the cross, declares that it can only be attained in the *descending* line. *The peril of the age is that men are turning upside down the gospel of Christ in order to exalt themselves.*

One feature of corruption noticed by the apostle Jude is that in those things which men know naturally as brute beasts, they corrupt themselves. Such a natural knowledge, even of the leading truths of the gospel, is found among professing Christians. There is a natural knowledge of the mercy of God, a natural knowledge of Christ dying for sinners, which men only use to corrupt themselves, by assuming on the very ground of it, a more proud and independent standing before God than those that are without such knowledge. Such is the fearful aspect before our eyes—man exalting himself by means of the very light which should humble him and lead him to magnify the Lord. Surely "the light is become darkness, and how great is that darkness!"

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands

of the living God" (Heb. x. 31). Infidelity and superstition are spreading, and God's hand lifted up in judgment, and yet men "will not see" (Is. xxvi. 11). This is, indeed, alarming. But this is not all; the most alarming feature is that of man advancing himself into independence of God, by means of the very light which sets forth "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." This, it is to be feared, is the true character of vaunted Christian civilization.

There is nothing so dark in the picture of "the perilous days," portrayed by the apostle Paul, as to alarm our fears. He does not present us with desolating wars, appalling famine, or ravishing pestilence, but with selfishness, gain and pleasure, under the form of godliness. If this peril is not perceived, if even real Christians have thought that, by mingling with the world, they could elevate and improve it, and by the attempt have lost their own savour ("wherewithal shall it be salted?")—Christians themselves are not the only sufferers. "A woe is come on *the world*," because of the offences of Christians (Matt. xviii. 7). Christians have failed to glory only in the cross of Christ (Gal. vi. 14); and thus, instead of "holding forth the word of life in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation" (Phil. ii. 15), they have helped on

the delusion of the world. The Christian of this favoured land, although a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, may well weep over the actual condition of his country. He sees before him the antagonism of selfishness, capital arrayed against labour, and labour against capital, and the efforts of the wisest powerless to adjust these conflicting claims. He sees gain and godliness (*cf.* 1 Tim. vi. 5) almost become convertible terms; and national legislation, and even religion itself, made to bow to the low principle of human convenience. But it belongs not to the Christian to speculate on the decline of nations, except so far as to show the church the magnitude of its sin. "Judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Pet. iv. 17). Such is the divine order. Let Christians then judge from their own selves what is right (1 Cor. xi. 13). And, if they have helped on human selfishness by failing to exhibit the glory of the humiliation of JESUS, let them at once stand forth in the confession of His name before men, not only for their 'own souls' blessing, but for the good of others. We cannot correct selfishness by counter selfishness, but by testifying to the unselfish love of JESUS, taking up the cross and following Him (Matt. xvi. 24).

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. ii. 5).

HOW DO YOU LOOK UPON THINGS: AND FROM WHAT STAND-POINT?

In the Epistle to the Ephesians the stand-point is ascension. God has "raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ." You are brought entirely into another world, and your privilege is to be so completely there in Spirit as always to look down.

Do you look down upon things as Christ looks on them? Do you look down upon things at the present time in the Church in the mind of Christ? Have you His thoughts about them? How do you think about your domestic circumstances? How does He think about them? He sees exactly. Does He find in you what would be an expression of your being a member of that body of which He is the Head? I believe the very question so put would realize to one's soul, and show one the blessedness of what it is to be so with Him, and bring in the light on every step, that we should judge and refuse everything that is practically inconsistent with Him there. He has His thoughts. The word contains them. The Spirit of God wrote what these Ephesians should be. If they had kept it in their hearts they would never have forgotten their first love. He had a claim to everything from them. He who had left heaven and given up everything to bring them into that vital relationship and fellowship, with Himself, as members of His body; so that what the Head thought, the feet should do.

THE FAILURE OF THE SONS OF AARON.

Leviticus x.

One of the blessed places in which we are set, as children of God, is that of being made "priests" unto Him. But whilst we are apt, and justly so, to consider this a position of highest privilege, we too often forget, practically, that it is one of constant service. Set in blessed nearness unto God, yet (and by that very nearness) the priests in Israel became mere servants of all the people. JESUS, though "made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (a priest and king), is now a "Minister of the sanctuary," after the pattern of the priestly service of Aaron; and we, "priests and kings unto God," &c., are set in the place of service, as the "sons of Aaron."*

We trace all through the Scriptures the record of the failure of man. In every circumstance wherein he has been set, man has failed. And yet (as we have often heard) all this failure is seen but in the end to redound to the glory of God—to the praise of His

* We find in this part of Scripture the high priest and his sons, or "Aaron and his sons," continually presented to us as a type of the church. Sometimes, however, they are very distinctly separated, as, for instance, in their consecration. (Lev. viii.) Aaron is anointed without blood having been sprinkled upon him—they with blood. This shows very definitely the perfectness of Christ in His own Person to receive the fulness of the Holy Ghost: we can only have it by virtue of His perfectness and blood-shedding for us. I look at Aaron as a type of Christ—"Aaron and his sons," of the whole church.

grace! How full of blessing and goodness is this! It meets the pride of our hearts, and their natural tendency (that which is in every one of us) to self-dependence. Adam, Noah, Israel in every form, teaches this lesson: the giving of the law—priesthood—prophets—kings—the whole history of the wilderness and of the land, the same. Failure is ever the character of the ways of man; and the chapter before us presents it in most striking as well as touching circumstances.

The “sons of Aaron” were set in the place of grace, and there in the place of grace they failed.

The law had in itself no aspect of grace—this of course. Let me take law in its highest sense, as that which even concerns angels—unfallen, perfect beings, what does it teach? What God requires—what ought to be: “they do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word.” And thus also the ten words were the distinct demand, on the part of God, of righteousness from man, of what man ought to be towards Him and before Him—“Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself.” Nay, more; the law supposed sin—was adapted to those who had a tendency to sin; but the foundation and centre of all our blessings—what God is towards man in love and grace—was never brought out at all. Thus law (properly so) utterly fails in bringing us to God.

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But there were accompaniments to the law—sacrifices, which had the character of grace, because they were on behalf of transgressors. And here, properly speaking, priesthood found its place. (See Heb. v.) The priest was “ordained for men to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin.” That is grace—God not requiring goodness, but providing for sinners.

Here then we find the failure of the “sons of Aaron” in this practical development of grace, and man’s services in grace.

But first let us look a little at another part of priestly service—I mean worship. All worship, properly such, is while there is sacrifice for sin, yet, strictly speaking, not founded upon the presentation of the “sin-offering.” As redeemed, we cannot draw nigh to worship without it; it is the door of entrance, indeed, but not the proper character of our worship. This assumes the “sweet savour” of the “burnt-offering”—the coming up to God not only in the value of the blood, but in our acceptance in JESUS, as having all the positive savour of what He was and did unto God—blessed thought!

There is this great principle in all worship—death must come in between us and God. See the case of Cain and Abel. Cain brought of the fruit of the ground upon which the curse rested—that which every natural man brings to God. His worship cost more of the “sweat of his brow,” the judicial toil of the curse consequent on sin, than that of Abel, but there was no faith in it, no recognition of the ground of his own

standing before God, or of God's judgment, mercy and patience. The offering of Cain (as of every natural man) is the witness of the most perfect insensibility of heart as to what he was before God. All that we can offer of our natural hearts is "the sacrifice of fools." (Ecc. v. 1.) The contrary was the case with Abel: his "more excellent sacrifice" consisted in this—it confessed that death must come in between the soul and God. And so it ever must—there can be no worship without it: in all circumstances death must come in between us and God.

Still there are two very distinct characters in death: as the wages of sin, and for God. While it is the witness of man's sin; yet, because of the death of the Lord Jesus, death is now one of our servants: "All things are ours, whether . . . life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are ours." (I Cor. iii. 21.) Death is for us now as it was against us before, because Christ has tasted death: "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 14, 15.) It was "by the grace of God" Christ tasted death. In His death we see the grace of God, though it was on account of sin. All that was against us is gone. The Lord Jesus Christ turns everything He touches into blessing. "Out of the eater cometh forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness." (Ju. xiv. 14.) If I am

able to contemplate death in its mightiest power—the death of JESUS, I see in it the power of grace.

And here it is that I find the proper character of the savour of worship, in the “burnt-offering.” The blessedness of the offering of JESUS was in the perfectness of His will, but the entireness of self-sacrifice to God—“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.” (John X. 17, 18.) He was not only the spotless Victim, but one able to give Himself to God. “Being in the form of God, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Phil ii. 6-8.) Again, “Lo I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do thy will, O God; yea, thy law is within My heart.” (Ps. xl. 7, 8; Heb. x. 7.) So we get not only the grace of God in the gift of JESUS, but that JESUS, “through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God.” (Heb. ix. 14.)

Will, which in us is sin, becomes in the offering up of Himself, obedience. In every shape was perfectness. Perfect in all His ways—in all His life—in self-consecration to God; but this perfect thing itself He offered.

up to God in perfect obedience—"Not My will, but Thine, be done." There was the perfection of glorifying God in it. Just as the purpose of self-will in the first Adam, who sought himself, brought in death, so that of the will to glorify God in the second, the Lord Jesus Christ, through death brought in life to us. The divine glory was gone, so far as man was concerned. He had insulted the character and majesty of God, had listened to the lie of Satan against God (for he denied that truth and goodness were in God) he had taken Satan for his friend: but the Lord Jesus Christ, in thus offering up Himself, glorified God in all. And so when Judas had gone out, He says, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. (John xiii. 31). God found rest there.

God was glorified. Was He true in saying that the "wages of sin is death?" Satan had said "ye shall not surely die:" see JESUS. Was he true in His love for man? This Satan had questioned. JESUS died for him. Did Satan tempt man, and say, "then shall ye be as gods?" God gave His Son, and conformity to His image. God was vindicated thus against man, though for man.

When the Lord Jesus Christ "through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God," God found His rest there. It is no matter where I find my rest, if I am not seeking rest where God has found His. God has found it in JESUS (He can look for or to nothing else, in one sense); and we can rest there also. Here we have the ground of worship, and worship itself: it

assumes the proper savour of all that Christ was and did for us, and thus has the character of the "burnt-offering."

In another character—as the "sin-offering"—sin was laid upon Him, "He was made sin for us." (2 Cor. v. 21). This was not "an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto Jehovah," but was burnt without the camp as an unclean thing. (Lev. iv.)

When the offerings themselves are brought out in Leviticus, the "burnt-offering," "meat-offering," and "peace-offering" are mentioned first, and then the "sin-offering;" but in application, when the individual worshipper is treated of, he presented his "sin-offering" first, then his "burnt-offering," &c., because he could not worship whilst sin was against him, but had to approach by the efficacy of that which took it away.

Though God meets us in our sins by the blood of Christ, yet when we speak of worship we speak of Him in His own savour before God. We come in all the savour of Christ's sacrifice. Sin is gone out of the place, and we stand in the value, the intrinsic value, of Christ.

The burnt-offering was a "sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto Jehovah." (Lev. i. 9). The more it was searched by the fire, the more its sweetness came out before God. So was it in Christ. The coming down of the fire of the holiness of God, trying and searching all the inwards of everything in Him, only brought out a "sweet savour" unto God. This, too, is our acceptance; it is in this value that we ascend up to God; and being there, we have communion of

worship and fellowship before Him. In the sacrifices God had His food, the priest his share, and the rest ate of them also. All our feasting upon Christ is in this value.

It was from the "altar of burnt-offering" that coals were taken to kindle the incense that went up before God. "Strange fire" not arising from this source was inadmissible. All our worship, our singing a hymn together, for instance, must have this character—the savour of Christ; God accepts it as such, though full of failure. Everything must be "salted with fire;" if it does not go up through fire, it cannot stand; apart from it there is only condemnation and judgment—the character of the sin of Nadab and Abihu. The fire tries every man's work; and, if judgment has already done its work on JESUS, we have nothing but the savour of JESUS to be in before God.

This is the real value of our place before the Lord. In this is our joy. It is the place of grace.

But then it was here that the "sons of Aaron" failed.

"And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before Jehovah, which He commanded them not. (Ver. I.) There was the separation of service from the power of its acceptance, and thus failure in the place of grace; failure, not on God's part, but on man's.

Man has failed under law, that might be expected; but, when brought near to God in grace, there, also, has he failed.

The sin of Nadab and Abihu (in this the awful type of the professing church) was sin against the very grace of God, want of respect in the sense of their position, of reverence of God. Our place, though that of perfectness of joy, is ever that of reverence. (Heb. xii. 28, 29.)

But how is the sin met? As must needs be, in judgment—judgment coming forth from the very place of grace: “there went out fire from Jehovah, and devoured them, and they died before Jehovah. (Ver. 2.) It is a terrible character the Lord puts on here! The “strange fire” met in result by holiness, the true fire of God’s judgment—“they died before Jehovah.” Awful thought! He was found to be a God of judgment, in the very place of blessing and of grace. And thus must it ever be with that which takes falsely a place “before Jehovah,” for after all, though it is the place of grace, it is still one of judgment; “I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me.” We have ever to judge ourselves, that we be not judged of God. (1 Cor. xi. 31.)

We read, “But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.” (1 Pet. i. 15-17.) The Lord always judges according to the place into which we are brought, according to the position in which we stand. And so do we of others, in some sort. For instance, I judge of those

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who are within my house differently from what I do of those without; I say, not to a stranger, but to one brought into my house, "you must have clean habits to live here." God is dealing with us on the ground of grace, yet of holiness; for holiness is with us as much a part of grace as any other blessing. "Be ye holy, for I am holy" is the expression of intimacy, and comes not merely in the way of command. Grace must make us holy, "partakers of His holiness." (See Heb. xii.) It is not God requiring man's holiness, but making us partakers of His. What could we wish more? Love does it, and we are made partakers of that which separates God from all that is inconsistent with Himself—holiness, not mere innocence. Innocence is the ignorance of good and evil: you would not say that God was innocent, but holy. He makes us "partakers of His holiness." It is "*His holiness*"—the knowledge of evil as He knows it, and ability to rise above it. The holiness is as much a part of the grace, as the love that does it.

They died. "And Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that Jehovah spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified, and Aaron held His peace." (Ver. 3.) There was silence as to the place of intercession. "There is a sin unto death:" the church has to be silent. (I John v. 16.) God has taken the cause into His own hands, He has acted in His holy place, and all that man can do is to hold his peace.

But this is not all. The Lord takes occa-

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sion by this failure, to bring out what is our position "before him" day by day, and to show forth yet other failure.

"And Jehovah spake unto Aaron"—to Aaron, because about that which became the priests, those who go in "before Jehovah."* We have instructions from Christ, as the Priest, as well as the Lawgiver. There are things which refer to the comeliness of the saint, and not to mere righteousness—things which are known by the Spirit to be comely to us as priests. We read in Hebrews v., that those are priests who are "called of God, as was Aaron," and that "Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." So, though in an altogether inferior sense, we are priests as born of God, we become priests. That which is here brought before us is not merely precept; it is priestly instruction as to the manner of our approach to God; and that which understands and estimates it is the new nature in which we are born of God.

"And Jehovah spake unto Aaron, saying Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die;

*This is of common concern to all saints, for as "sons of Aaron" all have an equality; though in another sense, when looked at as Levites, there may be distinction, and whilst all are equally servants—all near, one has to carry the ark, another the boards, &c. And it is in this our highest and proper character we are here spoken of. The Lord gives the instructions to Aaron, the high priest, as to how the "sons of Aaron" should draw nigh.

it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations; and that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which Jehovah has spoken unto them by the hand of Moses." (Vv. 8-11.) "Wine" and "strong drink" — all that excites the flesh; that does not belong to the cleanness of spiritual apprehension and judgment becoming those who go into the sanctuary, must be put away.

I believe we are often hindered going into God's presence by this "drinking of wine." The moment there is that which acts on the flesh and excites nature, the going to find pleasure and joy in things harmless even in themselves, no matter what (nature may take up anything) there is "wine" and "strong drink," that which would put us out of the place of spiritual discernment: and it is inadmissible.

There are ten thousand things which may thus excite, eloquence for instance. If excited by eloquence, this would hinder the enjoyment of truth: the same truth, were it presented without it, and thus that which is of Christ, would pall on the taste. Eloquence is not in itself a wrong thing, and yet Paul says, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and

my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. (I Cor. ii. 1-5). There is a vast deal connected with the things of God that is not like this; a vast deal which after all is "wine" and "strong drink," and it unfits for the sanctuary. Whatever has not the real, calm, spiritual joy fit for the presence of God is so. Look at it—we see it connected with all the forms of false worship. Again, thought as to the beauty and elegance of the edifice where we meet for worship, &c., has the same character; it acts on nature, and whatever does this cannot be fit for the presence of God—cannot be carried into His Sanctuary. So of all things around which hinder the power of spiritual discernment, though not in themselves wrong. We might be in a lovely place and not think of it, then it is not "strong drink."

The object of this instruction is not merely as to our acting rightly. The condition of mind which gives the capacity of judging "between unclean and clean," depends on the absence of these things—the capacity of learning, through fellowship with God in the sanctuary, to "put difference between holy and unholy." So the apostle prays for the saint at Colosse, that they might be "filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, [in order] that they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing," &c. So, too, for the Philippians that they might have such

a knowledge of the will of God, "that ye may approve things that are excellent [try the things that differ]; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ:"—without a single stumble all the way along until the coming of the Lord. He supposes that there might be such intimacy of acquaintance with the mind of God, that there should not.

We can never give the least justification to sin and say, "the flesh is in us, and we could not help it;" for "there hath no temptation taken us but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape that we may be able to bear it." The theory of the Christian is this—the flesh should never be discovered but in the presence of God, where it is always in the presence of grace and of holiness too.

This is the true power of our walk. It is not any particular measure of attainment; it is simply a man walking according to his communion, who never gets into the weakness of the flesh, for the flesh is known only before God, and not before Satan. When I learn the flesh thus, I drink into the opposite, of it, the grace of God, and so go forth in the strength of what is in God, and not in the shame and weakness of what is in myself.

Thus it is, that, in estrangement from all that acts upon the flesh, and near God, I learn in the sanctuary His mind, and am able to "put difference between holy and

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unholy, unclean and clean." Then also I can teach others and say, That is the mind of the Lord about such and such a thing; as it is said here, "teach the children of Israel all the statutes which Jehovah hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses." But have we not often found an incapacity to judge according to the mind of God, where there was no failure in precept—a spiritual incompetency? Alas! my friends, we have been content to "drink wine, and strong drink," and thus our spiritual faculties have become darkened.

There is another thing to notice. The "sons of Aaron" were to eat of the "meat-offering" and the "peace-offering?" (V. 12-15.) See the fellowship here. The inward parts were fed upon by God (of the "peace-offering," it was "the food of the offering made by fire unto Jehovah"). Aaron and his sons had their part, and so also the particular worshipper. I cannot then separate myself from God herein, because I cannot separate myself from God's delight in Christ, nor from "the whole family of God who have all their portion." There is no proper worship that does not take in God, Christ, and the whole family of Aaron—the church: it is a common feast, if true. So in Ephesians iii., "that ye may be able to comprehend *with all saints* what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." How can I "comprehend with all saints" if I leave out any? I cannot separate from them without dimin-

ishing my own sense of the fulness of the love of Christ and of God. If I leave out one, he is Christ's joy. And here we fail.

Again. There is, in a certain sense, a priestly way in which we have to bear the sins and sorrows of our brethren; not, of course, as to atonement (that was Christ's alone; the blood carried inside was Christ's alone), but still there is a true sense in which we have to bear them. And in this, I believe, above everything else, we fail. It is not only that Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire: Eleazar and Ithamar were not like them, and yet their failure is recorded. "And Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin-offering, and behold it was burnt. and he was angry with Eleazer and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron, which were left alive, saying, Wherefore have ye not eaten of the sin-offering in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and God has given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before Jehovah? Behold, the blood of it was not brought in within the holy place: ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy place, as I commanded." (Vv. 16-18.)

The rule as to the "sin-offering" was this: if the blood was carried inside, to be sprinkled before Jehovah, the body was carried without the camp to be burnt; but in the "sin-offering" for offences, the priest was to eat it; and in this the "sons of Aaron" had a share.

We get the pattern for the exercise of grace in the saints as to the failure and sins of their brethren, in John xiii.—"If I, your

Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet." Where there is defilement seen in a brother, there should ever be this washing by us; but it is impossible that there can, unless in spirit we bear before the Lord all the burden of the fault and sin we desire to confess (washing the feet is not atonement); and here we all fail—in the use of this priestly service.

Suppose I were really walking in the power of the place in which I am set, if I see sin in my brother, and go to pray for him, I find him identified with Christ as represented to the world: the garment of Christ is soiled, the honour of Christ is affected, the joy of Christ is hindered, all is spoiled in that sense, communion with Christ is lost. It is a terrible thing to see the saints of God dishonour Christ thus! Well, now, it is to bear the misery and sorrow of all this, as though I had been in the sin myself. Love gets into the place of the sinner, and his sin becomes the occasion of the outgoings of the heart in intercession to God—of the working of love.

Suppose a child in agony—the mother sees it thus distressed, convulsed by pain; and, though she herself has no pain of body, she suffers far more than it in pain of mind, in agony of heart. Thus should it be with us, in sympathy with the saints, when writhing under false doctrine or unworthiness of walk. ("For as the body is one, and hath many members . . . and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; . . . Now ye are the body of

Christ and members in particular.”—I Cor. xii.) All is borne by JESUS, but then we should identify ourselves with JESUS in dealing about the sin—in feeding on the “sin-suffering.” See Daniel, in his confession. (Chap. ix.) Did he say Israel has sinned? No, but *we* have sinned; to *us* belongeth confusion of faces; *we* have rebelled. And this is our place.

When Moses charges Eleazar and Ithamar with the sin, Aaron comes in (ver. 19) and answers for them; he lays it all upon himself. And so Christ for us: He makes Himself responsible for it all. It was, however, their privilege to have eaten of the “sin-offering, as it is ours: we are given this portion. God, in the richness of His grace, not only blesses us, but uses us: we are fellow-workers under Him. Paul plants, Apollos waters, God gives the increase; whilst it is God who has done it all. If a man was converted, whose joy was it? “Ye are our joy.” It was Paul’s joy. Paul had not redeemed them, but he had the joy of love.

In giving us this service of love we have His Spirit in us, and so the joy of love is ours. But it is not merely that we should go out and preach the gospel to sinners (preaching the gospel answers to the ministry of apostleship, whilst teaching and admonishing the saints answers to that of priesthood); prayer for a brother is the ministry of love in priesthood. If it be a matter of intercession, we ought to bear all the iniquity of it on our own hearts before the Lord. Thus the very sin itself becomes

the occasion of the outflowing of love, and not of judgement.

But is it not true that we have failed? Whilst the outward professing church has offered strange fire "before the Lord," have we known how to "eat the sin-offering" for our brethren? Have we not been charging them with the offence in righteousness, laying them down as under law, instead of "eating the sin-offering in the holy place?"

Grief should not hinder our acting thus in priestly service before the Lord; but let us take care also that the joy of nature does not: the "wine" and "strong drink." Again, I say, have we not shrunk from bearing the iniquity of our brethren in intercession before the Lord, from "eating the sin-offering in the holy place?" How little do the faults of a dear brother pain us as our own! Have we really pleaded, as feeling the evil, in the intercession of grace? How seldom do we thus deal with it, standing as it were in the gap! There is a vast deal of failure in all of us as to this—abundant failure! There is not that sense among us of the identity of Christ with His saints, which would put us thus in the place of intercession.

But the voice of Aaron is lifted up (ver. 19) and it prevails; Moses, the commander and requirer, is "content." (Ver. 20). So, in hearing the voice of our Aaron, when lifted up on our behalf, God is "content." And here is our comfort under the sense of it all.

Peace is heard again. But if it be so, the sense of that should not make us think lightly about the sins of our brethren.

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“I AM HE THAT LIVETH, AND WAS DEAD, AND, BEHOLD, I AM ALIVE FOR EVERMORE. AMEN!”

Rev. i. 18.

He lives to God,
He lives for me,
A great High Priest for ever ;
No longer now upon the tree,
In highest heaven, enthroned is He,
Able to help, and feel for me,
His power can fail me never.

Gone back to God,
Gone back for me,
His home is mine forever ;
The meaning of His work I see,
That I might like Him, with Him be,
In glory bright eternally,
To praise His name for ever.



INDIFFERENCE—NEUTRALITY—SELF-ASSERTION.

Revelation iii.

It will be found that these three are the great leading features of the professing church, fully developed in its last phase; and those whose eyes are both opened and anointed at the present time, see very distinctly how rapidly the growth of these evil principles are being developed, so that all the elements which will reach maturity in full-blown Laodiceanism, are being, as it were, rapidly hurried to the front. But to see this in the midst of clouds of dust which Satan is perpetually raising, there must be that which Scripture describes as the “senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” (Heb. v. 14.)

Now the first great mark of infection

with this evil principle is, *indifference to Christ as Lord*, which very plainly displays itself, though in a form and guise which deceive the unwary. It is true that *in terms* the authority of Christ is not denied, but *practically* it is not recognized. And moreover there are various shades of this, as of every evil thing; but the question is, not the amount which may be accredited to us, but whether we are, through grace, entirely apart from it ourselves. Has He not of late, as our Lord, given a very solemn proof of His authority as well as His right to sift and try and test that with which His name has been, and, through grace, is still associated on earth? and are there not many ways and forms of saying to Him, "What doest Thou?" Now what shall we say to the Lord's contention, the Lord's test, the Lord's voice like many waters, and the Lord's eyes as a flame of fire? Alas for us all if our eyes are not open to see this, and if we can rise no higher than men and their ways!

But it is solemn to remember how the road has been prepared, so that His way should not be perceived. The enemy has skilfully set traps to catch the feet of the saints of God. It is well for us to remember the *character* of his opposition now: *violence* and *corruption* are the two great weapons by which Satan has wrought from the first, and the last is the more to be dreaded, because more subtle. "The wiles of the devil" have now to be withstood on God's ground, and we need the whole armour of God, buckled on, and the spirit of dependence maintained

in order successfully to resist the foe. Where this is not the case, as the story of the Gideonites in Joshua sorrowfully illustrates, we fall a prey to the corrupting wiles of the devil; and it will display itself where the battle rages most fiercely. In Laodicea there will be an indifference to Christ as Lord, which is deeply heart-breaking. There will be a lack of conscience and spiritual affection which would secure His blessed name being associated with that which is repugnant to "Him that is holy and Him that is true;" and lastly, where this corruption gets sway there will be exhibited an antagonism to His thoughts and mind which is most solemn to contemplate.

The next characteristic mark of the professing church in its closing state, is *neutrality*; "neither cold *nor* hot." It is very solemn to see that indifference to Christ, is the producing cause of this lukewarm state. In Laodicea He is *outside*, and they are neutral *inside*! As to *evil*, the saints if true to Christ would be intolerant; patience and long suffering would assuredly mark them in their mode of acting as well as in their spirit—but where these blessed qualities are pleaded for a toleration of sin, and a course of action is attempted to be founded or based upon this, it is clearly the spirit of this *neutrality* concerning which the Lord says to Laodicea in His indignation, "I would thou wert cold or hot." Moreover, on heavenly ground, there can be no such principle. "Art thou for us or for our adversaries?"—is the abiding illustration and witness of this great fact. And may I not

appeal to another solemn witness of what I am setting forth? If the history of God's testimony during the past half-century, be prayerfully considered and pondered, it will be seen that at this very day, the *fruit* of this very principle of neutrality abides. Oh, for eyes to see, and hearts to feel for Christ in all this; thus it will be clear to us as taught of God, that the path of safety is the path of faith, and that holiness is, as it were, the very pavement of that way, and Christ the company which those who are for Him enjoy as walking in it: this and this alone can suit Him, and He gives us to know how blessed it is for us, and so we rejoice that "there is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen; the lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it"—it is a *divine* path and *outside*, because above the most acute creature wisdom and ken—moreover this wisdom cannot be procured by man as such, for "man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith it is not in me, and the sea saith, it is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof . . . The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold." Such then is the *nature* and *value* of the path of faith and wisdom in God's estimate of it. but mark well His words—"Unto man He saith, behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom: *and to depart from evil is understanding.*" (Job xxviii.)

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The last feature in Laodicea, which I would notice here, is the miserable *self-assertion* and *self-complacency* evinced in the language, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Oh, conceive such words, and the blessed Lord outside! This is the full development of Laodiceanism; it is found alongside indifference to Christ and a lukewarmness which is neither cold nor hot. Does it not become all His saints to watch against *this spirit*? He calls it "*miserable and poor*." Alas! how soon any of us might be corrupted and infected with it; and things which are all right in themselves may be used by Satan in his wiles to invest us with this spirit: for instance, if ourselves, *our* service, *our* work, *our* usefulness are before our eyes instead of Christ, how soon the spirit of Laodicea will enfold us in the meshes of its self-complacent net! Christ alone is our safety and rest. To keep *His word* and not deny *His name* is the reach of "little strength;" yet is it also our preservation as our comfort and joy.

May the Lord, in great grace, preserve His own in this day from the principles we have been reviewing, and may He also, in sovereign mercy, rescue from their power and influence, any who have fallen under them.



"Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work." 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17.

DIVINE WARNING AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR "THE LAST DAYS."

Epistle of Jude.

In the first propagation of Christianity and earliest history of the church, there were markedly displayed two master-forms of evil, against which it had to contend. There was the self-righteousness of the Jew built upon his religion of heaven-appointed ordinances ("a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ");—and the atheistic wisdom of the Greek; a wisdom tenaciously clung to by the whole civilized, and as it is called, "Christian world"; which modifies their philosophy, ethics, and divinity, and has stamped its features on the whole range of their literature; and by which they would *now* correct and mould the precious revelation of God! Though the voice of inspiration declares concerning it, "The world *by wisdom* knew not God." (1 Cor. i. 21.)

Accordingly, the preaching of Christ crucified was "unto the Jews a *stumbling-block*, and unto the Greeks *foolishness*"; but where faith overcame these obstacles, it is added, "unto them who are called, both *Jews and Greeks*, Christ the *power* of God and the *wisdom* of God." And in vain is *God's* power and *God's* wisdom, henceforth sought in dissociation from the cross. There alone is its illustration and display, in the person and work of HIM Who "was crucified through weakness, yet liveth by the power of God." (2 Cor. xiii. 4.)

But before the canon of the New Testa-

ment is closed, the Spirit of revelation is found in conflict with evil of altogether another type.

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

It may be no pleasant task to ponder

this character of the epistle of Jude, and of other Scriptures which present a concurrent testimony, that in the very bosom of Christianity there should arise a defined and progressive system of evil—commencing in apostolic days—which no revival in the church ever sets aside, and no reformation ever eradicates; but which works on until the ripened iniquity brings the Lord Himself in judgment upon the dispensation of Christianity, as surely as the corruption of the old world brought upon it the judgment of the flood; or the apostasy of Israel brought their overthrow in the wilderness. Yet this corruption, which has for its seed-bed the very bosom of the church, is most necessary to be noted by the saints of God, if they would have God's estimate of the scene through which they must have their course; or if they would possess the only torch of guidance through the darkened labyrinth. It is necessary to follow the Spirit's course when it ceases to treat of "the common salvation," because of the necessity of "earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints," and which is referred to by the Holy Spirit, in the 20th verse, as "your MOST HOLY faith," in spite of all the failure on the side of man's responsibility!

The terms *church* and *world*, in the New Testament, are characteristically opposed; and are in their proper application as distinct as light and darkness: but alas! in practical Christianity this distinctiveness no longer exists. It is not within the limits of a boundary line that truth and error are

now confined—though “the foundation of God abideth sure.” But it is not now as once it was—the Jew, *outside* the profession of Christianity, “ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish his own righteousness, and not submitting to the righteousness of God;” nor is it the Gentile, *apart*, scoffing in proud derision at the preaching of “JESUS and the resurrection,” or persecuting and imprisoning those who bore His name; but it is *within* the limits of a professed Christianity, that the mystery of iniquity works; and therefore the need of the precious exhortation on the one hand, and, on the other, “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.”

There was *one* who could say, “I have kept the faith!” But through what contests had he to carry the sacred deposit, and by what incessant wiles was he tempted to betray his trust? The Lord give to His people courage, “earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints;” and grace to “keep themselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life!” For then, the onward progress of corruption, instead of staggering the soul, will give but additional confirmation to the truth, as its lamp brightens amidst the increasing gloom. It

is in the darkness of the *night* that the beacon-fire flashes most brightly, and warns of hidden dangers; and it is in the night that the light of the prophetic word, whether to direct or to warn, has its most special use. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a *dark* ['squalid,' Rev. Ver. marg.] *place until the day dawn*, and the day-star arise in your hearts." (2 Pet. i. 19.)

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

Hence, in giving the moral characteristics of the "men who had crept in unawares," he says, with a "*woe unto them*," they have "gone in the way of *Cain*, and ran greedily after the error of *Balaam* for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of *Core*"! Thus associating their principles with every form

of corruption which God will judge. For in *Cain* is presented the first apostate amongst men, in the way of infidelity and hatred of righteousness. *Balaam* is the selected example of corruption in religion for reward. *Core* is the head of revolt.

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

In Scripture, Balaam stands in bad pre-eminence as a man who used his character as a prophet to gain the rewards of the powers of the world, and against the true people of God. He would have used the revelations of God to this end, if they could have been brought into such subserviency; but, in the failure of this, his heart, set upon "the wages of unrighteousness," directly uses, for the ends of corruption, the light he had in the ways of God. Memorable and instructive are the words to the Church in Pergamos—"thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of *Balaam*, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."

"The error of Balaam for reward"—"having men's persons in admiration because of advantage"—and, "through covetousness shall they, with feigned words, make merchandise of you"—are exponents

of evil that need no eye of a seer to give them their application.

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

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

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

These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev. xix. 19, 20).

This is the result, when the issue is joined at last, between Him who "shall sit as a priest upon His throne," and the last daring usurper of His rights, in the person of him who "has said in his heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the North: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the Most High."

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

But are there not other systems around us in Christendom, which while the accredited doctrines are in entire antagonism with the horrid dogmas of Rome, still it cannot be concealed or denied that the sin of Corah covertly lurks, asserting the prerogative of priestly authority, so "lording it over God's heritage," the incipient working of Corah's sin?

In correspondence with this general character of the epistle, is the association of

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

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

From these principles flow, legitimately, insubjection to all constituted authority; for grace, and subjection to the authority of Christ, are the only curb to the wantonness of man’s self-will. And if men fancy, and would teach, that, by “despising dom-

inion [or 'authority'], and speaking evil of dignities," they exalt themselves, the Christian is taught how to estimate these things, by the spirit in which an "archangel" acted.

"These are spots *in your feasts of charity* ['love'], when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear; clouds without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, *twice dead* [dead naturally, and dead after a profession of life], plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." "Spots in your feasts of charity," alas! tells us where this evil began. And when it is said, "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of *these*," we learn, that in the very place where the evil arose there its judgment will fall. Nor is the 19th verse any exception to this—"these be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." For it should be observed, that the words do not indicate the action of schismatics; nor even, as it is said in the Epistle of John, "they went out from us." The general condition of the Church was now so low, that they could remain, and "mark themselves off, or distinguish themselves," as the expression is. But, with this assumption of separation, and claim to superior sanctity, they are declared to be "*natural men*, not having the Spirit;" in contrast to that which characterizes the true saint, who is a "*spiritual man*;" and in contrast with the only spring of holiness, so beautifully presented in the 20th verse—

“But, ye beloved, building up yourselves in your *most holy faith*, praying in the *Holy Ghost*, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of *OUR Lord Jesus Christ* unto eternal life.”

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

In verses 14, 16, Enoch’s prophecy is given not more as a token of warning against the evil on which he predicts that judgment will fall, than as a stay to the faithful, in the certain knowledge, that, as the evil is seen rising to its flood-mark, so certainly will the power of Christ’s judgment be interposed to put it down.

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

But, besides this, the characteristics of the evil would be by no means complete, without this concurrent testimony; con-

sequently, the warnings and encouragements for "the last days" would be incomplete, if confined to the features of this epistle.

2 Thessalonians presents, amongst other delineations, "the mystery of iniquity" [or 'lawlessness'], and "the man of sin;" from whose delusions, and "the deceivableness of unrighteousness," there is no escape, but in "receiving THE LOVE *of the truth.*"

2 Timothy gives the moral characteristics of "the last days" and the "perilous times," in the self-love, and boasting, and spirit of fierce democracy, which still have their place amongst those who have "a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof"; and preservation to the "man of God" is pointed out in the exhortation, "but continue thou in the things which thou hast learned"; and in the assertion of the inspiration of all Scripture, and its perfectness, "that [thus] the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

2 Peter goes over the same subject, as to its main features, as Jude, with the same result in judgment upon the evil. But there is this characteristic difference, that it dwells on the comparison between "the false prophets" of a former dispensation—the leaders in Israel's apostasy—and the "false teachers," who are presented as the active instruments of the more fearful evil in this. But, whilst these "false teachers" are leading the van in corruption, and the "scoffers" are saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?" the saint is called to listen to the words, "ye, therefore, beloved,

seeing ye know these things before, beware, lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To HIM be glory both now and for ever. Amen!*"

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

The epistles to the seven churches, in the Revelation, in their moral bearing, evidently present the same general progress of decay, while the prophetic part opens into a wider scene; and in them blessing, and safeguard, and overcoming, are connected with an "ear to hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches"—and, *if it might be*, a recovery of "*first love*."

But there are yet to be noticed one or two points in the beautiful closing verses of Jude. Verses 21, 22, present the practical, every-day business of a saint; and the more so as the evil day comes on: "Ye beloved, building up yourselves on your *most holy*

faith" (that is its character, in contrast with "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness"), "praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life." Like Enoch, the prophet of the epistle, "walking with God," in the quiet and holy intimacy of one who has the attestation that "he pleased God;" though, for a while, in the midst of all the evil, whose coming judgment he predicted, but waiting for his own translation to a sphere alike above the evil and the judgment, which the coming of the Lord with ten thousands of His saints would execute.

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

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

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

darkening every ray of light around !

One is not sent to the happiest saint of God, to learn, from the testimony of *his experience*, what are the privileges and hopes to which he is called by the grace of God. These are alone learned in their perfectness from the Scriptures of truth, illustrated in the blessed Person of Christ, and revealed in living power to the soul by the Holy Ghost.

Neither is it necessary to go to the men who are wise in the affairs of the world—for the *world* it is still, despite its formal adoption of the name of Christ—to learn its character and course. The true reflections of things in heaven and on earth are alone to be found in the divine mirror of the word. The saint, apart from the world, with the Bible in his hand, as one shut up in a camera obscura, sees brought beneath his gaze every movement and figure in the busy complicated scene around him, with a clearness that none of its actors can discern. Thus, and thus only, is it safe to know the world: “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” (I John ii., 16, 17.)

“Now unto HIM that is able to keep you from falling [or ‘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.

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HYMN OF PRAISE.

Nearer, my God, to Thee,—
I cannot be ;
Christ's blood hath made me nigh,
Praise, praise to Thee !
Now blest in Christ Thy Son,
Thy love to Him my own,
This shall be still my song,
Praises to Thee !

Pilgrim and stranger here,
I journey on ;
Upward my heart now turns,
Heaven is my home ;
Thy love constraining still,
Henceforth to do Thy will ;
Praises my spirit fill,
All praise to Thee !

Now, let my walk and ways,
More Christ-like be ;
Ever delighting in
His love to me :—
Till I shall see His face,
Owing Thy sovereign grace,
That brought me to this place—
Nearness to Thee.

Lessons, on desert sands,
Now taught by Thee ;
Causes my heart to sing,
More praise to Thee !
Trials thus sent do bless,
Partaking Thy holiness,
Peaceful fruits of righteousness,
Bring praise to Thee.

Sweet is the blessed hope
Given us by Thee ;
Glory with Him who died.
On Calv'ry's tree !
Oh ! what a song we'll raise,
Singing His worthy praise,
When on Himself we gaze—
And like Him be !

THE GLORY OF THE SON OF MAN AS WITNESSED IN THE CROSS.



The supreme blessedness of the saints when they shall have their part with Christ above, will be to behold His glory. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." Such is the desire of the Son of God for the objects of His love. Nothing can satisfy His love, short of having us with Himself, and like Himself, in the place His love has prepared for us in the Father's house. But there, too, He would have us behold His glory—the glory given Him of the Father, who loved Him before the foundation of the world; and, if He is our all, to behold *His* glory in that day will be our deepest delight. But if such will be the case *then*, can it be otherwise *now* than that the renewed nature should be moved, and that we should be led to adore and worship, as the Spirit of God unfolds His different glories before our wondering eyes?

Let us, as the Holy Spirit enables us, seek to contemplate a little the glory of our blessed Lord as it shines out at the cross.

It was man's hour, and the power of darkness (Luke xxii. 53). Satan had entered into Judas, and he had gone out in the darkness of the night, to accomplish his foul designs. Jesus knew this, and saw the cross before Him with all that was to be accomplished there for the glory of God amid the deepen-

ing darkness of that terrible hour. Conscious of His own personal glory in the presence of this stupendous work, and knowing well what the issue would be, He said: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him" (Jno. xiii. 31, 32).

Here we have three glorifyings:

- (1) The Son of man glorified,
- (2) God glorified in the Son of man.
- (3) The Son of man glorified in God; that is, the Son of man goes into the glory of God.

It is to the first of these we desire to call special attention: "Now is the Son of man glorified." The thought we have before us is, that the work of the cross was the Son of man's glory. There His intrinsic moral and personal glory shone forth with a brilliancy that will never grow dim—a brilliancy that lightens up eternity, and in the light of which we shall worship forever.

There was not only the question of man's ruin and need: there was the question of God's glory in a scene where His character had been traduced, and where sin had spread its deadly blight on every side. Sin must be judged; God's character, His majesty, His righteousness, His holiness, His truth, His love, must be made good. Who could sustain the glory and majesty of God in His judgment of sin? Who in the presence of this awful judgment could declare and make manifest before the universe that "God is love"? The Son of man. He, and He alone, could do this; and to do this was His *glory*. That a man—the Son of man—

should do this, will be the wonder of wonders throughout eternity. That this Man is the incarnate Word, the Son, the brightness of God's glory, and the exact expression of His substance, I need hardly say. Yet it is the Son of man we have before us here, and the shining forth of His glory in that work of the cross on which God's glory will rest forever.

In order to get the truth of this more fully before our hearts let us compare other Scriptures.

In Lev. xvi., we have Israel's great day of atonement. Various directions are given in the opening verses. Verse 11 gives us the first real action of the day—the killing of the bullock. This is the death of the atoning victim, the foundation of all. For us it is the death of the Lord Jesus.

Now it might be supposed the next thing would be the sprinkling of the blood; but such was not the case. The first thing after the death of the victim was the burning of the incense: "And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail; and he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not."

What is this incense? And what is the burning before the Lord? We learn from Exod. xxx. 34-38, that this incense was a "perfume," "pure and holy," compounded after the art of the apothecary. It was to be beaten small, and placed before the testi-

mony. It was to be "most holy," and none was to be made like it, on pain of death. On the day of atonement it was burnt on the censer before the Lord, immediately after the killing of the bullock. Out of this burning arose a cloud—"the cloud of the incense"—which covered the mercy seat.

The killing of the bullock was in type the death of Christ. That death was under the fire of God's judgment. And what could this cloud of incense be but the sweet savour of Christ—the sweet and holy perfume which arose out of that awful burning? Not the sprinkling of the blood, but the burning of this pure and holy incense, was the first thing after the death of the holy victim. And the sweet perfume of that most holy and infinitely precious Sacrifice, was the first thing that rose up before God in the death of the Lord Jesus. That death of holy obedience told out the glory of His person, and spread abroad the savour of His perfections.

That tabernacle was the sanctuary of Jehovah's glory. The mercy seat was His throne. Between the Cherubim, over the mercy seat, dwelt the Shechinah, the visible cloud of glory, which witnessed the presence of Jehovah. The glory and majesty of Him who dwelt there must be made good on that day of atonement. And this we have presented to us in type. Out of the burning incense on the censer of the high priest arose a cloud of glory that covered the mercy seat. This was the glory that answered to the glory between the cherubim—glory equal to that glory—glory giving its

value to the blood of the victim, which was to be sprinkled before and on the mercy seat : and so it was said, "that he die not." In short, it is the intrinsic personal glory and infinite perfections of the Son of man, witnessed in His death on the cross, in which He sustained the full weight of the glory and majesty of God in the judgment of sin, and in that scene of deepest anguish and unparalleled sorrow, made good the truth that "God is love," as well as "light."

Let us turn now to Ps. xxii. The psalm opens with the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This was the cry of the Lord Jesus on the cross, where He was made sin for us ; and where, under the holy judgment of God, He bore our sins. In obedience to the will of God, and for the glory of God, He had gone down under the waves and billows of divine judgment, and out of that abyss of darkness and unequalled sorrow He cried, and was not heard. Oh ! where was ever sorrow like His sorrow ? The fathers had cried to God, and had been delivered, but to Him the heavens were brass. Lover and friend were far away—none to comfort ; His enemies were against Him ; the power and malice and rage of Satan were there ; yet all this was as nothing compared with being forsaken of God. It was the anguish of the outer darkness. And yet, while the question "Why ?" ascends from those awful depths, no murmur escapes His holy lips ; though stroke after stroke of divine judgment falls upon Him for sins not His own, no word of resentment or rebellion is heard. On the contrary

He owns the holiness of the hand that was bruising Him for sin; "but thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel" (verse 3). What is this, but the rising up of the cloud of incense from the burning censer, the holy perfume of the glory of the Son of man as tested under the fire of God's judgment?

In Rev. xvi. we have the plagues and judgments of God visited upon men because of their wickedness, with the result that a stream of blasphemy against God issues from their wicked and rebellious hearts, the pressure of judgment bringing out just what was there. How different with Christ! The unmingled judgment of God falling upon Him brought forth the utterance of praise—"Thou art holy." It brought out just what was there—what He was. Bruise a noxious weed, and it will emit its foulest odours; bruise a lovely rose, and it will emit its sweetest perfume. So with wicked men; so with Christ.

Men ask: If wicked men are punished eternally for their sins, why did not Christ suffer eternally when He took the place of the sinner? The answer is simple. The judgment of God never produces repentance in the sinner. Its only effect is to bring out all the rebellion of a heart that is incorrigible enmity against God. Man's rebellion and enmity continue forever, and God's judgment abides forever. But how was it with Christ? He suffered for our sins, the Just for the unjust. The full weight of God's wrath and judgment fell upon Him during the three hours of darkness.

What was the effect? Instead of enmity, resentment or rebellion, there was perfect submission. The only answer to the crushing blows of judgment was,—“But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.” This was the holy perfume of the burning incense. I ask, *could* God go on bruising forever that holy and blessed One, when every stroke of judgment only brought out the intrinsic glory and moral loveliness of what He was, the burning of the censer filling the very heavens with the sweet and holy perfume of that precious incense? It could not be. A moment must come when God must say, I am satisfied, I am glorified, and when the sword of divine judgment must be put back in its scabbard. The character of the Victim was such that it must be so. The value of the work was commensurate with the glory of the Person whose work it was.

Oh! what a Saviour! what perfection! what beauty! what moral loveliness! what glory! Who would not worship and adore in His presence! Who would not cry, Worthy, worthy, worthy, the Lamb that was slain! In His presence our souls have rest, and our hearts adore, as we gaze upon the glory that shone out amid the darkness of Calvary,—the glory of Him who not only glorified God, but who has met all our deep need, and in the sweet savour of whose work we stand before God accepted forever,—yea, “accepted in the Beloved.”



TRUTH.

“Jesus saith, I AM the way, THE TRUTH, and the life.”—John xiv. 6.

Sanctify them through thy truth: THY WORD IS TRUTH.”—John xvii. 17.

“Truth” I hold to be *definite, unchangeable, and perfectly revealed in the Scriptures.* These are, as regards man, the only fountain and depository of truth. As to its essence and living embodiment, it is found alone in Him who said, “I AM THE TRUTH”—happily for us, *“the way and the life also.”* If others hold not this, it is their loss: they have not the anchor that can be trusted in the storm. Truth, I deny not, may be matter of long and hesitating and anxious enquiry. Because truth, which is but the expression of the mind of God, though perfectly revealed, is not at once, and of necessity, perfectly understood—not even by those who are called “wisdom’s children,” and are “born of God.” “We know in part, and we prophecy in part.” But truth itself in the Scriptures, is perfect, absolute, and unchangeable. There is much in the apprehension of this. It removes doubt from the pathway, and is the hinge of all true enquiry. It lays open the well, and how its living waters may be drawn. It points to the oracle, and the temper in which it must be consulted.

As to the study of truth or its investigation, it must be with intent to *obey*, and not to speculate: “If any man will *do* his will, he shall know of the doctrine” (John vii.

17). The disciple's place, and not the Master's, belongs to every student of the truth. Moreover, if success is to crown the study, truth must be sought for its own sake, or rather for its Author's. If the secret bent and purpose is to feed the imagination, or to gratify the lust of knowing, then *know* this, that thou shalt be "ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge (or 'full-knowledge') of the truth" (2 Tim. iii. 7). On the other hand, "If thou criest after knowledge" (conscious of thy lack of it), "and liftest up thy voice for understanding;" "if thou seekest her as silver" (with an estimation of its value), "and searchest for her as for hid treasures" (willing to dig the field over rather than fail in thy search); "then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." . . . "When wisdom entereth *into thine heart*, and knowledge is pleasant to thy soul, discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee; (Prov. ii. 3-11). It is the *heart's* estimation of the truth that quickens diligence in its pursuit; and it is this also, and not the mind's dry activity, that determines the rate and measure of advancement in it.

"Buy the truth, and sell it not" (Prov. xxiii. 23): no price is too great for its purchase—no gain sufficient to repay its loss. This is no direction for the world's marketing: but it tells us plainly why so few obtain what so many profess to seek. "Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath *no heart* for it?" (xvii. 16). Albeit the fool of Scripture is the

world's wise man. To him then, who would advance in the knowledge of the truth, Paul's direction to Timothy must not stand in the letter only: "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all." And he adds, "Take heed unto *thyself* and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."

In the communication of truth, when it is drawn directly from the divine word; or, it may be, learnt from others, and verified by that word (for all are not alike successful diggers, in the mine, though all should alike possess a value for the ore), it is definite and determinate. When teaching ceases to be definite it ceases to be powerful; for it ceases to be truth that is taught. *All truth is definite or ceases to be truth.* Teaching that swerves from this may not cease to be exciting or attractive, but it ceases to edify. "He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord." (Jer. xxiii. 28). But he who deals out as truth that which is unascertained and indeterminate, first imposes on himself the chaff for the wheat, and then practices the same deception upon others. To present truth in the plainest and severest garb, and to unfold it in terms level to the commonest minds, is the plain duty of every teacher who is in earnest in what he does. But to seek to popularize truth by diluting it—to drape it so that its proportions are hidden—to adorn it by the efforts of imagination, in order to

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make it palatable, and so win for it a place in minds that have no love for it, nor intention to practice it, is to "sow the wind, and to reap the whirlwind" (Hos. viii. 7). Spiritual truth can only be apprehended by the understanding becoming spiritual; and the attempt to bring it within the grasp of the unspiritual mind is at best but to leaven and corrupt the truth, instead of using it as a lever by which to bring up the soul to God. Confidence in the truth, or faith, is content to let God work, and to open his own doors for its reception. But there is a bustling activity that is ever thrusting *itself* forward—a running where there are no tidings prepared; which, though it may put on the guise of zeal for the truth, is in the issue no better than sowing in unploughed land. There is divine wisdom in the exhortation of the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, "Break up your fallow ground and sow not among thorns" (Jer. iv. 3).

I speak not here against pressing the message of the gospel upon unwilling hearers; though in this, both time and wisdom, and an open door, should be sought at the hands of the Lord; and there should be care that *love* be never absent as the chief handmaid in the work.

But truth can never be *popular* in this world. Altogether apart from the testimony of Scripture, even philosophers are puzzled "to know how it is that men should love lies, where they make neither for pleasure, as with poets; nor for advantage, as with the merchant; but for the lie's sake." And we know who has said, "*Because* I tell you the

truth, ye believe me not" (John viii. 45). Truth shows men's follies and by-ends too clearly, and sheds too broad a light on the masquerading of the world, ever to be welcomed by it. It is only "he that doeth the truth [that] comes to the light" (John iii. 21). Men like to live in a sort of twilight; or to walk by the light of a fire that themselves have kindled, and sparks that they have compassed themselves about with (see Is. l. 11.) And this they are allowed to do, as long as truth is mingled with men's thoughts and speculations, instead of shining with its own clear light. All human over-valuing, and self-conceit, and false fancies, are detected by the truth; and things that sparkle and look bright by the world's candle-light, lose their lustre when brought into the light of the sanctuary (see Ps. lxxiii. 17). This men cannot afford, for it strips the world of its glory, and shows it as a base counterfeit. Supposing the light of truth to be let in upon men and their pursuits, and their estimation of themselves (to go no further), does any one doubt that it would make them feel themselves to be poor, shrunken things, where the heart had not Christ to fill up the place of that which the truth takes away? But it is the very province of the truth to exhibit things as they are. It is the light which makes all things manifest (see Ephes. v. 13). There is no object, therefore, unless I would be untrue to my own ends, as they themselves will be ere long manifested in the light, in so disguising truth as to make it pass through the world unrecognized in its claims, and without accomplish-

ing a single purpose for which it is given. But this is done when it judges neither the conscience nor the ways of those by whom it is professedly embraced. The pleasure that may be professed by such a reception of the truth, or the profit, is as nothing; and I ought to blush, if I have only gained for it a welcome on the condition that it shall be deposed from its authority. It is like making truth a harlot to minister to the lusts of the mind. God is the communicator of truth, and He has given it that the heart may be brought into *subjection to His authority*, as well as into acquaintance with Himself, His works and ways. If I deal with truth at all, for my own profit or that of others, I am bound to do it in subjection to God. Hence the apostle's declaration, "We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor. iv. 2).

Man, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, is only the interpreter of the heavenly oracles. Hence arises a *limit* in the service of truth. I must cease to interpret when I cease to understand. It may be the consequence of my negligence that I do not understand. Be it so. The acknowledgment of this may prove a spur to my diligence (especially if I bear in mind the word, "to him that hath shall be given"); but it is certainly no warrant to cover ignorance by the pretence of knowledge. How many expositions of Scripture are to be met with,

whose contradictions amongst themselves show that it is not *truth* that is presented, but the uncertain and ever-varying notions of men. What, then, in writing, or in oral teaching, profits? The *definiteness* of truth; truth, doubtless applied by the Holy Spirit to the conscience and the heart;—still, the definiteness of truth. That there may be an effect where this is absent, I do not deny. But what is it? The effect of making people think, if they think at all, that Scripture is as vague and pointless as any exposition of its declarations. Still, I affirm that truth is definite, or it is not truth. Boundless in its extent it is, and infinitely varied in its application, but always *definite*. Where this definiteness is not grasped, uncertainty and unpreparedness for action are the necessary result, “for if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” (1 Cor. xiv. 8). An easy-going orthodox profession may be satisfied with vagueness and generality, nay, with vapidness and insipidity; but if the truth is to detach souls from the world, to bring into peace and liberty, and to direct to the just hope of a Christian, it must be definite. Let those who are teachers of the truth beware, for the streams will not rise higher than the level of the spring; and there is always a (more or less marked) correspondence between the character and condition of the teachers and the taught. People that are caught by the imaginative, the sentimental, the shallow and wordy, as well as those who are captivated by the comprehensive and earnest, will infallibly bear its stamp. More-

over, it is not everything true which profits. Where popular effect may become a snare, the example of Philip, in Acts viii., may well furnish instruction to the heart. But above all should be studied the way in which He, who spake as never man spake, detaches, by the truth He presents, the multitudes that were gathered around Him, from all false expectations which they might have associated with His words and mission, through carnality or a wordly mind. The sermon on the mount (Matt. v., etc.), and John vi., stand out as prominent examples of this. It is a sore trial to our poor hearts to be obliged, by the presentation of the distinctiveness of truth, to count upon following the experience of the Master, as is recorded in John vi. 66: "From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." But this was only a legitimate, though sorrowful, effect of the Lord's faithfulness to His mission, as uttered before Pilate, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should *bear witness unto THE TRUTH*. Every one that is *of the truth* heareth my voice" (John xviii. 37).

For the truth's sake all *imitation* of others, in their modes of communicating it, should be eschewed. It has the effect of making the message appear *unreal* in the hands of him who is delivering it. Simplicity of purpose and aim will stamp its own impress on the mode of communicating, and the vessel under this power be seen as God has fitted it, and not distorted by the attempt to emulate that which it may be most unlike, both

in original character, and in training for the work.

"Take heed *how* ye hear" brings before us the responsibility before God the individual is placed under on hearing the truth. But know this, that truth will never be truth to the soul, until it is translated into action. Truth appeals to the conscience and to the affections with all the authority of the God of truth. At first it deals with me about ruin and redemption. It claims to be formative of my motives, to be the guide of my actions, the director of my thoughts, the animator of my hopes, the overseer of my whole inner, as well as outer, life.

Supposing truth to have been rightly taught and rightly received, what will be its legitimate effect? This is answered in the most direct way in the summary the apostle gives of the effect of the gospel on the Thesalonians. He speaks of them as remembering their "work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope of our Lord Jesus Christ." And this answer to his expression in Corinthians, "Now abideth faith, hope, charity [love], these three." There is that in the revelation of the truths of heavenly grace which thus acts, by the power of God on the soul, when it is yielded up to its power. The "work of faith" is seen in its turning the heart "to God from idols," in all the intensity of the contrast between utter emptiness and vanity, and eternal living fulness. The "labour of love" expresses itself in the outgoing of life's energies in the service of Him who, in the all-commanding and constraining power of infinite and un-

stinted love, makes Himself known to the soul, and by *love* thus enchains and leads it captive. "The patience of hope" takes the definite form of waiting for the accomplishment of the promise of Him who said, "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that *where* I am, there ye may be also." Hope shows its power in the soul by sustaining the patience while "waiting for God's Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead [with all the pregnancy of this mighty truth in power and love and grace] even JESUS, who delivered us from the wrath to come."

Now these are presented, not as the ripened fruits of long experience in the truth, but as the very first results of the reception of gospel grace: the upspringing of heavenly fruit from a virgin soil when first brought under culture by the hand of God; the well-tuned harmony of the soul touched in its chords by the skill of infinite love. The Lord Jesus Christ was the Spring and Object of their faith and love and hope. "The work of faith" was there; and "the labour of love" was there; and the "patience of hope" was there. Nothing of the divine testimony was inert. Indeed, apart from this living energy, Christianity has no existence in this world. The truths by which it was first evoked remain, and the divine power remains which gave these truths this living expression. Many things which marked the bright course of the early church have passed away, but these are emphatically said to remain, "faith, hope, charity, these three," without which Christianity is not.

Should not, then, a right presentation and a right reception of the truth of the gospel be still productive of the same effects? Should we not view it as a defective gospel, either as preached or professed, if these effects be absent? God's grace must not be limited: but I am speaking of the responsibility which the truth brings to the soul. The effect of the gospel is not here limited, as it is so often now, to the individual having obtained peace by it, or even the knowledge of the possession of eternal life. If the heart rests in faith on the divine truths on which Christianity is based, must it not claim for them an energetic and transforming power? Where God is working, I own it becomes the soul to tread softly. But in what are called "revivals," I think I see this—on the part of God, souls awakened in an extraordinary degree, and many doubtless brought to Christ;—on the part of man, nature largely acted on, often a defective gospel presented, and the mind concentrated too much on its own assured and joyous feelings. The result of this is, to a large extent, even where the work is real, the rearing of hot-house plants, which wither and show the yellow leaf when the extraneous heat and forcing influences are withdrawn. Conversion is not everything. Fervour will not stand in the place of truth engrafted in the soul. Activity is not the only sign of spiritual life and power. "I am so happy!" may be welcomed as the soul's expression of having found in Christ what it could find in nothing else. But there is another word of Christ to be heard besides "thy sins are

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forgiven thee:" it is, "If any man serve Me, *let him follow Me.*" It is a great thing that the practical aim of Christians be not lowered. True revival I take to be the leading back of souls to see from whence they have fallen, and to repent and do the first works. The sure token of a revival in the church (I do not mean the fact of frequent conversions) will be found in Christians being led solemnly to lay it to heart, whether the church is in a position to meet the Lord, and whether it is a true and faithful witness for Him in His absence. There are dangers of all times, and there are the special dangers of our own; but the fulness of the truth as communicated to us by God is sufficient to enable the simple and dependent saint to meet them all, and so to find the special blessing promised, by the lips of Him whose name we bear, "to him that overcometh."



FRAGMENT.—Scripture speaks of grace as well as truth. It speaks of God's love who gave His only-begotten Son that sinners like you and me might be with Him, know Him, enjoy Him for ever, and enjoy Him *now*; that the conscience, perfectly purged, might be in joy in His presence, without a cloud, without a reproach, without fear.

Wherever we follow Thee Lord,
 With adoration of heart do we see
 Both grace and truth blending together
 In fullest perfection in Thee.

SEARCHED, KNOWN AND WINNOWNED.

"All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of HIM with whom we have to do." Heb. iv. 13.

PSALM cxxxix.

It is a very solemn thought for the soul, that it is under the searching of HIM who is omniscient, yea of HIM who is LIGHT as well as LOVE. Yet this is the foundation of solid peace to him who believes the Gospel of the grace of God.

The searching eye of Omniscience, moreover gives real value to the present priestly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ; and it will be found also the only ground of practical holiness. In this respect there is an essential difference between him that is spiritual, and a man of deep thought and high intellect. He that is quickened by the Spirit is frequently able to interpret things strange and paradoxical to others. The spiritual man "judgeth all things," and he knows "the end of the Lord." (I Cor. ii. 15; Jas. v. 11.)

Every human being has been *searched by HIM who is omniscient, whether he is conscious of it or not. This will be made clear "in the day when God shall judge the

* See Note on page 2

secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (Rom. ii. 16.). The searching of "the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. iv. 12.) [by the word of God now,] is the means of bringing God's knowledge into application to our conscience before that day. And when this is the case, then we are conscious that our thoughts are understood afar off, and that there is not a word in the tongue, but the Lord knoweth it altogether. He has "beset us behind and before." He can look backward, and He can look forward also. All our history is before HIM, as if it had been written after we had run our course. "O Lord, *Thou hast searched me,*" is the language of the Psalmist—not "Thou art doing it now, or wilt do it hereafter, but Thou hast done it already." "O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known* me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou winnowest [marg.] my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways." (vv., 1-3.)

We do not like to have our paths winnowed. We like to be accredited by men for our zeal and devotedness: but when our paths are winnowed, all our thoughts

* Literally, "Thou hast searched me and knowest." That is, the knowledge is the result of thorough investigation, and careful scrutiny.

are discovered and opened to us. If God acted toward us according to our experience of ourselves, what believer would not have his peace disturbed? The practical experience of the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of our hearts" is from bad to worse; Herein is the great error of that which is termed "progressive sanctification." God is not forming a people for *their own*, but for *His, praise*. (Eph. i., 6.) He is showing them what they are in themselves, in order to show them by His Spirit the blessed suitability of Christ to all their need. If God be winnowing our path, it is on the ground that He has searched us already, knows us altogether, and provided for what He knows we need. "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow." (Heb. iv. 12.) This is a painful process, either pricking the heart, and leading to godly sorrow (Acts ii. 37); or cutting the heart (Acts vii. 54.), stinging the conscience, which may result in murderous anger. The word of God is likewise "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do." When the

word thus performs its office, it leads us to value the priesthood of Christ. "Seeing then we have a great High Priest," etc. (Heb. iv. 13, 14.)

We can never get from under this searching process. "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell [Sheol], behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me;' even the night shall be light about me; yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee," *vv.*, (7-12.) The Lord Jesus says to the church of Thyatira, "All the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts." (Rev. ii. 23.) When God quickens a sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, He makes him to know what it is to be, not only a sinner by acts of disobedience, but a sinner by nature, that sin *dwell-eth* in him. (Rom. vii. 20.) And this He does by searching him, and winnowing his paths, and making him, in measure, see himself, even as God sees him. (Job xlii. 5, 6; Is. vi. 1-5.)

The Lord Jesus did not commit Himself to those who believed in His name, when they saw His miracles, "because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for He knew what was in man." (John ii. 23-25.) They appeared with the fairest outside, both as to candour and religion; but He knew what was in man. Others might have judged that conviction was the groundwork of their faith; yet such is a man's heart, that miracles do not produce solid conviction. Jesus knew this; for He knew all men. Of old "Israel saw the great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians;" "Then believed they His words; they sang His praise. They soon forgot His works." (Ex. xiv. 31; Ps cvi. 12, 13.) And when the Lord again visited Israel, this was the testimony, "Ye also have seen Me, and believe not." "Though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him." (John vi. 36; xii. 37.) His own select disciples, the eye-witnesses of His miracles, forsook Him and fled when He was betrayed into the hands of men.

When the searching of Omniscience discovers to one what it really is to be a sinner, and that good does not dwell in him, that is, in his flesh, it discovers also that the ground on which God is acting towards him

is that of the fullest grace. The God who knows all our hearts knows that these hearts are beyond measure worse than all the sins we have committed. His verdict against man is still the same that it was before the Flood, "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually." All the progress of man has not set aside this verdict of God.

We must recognize, then, that God knows us—knows us just as we are, knew us from the very outset, as He says to Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." (Jer. i. 5.) Or as later with the apostle Paul: "When it pleased God, Who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace," etc. (Gal. i 15.) God knows us from the beginning to the end of our course. His estimate of us is—"The flesh profiteth nothing;" and it is well if we lay down this estimate as our first axiom. But then the same God has spoken to us in the gospel of the remission of sins: but it is remission of sins according to His Omniscience; therefore, of all sins. And if God speaks to us of the righteousness of faith, it is according to His Omniscience, "everlasting righteousness."

“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,” has thrown the efficacy of what He Himself is into all that He has done. He has offered *one* sacrifice for sins, of abiding efficacy. He has “obtained *eternal* redemption,” and brought in “*everlasting* righteousness.” He has “perfected *for ever* them that are sanctified.” He is consecrated a Priest *for evermore*. (Heb. vii. ix. x.)

ALL THE VALUE OF THE WORK AND OFFICES OF CHRIST FLOWS FROM THE GLORY OF HIS PERSON. The whole question between God and the awakened sinner is settled upon the ground of the unalterable value of what Christ has done as estimated by God Himself. In this sense the word *progressive* is human, not divine. “It is finished” excludes the idea of progression. “I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before Him.” (Eccles. iii. 14.) Progress is necessarily associated with change, but truth is immutable. “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.” We have all truth in the word, and we have the Spirit to guide into all truth. The work of the Lord Jesus Christ is commensurate with, yea, rises infinitely above, all our need as sinners. There are things reported unto us by the Holy Ghost,

sent down from heaven, to tell out heaven's estimate of Christ's sufferings, and the glory to follow, which angels desire to look into. (I Peter i. 12.)

The great hindrance to solid peace is a reasoning still in our own minds as to whether we are really as bad as God knows us to be. It is expecting to find ourselves better and better in ourselves, instead of seeing that God acts upon His own Omniscience as to what we are, and not upon what we are thinking of ourselves, and presents to us His own estimate of Christ's work and priesthood. The gospel is "the gospel of God." (Rom. i. 1.) It is God who bears witness to the total ruin of man, and it is the same God who bears testimony to the complete efficacy of Christ's work. This is of all importance: for no one thoroughly knows the badness of his own heart, and no one fully knows the perfections of Christ. We shall be learners throughout eternity of Christ's perfections.

"I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." *v.* 14. Most marvellous! Look at man. Is he not most skilfully and wonderfully contrived? See in the same person the loftiest flights of thought, and the most debasing passions! Physically and morally

we are fearfully and wonderfully made. If we regard the Second Man, the Lord from heaven, Immanuel, God with us, the One testified unto by Jehovah of hosts as "the Man My Fellow" (Zechariah xiii. 7); Him Who fills the highest heavens, and yet was down here a Babe in a manger; Who could command the waves, and still the storm, but was buffeted by His creatures; how fearfully and wonderfully made! But we are looking at the psalm in another aspect; and who so fearfully and wonderfully made as one quickened by the Spirit, the believer in God's testimony to His Son? The believer holds to two heads. As naturally constituted, we are under "the law of sin and death." Men may deny that man is so constituted, but the fact is before our eyes, that no progress man has made, no advancement, no cultivation, no invention, has liberated him from "the law of sin and death." This is what human philanthropy cannot achieve. But it is here that divine philanthropy begins. "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ," (Ephes. ii. 4, 5.) "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. viii. 2.) How fearfully and wonderfully are believers made,

holding both to the first and to the Second Adam! And when we look within, how fearfully and wonderfully made! Our souls know what it is to leave things here behind, and to find Christ excellently precious; and then some vain trifle comes in, and pulls us down, and makes us more intensely interested about the passing trifle, than all the solid realities which are in Christ Jesus. Those who have learned something of themselves know how often their songs of gratitude and praise are succeeded by murmurings, as with Israel of old; yea, they know how the atheistic thought that would dethrone God has battled with the spirit which would fain praise God for redeeming grace and delivering mercy. Those who are taught by the Spirit of truth are learning the unmitigated evil of the flesh. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James i. 17.) In practice we often contradict this truth, probing into that which is below, and only learning disappointment. But God is never disappointed when we are disappointed. He leads us to be disappointed with ourselves in order that we may better learn our need of, and be satisfied with, Christ. It is hard and painful for us to be strip-

ped of self, to be searched and winnowed. We become disappointed with the world, disappointed with other Christians (and this may be needful), but, when God winnows our path, we learn to be thoroughly disappointed with ourselves.

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His *handiwork*.” (Ps. xix. 1.) But “we are His *workmanship*.” We are not workers for the salvation of the soul (*every one truly converted has that*); 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. For we are His *workmanship*.” (Eph. ii. 8-10.) And this we are “to the intent that *now* unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church *the manifold wisdom of God*” (Eph. iii. 10), as well as that “*in the ages to come* He might show the *exceeding riches of His grace* in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” (Eph. ii. 7.) The Church of the living God is God’s peculiar *workmanship*. There is a false church, the *workmanship* of man under the guidance of Satan, a counterfeit of the true Church. If Christ has a bride, there is a harlot audaciously claiming this honoured place. If God has His city, the heavenly Jerusalem, man is rearing Babylon (let us beware of her deli-

cacies). If there are those who are sealed with the seal of the living God in their foreheads, there are those who have the mark of the Beast. But the Church of the living God is so peculiarly the workmanship of God, that whenever man has attempted to uphold, strengthen, or form it, he has undermined, weakened, and marred it. God is a jealous God, and He is very jealous of man's presumption in interfering with His Church.

"My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being *unperfect*; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." (vv. 15, 16.) We may remark, in passing, that "substance yet being *unperfect*," is one word in the original. Our translators have made use of a strange word "*unperfect*," in order to show that the sense is not that of *imperfect*. The newborn babe is a perfect human being, as truly as a man. The rudiments of man are all wrapped up in the babe. The eye of God sees all these rudiments, before they are unfolded. When a sign was given from heaven to the shepherds it was, "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Sav-

iour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you. Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." (Luke ii. 11, 12.) A strange sign; yet the testimony of heaven, and faith's acknowledgment, was to that Babe, as Christ, Jehovah.

Disappointed, as we must needs be, with ourselves, let us mark this, that, with respect to the members of Christ's mystical body, God sees in every one of them the rudiments of that which shall shine forth in the day of Christ, to the praise of God's glory. We might avail ourselves of many things in nature in illustration; as, for instance, the fragile egg of a bird. That egg is perfect; but we do not see in it the bill, the foot, or the wing on which the future lark shall rise toward heaven, trilling its sweet song. But God sees all these there. He did not tell Abraham, A father of many nations *will I make* thee; but, "*I have made* thee." (Gen. xvii. 5.) It is written, "Whom He did did foreknow, He also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among *many* brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified." (Rom. viii. 29, 30.)

God must speak His own language. There are links in the divine chain, and our experience may come in as though to separate them; but God sees in each "vessel of mercy" one "afore-prepared unto glory." The members of Christ's mystical body are being here formed out of strange materials, and in a strange place, for that hour when they shall be glorified saints. Angels *see* God's works in creation, in providence, and in those things in which they are the executors of His will; but they see nothing to compare with the wonderful workmanship of God in quickening into life those who were dead in trespasses and sins. But how unlike are such to glory; groaning in bodies of sin and death; groaning in the midst of, and with, a groaning creation; how unlike glory! But God sees us "yet being *unperfect*." He sees us through and through; and He sees us as His grace has made us to be in Christ. He too has made provision for us in Christ, for all that He knows we need. "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John v. 24.)

There is a blessed turn in the psalm at verses 17, 18: "How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the

sum of them ! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand." This is a blessed theme, the theme of God's fathomless and illimitable grace. Here there is real liberty. Do we know what it is to have our own thoughts, (so narrow, so beggarly, so mean) beaten down by God's high, generous, liberal thoughts, His thoughts of us as to what we are in Christ ? "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore," says Jesus, "that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto ME." (John vi. 45.) JESUS is the great thought of God ; God's thoughts are expressed to us in Him. It is not an unfallen angel, but a sinner quickened by the Spirit of God, who can thus get into the deep thoughts of God. When He is winnowing our ways, how precious are His thoughts to us ! We sometimes try to put one another to shame, to degrade one another ; but God works for an expected end. He only humbles us in order to exalt us ; He suffers us to hunger in order to prove us, and do us good at our latter end. (Deut. viii. 16.)

The time is come when judgment must begin at the house of God. He will search each Christian, and make him conscious of the ground on which he can stand before God. "If it first begin at us, what shall the

end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (I Peter iv. 17, 18.) We can understand the meaning of the word "scarcely" when our path is winnowed. It does not imply either uncertainty or imperfection in the salvation which is of God; but we learn that salvation must be of God, and we learn also our constant need of it. Finished and complete in itself, faith apprehends it as continually needed, as though our whole life were one of escapes, and "He that is our God is the God of salvation." (Ps. lxxviii. 20. In this verse 'salvation' is plural in original.) He hath delivered, He doth deliver, in Whom we trust that He will deliver. (2 Cor. i. 10.) Those who, in exercise of soul, find out what is in their own hearts, well know that all that is going on in the world around them is but the manifestation of the very evil the principles of which God has been discovering, and they have been judging, in their own hearts.

There is a present restraint, under God's hand, on man's evil. Once, for a moment, God removed it: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." (Luke xxii. 53.) Again He will remove it, and men will be given over to strong delusion, to believe a lie, that they all may be damned who be-

lieve not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.) The present moment is a solemn one: popery and semi-popery spreading on one hand; rationalism and infidelity on the other. Of our own selves we must judge righteous judgment. "Surely Thou wilt slay the wicked, O God." (vv. 19, 20.) If He is sifting His own people, He will judge all this proud Christianity, whether respecting sacerdotal or sacramental efficacy, or despising lordship and government. But is the knowledge of being delivered from the wrath to come to settle us in self-complacency? By no means; but under the sheltering certainty that God *has* searched and knows us (as expressed in verse 1 of this psalm), we can turn this truth into a prayer, and say, in the words of the concluding verses, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." vv. 23, 24. None but he who knows the shelter of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the mercy-seat of God, and is conscious that God has already searched him, and known him, could put up such a prayer. God must be acknowledged as Omniscient. We need Him to help us in searching ourselves, because we are partial in self-judgment. The beam is in our own

eye, the mote in our brother's eye, and nothing but the Spirit of God can enable us to get the beam out. It is He Who searches the reins and hearts Who has said, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. x. 17); and it is because He remembers them no more that we can ask Him to show us what debtors we are to His grace.

There was once a man, of like passions with ourselves, one who had cursed, and sworn, and denied His Lord, but for whom that Lord had prayed, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you. that *he may sift you as wheat*: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (Luke xxii. 31, 32.) And after this terrible sifting, when the Lord searched him, twice he answered readily to the challenge as oft repeated, "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." But the question was repeated a third time; and "Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me? And he said unto Him, Lord, *Thou knowest all things*: Thou knowest that I love Thee." (John xxi.)

The Lord, in order to get at the bottom of our hearts, may have to remove a great heap of rubbish, such as self-confidence, pride, and vanity; but He knows what His own grace has done for us, and He will

His love at the bottom of our hearts. He had to remove a great deal from Peter—a mass of fleshly confidence and forward zeal. He may have to take away from us much of that in which we have gloried; but, after all, He will bring out, “Thou knowest that I love Thee”—personal affection for Himself. In the winnowing of our paths much may have to be winnowed out that has been cherished more than Christ Himself; but there is at the bottom faith in Christ and love to Christ. What a mixture of double-mindedness, of pride, of vanity, there is in the best thing we do! Our prayers, our praises, and our service, are so poor and worthless; and yet we are proud of them. We seek praise from our fellow-men for the very things we have to confess as tainted with sin before God. What need, therefore, to bare our hearts, and say, “See if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” We, perhaps, are not able to detect some particular evil in our own souls, and others may not suspect it. There are instances in which we may thankfully say, “I know nothing by [against] myself;” yet how needful to add, “Yet am I not hereby justified; but He that judgeth me is the Lord.” (I Cor. iv. 4.) But when the Lord applies Himself to His priestly, discerning judgment as the One

Who searcheth the reins and trieth the heart, we may be led to one discovery after another of some crookedness of motive, sufficient of itself to disturb us, but used by the Lord to lead us into "the way everlasting." And is not this way Christ Himself, the only way, the true way, the living way, the way everlasting?

How prone are we to depart from this way! Therefore is He pleased to search out our own ways, that He may lead us therein, to show us that Christ must be practically to us that which He declares Himself to be in His word, "The first and the last," our Alpha and our Omega. Happy is it if we are under that process which however humbling to ourselves, and humiliating in the eyes of others, leads us still to justify God in using it, and to say, "Search me, O God." All is well that leads us "in the way everlasting," that beats us out of our own ways, and brings us there; that makes us, in result, value Christ for the way, as well as at the outset, and the end; Christ learnt as our portion to live upon, as well as known for the pardon of our sins.

The Lord grant to all His people the blessed secret of self-judgment. "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." But if we do not, and are judged, "we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world." (I Cor. xi. 31, 32.)

THE HIDDEN MANNA.

Oh shall I, when in yon bright sphere
Know fully all Thy pathway here—
Those footsteps to my heart so dear—
Lord Jesus?

Wilt Thou not then re-touch, re-trace—
In glory's light, that path of grace,—
For me, while gazing on Thy face,
Lord Jesus?

Will it not be Thy joy to show
The secrets of Thy life of woe,—
Clothed in the love that brought Thee low ?
Those walks and ways, each act and word,
Which oft my inmost soul have stirred,
Penn'd by Thy Spirit in Thy word :—
Those works and deeds. none wrought in vain—
But which “unwritten” must remain,
Because “the world could not contain”
Their fulness.

Those thirty years, when few could see
Thy life ; its meaning, none but He
Who all His pleasure found in Thee ;
Whose eye did Thy daily walk perceive—
Whose heart its fragrance did receive—
Whose bosom Thou didst never leave,
Thy Father's.

Those after years,—so brief—so great
When Thou on needy man didst wait,
Low bending to his lost estate :
And standing forth for God alone
His heart's deep fulness to make known,
Nought claiming :—though 'twas all Thine own.
The sorrow which Thy spirit knew
In finding none who cared (or few,)
For all heaven's wealth,—nor deemed it true.

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The deep, deep solitude of thought—
 Rich in its treasures, all unsought
 By those Thou wouldst with life have bought :

The full unbroken peace and rest
 Thy lowly spirit e'er possessed,
 While man's rude turmoil round Thee pressed :

The joy in which man found no part,
 For ever welling in Thy heart
 In Him whose grace Thou wouldst impart.

Communion which had ne'er begun
 Between the Father and His Son,
 Eternal, with no break, save—*one*.

That awful break ! which made Thee cry
 In wonder and amazement—" *Why*."
 So new,—so strange,—and then,—to die !
 But well *we* know the reason " *Why*,"

Lord Jesus !

Who but Thyself could have stepp'd in
 To that dread gap, to bear our sin,
 Whom all Thy grace had failed to win ?

But hush ! no tongue can tell the tale,
 All human words and thoughts must fail,
 No mortal eye can pierce that veil.

I know not now one thousandth part
 Of those past sorrows of Thy heart :

But when I see Thee as Thou art,—
 And with Thee in God's glory shine,—
 Shall I not share His joy, and Thine,—
 And know the Hidden Manna mine,

Lord Jesus !

Freed from all else, on Thee to gaze
 And study Thee through endless days
 While sounding forth Thy matchless praise

Lord Jesus !

PHILIPPIANS III.

Notes of an Address.

I think it is an important thing, in these days, to avoid the natural tendency of the heart, to measure the truth of God by the expression we have of it here on earth; or even to measure the truth by the apprehension we have of it here. We see the truth and know it; we look round at the expression of it, and then the heart fails, when we find how little the expression really answers to the object before it. The truth is presented to us by God Himself; the expression fails, and then the tendency comes in to accept a lower standard, than God has given. The standard remains the same. God does not lower the standard because of our short-coming. It is always the same standard in spite of our failures, and God seeks in His grace to cause that standard to have its effect upon us. The more we are occupied with the standard, the more we shall be conscious of how we fail.

Now one mark of being in the presence of God is consciousness of failure and shortcomings; there is no thought in the presence of God of how far I have attained. There is satisfaction in the Object, but with that, the conscious sense of how far short we come in practice and ways and life here.

Before the soul can really look at the Ob-

ject, as presented here, it must get the truth, put before it in the beginning of the chapter: "We are the circumcision;," not of it—we represent it, we are it. He is laying the basis upon which the soul can stand; and be occupied with, can gaze in simplicity and uprightness of heart at, the Object set before it. The Object is Christ in glory, not Christ upon the cross; "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection." It is not gazing upon Christ on the cross as an offering for sin, but Christ in glory at the right hand of God in heaven. In verse 3 he lays the ground. It is no longer Israel. If we are truly the children of God, and have this Object before us, the sole ground upon which we can stand and gaze upon such an Object, is that given us in this verse. If we think of ourselves, and what we are, we can only go back to this verse, and the truth therein contained: God has set us before Himself as representing the entire cutting off of the old man; not an effort of the old man to turn over a new leaf; not a cultivating of the old man; not a giving of the heart to Christ; but a consenting in the bottom of the heart to this—that we represent the entire cutting off of the old man. What takes the place of the old man? The new Man, the Christ of God, and that Christ in heavenly glory. That is the only ground

upon which we can stand before God, not looking for feelings, or apprehensions, or anything in ourselves at all; not looking even to see how far we appreciate that Object; but gazing on that Object. The consequence being that you are able to witness to that Object, you reflect that Object. It is, too, the only way in which the soul is really honest with God.

Look at Luke x. for instance. There we have a man not really honest with God, a man who comes and asks, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Tell me, the Lord says, how do you read the law? What is your version of it? He tells the Lord Jesus, and he had read it rightly. Do that and live, the Lord says. Here the dishonest heart comes out: the man turns to the Lord, and he does not say, Who is my God? He avoids the keen edge of the word, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," &c. When the Lord applies the word out of His own lips to him, he does not say, Who is my God? It is a heart not prepared to face the truth, and he says, "Who is my neighbour?" The word applied by the Lord Jesus cuts down to the heart and conscience; he cannot stand it, therefore he seeks to "justify himself." He was surrounded by all the marks of who his God was; and what it was to have to do with

God; but He seeks to "justify himself." Then the Lord goes on with him and seeks to take him up on that ground. He comes in, in all the wondrous blessedness of divine grace, to the heart that is set to avoid the keen edge of the word. I will tell you who your neighbour is, He says. You have no such neighbour in all the universe of God as God Himself! And He has come down to you where you were, half dead, stripped of everything, robbed of everything. Here He presents HIMSELF as come not merely to give forgiveness of sins; He takes him to the inn and takes care of him. You remember the blessed story, always so fresh to all of us. He places him at His own cost for ever. He makes no bargain with the owner of the inn. He says, Whatever you spend I will repay, he is at My cost forever. On no other ground will He have to say to the man.

Now, before we go back, just look, for a moment, at one who is really fit for the place we have in our chapter. Mary had the divine Object before her soul. The Lord Jesus was in Martha's house—she was occupied about "much serving." There was one there who sat at "Jesus' feet, and heard His word," and the Lord took care that she should not be interrupted. What was it, she heard? Was it anything good about

herself? He did not come to flatter, He came "to seek and to save that which was lost." Do you know what He had come to do? That was part of what she heard. Do you know what He was Himself? That was another part of it. She heard of the goodness of God, of the love of God, we may be sure. It was bringing God Himself before her, in the delight of satisfying His own heart of love, in such a world as this; and He takes care she shall not be interrupted in hearing of it.

Do you say there is no fruit in that occupation? Beloved friends, we must be empty vessels before we can be full ones. The great difficulty is to be an empty vessel. We think we have something, instead of being empty to be filled with Himself and His love. I do not think it is a question of what we can do for Him; it is the heart so taken up with Him, so kept by Him, that testimony to Himself flows out, because it cannot be kept in. It flows out because the heart is full.

Now read verse 3. That is what we are: "We are the circumcision," And then He speaks of the flesh. It is not sin now, but the religious nature that the flesh could have to boast of; the religious man was taken up and disposed of, because displaced by Another. It is not now a religion of

God's establishing, but a Person; it is having to do with a Person; being here in this world, simply and heartily and uprightly gazing upon that Person. The consequence is you reflect that Person.

You remember when the Lord comes to the disciples in the boat, He comes to them walking on the water. They all think they have seen a spirit, and are alarmed by the supernatural manifestation before them. He was doing an impossibility for man—walking on the waves! Peter said, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee on the water." Jesus says, "Come." Peter gets out of the boat and does the same thing, *the very same thing that Jesus Himself was doing*. The one, who has his eye fixed on Him, does the same thing that He does. The reflection of the Object comes simply from occupation with the Object. He looks neither to the right hand nor to the left, and he walks on the water. There is the reflection of Christ Himself. There is the testimony. There is no testimony when Peter looks at the circumstances around him, and begins to sink. Then he says, "Lord save *me*." It is not bearing witness to what Christ was Himself, but he cries to Him, for the power that shall uphold him.

There we see plainly, I think, the two powers that are always there: the power of

the Object that can produce likeness to the Object, and make the one occupied with it answer to the Object Himself. But there is another power, and that power is always ready, that hand is always stretched out—the power to save. But that is not testimony. Peter, sinking, cries, “Lord save me,” and the hand is stretched out immediately; He is near enough to stretch out His hand, and save him from sinking. The power is always in the Object, but if we are looking to the right hand or to the left, the power fails us for the time being; but the other power is always there—the power to save. It does not do to look at the effect produced, or what the consequences are—we soon then get back to be occupied with ourselves.

I do not know, whether we have apprehended what it is to be occupied simply with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; and then, with what corresponds to Him down here. You cannot be rightly occupied with what is dear to Him down here, unless you are occupied with Him first, and what suits Him.

Verses 8, 9, 10. Here is a man with an Object outside Himself altogether. I look forward to that Object “That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection.” We know what He has done—we should not

be Christians if we did not; we must know that before our consciences can have rest—but it is *Himself* here: “That I may know Him”—a Person before me. The very first step, in my introduction to Himself, is the knowledge of what He has done, and when I know that, I seek to know Himself, the One who has done it; and the very motives, not only that actuated Him to come down to seek and to save the lost, but that actuated Him in all His life here. I see One who had the glory of God before Him, in everything He did. I cannot get near Him unless I know the effect of what He has done. It has been to transfer me from the ground, on which I stood as a lost creature, to the ground not only of being forgiven and pardoned, but of being received and established by God Himself, in the very same favour as the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Have you ever asked yourself that question: How much does God love me? Just as much as He loves the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Surely we speak of it with bated breath. We look at ourselves, we think of ourselves, God loves *me* as He loves the Lord Jesus Christ! He has accepted me in Him! Received me into that same favour, loves me as much as He loves Christ! You come back again then to

the ground of grace, and drink afresh of that blessed stream. It is the sovereignty of divine love and grace that has set us before Him, in order to delight His own heart in us. Poor, needy things we may be, but He has us before Himself, that He may satisfy His own heart, in bestowing all His love upon us, that He may have, always going up to Him the praises of those hearts that have found all in Himself. It is the having to do with God Himself.

As to myself, he says, "I count all things but loss . . . that I may win Christ, [or 'have Christ as my gain.']" And that is the one Object, he says, I have before me now: "That I may know him." Not, that I may go back and study His wonderful, blessed life on earth; wonderful and blessed it is; wonderful in grace and mercy; but that I may know Him in the power of His resurrection; what it is now to have to do with Him who when here upon earth said: "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" To have to do with Him who is now unstraitened in all His desires; He has passed through it, and is now the other side of death and judgment; to know what it is to be taken up by Himself, at His cost, at His charge every moment of our time down here, that He may express out

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of such a thing as I am what can conduce to His glory.

But how soon a kind of cloud comes over that! Something of self comes in. How soon a cloud or mist comes over it, and we turn away from it, and we look at other things, and we think things ought to be so and so, and like this, or like that. And so they ought to be, perhaps. But He knows a great deal more about it than you and I do, and He looks for subjection to His hand. He looks for us to be in His hand, that in the midst of all these things, He may express from us and through us, what is to His honour and glory.

It is true, we are in the school, but it is a blessed school. I think, it was said, if we are not good at school, we are not good at home. Had we not better put it the other way? The one who is good at home, will be good at school; we must begin with home first. Here is the secret of all good conduct. In the school we are tested, the heart is tested, and failure appears, and this is the reason—we are not, in our inmost souls, right with Himself, not walking in simplicity and uprightness, not walking as the Apostle says here of himself, really clear of everything but this one blessed Object before him: "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection," and here

in this world "the fellowship of his sufferings." It is not possible for you to enter into the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ here, unless you "know Him, and the power of His resurrection."

Let me ask, What answers to a glorified Christ? A suffering, dependent people down here! And we are content to be a suffering people here in this world. Why? Because it conduces to Christ's glory. It conduces to His glory that His people should be a suffering people in the place where He was crucified—God forbid they should be anything else! It was the ruin of the testimony always, when people began looking for something here, something that the heart could rest upon, and that the eye could see, instead of just the fellowship of His sufferings; "That I may know HIM, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made comformable unto His death." Not, that I may lay hold of something, but that I may, by the grace of God, understand what He is, in His greatness, in His goodness, in His infinite love. What has He apprehended you for? To save you from hell? That is the poorest thing! It is a blessed mercy, surely, but is that all Christ died for? No! It is to have you for Himself, that He may be glorified thereby. He has laid hold of

me for a purpose. We cannot perhaps always express what that purpose is. We must know Himself, before we can know it; we must get near enough to Himself to know what that is, for which He has apprehended us; (just as Mary could sit at His feet, and hear His word, and He would take care she should not be interrupted) letting Him pour into our souls what His blessed mind is. About *us*, and our ways down here? No! About *Himself* and His ways. Not about yourself; He has cut you off, and now He has taken you up, and set you before Him, that He may talk to you of Himself and His ways. There is no such blessed occupation as that.

If you look at 1 Thesealonians i. 3, 4, you see the same Spirit producing the same thought, the same desire. They are waiting for His Son from heaven. That is the one Object I have before me, he says, Christ Himself, and that I may know the power of His resurrection. The first effect of the Gospel is that you become a waiting people; the effect of occupation with Christ is that you are content to be a suffering people for His sake. Waiting for His Son and suffering for His sake. Whatever the past history may have been, that is the place we can always take

through God's grace, where we can always find ourselves at home. We shall never be disappointed if we are only content to be a waiting and a suffering people with Christ; the Object before us there—Himself, and the power of His resurrection, and waiting for Himself from heaven. If we are just content with that, we shall have no blighted hopes; no short-comings there, no expectations unfulfilled there, nothing to mar nor to soil. Paul was not satisfied with his own sufferings, but with the Object that led him to suffer—satisfied with Himself for whom we wait. That is the ground He sets before us; a narrow path it may be, but a path that goes on changelessly. The difficulty is, people try to make out another pathway, and so sorrow comes in, and trial. People get distrustful and cast down because they look for something else. God sets before us the consequence of having to do with Christ, and waiting for His coming. If I have Christ in glory before me, I am a suffering person here, and I am content to be it, because He is glorified by it, and I am in a world which crucified Him, and I am waiting for that blessed One who is coming.

Look at the end of this chapter. It is not isolation. "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded," &c. That is the great healer of divisions, where there is

singleness of heart and eye to Himself; a causer of divisions where there is not. If we are going to walk for Him and His glory, it must be simply as subject, dependent, suffering, waiting people. You say, It is a difficult path? It is more than difficult; it is impossible, unless you go back to verse 3. I must know HIM and accept that ground. And if we are going to walk as dependent, subject, suffering, waiting people, that will be the great healer of all strifes and divisions, but it will be a great means of manifesting those who will not walk that way. Only, through grace, let me look straight forward. (Cf. Prov. iv. 25.)

You will find one prayer that seems to me to be always a prayer in the sanctuary: "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." (Ps. xvii. 5; cf. Ps. cxix. 117.) On that pathway there is no foothold for the flesh; and thus he expresses dependence upon Him who alone can hold up, but who is ever ready to do so, blessed be His name! "We are the circumcision." That is what God, in His wondrous grace, has revealed in these days; His people represent the cutting off of the flesh, and the setting up and upholding in this world, by the power, and at the cost of Another, of a people to be maintained for His glory. If we are content to be that, there is no disappointment. Disappointment comes in where the heart is looking for, and seeking something, which does not conduce to His glory.

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Extract from a letter written by a beloved brother (who was a doctor, now with the Lord), to his sister when in ill health.

MY DEAREST

I was sorry, I can hardly say disappointed, to find that you had not strictly carried out my prescriptions. I think I know enough to be able to say that I am sure they would have done you good. I have been so sorry to hear that you have been so suffering. I well know what it is, and have again and again found, through mercy, relief from the line of treatment I indicated in my last letter to you. I can well imagine that those around you can hardly enter into your feelings, unless indeed they have felt the same; but I can and do, dear. I fully trust you will come out of it soon and grow stronger as, if it please God, you grow older. The great thing is not to fight against it: accept it as coming from the Lord, and wait, adoringly wait, till He is pleased to heal you. Not that He is not often pleased to use remedies: but after all, all is in His loving hands. It may not be a lesson for you only, but for others also—for *me* amongst the rest. We all feel your suffering, greatly, and many prayers go up daily for you. Your part is to be still—do nothing—a hard lesson, but perhaps one you need. Above all do not seek and look for a second cause:

accept no other cause or reason for your suffering, but simply the Lord's will. If you were and had been as bright a saint as Paul you would probably have had to go through far more than you ever have or will: read 2nd Corrinthians xi., and see if you have ever had to suffer anything like that. No doubt he was wonderfully sustained, but if God could sustain Him through his great trials, surely He can sustain us through our lesser ones. Perhaps you think you have failed in some way or other, or altogether. Well, dear, I can only say that that ought to be a settled question. I never heard or read of anybody who hadn't or didn't, except the Blessed Lord Himself. But it is just because you, and I, and the rest of us, have failed, and come short of the glory of God, that we need a Saviour. Blessed be God, He will get all the glory, while we get all the benefit. If we hadn't and didn't fail we should not *want* a Saviour, and we should get the credit and glory. I am glad, through grace, to say with St. Paul, that I prefer "the righteousness which is of God in Christ" to any righteousness that I could possibly have wrought out by and for myself. We stand before God in His *own* righteousness which is manifested by His giving Christ (who bore our sins) His present place, and will be further manifested by

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His giving us manifestly His (i. e., Christ's place) before Him in glory. Oh! thought beyond all thought.

The source of our blessing is *never* what *we* have done, but what He has done; *never* what *we* are, but what *He* is. Our enjoyment may (not always) depend on our walk and course, but the source is always in God. The Blessed Lord Jesus Christ has bought us and paid for us and He has no kind of thought of letting us go; either by our own perverse will, or by the will of any other power or creature, blessed be His Name!

The Lord never yet gave a single saint to feel satisfaction with him, or herself; and never will. If you want to feel satisfied with yourself—you never will. If you wish to be satisfied, turn your eye off self to Him. "He can satisfy the heart's desire, He only." Nor will He ever give you to be a little bit pleased with yourself, no not a little bit. You would soon be taken up with that little bit and forget all about Him. This could not please Him nor be good for you. No dearest . . . that wouldn't do at all. Give it all up as a downright bad job. Listen! Hear Him say, "Be still, and know that I am God." Mr Darby said, I am sure I do not love the Lord enough, but I am sure it is the Lord I love; I have

no confidence in my own heart, but all confidence in Him. He has died for me, that is what I count on; He has put away my sins, that is what I need; He is coming again, that is what I am looking for. Bunyan found that Satan could say, "Sell Him, sell Him," much faster than he could answer "Not for a thousand worlds." Another Saint, I forget his name, had a much better plan. He simply prayed, "Lord do Thou answer for me."

If you could pierce a little hole in the cloud you would see that all is bright above. All is bright on God's side.

FRAGMENTS—"The place where the truth and power of God are gathering souls must be a corresponding place here to the place we have in glory. The Holy Ghost guides us in to the path, and is our power to walk in it. But truth is not enough, or being in the right path is not enough. We want the company of Christ. I must talk *with* Him by the way, not merely speak *of* Him; but I must know Him more intimately than my most familiar friend."

"It is the attractive power of Christ that keeps me out of all that is around, and finding Him the Companion of the journey. But if we walk with Christ, we must walk with Him *in white*; no spot of the world."

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FOR EVER WITH THE LORD.

This earth is but a wilderness
Of toil, and pain, and sorrow ;
But Christ is near our souls to bless,
And lightens all our sore distress,
By pointing to the morrow,—
The bright, eternal morrow,
When we shall be,
O Lord, with Thee,
Blest end of all our sorrow.

With swelling hearts, and longing eyes,
We heed the watchman's warning :
His Midnight cry, "The Bridegroom's nigh!"
And watch to see appear on high,
The bright Star of the morning,—
The fair, unclouded morning,
When we shall be,
O Lord, with Thee:
We long to see its dawning.

"Behold, I come! I quickly come!"
We hear the Bridegroom telling;
"My Bride no more on earth shall roam;
"I come to take her to My home,
My own celestial dwelling:"—
Thy own celestial dwelling,
Where we shall be,
O Lord, with Thee,
Thy praise for ever swelling.



THE MORNING STAR

The path of the Church across the earth is that of an unnoticed stranger. "The world knoweth us not, because it knew HIM not." (1 John iii. 1.) And as her path *across* the earth is thus untracked, so is her path *from* it to be. All about her is, "a stranger here." And as the world around knows not the church, nor will be a witness of the *act*

of her translation, she herself knows not the *time* of such translation. But we know this link between us and the heavens will be formed ere the kingdom, or "the world to come," be manifested. Because the saints are to be the companions of the King of that kingdom in the *first* acts of it, that is, when He bears the sword of judgment which is to clear the scene for the sceptre of peace and righteousness—as He has promised, "he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron."

"I will give him the morning star."

Is there not something of a link, something of an intermediate, connecting action, intimated by this?

The sun is that light in the heavens which connects itself with the earth, with the interests and the doings of the children of men. The sun rules the day, the moon and the stars the night. But the morning star receives no appointment in such a system. "He appointed the moon for seasons, the sun knoweth his going down. Thou makest darkness and it is night, wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their

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dens. Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening." The morning star has no place in such arrangements. It is beautiful, but it shines in a solitary hour. The children of men have laid them down, and their sleep, in divine mercy, is still sweet to them, while the morning star is decking the face of the sky.

The season in which the sun shines is *ours*. I mean, the sun is the companion of *man*. But the morning star does not, in this way, recall man to his labour. It appears rather at an hour which is quite its own, neither day nor night. The child of the *earlier* morning, the one who is up before the sun, the watchman who has gone through the night sees it, but none but he.

The sun, in the language or thought of Scripture, is for the *kingdom*. As we read, "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God; and he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth." (2 Sam. xxiii, 3, 4, see also Matt. xiii. 43; xvii. 1-2.

I ask, then, is there not to be expected by us a light before the light of the kingdom? Are not these signs in the heavens set there for times and seasons? Are there not voices in such spheres? Is there not a mystery in the morning star, in the hour of its solitary shining, as well as in the sun when

he riseth in his strength upon the earth? Is it not the sign in the heavens of One whose appearing is not for the world, but for a people who wait for an early, unearthly Lord? The hope of Israel, the earthly people, greets the day-spring (Luke i. 78)—but the Church welcomes the MORNING STAR.

“I am the root and offspring of David, and the Bright and MORNING STAR, and the Spirit and the Bride say, come.” (Rev. xxii. 16, 17.)

All things are ours: and among this glorious *all*, the morning star, for our transfiguration to be *like* Jesus, and the rising sun for our day of power *with* Jesus.

In the progress of our meditations we have watched a light in the heavens earlier than that of the day-spring, a light which Jesus, the Son of God, amid His other glories, claims to be, and to share with His saints. “I will give him the Morning Star.”

And after the morning star has shone for its brief hour, the sun in its appointed season will rise. “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” And it shall be “a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.” “Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad, let the sea roar, and the ful-

ness thereof, let the field be joyful and all that is therein; then shall the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord; for He cometh to judge the earth."

"Scenes surpassing fable, and yet true."

One has said, "Faith has a world of its own." Surely we may say, this is so—faith has indeed a world of its own. O for power in the soul to walk there; and that power lies in the earnestness and fervour of faith, which is but the simplicity and reality of faith! Blessed, beloved, when we have power to enter into and dwell in our own world! Have we not our own world at this living moment, when by faith our souls have access "into this grace wherein we stand"? That grace is the present peaceful, happy dwelling-place of the *conscience* sprinkled and purified, and the bright dwelling-place of *hope*, from whence it looks out, "for the glory of God." (Rom. v. 1-2). It may be poorly known: but it is ours. And amid all this conscious infirmity, our faith has but to glorify the Son of God, for deeper enjoyment of HIM is the diviner progress.



"The things which are seen are temporal; the things that are not seen are eternal."

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,"

—(2 Cor. iv. 18; Heb. xi. 7.)

THE LAST DAYS.

“As Jannes and Jambres, withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth.” (2 Tim. iii. 8).

The last words of any servant of God, must carry with them a feeling of deep solemnity; and especially so, when we think of them as written or spoken at the close of their earthly service, the fruit of varied and lengthened experience, and with the solemn judgment of all, which intercourse with God for years had given. With how much greater power must they come to us, as the words of inspiration given by the Spirit of God, as these last words of Paul to Timothy—his own son in the faith.

The Scriptures of God, speaking generally, contain Truth revealed for Eternity: they also contain Truth for Time, which will have no application when Time has passed away; yet the issues of what they teach—though not for Time, will have their bearing on the eternal history of all, to whom addressed, or to whom they were spoken. Such is Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy; such the last words of this “Man of God.” Eternal in the issues unfolded, they were written for time, and have their special application now, before time has passed away.

What must have been the feelings of

Paul, in the midst of the corruption of that which was best—the best thing ever seen on earth next to the only Perfect One. Would that one's heart, by God's Spirit taught, might approach these last words of Paul (2 Timothy), with somewhat of those feelings that filled his soul, as he wrote to his beloved son in the faith: the one of whom he could say "I have no man likeminded." When we look around at the carnal, worldly ones, whom we meet day after day in His church; carnal and worldly though His: we little wonder at His anguish of soul, and the growing and deepening preciousness of Christ "Whom he had believed." As he turns away from all on earth in which his heart lived, and for which he laboured and toiled for so many long years; laboured and toiled with sufferings unparalleled in the history of any one "man subject to like passions as we are;" and turns to HIM who alone was worthy of all his heart's devotedness, to say, "I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

How blessedly Paul's heart turns to the Lord who stood by him, and strengthened

him ; who delivered him, and would deliver ; and the heart of the aged servant goes out to Timothy, at such an hour as is before us in his Second Epistle to his dearly beloved son ; before he was “poured forth,” (Chap. iv. 6, see Greek), as the time of his “release” was at hand.

There is something striking in the opening words of this Epistle ; and that which is not the general testimony of His other writings, in that he speaks of himself as an “Apostle, according to the promise of *life* which is in Christ Jesus.” He refers more largely to this *life*—“Eternal life, promised before the world began,” in his earlier letter to Titus. But here too he is an Apostle according to this “promise of *life* in Christ Jesus.” This has marked significance in the Epistle, the whole way through. The exhortations here become more intensely individual too, as things had reached the ruin which is now before us ; and as this striking notice of *life* is so prominently pressed.

Now the tendency of the soul of man—of saints—is ever to go from one extreme to the other, almost in everything ; and in hardly anything more than in spiritual things. Many who longed for truths ; having found that which had delivered them from systems of men in the professing

church, have been pained and disappointed at the failure and weakness of those, who with themselves had sought and found it, and walked in the divine truths of the Church of God, calling on the Lord out of a pure heart. They have been disheartened at all further hopes of corporate perfectness being possible, and have leaped to the other extreme, that all being now so broken and ruined, there is nothing left but individual godliness, and a path of units drawn together by their common spiritual need. Have we not heard it said at times, Well, the corporate testimony is over, but we have the word, Matt. xviii. 20 to fall back upon—the misuse of the passage, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” All such thoughts are the cry of unbelief. So that when we get *discouraged* about things in the church of God, we prove that we are not, or never were, on right ground in our souls.

It is the constant tendency of the soul to get occupied with evil (see Matt. xxiv. 12), and to sink down under the thought that it is greater than good. To do so is to suppose that it is greater than God! It is a great thing to count upon Him: to feel that *He* is over all, and would fill our hearts with the strength of His grace that is in Christ

Jesus. In no epistle do we find such varied power of evil recognized as in Second Timothy, and yet in no epistle is boldness and courage more pressed upon the servant, in the midst of it all, than in it. God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and etc. . . . "Be not thou ashamed of the testimony of the Lord. . . . But be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God." "Hold fast the form of sound words." "Be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus." "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." "Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions." "Make full proof of thy ministry." etc., etc.,

But I would now examine first of all, this thought of "*life*," which is so much before his mind. He speaks of himself as an apostle according to the promise of *life* which is in Christ Jesus. We get back here to what was, before the world was: "eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the ages of time," (Greek) but brought forth by the Gospel while time was there, and when man had been fully tried and found wanting. God "Hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works," (that is, our responsibility, according to which judgment was earned); "but according to his own purpose and grace,

which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the ages of time, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished ['annulled'] death, and hath brought *life*, and incorruptibility to light through the Gospel." Here we have the "ages of time," during the first man's history, passed over in silence; given before they began, and brought out when his history was passed though displayed and unfolded in the Person, and path, and appearing in this scene of Jesus Christ. The eternal life that was with the Father was manifested in the Son—a Man on earth. A life of which every motion and expression was a life of communion between His Father and Himself. One will alone, the Father's will, was done by One alone, One whose will, ever perfect, was surrendered, and never done: "The will of Him that sent Me," was His life. (See Heb. x. 5-10; John iv. 34; v. 30; vi. 39, 40; Luke xxii. 42.) Beauteous path of light and blessing, in a world departed from God, through the will of man, instigated by the enemy. In death and by death, the perfection of obedience, without which, all the rest were imperfect, He annulled death; He in whom there was no necessity to die, went down to death: capable of it, for in grace He became a Man, He yields that perfect life in obedience to

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His Father's commandment—taking upon Him in spotless purity of person, His people's sins: the wages of which was death. But more than this: bearing all the claims which God's Holy Being required for vindication against, and because of, sin; making full atonement on the cross, He changed death from being its wages, into a pathway into life; annulling its office as the precursor of judgment to come. We were under its power, but instead of death and corruption, He brought life and incorruptibility to light, by the glad tidings of His victory! This life was promised before the ages; manifested in Him, as Man on earth, and now has shined forth in the Gospel.

“Faithful is the word” to His own—“if we have co-died with Him, we shall also co-live. If we suffer, we shall co-reign. (Chap. ii. 11.)

And again “All that desire to *live* godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.” (Chap. iii. 12.) In Paul's life we see a pattern of this in a striking way. And now at the end of such a course he can turn to Timothy and recall it in the words “Thou hast fully known my doctrine, *manner of life*, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions. which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium; at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.”

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I would remark here that these scriptures, (Chaps. iii., and iv., of 2 Timothy), are the forecastings of the Spirit of God, as to the state of things which would intervene at once when the Apostolic service in the church would end.

"The last days" at once began when Paul was gone. John who outlived him could tell us "Little children it is the last hour" (I John ii. 18). So James, "Ye have heaped treasure together in the last days." (Jas. v. iii). "The judge standeth before the door." (Chap. v. 9). So Peter, "Ready to be revealed in the last time." (I Peter i. v). "The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God." (I Peter iv. 17). "There shall come in the last days scoffers." (2 Peter iii. 3). "The last days" is not merely the time in which we live, in the close of nineteen centuries. It is an expression technically used by the apostles descriptive of the then moral state that had come or was just coming in.

But now mark what comes next. This life in Christ—possessed by His own: "Christ is our life," would be opposed by the "form of godliness," in the ruined, professing body. We have already cited his words (2 Tim. iii.) as to what men would become under His name; the "form of godliness" possessed—the "power" denied: from

such the true hearted would "turn away." Distinct positive departure from all that bore not the impress in practical power, of this life, lived and expressed.

This resistance of the truth would be seen in a remarkable way, by an imitation, a counterfeit which would go far to deceive. The aged apostle reverts to the first moments of Israel's history when they were in Egypt, before deliverance. When they were still captives under Satan's power.

God had sent Moses to deliver them, and Aaron was to be his mouth-piece and prophet. They went in to speak to Pharaoh, as the Lord had commanded, and Aaron cast down his rod, at the demand of Pharaoh to show a proof of their divine mission; and Aaron's rod became a serpent. The rod (the sign of power) had become Satanic, and under this the people were held captive. Just as in the profession of Christianity the form of godliness had its power from the enemy, and was without the power of life by the truth. Moses fled before it, when first it was shown him by God in the desert; and now the faithful would also flee, or turn away.

Pharaoh calls now the wise men and sorcerers; the Jannes and Jambres of that day, who resisted the truth; and they cast down their rods, which also became serpents. Thus the Testimony of the Lord was frustrated by Satan's power. "And Pharaoh's heart was hardened."

Again the Lord presents further signs of

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power. Aaron, at His commandment, takes his rod and stretches it out upon the waters of Egypt; and the waters were turned to blood. What was the sign of refreshment to man, became that of judgment and death. All this points to that terrible second enacting of these things, when the "Second angel pours out his vial of the wrath of God upon the sea, and it became as the blood of a dead man: and the third angel pours his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and they became blood." All became deathful, not only the masses of nations and men; but the springs and issues of all human things in that day. How solemnly are all running up at the present moment to the end—the ocean of judgment that comes upon the earth.

Another sign is given in the plague of frogs. "Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt. And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt." Again Satan's power is put forth; and we read "The magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt." Then the respite came; and at the intercession of Moses the plague was removed, and "when Pharaoh saw there was respite he hardened his heart" still more. How striking that the only chance of the removal of the plague rested with *Moses* before the Lord: those who wielded Satan's power were helpless before it, and under its power.

Now here we have this persistent and terrible resisting of the truth; not with open persecution or power; but in a way which does more to destroy it than any other. It was by *imitation*—by presenting a counterfeit of the true. God's servants produce a proof of their divine mission; at once this is counteracted by the enemy. Jannes and Jambres imitate the miracle, and the onlooker is confounded. GOD and Satan were at one, it appeared, and Israel would not be allowed to go apart from Egypt. Thus it is at the present hour. What do we hear on every side? Oh, they say in the world-churches around us, we have quite as good a gospel as that from such an one; there is no need to come apart as separatists to hear that, and so the enemy succeeds. We find that the truth of the presence of the Spirit on earth is spoken of, in such and such a church. No necessity then, is there, to move from one section of the professing church to hear that: so also the doctrines of the church of God; of the coming of the Lord; each distinctive thing is taken up—first revealed to *form* His people, by the Lord, then the world-churches take them up, and the hearer—the onlooker is deceived by the counterfeit of the enemy; his conscience lulled to sleep, and the form without the power is the soporific used.

At last came another sign. "Say unto Aaron," saith the Lord, "Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt. And they did so: for Aaron

stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man and beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but *they could not.*" (Exod. viii. 16-17).

Yes, my reader mark well, that last triumph of God; evoking the word from the mouths of Satan's instruments "*This is the finger of God!*" Their folly is made manifest unto all. The power of Satan's deception; his specious counterfeits, are worthless, in the presence of *life*—living realities speak for God more than all. They could go no farther than this. Imitation might be inimitable: counterfeit might be so near the truth—so like, that all were deceived. But the *life* of Christ to be *lived* on earth—Christ living in His own, producing the deep reality of that which no imitation can ever reach, and the folly of all is made manifest as theirs also was.

This "manner of life" was seen in Paul—a man of like passions as we are. He was the exponent of his own teaching. His "purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me." Such was the course of this man. Such was a course which would put to silence the spurious imitation which was resisting the truth: ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge ['full knowledge,' epignosis.] of it.

If ever there was a time when the godly should live to Christ it is now. It is the *only* way in which they will put to shame the counterfeits of the enemy, in which even His own are ensnared; and force the enemy, and the world around which he leads and governs to say, "This is the finger of God." God alone can produce life, and give the power and grace to live it here below. It alone is fragrant in His sight. "The life of Jesus made manifest in our body." May we be stirred to the depths of our souls with the thought of this victory, which we can indeed give Him over the enemy, even our faith; overcoming the world which He has passed through in His own perfection. "I have overcome the world." It is a beaten foe. Our faith in Him keeps us dependent and "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (I Jno. v. 4).

Thus "life," which walks with God, and waits for Christ, and serves Him while it waits, is the subject initiative in his teaching here. (2 Tim. i. 1.) It was promised in Christ Jesus before the world was: exhibited in Him on earth; (2 Tim. i. 10), brought to light by the glad tidings of His work and victory, (2 Tim. i. 10.) Those who have died with Him, shall also live with Him if we look onward to the future. (2 Tim. ii. 11). It was seen in Paul as a present thing, as he walked and served continually. (2 Tim. iii. 10). The enemy would frustrate it by his counterfeits but be brought to shame by a lowly, unworldly, devoted and separate walk with God. (2 Tim.

iii. 8, 9.) And all that would thus *live* godly in Christ Jesus would suffer. (2 Tim. iii. 12).

Still, the servant was to "continue in the things which thou hast learned, and been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." Never would there come a moment when such were to be abandoned; "Paul's doctrine" was the *last revelation* ever given; it was God's secret to those that fear Him who had an ear to hear. Until we all come in the unity of the faith, it would abide; because the Holy Ghost on earth remained. It has been the *last truth restored* to the church of God, as it was the last given; and when it was lost at the first, complete ruin supervened; and now when refused, or abused, by taking it up in the form without the power, it sounds as the tocsin to all further progress in those who are thus beguiled of the enemy.

The Scriptures of God are completed by the doctrine of the church through Paul. "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the assembly; whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given unto me for you, to complete the Word of God." (Col i. 24, 25). A segment of the complete circle of revelation was wanted when Paul was called, and by his doctrine all is told; there is no advance beyond it. John may unfold what was already spoken of, but no further truth is revealed. To go beyond it, and the Scriptures completed by it, is the spirit of error; of antichrist. John can tell the elect lady

and her children that "many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not Jesus Christ coming in flesh. This is the deceiver, and the antichrist." . . . (and) "Whosoever goes forward (see Greek) and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." How completely does the Spirit of God pronounce against all advance, all developement; and all that would not abide in what was "from the beginning," *i.e.*, from the complete revelation of the truth in Christ, unfolded through His Apostles by the Holy Ghost. John could say again "He that knoweth God heareth us: he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error." (1 Jno. iv. 6.)

God has cast His people over on the Scriptures, in the last days. "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), said the apostle to the elders at Ephesus, where "grievous wolves were entering, not sparing the flock." "Continue," says he to Timothy, as to all of us, "thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing *from whom* thou hast learned them; and that from an infant thou hast known the Holy Scriptures." "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect thoroughly furnished unto every good work." (2 Tim. iii. 14, 16).

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THE DIVINE PATH

... , "I have found the track of a divine Person in the world. I follow that, and I know where it ends."

O ! wondrous grace, that such as I,
 Rais'd by the self-same power as Thou,
 May walk on earth, in life to die——
 Through living union with Thee now.

Then teach me in Thy death to learn,
 How Thou my heart from earth canst wean;
 Nature allures at every turn,
 But Thou hast died, out of the scene !

And sure the faithful heart must loathe
 All that for which her Lord hath died ;
 Must long to feel His hand unclothe
 This mortal part, in life to hide.

But 'tis my God and Father's will,
 Who deigns to make my path His care,
 That I this orbit should fulfil,
 His grace and glory to declare.

Then count me worthy, Lord, to be
 A lowly witness on this earth,
 So wholly Thine, so kept by Thee,
 To know and testify Thy worth.

O, holy joy ! by man unseen,
 This secret, sacred path to tread,
 The footprints where my Lord has been.
 For Thee while here, and to Thee led.

For such, a gladsome path must be
 E'en here (with Thee for Guide and Friend);
 Learning Thine all-sufficiency,
 We scarce could wish that path to end.

But end it will—where every sound
 Shall be the echo of Thy praise :
 The Bridegroom Thou ! Thy Church around
 Reflecting all Thy glory's rays.

O ! may Thy wisdom, love, and light
 Enclose me, in this squalid *scene.
 What cloud (with Thee, my Lord, in sight)
 Thy glory from my path can screen ?

*2 Pet. i, 19. (Gr. Rev. ver., margin.)

THE LAMB'S WIFE.

In the Apocalypse, the Lord is much spoken of as "the Lamb"—a title which suggests the thought of suffering and atonement. But in this Book of Apocalypse, He is neither suffering or doing the work of atonement. All that is over and perfected, as we know; He is rather exercising Himself in His strength, judging and conquering. This may, therefore, at first surprise us, that He should so generally, in the progress of the action in this Book, be called "the Lamb." But, like all else in the oracles of God, this is only beautiful and perfect in its way and season, when considered a little.

Redemption is conducted by either *blood* or *power*. The blood of our Redeemer, or our Kinsman, acts towards God, as I may express it; His power acts against Satan. The blood of Christ ransoms us from the righteous judgment or demand of God; the power of Christ rescues us from the captivity of Satan.

This is sure and simple; but, then, there could be no rescue or deliverance from Satan, if there had not been a ransom given or paid to God. And hence it is, that our Redeemer gets His title *to go forth and deliver*, from the blood which He had shed *to atone*; and thus, in the Apocalypse, where He is acting as our Redeemer *by power*, He is ever kept in sight as "the Lamb." *

*The ordinance of the jubilee gives us something kindred with this. The trumpet which announced its approach was sounded on the day of atonement.

We are all, I may say, familiar in our thoughts with such truth as this. The *Cross* of Christ sustains the *inheritance*. The inheritance is a *purchased* thing, as well as a *rescued* or *delivered* thing. There is no recovery or regeneration of this ruined scene, except on the ground and title of the expiation accomplished at Calvary. In a purer sense than perhaps it was once said, we may say, "No Cross, no Crown"—in symbol of which, the royal rights of Christ were written in every language of the nations on the cursed tree.

This is so, as we surely know. In the action, therefore, of rescuing the inheritance from Satan, the usurper, and then reigning over it as regained or delivered, the Lord Jesus is spoken of as "the Lamb," the One who had already made atonement; or, as redeeming *by power* on the ground of having redeemed *by blood*, He is introduced at the opening of the action of this Book, in the combined characters of "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," and "the Lamb as it had been slain." (Chap. v.)

But, further, the Lord Jesus, in this Book, is judging the nations, as well as rescuing the inheritance from Satan; He is visiting the world for its iniquity and unbelief.

Such an action as this, He is to conduct

That is, all the restoring virtues of that mystic fiftieth year was declared to derive itself out of the atonement or cross of Christ, from the act of reconciliation to God through the blood of Calvary (see Lev. xxv). So, "the shepherd, the stone of Israel" comes from the sorrowing Joseph, who had been hit by the archers. (Gen. xlix.)

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as the One *who had been once despised and rejected*. Scripture abundantly tells us this. It is the *refused King* that is to call forth the rebel citizens to have them slain before Him. It is the *disallowed Stone* that is to fall and grind to powder (Luke xix.; Matt. xxi.). Jesus is to be honoured where once He was put to shame; He is to be rich, where once He was poor; He is to be enthroned in strength, where once He was crucified in weakness. The despised Son of Man is to judge, to avenge, and to conquer.

All this is clear, and sure, and simple, in the light of the oracles of God; and therefore we may say, as far as the action of this Book is upon *man*, judging Him (be he Jew or Greek), or visiting him with wrath or plague, the action is conducted by the *rejected Christ*; as far as the action is upon *Satan*, redeeming the inheritance out of his hand, and quelling his power in this scene of his usurpation, it is conducted by the Christ who *made atonement*. The Lord does not judge man, because He had been the Lamb slain for sinners, but because, as the righteous witness for God in the world, the world had rejected and crucified Him; but He does overthrow the might of the great enemy, and rescues the inheritance out of His hand, because He had paid the ransom price of that inheritance by His precious blood.

All this the wayfaring man may read in God's own perfect and sufficient Book; and all this gives the Lord Jesus, in the Apocalypse, where He is judging man, and answering the way of the usurper, that title

which at once expresses Him to us as the *rejected* One, and as the *atoning* One—for we find that His title, “the Lamb,” in this Book at times connects itself with the first of these ideas, and at other times with the second of them (see chaps. v. 6, 8, 12, 13; vi. 1, 16; vii. 9, 10, 14, 17; xii. 11; xiii. 8; xiv. 1, 4, 10; xv. 3; xvii. 14; xix. 7, 9). And this may easily and naturally remind us of that well-known chapter, Isaiah liii., where the Lord Jesus is looked at as “the Lamb,” but at times treated there as the *victim*, whose blood cleanses; and at other times, as the *One whom man was hating and despising*.*

But again—as we find the Lord as “the Lamb” in this Book, so do we find the Church as “the Lamb’s wife.” If I recollect aright, it is the *only* title in the course of this Book, which is given to the Church. And no doubt, there is correspondency in these titles: He is “the Lamb,” and she is “the Lamb’s wife”; and this latter title is to be interpreted according to the same rules which have already led us to interpret the former.

The Lord, we have seen, is “the Lamb,” as having made atonement to God, and as having been rejected by men. Accordingly “the Lamb’s wife” is the Church, as connected with the virtue of the blood of Christ, and also with His rejection in the world. It tells us that we are purchased, and saved, and reconciled; but it tells us

*After the judicial action of this Book is over, and Satan is bound, the Lord is seen in the New Jerusalem, and over the rescued earth, under the same title, “the Lamb.” (See chaps. xxi. 9, 14, 22, 23, 27; xxii. 1, 3).

also, that we are strangers in the world, a rejected heavenly people, companions of a despised JESUS. Had we but affections, I might surely say, this is both comforting and serious truth.

Our character as saints, according to this truth, is lost, when we practically deny either the one or the other of these things. That is, we do not, in living power, present the living image of "the Lamb's wife," when we either live in the bondage of the rudiments and ordinances of a fleshly, worldly, sanctuary; or when we affect citizenship in the earth, forming alliance with the kingdoms of the world, or acting according to the course of it. By the first of these things, we practically deny that we are purchased and saved by Christ; by the second, we refuse the thought that we are rejected with Him. We do not shew forth our union with "the Lamb."

Had we but affections, again I say, how should we value such a calling! Great dignity, *moral* dignity is conferred on the church, by giving her, after this manner, association with Christ in the day of His rejection. She will be the companion and associate of His glory and power by and-bye; but she is *now* joined with Him in this age of His rejection and weakness in the world; and this is something of a deeper character, as our hearts one with another so well understand.

Supposing one were to come to us in the day of the gladness of His heart, and ask us to rejoice with Him, we should feel at once that He was treating us with a measure of

confidence that was very grateful to us. But supposing that another were to come in the day of his sorrow, and seek from us that we would feel for him, and enter into the secret of his trouble with him, we should be very sensible of this, that he was treating us with a still larger measure of confidence, and we should be still more gratified. The heart knows all this very well. And thus is it with Christ and the church. The church is called to be the companion of the Lord in that age of the world which is marked by His scorn, and rejection, and weakness in it. This is her characteristic. She knows the reconciliation perfectly, and has peace with God; but she knows Christ's place in the world that has refused Him, in the midst of a generation that has mistaken Him and His glory altogether. She is called to know Him in His sorrow and rejection; and when we consider *who* He is, this is the highest *moral* dignity that any creature could sustain; just as her place and condition in the system of coming glories will be the loftiest and richest that any creature could fill.

And such is the Bride, "the Lamb's wife." I mean characteristically, not assuming to speak her worth and honours in detail. But such she is in the character of her calling.

One may catch the bright idea of such a calling, and marvel and adore the grace and wisdom that have designed it. But, while doing this, one may feel that we have to look out beyond the measure of our own poor heart for capacity to prize and enjoy such a mystery; and far beyond our own

poor ways, for anything like a worthy image or reflection of it, in the joy and power and service which ought to accompany the faith of it.



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

Romans xi. 36.

Such, under the power of divine inspiration, was the language of a servant of God. He had just run rapidly through the past, present and future of the inhabitable earth; had seen its changing phases as connected with God, and His dealings through various economies; had shown that the divine object in all those variations, so bewildering to man in his pride, had been *very simple*: God had so wrought as to include all in unbelief, that so He might have mercy upon all. It is not here Adam and Paradise, but man (Jew and Gentile) outside of Paradise. He speaks not *here* directly of how the creature had been allowed to break up the creature's circumstances of finite blessing, so as that the ruin might fall into the hand of God, so that He might do, *in mercy*, as might seem good to Him, with that which had failed as being an expression of His power and wisdom—and had failed when set upon its own responsibility: but He speaks rather of how all light and responsibility committed to the *failed* creature in the various economies or dispensations only more fully proved the creature to be a failed one, and brought him into the place in

which mercy alone had a right to speak. Tried, in various ways, man ever proved himself a ruined rebel; but God had planned a wide-spread display of His own mercy, and when all the various parts of the inhabitable Earth should have shown out what they were, God would show out, in these same places, what He was as the God of Mercy. He would have scope enough to do it in them; varieties of vessels too would be there; and the display would have its brightness enhanced by the contrast between the smallness of what had been and the greatness then to be present, and by the contrast between the mercy of God and the unrighteousness of the creature. "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all" (vv. 32). His whole soul is moved—and well it might be so—and filled with the glorious subject—it rolls forth the blessed anthem: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (vv. 33-36).

This last clause, "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things," is thus the reasonable solution of the whole vision of God's dealings with man upon earth, *in dispensation*. It is abstract enough, yet strikes a chord of praise in the Apostle's heart,

and he adds, "To whom be glory for ever. Amen."

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

And this truly is a great salvation—to see God as the end of our retrospect; God as the source to us of it, at least, *as a whole*; to know God to be more present in power than all else, whether it be self, Satan, the world, or the flesh—God overruling all—causing all things to work together for

good to them that love Him ; in the *present* purpose, too, of all that is there as to faith, God and God alone. And if He be alone in the purpose which is present, He surely must fill the future—of Him, through Him, to Him all things.

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

I desire to say a few words upon this in connection with the full liberty of the gospel of Christ in the soul and life of a believer. For I believe many have failed, and that there is danger to many of us of failing

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herein: to some from not seeing the importance of this truth, *as a united whole*, viz., that our gospel, in its fulness, is this our full association with God—our being able to say with truth, “of Him, through Him, to Him, all things!” And to others there is danger from their not seeing the inseparableness, of the three statements *of, through, and to Him, all things*. The subject is one of immense importance to the Christian, as to his own soul, as having to judge himself that we be not judged of the Lord; and it is one of pre-eminent interest to brotherly love, as affording the solution of, and the cure for, a great deal of ill-proportioned Christianity in those we love;—it gives, too, the explanation, I am fain to believe, of a great many of the differences that try brotherly love. May the meditation of it lead us to judge ourselves, that we may be better able to help others; to forbear toward the weak, and not to be stumbled by the strong.

I may add, that in a day like the present, when rush, hurry, and bustle characterize man in all his doings, quietness and calmness will be the fruit of this being hidden (oneself, and all one's circumstances) in God. For what trouble can trouble His abode? What whirlwind can reach the soul that dwells in the secret of His presence? (Ps. xlv. 10.)

Adam, in the fall, took *a new position* for himself. Creation was all of God, and through God, and to God; and so was himself, Adam, as part of it. His position and condition, as created, were in accordance

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

This departure from God was man's own act, though set on to it by Satan. It was man's own act; and he has reaped the fruits of it, and is under the consequences of it. It is a great moral disease, it is morally ruin, for a creature so to have sunk down into itself—to have become so surrounded and filled with itself, that self has taken the place of spring, and power and end of everything to it. It knows, in sin, no God above it, that it can depend upon. God is to it a Being of power adverse to itself. Now the Gospel of God's grace meets man in all his selfishness—meets him just there where he feels that God ought to be against him, and brings in those parts of the divine character which man, so placed, can recognize, in order to give rest to his soul. Such a soul must own God to be

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above it, and not adverse to it either. And yet it may be very far from seeing how the whole salvation is of God, and the whole application of it through Him. But it is learning that there is a mighty God above, and something of His ways, and is getting unconsciously set in its right place before God—its right place of dependence. When light dawns more clearly into it, it finds that, indeed, it is fully saved, and that the blessed work of its salvation, while it suits it, came forth not for its sake, but because of what God was and is in His own being. He is merciful, and delights in mercy—has delighted in doing mercy's work, and does delight in giving to man the full enjoyment of it. The discovery of this gives solid peace—we understand where mercy has set us. And this is most blessed. Yet I think it will be found that there is a something which precedes this, even the spirit of obedience;—the soul seeking oft, it knows not why, God and His presence, and entire surrender to Him of everything. Now, this desire to do God's will,—this owning of "all to God"—and therefore that nothing can suffice oneself save to be "wholly"—heart, mind, soul, and body—in principle and in practice to God, is a very important thing. In a creature it is nothing less than God's glory. It can never be given up if we are to be like Christ,—if God is to be God to us. I call attention to this point because I am persuaded that in a clear understanding of it the well-being of the whole flock of God, and of every soul individually is concerned. God must be the end, the sole end, where

His power is. The Son of God, the perfect Servant of God, knew no other end than God's will and God's glory. It was His glory to be here below, doing nothing but God's will, suffering nothing but God's pleasure. If any fain any other state as one of blessedness here below for the disciple, they deceive their own selves, and are *hearers* only, and *not doers* of His will.

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

leading unto obedience. Let the difficulty of retaining the Spirit of obedience unclouded be fully admitted,—but still, if saved, we are saved unto God, and the life of God in the soul, and he that touches that touches our all.

The Spirit of God has, as His unmixed purpose, to seek the glory of God and the honour of Christ. What else would you charge upon that Holy One as *His* purpose and work here below? To it from a taste for the world in its present state,—is it from the pleasures of the treatment He has experienced from the flesh and from the devil, that He abides among and in us? Did He own us as His end—when He sought us,—while He keeps us? Oh, no: merciful and long-suffering as He is to us ward, He is so because He links us up with a great purpose of God in Christ. And would I debase to the level of my thoughts and affections His actings in me? Nay, I am called upon to rise to His level rather. Now I do most solemnly believe, may I be wrong, that very many are in jeopardy just in not seeing how their perfect liberty in Christ supposes (what it gives) a perfect purpose to live, to be to God, and to God alone. And sure I am that it is impossible for two to walk together except they be agreed. Will God give up His object in order to walk with me, if I have an object at variance with His? Or must I give up my object to walk with Him, according to that which He seeks. And is it not here that one fruitful cause of separation among disciples of Christ is found? Namely, the various allowed mea-

tures of mixing up with God's sole object—which is His glory in the honour of Christ as Lord of all—portions of worldliness, fleshliness, and Satanic objects. I warn my brethren, the Church and the world cannot walk on together. God's Spirit is onward, forward:—the face of every one that is led by Him is, as it were, set firmly for an onward course. If men will walk according to the flesh, they cannot seek heaven, but the world; and then not the Holy Ghost, but the prince of the power of the air is he that worketh in them. I feel the moment to be one of crisis in this respect. If you are God's—live to Him and go onward—forward a little while further; how very little is the little while! and count the flesh to be already crucified with its affections, and lusts, and the world a wilderness. If you will not do this Satan will catch your flesh, and into the world sink you must.



“My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith The LORD, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

Isaiah lv. 8-9.

The article “Of Him, and through Him, and to Him—all things,” has brought before us a solemn, but much needed, word, in a day of such tremendous energy and activity on man's part, not only in the political but

also in the religious world ; and, "Be still, and know that I am GOD," is almost unheeded. Even the Lord's beloved people are apt to be carried away and affected by what they see and hear around them ; such as "O times are changed and we must adapt ourselves accordingly." What ! Is GOD changed ? Are His thoughts changed ? Let His word answer. "I am the LORD, I change not ; *therefore* ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." (Mal. iii. 6, read also vv. 16-18). "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." (Heb. xiii. 8.) Therefore HE who "loved the church, and gave HIMSELF for it" (Ephes. v. 25 ; cf. John xiii. 1.), loves her *now*, as much as ever : and wherever there is the obedience of faith to act upon His word in Matt. xviii. 18, 20, they will find that He is faithful. Again, in the Old Testament, repeated in the New, "The Word of our God shall stand *for ever*." (Is. xl. 8 ; 1 Pet. i. 25.) It is just as true *now* before God (and to faith) that, "There is One body" as when first written (Ephes. iv. 4.) for the Other Comforter, the Spirit of truth, the Lord Jesus said would "abide with *you for ever*." (John xiv. 16, 17.) The Holy Spirit in the Word of God speaks of a certain class thus, "the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it," having shortly before given the very solemn warning, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief." (Heb. iii. 12 ; iv. 2.)

And now fellow believer turn with me to a very precious scene in 2 Sam. vii. : David

had it on his heart to undertake a certain service for the Lord. He tells the prophet, who replies, "Go, do all that is in thy heart," adding, what he had no authority for, "the Lord is with thee." But, "it came to pass *that night*," He whose thoughts and ways were as much higher than the thoughts and ways of even a David backed up by the prophet Nathan, as the heavens are higher than the earth, sends the latter to the former with a message unfolding His thoughts and ways—read vv. 5-17. Is David disappointed at the thwarting of His plans? Oh no. He goes right in and "*sat before the Lord*." How sweet! Read Psalm xxxii. 7. But the "hiding place" is not only used in time of trouble, but also when enjoying God's word, see Psalm cxix. 113, 114. Dear reader sit down, *before the Lord*, and ponder over that exquisite scene in 2 Sam. vii. David had had many experiences of God's goodness, but this seems the climax. Overwhelmed with the unfolding of God's thoughts and God's ways, his heart basking as it were in the warmth and sunshine of God's love and grace, turns away from all that is of man ("Is this the manner of man, O Lord God?") and, lost for words to express himself—"what can David say more unto Thee?" The writer of Psalm cxxxix. (cf. last clause of ver. 20, with that Psalm), linking God's word with His heart, reaches the *Source of all blessing, THE HEART OF GOD.*

Would that we who are *so richly blessed*, and at *such cost* knew more of what it is to go in and "sit before the Lord." There

would be a deeper developing of the affections of the heart Godward as we drank in more and more of His thoughts and His ways, and, without any effort, the thoughts and ways of men would have less influence upon us—the whole tenor of our lives would be affected and any service undertaken would savour less of man and man's thoughts (self or other men's) and more of HIM in whose presence we had been sitting:—and when we met together there would be more of what has been already referred to,—Malachi iii. 16-18.

Having had before us the **Fountain of all our blessing, "THE HEART OF GOD,"** it will be in keeping with the character of "The Remembrancer" and a fitting close—stirring one another up by putting in "remembrance" to keep in mind *The End* that God has in view: "**That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.**"

"The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer; and above all things have fervent charity ['love'] among yourselves, for charity shall cover the multitude of sins, use hospitality one to another without grudging; as every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to Whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter iv. 8-11).