

WORDS OF GRACE
FOR
The Household of Faith.

VOL. II.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
A WORD OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT	1
ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION—	
2, 29, 57, 85, 113, 141, 169, 197, 225, 253, 281, 309	
SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH—	
12, 39, 73, 122, 153, 178, 207	
NOTES OF MINISTRY AT THE LORD'S TABLE	15
CONVERSATIONS ON SCRIPTURE	21, 44
RECOLLECTIONS OF THE MINISTRY OF ROBERT KENT—	
LOST AND SAVED	25
JOB	52
CHRIST OUR FOOD	54
A GREETING AND A RESPONSE	55
“DAYS” AND “HOURS” IN JOHN	79
SONGS IN THE WILDERNESS	135
EXTRACTS	14, 24, 28, 67, 72, 84
GOSPEL ADDRESSES	48, 75, 99, 137
FOOTSTEPS OF GRACE	68, 96, 133, 164, 251, 273, 303
RECOLLECTIONS OF RALPH EVANS' MINISTRY	107, 167
LIBERTY AND FRUIT	129
EXTRACT FROM A LETTER	139
“CONSIDER HIM” (Poetry)	140
FIRST LOVE AND FIRST WORKS	158
THE VAIL	189, 216, 236
NOTES OF READINGS WITH RALPH EVANS	222
THE CHRISTIAN ARMOUR	245

	PAGE
CHRIST DWELLING IN THE HEART	264
THE HOLY SPIRIT'S TESTIMONY	270
SCRIPTURE QUERIES	278, 305
TO LIVE—CHRIST	294, 327
"HE BREATHED ON THEM"	300
CHRISTIAN PLACE AND POWER	318

WORDS OF GRACE

FOR

THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH.

A WORD OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

AT the commencement of a new year the Editor of *Words of Grace* desires to thank the Lord, and His servants also, for the written ministry of His Word inserted therein from time to time, as well as for the grace expressed in other less public, but not less important ways.

In doing so he would wish to say that the magazine is intended for the ministry of the simple truth to the whole household of faith, and anything of a sectarian tendency would be out of place in it. All that is for the honour of Christ would be admitted, as far as its space may allow, and only that excluded which Scripture itself rejects—namely, what is unsuitable to Him.

To any who may have derived profit from the reading of *Words of Grace*, it is suggested that a gratuitous distribution of it among Christians would increase the circulation of the truth and conduce, it is hoped, to the glory of Christ and the blessing of souls.

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

BY THE EDITOR.

(*From Shorthand Report.*)

LECTURE VIII. CHAPTERS IV. AND V.

YOU have noticed, doubtless, that this chapter commences the second subject of which the Spirit of God had already spoken to the prophet in the first chapter. He was about to record what was to happen in this world, when the voice as of the trumpet sounds behind him, and he turns and sees seven golden candlesticks and the Son of man walking in the midst of them. Then the Spirit of God instructs him to write the things he had seen—this was the Son of man in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; also the things which are—that is, the churches we have gone through, the history of the Church right on to the end. After the close of the third chapter nothing more is said as to the Church on earth until the eternal state. This shows the distinction of the subjects. The first is the Son of man standing amid the golden candlesticks; the second, the history of the Church right on to the end; and after that, “the things which shall be after these.”

Now we are able to take up the chapter in its proper place, remembering that the history of the Church on earth has come to its end, and that Christ has nothing more to do with it. When the state comes which renders that possible it is spued out of Christ's mouth. He does not say “if” this, that, or the other

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

3

happens, but, "I am about to do it." It is a foregone conclusion: not merely a warning, but a declaration of what He intends to do. He is about to spue them out of His mouth. This chapter supposes that moment to have come; and now we take up—no longer the history of the Church, or the world and the Church in it, but from this chapter forward a new subject altogether.

After these things the prophet looked, and, behold, there was a door opened in heaven. He is to take a new point of view. This is the first thing we have clearly to understand. A door is now opened in heaven, and he hears the same voice, that was of a trumpet, saying, "Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be after these."

It is important that we should understand what this change of position is, in order properly to get the mind of the Spirit of God about what is recorded in this Scripture. If we are in any way involved in these terrible judgments as those who are under them, which are recorded in this Book and are to come upon this devoted earth, how can we sit down to read this Book with any comfort at all? No; it is a fact, the Christian belongs to heaven. I know we are on the earth, and have natural relationships in which God places us, and being in those relationships we are responsible to walk with God in them. That is perfectly true, but it in no wise hinders the positive fact that the Christian is a heavenly man, that he belongs to heaven; his life is in heaven, his politics are there. But you say, "Must we not go in for the politics of this world, and put the best man in the best place?" No; the politics of this world are not ours

at all. Our "citizenship"—the same word—is in heaven. It is perfectly true we have not a body suited to the treasure, but we have got the better thing, namely, the treasure. It only needs that moment—the twinkling of an eye and the word of power from the Lord Jesus Christ—to change the body of humiliation and fashion it like to His own body of glory; and then we shall have the vessel suited to the treasure which we already have. I say this by the way to show that we must really take the heavenly point of view when we come to deal with this scripture. It was always morally so. Take a case in point. Abraham was called out by the God of glory appearing to him, and was told to leave his country, kindred, and father's house, and go to a place God would show him. But Scripture remarks that Abraham did not act on his own initiative at all; his father-in-law, Terah, took him. Truly, he left Ur of the Chaldees, but he allowed his father-in-law to lead him instead of going simply by the bare word of God. The consequence was that he stopped half-way—and many a man does so—for he stopped in Haran until his father-in-law was dead. He had to get rid of the influence which was exerted over him and hindered the accomplishment of God's purposes. But he started afterwards, and took all his cattle with him, which he would have been better without. But he also took his brother's son, and away he went; they started from Haran to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came.

The first thing he meets is a famine in the land, and because they have so much cattle there is not food for all, and he goes to Egypt and gets into trouble there. He has to go back to the place where he built his altar

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

5

at the first, but not even then does the trouble end. There is a quarrel between Abraham's herdmen and Lot's herdmen, and he has to speak to his nephew about it, and says, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen. . . . If thou depart to the right hand, I will go to the left." Accordingly he separates himself from him, and Lot sees the valley of Jordan, "well watered like the garden of the Lord, as thou goest into Egypt," and he chooses the valley of the plain and journeys towards the east, and pitches his tent towards Sodom. Abraham is left alone—these links, these influences are severed—and as soon as he is free to be alone with God, then the Lord says, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed."

But the time came when Lot found out he had got into a bad place, and Abraham had to deliver him. Abraham is outside of the influences of the cities of the plain, for he dwelt in the land of Canaan, and he had to go to the rescue of his nephew. Not only that; presently the wickedness of the cities reaches its height, and God comes down to see if the wickedness is altogether like the report that has reached Him, and He finds Abraham outside the cities of the plain, and Lot, as we know, inside. God finds a friend in Abraham, for he is called the friend of God; the man who is standing clear from the influence which the world and nature exert upon the soul, a man living by faith—and it is to such a man that He can confide His purpose. "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become

a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him." So He talks to Abraham all about the matter, and Abraham enters into intercession with the Lord, beginning with fifty, and bringing his faith and prayer up to the point of bargaining that if there were ten righteous men in the city He would spare it for their sake. There were not ten to be found, but He does deliver Lot.

You see the appropriateness of being brought from the scene on which the judgment falls, in order to have communion with God about the thing that He is doing. So when Abraham rises up early in the morning *he* is in peace, but he looks towards Sodom, and the smoke rose up from the cities of the plain like a furnace. There was not a flame or tongue of fire that touched Abraham, there was not a single quiver in his heart about what was coming. He was in no wise involved in the judgment God was bringing on the cities of the plain; he knew he was outside of it. And is not that the Christian's place? It is, and it is the place we have to take.

So here, when the history of the responsibility of the Church on earth has come to its end and its fall is announced, then the Spirit of God invites the prophet to come up to heaven, from thence to see properly what is going on.

"And immediately I was in the spirit." It is a throne he sees set up there, no longer a house with a candlestick and seven branches, or seven candles on

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

7

earth. We have left that, and now are introduced into the heavenly scene, and there is a throne there—the source of all the action that is about to take place. “And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.” That is to say, all the powers of this throne are about to be exercised in a special way. God displays His glory like unto a jasper and sardius. You know that these two precious stones form the first and the last in the galaxy of twelve that were placed in the breastplate of the High Priest when he went into the presence of Jehovah. They represent, I have no question at all, the glory of God in government, especially among the Jews, as exercised in man. It is the glory of God in government with regard to man that we have to do with. That is the reason why the throne is set up in this peculiar and special way before the eyes of the prophet. To-day God is not entering into direct government on earth; a man may curse God just as he pleases, and perhaps be the one to be converted next. There is no government in that, but grace. Take Saul of Tarsus. There never was a man more distinctly opposed to what God was doing than he, or that hated the name of Jesus so thoroughly as Saul, and yet he was the very man God took and made to be the foremost apostle of the grace of God. How different the way of God is now from what we find here! Here is a throne set up, and when you have to do with a throne of government, in whatsoever way, it is well to take care what you do.

Godhead governmental power is set forth in this beautiful way by the revelation of divine glory like unto

a jasper and sardine stone. These two precious stones formed the first and the last in the breastplate of the High Priest, and they are the stones mentioned in connection with the government of Tyre, identified in figure with Satan himself. As you read in Ezekiel, God had set him in an exceptional place of government and authority; for there is no doubt that was the place Satan had, and he was decorated with a similar expression of divine glory to that which you find in the breastplate of the High Priest. But the difference between the Old Testament and the New, with reference to these precious stones, is that in the Old the sardine stone is first and the jasper last, whether in the breastplate of the high priest or the decorations of Satan; whereas in the New Testament the jasper is first and the sardine stone last. The reason, I do not question, is that in the Old Testament the grand truth set forth is God's government according to man's responsibility; whereas in the Book of Revelation especially it is God's government according to the power of the resurrection and in the hand of Christ. Still it is government.

Now there is another point. The exercise of this throne takes as its first sphere the world of men: men are subject to the government of His throne. But there is a rainbow about the throne like an emerald. A rainbow represents God's covenant with the creature—not merely with men; it was that which He set in the cloud after the deluge, and by which He covenanted that He would no more destroy the earth by a flood—that day and night, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest should not cease so long as the earth endured. Now when God is about to set up His throne once more to govern the earth

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

9

directly, He takes into account that men are the subjects of His covenant; and, secondly, that the creation is the subject of His covenant, because there are terrible things to take place that will shake the whole framework of creation. But God forgets not His covenant with men and creation, and He will carry it out.

A remarkable thing about this throne is that there are twenty-four thrones, and upon the thrones twenty-four elders sitting clothed in white raiment, and on their heads crowns of gold. Now I do not doubt that these elders are the company of heavenly saints—they are men in heaven. The living saints have been changed, the dead saints have been raised, and all together are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and the whole heavenly company are found surrounding the throne in heaven distinguished by this number twenty-four. Many persons say, and I do not reject the idea at all, that this number has reference to the twenty-four courses of the priests. Very likely; and it is also said that they represent the Old Testament saints and the New Testament saints. Very likely, but still I believe that the idea here is a very distinct one. The twenty-four are two twelves. The point is, and everybody who has read the Book of the Revelation, or considered the Word of God at all, knows very well that the number twelve is used as expressive of God's government in man. For example, you have twelve tribes of Israel. Israel was the nation in respect of which God governed the world. He is not governing the world in reference to Israel to-day, because He has rejected them; but, nevertheless, the principle remains that when God does enter into

direct government of this world it will be by means of Israel on earth once more. God is not going to give up His people because we Gentiles go to heaven. No! Gentiles may be for the moment grafted in, as the apostle tells us in Romans xi., and we *are* grafted in. But when God has His saints in heaven and has broken off those who do not stand by faith, the natural branches will be grafted in again. If the Gentiles do not stand by faith they will be broken off; and when God governs the world immediately in the coming day, Israel shall be the top of the nations, and not the tail. Therefore we get twelve distinctly defined as the number in which God's government of the world in man is expressed.

But here are two parties; that is to say, we, or these twenty-four elders, have two distinct spheres of government. For I take it for granted we are Christians here to-night and belong to the Church, and are spiritual stones in the spiritual house. If there be anyone here who is not, who does not know Christ, let him believe and be saved. But every soul in this room who is saved and sealed is united to Him as a part of the living Church of God. I say again, we have two very distinct spheres of government, not exercised to-day, but still that belong to us, and which will surely be exercised in the coming day. The sixth chapter of 1 Corinthians tells you definitely that those Christians who were squabbling in the Church and having all sorts of questions with one another, whom the apostle reproves in the most decided way, were to judge the world. "Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world?" Is not that a sphere of government? We

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

11

have not it yet, but we *are* to judge the world. Are we not, then, capable of judging the smallest matters? Can ye not judge any little differences that arise between you and the world, or among the saints, if you are going to have the whole sphere of the habitable world for your exercise of authority by-and-by? We are not going to be different people in heaven—that is in principle—and if we are to govern the world presently, are we not able to take cognizance of small matters that arise now?

But there is another sphere, and the apostle speaks in order to put them to shame: “Do ye not know that we shall judge angels?” This is not the world at all. Angels belong to a totally different order of things from men on earth, and that also is to be the sphere of the exercise of our authority. The whole body of the saints will be associated, I do not doubt, with the Lord Jesus Christ in it, because we can do nothing without Him either here or in heaven. But nevertheless there is the truth that these two grand, marvellous spheres of authority pertain to the saints, though the exercise is not entered upon yet. There is no exercise of it until that coming day when the throne is set up, in this particular and special way to govern men and to maintain God’s covenant in connection with the creature. This goes wider than men; the beasts of the earth, the birds and the insects that fly, and the fields—everything comes in under God’s covenant with creation. He leaves not out the sparrows nor the little insect that is born and dies in a day.

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

BY J. BARTON.

No. 6.

To Smyrna the Lord presents Himself in a character calculated to encourage them to stand in the presence of death, which assailed them from the world, and would set them superior to its fear. The Church having left its first love and declined into a form of godliness without the power and spring which could alone maintain it in separation and reality, Satan is allowed to bring in the power of death, that they may taste what that world is into which they had slipped, forgetting that they were not of the world, even as Christ was not of it. "He who became dead and lived" was the suited One to comfort and encourage those whom the devil was allowed to cast into prison and try with fear of death. Their tribulation had a limit attached to it, *ten* days; and if they were allowed to suffer death a crown of life awaited them, and the overcomer would not be hurt of the second death. They had as their life Him who had annulled the power of death, had brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel, and says to His own, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Thus are they superior to the fear of death, for to them to live is Christ, to die gain. It is as a comfort that He says here, "I know thy works." We are sometimes apt to think the Lord has forgotten us, and does not know into what a little bit of faithfulness to Him has

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH. 13

brought us. When the blind man in John ix. was cast out of the synagogue for confessing Jesus according to the measure of the light he had, "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him" He gives him further knowledge of Himself as the "Son of God," and thus better fits him as a witness, according to that word, "Unto him that *hath* shall more be given." The Lord knew *the poverty* and *the riches* of those tried ones. How rich in Him who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich!

Life and *death* are ours in Christ. There was not a drop of water in Jordan where the ark stood.

Satan might easily use it to terrify the saints of God into denial of Christ were not its power annulled in the cross. Yet the Lord may allow one of His witnesses to glorify Him in death. But our confidence is that "He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus." "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Well may the servants of such a Master be free from the fear of man. He is the same to-day, though He may not manifest His power on the behalf of His saints in a manifest miraculous way. He can say "Come" to one who would walk on the water to Him, and can show Himself equal to maintain in that path, though the wind be boisterous. Paul's heart was so set on following Christ that he desired to be made conformable to His death; he knew what was beyond. Just as the Lord presented Himself suitably to the condition and circumstances of His saints then, so

14 SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

do our hearts prove Him to-day by the gracious way in which He adapts Himself to each new need day by day, and the circumstances which faithfulness to Him brings us into. It is a new way every day: "For ye have not passed this way heretofore." Are we not conscious of finding ourselves daily with *new* requests for the Lord's ear, which we know we have not asked of Him before? As we get to know Him better, seeing more clearly what is suited to Him, this is freshness and the fruit of "being renewed in the spirit of our minds." We cannot ask Him to come with us into what is unworthy of Himself. "Ye ask, and have not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." We cannot make the Lord the minister of our lusts. Rather is our happy portion, "Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Desires and ways suggested and formed in His company; it is His delight to meet us, conscious that He has no controversy with us. He is for us. Whom have we to fear? Then if one of three in the fiery furnace, we shall find the presence of the fourth; and all that the fire can touch is that which binds, while no smell of it passes on our garments.

"THE perfect or full-grown Christian is one who, in faith, is in the place that is ours in the purpose of God—one not merely knowing that Jesus is the Christ, and that his sins are forgiven him, but that he is in Christ before God, dead and risen with Him."

"And our hearts, if they are not practically in heaven with Christ, will soon become attached to earthly things."—*Extracted.*

NOTES OF MINISTRY AT THE LORD'S TABLE.

No. 1.

MATTHEW xiii. 44-47.

It is good for our souls to see the Church of God—all true believers—in the beauty and excellency they have in the mind and heart of God. It humbles us as to what we are, but it is good sometimes to get from our own side to see what is in the mind of God. It is not by looking at his blunders that a painter does his work well, though he must see them, but by looking at his model.

Moses had to tell the children of Israel, "Ye are a stiffnecked people"—"rebellious against the Lord"; but at the same time, when Balaam fell into a trance, and saw the vision of the *Almighty*, he said they were "as lign aloes that the *Lord* had planted. . . . He shall pour the water out of his buckets"—full of freshness and vigour and beauty in God's sight. God was forcing Balaam to see as *He* saw, and what a blessed thing that is! He leads us to judge our failures and shortcomings, but shows us that He sees us thus in Christ, and will have us so actually one day. Now He is glorified very poorly in us, then "He will be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe." We shall be brought to such a condition that the Lord will be *admired* in us. There will be such an expression of what beauty is, that everyone will admire Him in us. We get now "anointing our eyes with eye salve," the comfort and encouragement of it to our

16 NOTES OF MINISTRY AT THE LORD'S TABLE.

hearts. It is a great thing to see that, after all, Christ will be satisfied, but there is no excuse for us—He ought to be glorified in us now.

This "treasure" (Matthew xiii. 44) was something so excessively precious that "for joy thereof He selleth all that He hath." He gives up everything to get it. We are precious in Christ's sight and honourable, and it is good to get our souls up to that aspect, the perfect beauty and grace of what the Lord Himself sees of beauty and blessedness: that is what He considers us. "For joy *thereof* He goes and sells all that He has." The joy Christ had in getting such a thing as we were in His mind, was so great that He gave up everything—Messiahship, even His life—gave up glory. He could never cease to be 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 on Him the form of a servant." It makes us feel how poor we are, and what infinite grace it was; but it is a blessed thought that we have that preciousness in His sight. We find what His heart is, not only in taking up and saving poor sinners; but He "loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, . . . that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." He had this in His mind, and would have the Church for Himself in that character; that is the treasure, dear to Himself and precious. Then you get in the "pearl of great price" the *beauty* of the Church. What a wonderful thought it gives us of the beauty and blessedness of it! He *understands* pearls—it is the Lord Himself—He knows and can see what perfect beauty and blessedness are. He sees and knows what is delightful to Him down here,

NOTES OF MINISTRY AT THE LORD'S TABLE. 17

and He says, "I must have that." He is seeking pearls, and when He finds one of great price, He sells all that He has to buy it; that is the place we have in His heart. It humbles us when we see how little we realize it; but though we fail, He has that in His mind. Because He knows what is beautiful, He takes us up to make us that, according to what God delights in—and there is nothing like it. Angels are glorious creatures, but they are not the fruit of redemption. Christ says: "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life," and He brings us into the value and blessedness of that. He can say, "Therefore"—He alone could give a motive to God.

That laying down His life was so perfect and excellent, it could be a motive for God's love. There was love in it; obedience in it; spotlessness in it; entire devotedness in it, besides the dignity of His Person; so that God could say, That is sufficient to move My affection.

He brings us to learn, as Balaam did, God's thoughts, seeing the lign aloes the Lord had planted. Israel was perverse, but that, not this, was the vision of the Almighty.

Do you think Christ is going to have anything His heart could not be satisfied with? Just think of our being that which satisfies the heart of Christ—the blessedness we are brought to, and what the love of Christ is!

For joy *thereof* He sells all He has. He will show the riches of His grace in His kindness toward us. We are poor, weak creatures, and Satan and temptation are apt to make us weary, we know, if we are going through the world seeking to serve Him, and it

18 NOTES OF MINISTRY AT THE LORD'S TABLE.

is well for us to get into these springs of the heart of Christ to us. There was one pearl of great price to Him, and that was His Church.

The Lord give us to know and taste His love, and to enter into His mind. It is slowly we learn what delights His heart. He is the pattern and model of the whole thing: the One that our hearts learn it in. But it is happy to think His heart is set on us. He sold all that He had to have us, because He delighted in us.

The Lord give us to learn what He is in the beauty of His love and obedience, that we may be changed into the same image from glory to glory. J. N. D.

*At North Row, Lord's Day morning,
January 22nd, 1871.*

No. 2.

JOHN xvii. 26.

Following J. N. D. on Matthew xiii.

A FEW words in connection with the same subject: this is more the inner side of it. That was more the redemption side, containing the revelation of God Himself, and of all that the blessed Lord has done, or is doing, or will do.

Here it is the unfolding of the exceeding riches of that character that He Himself knew so well—His Father's and His God's. We have the Lord speaking while He was on earth to His Father, about those who were around Him. He had not yet died, and the wonderful truth that "God made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin," had not taken place. He was about to go to the cross, but He had not yet gone. He speaks to His Father here of what He had made known to His

NOTES OF MINISTRY AT THE LORD'S TABLE. 19

people: "I have declared Thy name unto them, and will declare it." He brings in this name of the Father, and beautifully acts on this the moment He was risen from the grave, saying, "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, unto My God and your God." It was not such a revelation as of the creation, or of God blessing man, or keeping wickedness in check in government; but He knew all about the Father, and no one could reveal the Father but the Son, and He had made Him known.

Remark, it is "That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." The Lord represented His brethren as being in the place of the confidants of His love. We forget that. Occupied with the Father's delight in Him, we learn how short we come. The Father delights in Him. It is just the place we are brought into, fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Have you not thoughts, believing thoughts, of the Father's delight in that Son? not only in the work done in the days of His humiliation, but His delight from everlasting to everlasting—nothing but delight. Has He not given you the Spirit that you may stand here and find your portion in the Father's delight? Our getting there is a question of the completeness of His meeting, as the Servant, the mind of God, and He has altogether met it. Is it merely that? No. He that did make expiation, and did give the Spirit, has spoken and made known the Father's delight in Him, and we are quite content to stand by and see the contrast to ourselves. The heart does know it, and just where failure comes out most sensibly to ourselves and causes us to say, "In me, that is in my

20 NOTES OF MINISTRY AT THE LORD'S TABLE.

flesh, dwells no good thing," there comes in the sweetness of there being One who never did anything amiss, the perfect expression of all that is in God, in the Father. The heart finds refreshment in that, where there is failure, and says, Oh what a blessed thing that very contrast is! He has drawn me and is leading me, and won't stop till He has presented me conformed to His own likeness. He is perfect, and all the Father's delight flows out to Him and rests on Him, and I can say like John, "He must increase, and I must decrease"; He whose forerunner I was is come, and I cease to be anything in my own eyes.

Notice the contrast of the preceding verse, "O righteous Father, the world has not known Thee." If we could get to the secret of the sorrows that trouble our hearts, it is dabbling with things that are not of the Father but of the world. Christ brings us out of these things, and the mind recognizes it distinctly; but if we don't, in our walk down here, see that we are not to be of the world *practically*, no wonder if our souls get low and feeble, and cannot rise up to the delight of the Father in the Son, because there is not girdedness of loins.

He has spread His own portion before us, and it is not of the world.

We can look without a question of the measure of the love that passes finding out, and the worthiness of the One who is the centre of all the counsels of God, but we must beware of the world. Ever so little of the world admitted changes, not Him, but our power of enjoying Him and walking in the freshness of it.

G. V. W.

CONVERSATIONS ON SCRIPTURE.

No. 6.

DELIVERANCE.

OUR last conversation was very helpful, but let me pursue it further, and ask, What right have I to reckon myself dead to sin and alive to God as Christ is?

† Because if you are a believer Christ is your life, and consequently you share with Him inalienably in the effects of His work. He died to sin and rose again to live only to God, and this is the character of our life.

That goes very far, but no doubt it was this made the apostle say, "I am crucified with Christ."

† If crucified at all it could only have been when Christ was, but it is never true of us until Christ is our life. Mysticians think to get crucified in themselves; but, on the contrary, conscience plainly takes it as a fact against the evil principle of sin in us. Thus "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." (Gal. v. 24.) The basis is in "knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him."

Certainly it seems clear that I am entitled to deliverance from this terrible and subtle evil principle under which I have groaned so long, but the holy Word of God has also often seemed to shut me up under the enemy's power because I am not what I ought to be and would wish to be.

† The Word and Law of God is not sin, but is rather delighted in according to the inward man. Nevertheless, to obtain a sense of divine favour and approval by meeting its requirements would be a credit to yourself; and this could not be, for no flesh shall glory in His presence. Moreover it is impossible, for if you have sin in you, though perhaps not allowed, do you not think that God's eye detects it?

Just so; that is my difficulty.

† What you want is not by effort to meet His requirements, but by grace to be delivered from law, so that God does not call sin into question nor charge it upon you. In fact, you need to draw near to Him just as you are, and to be received according to the perfection and excellencies that are in Another.

But does He, will He so receive me? Sin *is* in me.

† Certainly He will, and He is holy and righteous in so doing, for Christ has been made sin and a curse for us to redeem us from the curse of the law; so that, instead of seeking favour and approval as having kept God's requirements, I may fully and freely and honestly own that sin in my flesh is ineradicable and incurable, but that, thanks be to God, the condemnation of it has passed for ever in the sacrifice of the Son of God for sin. He came under law, which took cognizance of man in the flesh, not to put us in relationship with God by it and on that principle, but, on the contrary, to die, and thus to end for us the state of the man whose blessing depended on the fulfilment of his responsibility. He made the law honourable, not by keeping it for us, that we might fail to keep it with impunity, and yet be reckoned righteous under it. Instead of this, though fulfilling

CONVERSATIONS ON SCRIPTURE.

23

it Himself in righteousness (and far more), He *died* and suffered its curse and penalty, and thus ended the history of man under it, except for the judgment of the wicked.

Then Christ's living righteousness is not imputed to us?

† No; that would leave us still under law, and would, in truth, nullify its force and make it void. We are identified with His death for us; thus the law is established, but by grace. Its penalty is enforced to the uttermost against us, and we have died to it by the body of Christ. Thus we are delivered from it.

So it has nothing more to say to us or we to it. That is clear and convincing. To be before God in peace, without a thought that He is requiring anything from me but only to praise Him and His beloved Son, what rest!

† No thought of sin can enter there; indeed its presence *in* us may be an occasion of communion with the grace that made Him to be sin *for* us.

But if the thought of law or that I had to be aught for God were to enter there, it would be just as fatal to my peace before Him. The sin in me would use the very holiness of God and His law to banish from my heart all sense of His delight, and produce distance and fear instead.

† Yes, sin is exceeding sinful, and slays the soul with what is holy, just, and good.

How important this is.

† Not only the being delivered from the power of sin, but deliverance from law, holy as it is. This is in every way as necessary as important for holiness

and peace and Christian walk with God and communion with Him.

It opens up an entirely fresh scene of blessing in Christ unrecognized before.

† We may speak of these things again perhaps, but let us rejoice to know that our link of relationship with God is not law nor requirement, nor what we have been nor can be, but Christ Himself alone in sovereign grace, risen from the dead, beyond the law and flesh of sin and death and condemnation.

“A RISEN Christ is needed to feed the soul.”

“But if we would have our appetites feed on Him as the old corn of the land, we must have the habit of feeding on Him as the manna. . . . And it is impossible to enjoy Him as the Paschal Lamb unless we are feeding on Him as the manna.”

“If I walk with Christ in me, if I eat manna in the desert, I feed also on the old corn of the land in Canaan. Every day one may do both. . . . But to glorify God, and reproduce the character of Jesus in all positions—of husband, wife, master, servant—one must feed on Christ, the old corn of the land.”

“WERE all the trappings of the flesh laid aside, we should discern how little real spiritual energy there is amongst us. Do you ask, ‘What shall I study?’ Study well these four words, ‘The flesh profiteth nothing.’”—*Extracted.*

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE MINISTRY OF
ROBERT KENT.

No. 6.

LOST AND SAVED.

THE reason of the difficulty many persons have in being able to say they are saved, is the fact that they have never seen that they are utterly lost. Men often complain of God in their trials and troubles, saying, "Why has this come upon me?" "What have I done to deserve it?" We do not need a revelation from God to see that sin is in the world; we see it in its effects all around us. Man would cast on God the blame of all his trials; but God did not make man as he is. In speaking to the woman, Satan, that old serpent, in his subtlety, impugns three things in God. He calls in question God's motive in what He has done for man. He says, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" saying, as it were, This garden is a beautiful place, but is there not one thing which would add to your happiness that God has kept back, that you may not eat of, and may not touch? God is not so good as He makes Himself out to be. When Eve listened to him, he had her heart and her whole inner being at his mercy. She was a ruined woman. Did God say, "Ye shall die"? "Ye shall not surely die"; "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." "Knowing good"—yes, but by being never able to attain to it; "and evil"—by being utter slaves to it. The serpent spoke to the woman; she was deceived.

He did not speak to Adam; he was not deceived. But so much the worse for him. They try to repair the mischief; they sew fig leaves together, and make themselves aprons. What ingenuity man expends on repairing! Surely there never was a day like the present for repairing, religiously and socially, what sin has done! But when man gets into the presence of God, it is all of no use; no trying there to wrap around one the apron of fig leaves. Man hears the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden, seeking to commune with His creature. Ah! then it is all over—all over. Does he come forth with joy and say, "Here am I," when God says, "Where art thou?" No; he hides himself behind what God has given for his comfort, pleasure, and happiness. This is seen in the gospel when man is invited by God's grace. He hides himself behind his comforts and his pleasures, and excuses himself by what God has given him—his piece of land, his yoke of oxen, and his wife, though perhaps in a polite way. "Where art thou?" This is God's first question to man. We shall come to another presently, namely, "What hast thou done?" Why does God ask these questions of His creatures? Was it not to draw out confession of sin? And does He get it? Not a bit of confession, but plenty of excuses. The last thing a man does when he sins is to confess it. He makes hundreds of excuses for himself, such as the pressure of circumstances, or temptation was too strong for him, &c. "I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid." Conscience does not bring a man to God, but makes a coward of him. In his answer to God, Adam does not so much cast the blame on the woman, though this he does, but on God. "The woman whom

Thou gavest me"—she did it, but You gave me the woman. Oh, how sin degrades us! The woman casts the blame on the serpent, and excuses herself. The Lord speaks to the serpent. No excuse for the serpent; he stands convicted. But in His words to the serpent, the Lord brings in cheer for their poor hearts—that salvation would come through the very one by whom the sin came. The seed of the woman, "it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel."

The Lord Jesus did not come into the world as Adam did, a full-grown man, but born of a woman, and He came under the law. He came into this world to supplant the first Adam, and to make atonement for sin. In principle the Lord taught this lesson when He said to Jeremiah, "Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there will I cause thee to hear My words." So Jeremiah went down to the potter's house, and saw him take a lump of clay, and fashion it. But the vessel was marred in the hand of the potter. Did the potter seek to mend the cracked part? No; he made another vessel. This is so blessed to my soul. The vessel of testimony has been marred, not by the potter—we have ruined ourselves. God brings in His Man, the last Adam, and a new creation.

God drives out the guilty pair, but not before He has clothed them with coats of skin, suitably according to His mind. That speaks of death, of atonement made for sin—animals had been slain. The Lord Jesus has made propitiation Godwards and substitution manwards. When they looked at themselves, they would see what told of it. They could go out into the world now without shame of others. The cross of Christ is the answer to the accusation of the serpent as to God's

love. He says, as it were, I give you My heart's treasure, the Son of My bosom, to be nailed to the cross. There His blessed heel was bruised. Death was the penalty; Christ bore the penalty, He tasted death for every man. The sword, witness of God's righteousness in judgment, was raised against Jehovah's Fellow, and we are become God's righteousness in Him.—*July 8th, 1894.*

“‘WILL ye plead for Baal?’ It is a most fearful instance of the want of a sound mind when we find so much perverse ingenuity, so many subtleties, so many analogies drawn in order to lull the awakened conscience into contentedness with evil. And do not let us suppose that all the arguments of all the good men in the world can make that which is evil good. It is melancholy indeed to see the arguments that are devised by the wit of men in vindication of evil. The bounden duty of the saint is to separate from evil, however sanctioned by antiquity or anything else.”

“We must possess Christianity with God, so that we know why we stand fast: we must be ourselves in communion with Him, in order to have the strength necessary to continue labouring in His name, and the sustainment of His grace at all times.”—*Extracted.*

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

BY THE EDITOR.

(*From Shorthand Report.*)

LECTURE VIII. CHAPTERS IV. AND V.—*continued.*

WHEN the throne is set up there are these twenty-four thrones in connection with it; we find these two parties of twelve, for the exercise of the throne is not limited to God's government of the habitable world and the maintenance of His covenant with the earth. God finds it necessary to give the full force of the throne in connection with the twenty-four elders. We have capacities for it, and the capacities we have are such as will be put into exercise to-morrow. This is why we are not to go to law before the ungodly.

They were "clothed in white raiment, and had on their heads crowns of gold."

White raiment represents moral capacity as well as the heavenly recognition of that which has been the result of the Holy Ghost's work in the soul in this world. The white garments which we shall assuredly, through grace, wear in the presence of our God were ours in the world, but they are also the public recognition on God's part of the life of holiness that has been wrought out here in the power of the Holy Ghost.

They had also crowns of gold. There are two words used for crowns in the book of the Revelation; here it is a word that signifies a crown of dignity* and not a

* Especially the crowns given at the Grecian public games.

sign of royal rule. There is the crown that the Queen wears, which is a crown of rule, and the coronet which a baron or duke or marquis or earl may wear, which is not a sign of rule, but a mark of dignity. What we wear in the heavenly scene when seated on these thrones and clad in this white raiment is not a sign of royal rule, but a mark of honour and dignity. I may mention that as regards the sign of rule* it is limited to three persons in the book of the Revelation; one is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself—He has many signs of kingly rule, inasmuch as He has many spheres of power. But He has a right to them. There are, however, others who have usurped it. The dragon has a sign of rule—seven of them—and his man, the beast, wears it also. And these are the only three persons in the Revelation who are seen with the sign of royal authority.

We have ascended then in spirit where the prophet did, and we see thrones and these twenty-four elders, and we know very well they are ourselves. Thanks be to God for it; because there are no other men in office, and if it were not so we should have no place at all.

Mark now what the result is of setting up this throne: no gospel such as we have; "But out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices." This is the manner of its exercise; these are the agencies set at work, and they are agencies of judgment, as you can well understand—providential judgments, of course—famine, pestilences, and sword. Here they are expressed, not in their application, but

* "*διαδημα*" used of the fillet which encircled the turban of the Persian king.

in the way they appear in the heavenly scene—the way by which God attains the object of judgment, be it an individual or a nation, namely, by the lightnings and the voices. As long as it is a question of providential judgment God always warns before He strikes, and therefore we have the voices. These are not *before* the lightnings—everybody knows that they come afterwards; but the voices are those which give the knowledge of the source from which the judgment comes. I only speak according to the scriptural use of the term. In the Psalms xxix. and xviii., the thunderings are the voice of God; and when the thunder proclaims it, man should know that God is speaking. You get influenza or the Indian plague, and people scarcely know whether God is dealing with them in a special way or not; but when the thunder (that is God's announcement) comes people know then that God is there. And in that coming day He will not leave them without a distinct sense that will reach every conscience that God is in it, and is speaking to men.

Now it is beautiful to see what He has in view in these thunderings and lightnings, which are the means God uses in connection with His throne when once it is set up. The end He has in view is nothing but blessing. If it were not for blessing, I believe the wicked would go on for ever, and that would be as good as saying there was no God at all. But His object in striking providential judgments is not merely to destroy the wicked, though it has that effect, but to bring about a scene of blessing. So we find there are here before the throne, regulating all its movements, these seven lamps of fire burning, which are the seven

Spirits of God, and the sea of glass. These two things represent the end that God has in view. In the first place everything must be brought into conformity with His nature and intolerance of evil. Fire is an expression of God's attitude with respect to evil; you cannot bring wickedness into the presence of God. If *we* are brought into the presence of God, is wickedness brought there? No; the poor sinner is brought there, but his sins are blotted out. If to-day God brings a poor soul to Himself He brings him there without his sins, but as fully cleansed. This is not what we have to do with in the coming day, but with the question of government; and God is going to burn up evil. There are the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, and everything must answer to that, and if it is evil be burned up. But it is not merely the hand of God, as intolerant of evil, that the throne is connected with; there is the sea of glass like crystal. This is not the application of moral cleansing to the soul, that would have to be water; this is not water, it is glass. Of course it is pure like crystal, admits of no defilement, but you cannot wash with it. God is about to bring in an established and unchangeable scene of purity where there is no defect or failure or fault, or pollution of any sort or kind. He is not going to have in that eternal day anything that speaks of evil, nor of the creature in his failure in responsibility. Scripture distinctly tells us as to the new creation, that there all things are of God. The first creation is that in which the creature has been developed, and where filth and failure have been the consequence. The new creation is that in which God only is displayed, though we are there; His thoughts,

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

33

His mind, His work, all that He is. And therefore when everything is brought up to the level of God's thoughts and purposes you find it a sea of glass—like crystal which cannot change—an established and unchangeable scene of purity that abides for eternity. This is what He has in view.

Now, we will note the agents that are at work—the attributes of God—four beasts round about the throne, full of eyes before and behind, each of them with six wings. These four living creatures represent the active agents putting into exercise the attributes of God in connection with His throne. It may be by a man or by an angel, but the character of God's throne is put into exercise with men and creation. As to their eyes, it will help us to remember that when God acts governmentally and providentially, we find it very difficult to make out what He is doing. But these living creatures take into account everything that is to come (they have eyes before and after) as well as everything that *has* happened, and take a wide view of things if even only dealing with me, a poor thing. In Him we have One who knows everything to come as well as that which has passed. But that is not all; they were full of eyes within and around; that is to say, it is not only the past as well as the future, but it is the present that He takes into account; and more, all the motives and all the thoughts that are at work in connection with our pathway here. The eyes are within; He observes what is within man. What a wise throne it is, and how thoroughly our hearts should bow down and accept all these dealings, and submit to them in the confidence that perfect goodness as well as perfect wisdom and

power is at work, for He is One who understands all that is to come, all that is past, and all that is present, and who knows every motive and thought that arises in the heart. All these things are taken into account in God's governmental dealings. As to the actual qualities themselves, the first is like a *Lion*—irresistible power; no use kicking against it. The Lord Jesus Christ said to that man Saul when He struck him to the ground, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." What is the use of rebelling against Me? There is irresistible power as a part of God's government, and it must needs be submitted to.

Then there is the *Calf*—patience. He does not fly off at a tangent, like we sometimes do. And the more one has to do in a little measure with government, one feels how unable we are to exert these qualities which we find in God. But there is the Calf also, and we must be prepared to be a calf at times—that is, patient.

"*A face as a man*" indicates Intelligence.

These are the attributes of God in exercise with regard to the government of the world and His covenant with creation, which will be inaugurated in the coming day when we are no longer here, and we shall be associated with this throne, though we have a wider sphere than the exercise of it as presented here.

A "*Flying Eagle*" is quick to discern and seize upon the thing that is corrupt, a figure of God's judgment of moral evil; often do we see the Lord Jesus Christ thus, crying "Woe unto you, Pharisees," etc.

He attacked with swift perception, as of an eagle, what was morally corrupt. These are the moral attributes of God which may be exercised by man or angels. Each had six wings, and they were full of eyes. "And they rest not day and night, saying, Holy,

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

35

holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

As to the character of the throne, it is not as in the tabernacle and the temple, where there were two of these cherubim, with only two wings each. In the tabernacle their wings touched one another above, and their faces were towards the mercy-seat. So in the temple—only there their wings stretched from side to side, and their faces were outward. They had but two wings, for they did not need to cover their faces or feet, because they were engaged with the perfect work of the Lord Jesus Christ, whether in grace at the cross or in government by-and-by in the glory; the tabernacle setting forth the work of the cross, and the temple the work of the Kingdom. Therefore these cherubim form the pedestal of the throne, based on the mercy-seat, and are engaged with the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Isaiah vi. I suppose there are two cherubim. They had six wings apiece, as here: with two they covered their face, with two they covered their feet, and with two they did fly. And they stand *above* the mercy-seat. The throne was high and lifted up, and the cherubim above the throne. God's throne is looked at as on earth, and government comes from thence; and as on earth He executes judgment on the people. In Ezekiel you do not find the cherubim above, but underneath the throne, and the throne above them, because then the throne had been removed from earth. Israel had proved apostate, Judah was carried away captive, and, therefore, the throne is no longer looked at as on earth; but the cherubim were executing God's judgment by Nebuchadnezzar on the earth. They

support the throne with their wings, of which they have four—not six, but a pair of hands to make up the number, pointing to the human instrument employed. With two they support the throne, with two they cover their bodies—but have no need to cover their faces, because the throne is above. In Revelation you get the throne in heaven and the living creatures in heaven; but not needing to cover their faces or feet, because man is in power now, and there are twenty-four elders in association with the central throne, and they are there on the ground of divine righteousness. There is *nothing to hide, neither the glory nor their ways*, because Christ is everything; and they repeat that which the cherubim in Isaiah declared, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.” The whole object of the throne is to bring about the glory of God. I would just notice that the three names of God used here are names of government—Jehovah, El, Shaddai—government as of a nation, government with men, and *government with the pilgrim of faith*; but not the government of the world when blest. They describe a government connected with the present world—not of the millennium.

To pass rapidly to the next chapter. Whenever God's attributes are put into exercise, and as a result redound to His glory, then the twenty-four elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne. They do not want their crowns and thrones when they worship: these are very nice when it is a question of government and display; but when it is a matter of worship they want neither, but descend from the throne, and cast their crowns before Him, and worship Him who liveth for ever and ever.

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

37

We have thus the throne set up. And what is it all about? As a matter of fact the world belongs to somebody, and the rightful Heir has not it in possession to-day. He has title to it all, but, as the apostle Paul tells us in Hebrews, "we see not yet all things put under Him." Instead of the rightful Heir, the usurper is in possession, and now the time is come to set it right—to crush the usurper, and to put everything in the hands of the rightful Heir, in order that God's purposes may be accomplished. At the right hand of Him that sits upon the throne is a book: it is, in fact, the title-deeds. When we remember that it is a question of the resumption of the inheritance by Him to whom it belongs, it explains in a very simple way the action of the throne and the whole import of the vision. The title-deeds are found in this book, which is held in the right hand, because the whole power of the throne is now exercised in righteousness with respect to the inheritance.

I will just refer you to a scripture that will explain the scene. When the end of Judah's kingdom was nearly come, and Zedekiah was about to lose his throne and be carried away to Babylon, Jeremiah was in prison. To him the Lord makes known that his uncle's son should come to him and ask him to buy his field in Anathoth. Presently he comes, and all the matter is gone into. The writing is subscribed, and witness taken. It is then sealed, and the money is weighed; and the writing, the evidence of his purchase, both that which is open, as well as that which is sealed—according to the law and custom—is given into the hands of Baruch, in the presence of his uncle's son and the witnesses.

So the thing was made sure. Thus there were two books in connection with the transfer of property among the Jews, two title-deeds, one a copy of the other, both subscribed and sealed, and held by the tribunal, by the competent authority, until the time came to claim the inheritance; and the right had to be proved according to the sealed book before the proper tribunal. This is what you find here; the tribunal—the court of justice—is set up, and there the title-deeds are held in the hand of Him that sits on the throne, and a strong angel proclaims with a loud voice, “Who is worthy,” who can prove his right, and put it into effectuation? There was no one in heaven or earth, or under it, and the prophet weeps much.

I would remark that the elders understood all about it, just as we do. We know the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Root of David. These are the two titles under which Christ takes the inheritance of this world. The Lion of the tribe of Judah represents his Jewish right. Jacob, when dying, prophesied of Judah that his hand should be in the neck of his enemies, that he should be as a lion. Then he says that the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come. It is the Jewish right of succession, and He is entitled to claim His Jewish rights in this world. But He is also the Root of David; here His Gentile rights come in. He has rights to the world, rights over the Gentile as well, and therefore in Isaiah xi. He is spoken of as the “Root of David”: “He that shall rise up to rule over the Gentiles, and in Him shall the Gentiles trust.” The apostle quotes this in Rom. xv. to declare the

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH. 39

Gentile rights of Christ. He says, "He was a servant of the circumcision to confirm the promises that God made to the fathers: and that the Gentiles should glorify God for His mercy"; then He quotes the passage from Isaiah as to the Root of David: "There shall be a Root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to rule over the Gentiles." There we find the Lord Jesus Christ presented in His double title—a title over the Jews and over the Gentiles; and He it is to whom the whole inheritance belongs. He has overcome and prevailed to open the book. It is beautiful to see the Lord Jesus Christ, the One we know, presented in this way. On the next occasion, if the Lord will, the progress of His cause will pass before us.

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

BY J. BARTON.

No. 7.

IN Satan's attack on the Church at Pergamos his tactics are changed. Finding that in Smyrna the persecution which he awakened only served to brighten their testimony, casting them more on the Lord and drawing forth on their behalf a special expression of His interest, sufficiency, and thoughtful care, the adversary now uses his world as a patroniser of the Church, and in the place of the stake proffers a pillow, with, alas! fatal success: the Church again falls into his trap. And these falls, after a time of revival and measure of restoration, are the more sad.

The Lord in v. 12 presents Himself in an attitude calculated to arouse and exercise the conscience of any

40 SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

who had an ear to hear; not now speaking of worldly persecution from outside, but doctrinal corruption within, of an old form, but adapted to new circumstances, used successfully by the same adversary against God's earthly witnesses in time past. After the Cross, Satan became *manifestly* the god and prince of this world, and the Church is looked at here as set in this world for a testimony, and the Holy Ghost, who dwells in the assembly to energize and give her character, is a witness against this world for its rejection of Christ. (John xvi.) Thus, while the Church is true to her calling, there can be nothing in common with the world. We need to remind our souls of the *gravity* of our calling and our responsibility as well as of our privilege, because of what grace has made us, which nothing can change—our relationship to Christ in which the Holy Ghost has set us. That these saints allowed themselves to be *made at home*, in the very place where Satan *dwelt* and where Christ's faithful martyr Antipas *was slain*, though they held fast His name and did not deny His faith, told too truly what leaving first love leads to. The device of Satan, so successful through his servant Balaam, in the plains of Moab, has now been enshrined as a favourite *doctrine* in its form so well adapted to-day to the state of the Church. Its many victims proclaim its value to the adversary. To the angel here the Lord would have it known that He saw those among them that held this *doctrine*, as well as that of the Nicolaitanes. If they did not repent, He would come unto them quickly and fight against these agents of Satan with the sword of His mouth. If any had an ear to hear, and overcame, in the midst of such a state of things, the promise to such a one was suitably precious; to

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH. 41

be enjoyed by him here in spirit and hope, and when manifested with Christ in glory, in deep reality. "The hidden bread of Christ—once humbled here—God's treasured store." What a portion! with "that secret name of undisclosed delight. Blest answer to reproach and shame graved on the stone of white."

There are two effects of knowing that the Lord's eye is ever upon us—knowing our works. If privileged to suffer for His name's sake, or for the truth's sake, or for righteousness, it is an immense comfort to know that He is interested in me, and that though He may allow me to know difficulties and deep exercises by the way, it is not because He has forgotten what I am passing through, or that He has, because of the confusion, left me to get home as best I can. There is not one of the feeblest of His lambs desiring to please Him and do His will that cannot look up and *meet* that eye of interest and love ready to help. "He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous." On the other hand, if I am walking carelessly, in self-pleasing, and going on with the world that has rejected Him, this sense of being seen and known by Him is often that which is calculated to arrest my conscience.

When saints become "earth dwellers" it is plain that they have lost the sense of their heavenly calling, if they ever knew it. It is a well-known historical fact that when Constantine took the Church under his patronage and caused much corruption to be *mingled* with the truths of Christianity, there were some who stood out for certain parts of the faith; and so-called creeds were compiled in its defence and preservation. Antipas had stood for the faith and had suffered, and had those who were blinded and deadened by this

42 SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

patronage done the same, they too would have suffered instead of being honoured. We find two doctrines in Scripture, the opposite of each other. Titus xi. 10 exhorts us so to walk in all the varied relationships of life, that in their details we may “adorn the *doctrine of God our Saviour* in all things,” and the three following verses characterize that doctrine as one of *separation* to Christ from all that is contrary to His name. The other doctrine is in the scripture before us, “the doctrine of Balaam”; and its evil means to a more evil end is told too in one word—*mingling*: the precious and the vile. Jeremiah, who found the word of the Lord and did eat it, and to whom it was the joy and rejoicing of his heart, filled with indignation, sat alone. The Lord’s confirmation of his condition and position was, “Let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them,” “and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, *thou shalt be as My mouth.*” We read of two prophets interested in Israel’s ways—one of them a false prophet, acting for reward, for Israel’s hurt; and accomplishing his purposes by counselling their being invited into association with moral and ecclesiastical corruption: knowing enough of Jehovah to tell him that if this device succeeded it would draw down the Lord’s wrath and visitation upon His people. This Balaam taught Balak for reward. Another prophet, himself the child of prayer, true to Jehovah and His people’s true interest, by his ministry puts God’s people in such an attitude before Him (1 Samuel vii.) that God having no controversy with them, He is free to show Himself strong on their behalf and bless them richly. They put away the strange gods, poured out water as an expression of

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH. 43

utter irrecoverable weakness, fasted, confessed their sins, and prepared their hearts to serve the Lord *only*: Samuel could now pray for them, and offer a sucking lamb as a burnt offering wholly unto the Lord. The apostle, too, in Hebrews xiii. wrote thus: "Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly." The *progress* of evil in the assembly is marked by *the deeds* of the Nicolaitanes alluded to at Ephesus being now perpetuated as a *doctrine*, so also the evil end and means of Balaam is adopted as a *doctrine*; the former probably referring to making grace an excuse for licence of flesh, the latter clearly seducing the saints into association with moral and ecclesiastical corruption. It is a sorrowful state of things, when through allowance inwardly or outwardly of what the Lord hates, He has a controversy with us and has to withstand our way, instead of being free to comfort and encourage us and light up our way with the sense of His smile and approval. To be an overcomer in such surroundings costs something to a witness for Christ and His truth. Hebrews xi. gives us a record of God's witnesses at various times, and lets us know that faith in God it was which gave courage and endurance to refuse what was contrary to Him.

CONVERSATIONS ON SCRIPTURE.

No. 6.

DELIVERANCE.

OUR last conversation has cleared away many a gathering cloud that hindered the enjoyment of God's favour. In *His favour is life, and Christ is my life without any responsibility in the flesh of sin or any demand of good from it.* Instead of this it has been wholly condemned in the cross. Now I am indeed set free for testimony of blessing to the world.

† Stop a moment. Are you thinking of setting right the world or even the Church?

Well, at least I ought to seek it. Should not peace and blessing be established among men, and evil be eradicated as far as lies in our power, and the powers ordained of God be exercised for the glory of Christ? And as regards the Church, you surely must own that false teaching should be judged.

† You would make a fine inquisitor. Instead of judging others we have to judge ourselves, and this puts a different complexion on the matter, for sin in oneself even cannot be eradicated. We must, indeed, withdraw from those that walk disorderly, and "lay hands suddenly" on no man, lest we become partakers of any man's evil deeds and bring ourselves under the judgment of them. For the same reason we have to purge ourselves from vessels to dishonour and put away a wicked man from among ourselves; but this is in

CONVERSATIONS ON SCRIPTURE.

45

effect judging ourselves, like the stoning of Achan when Israel had sinned, or as the people who fled when Korah and his company were engulfed.

An inquisitor! Be it far from me, for I myself am a miracle of grace. Yet to govern the world for Christ must involve the punishment of evil. There seems no way out of this dilemma. But surely we have to be in this world for Christ?

† Yes, but in His path, and that by His death and resurrection with which we are associated by grace. How was Christ in this world as Son of God? He assumed no direction here, not even setting right a plain matter of unrighteousness between two brothers. The time had not come to divide the inheritance. Nor would He claim Messiah's rights over the people of God, but owned the rule of Cæsar. His world-kingdom, too, He formally repudiates until He has gathered out of the world His own. When brought into contact with Satan's emissaries He denounced them, but otherwise expressly recognized the religious system established originally by God, however it might be corrupted. But mark you, without rectifying the disorder of that system He introduced another in substitution of it.

Surely you remember that He twice drove out the traffickers in the temple.

† Yes, at the outset of His ministry, when He owned it to be His Father's house but displaced it by the temple of His body; and at the end, though still God's temple, declaring its judgment and irremediable ruin. Thus, instead of seeking to restore, He swept it from the scene.

How mistaken I have been! It seems certain that He put nothing right in this world—neither between

men, nor as ruling the world, nor in taking David's throne, nor especially regarding the priestly and religious system. But above all, He had no thought of restoring anything in the world as it is.

† He could have done it by judgment, but this would have been at the expense of mercy and by the utter ruin of all. Instead of this, He Himself dies to the whole scene of sin and man in the flesh, so as to establish blessing and the divine glory upon the ground of resurrection, securing in the way of righteousness the accomplishment of all God's purposes and counsels for eternity.

How much better than our vain effort to set things right in this world, even were it possible! But what troubles me is this: I am in the world; must I then stand by and see things drifting on to judgment without stretching out a hand to help? or am I to love the world and go on in its current?

† We are to do good to all men as we have opportunity; but why are you so anxious to benefit the world as such? Is it *because you* love it? That side of it which is attractive to a Christian is the more deceitful and dangerous—its religious character. Openly evil and violent, it is repulsive. The Christian has to overcome it in whatever form, and this is alone possible by faith of the Son of God, another Object in another scene altogether. But you say the path of Christ is to be yours. Let me ask, what puts you in it?

His death and resurrection.

† Yes, certainly, your association with Him in it so that you are dead with Christ and crucified to the world. Can you not draw the consequence?

CONVERSATIONS ON SCRIPTURE.

47

No longer then living in the world. That settles the matter, indeed. How foolish not to have seen this before! It clears me from the world entirely, whether as regards setting it right or helping it to go wrong. What a *delusion* to think it a *duty to rectify the world* and bring it under Christ! I am dead with Him.

† Especially to ordinances for the flesh—"Touch not, taste not, handle not"—which are of the essence of the world, little as people think it. They have to do with a perishable scene. The flesh and law that applies to it, with sin that uses this against the soul; the world and all that is in it morally, with the devil who wields it and its religion against Christ the Son of the Father; from all of it are we absolutely and altogether free for ever by having died with Christ, and now we are as risen with Christ to set our minds upon things above, where Christ is at the right hand of God.

Ah, nothing can be bettered there, for all is divinely perfect; nothing to be denied, or judged, or refused in that blessed place. All, I know, is ours; everything there is to be desired and enjoyed, for all is Christ. His be the praise for ever.

GOSPEL ADDRESSES.

THE attention of our readers is earnestly invited to the various papers appearing under this title, adapted as they are to meet, in a simple but thorough and precious way, the first needs of the soul. They consist, in many cases, of notes taken at the time of the utterances of honoured and devoted servants of the Lord.

No. 1.

2 CORINTHIANS v.

THERE are two words of immense comfort here, when once we have believed in the Lord Jesus and His work, and yet often they are a trial to people who cannot say them with simplicity. They are "*we know*" and "*we have.*" (v. 1.) There is no question as to whether we can be received or not, for we *are* reconciled. The consequence of having eternal life is that we "live to Him." We know this, and it gives us a consciousness of the place we are in. It was not merely the apostle that had it, it was common Christian knowledge. The apostle considers here what its bearings are as to the Christian, and then to the world. The latter are death and judgment.

First I get the fulness of my place, that all this glory is mine; then he contemplates judgment. He says, "I don't want to be unclothed [to die]; I am looking for mortality to be 'swallowed up of life.'" Such a power has come in in the Son of God, that if the moment for this were come I should not die at all; it is divine power. "Enoch was not, for God took him." Such a power neutralizes death, and if you are "naked"—that is, you haven't got Christ—you will be raised for judgment.

Do you believe that God has given you glory? (v. 2.) You may groan now because you have not got it yet.

It is not a question of what *we* deserve; *He* has wrought us for it (*v.* 5), and He knows what He has wrought. He is glorifying Himself by us according to the riches of His grace, and He does what will glorify Himself. If we believe that He gave His Son for us, all the rest is easy; and that the blessed Lord gave Himself for us, then nothing is too great to expect.

Do you say, I fail here, and come short there: what will God do? The Holy Ghost never reasons like this, that is my responsibility, and drawing from it as a consequence what God will do. The Holy Ghost draws the consequence from what God *has* done for us: "If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by His life." He draws His conclusions from what God has done, and not from what we have done. The consequences of what *we* have done are judgment, and all would be over with me.

God never gives me up. It is His joy to get sinners to depend on what He has done for them, His joy to find the lost piece of silver, to get the lost sheep back. He does not *ask* us what He shall give us, He brings forth the best robe. He has wrought us for the glory. How can it be? Nothing less than by the gift of the Son of God on the cross. And He gives us the earnest of His Spirit that we may *know* it now.

Then the apostle looks the natural portion of man in the face. There is death and judgment, but he begins by saying, "*We* are always confident." I am looking for glory, but still I look death in the face. What is death for the believer? "Absent from the body, and present with the Lord." We were under death, and subject to it, and the judgment afterwards; now, instead of my belonging to it, death belongs to me. "All things

are yours ; life, death, things present, things to come, ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." When I die, I have done with mortality ; my body goes to corruption ; no matter, it will be raised again. I have done with this burden, the spirit is with Christ ; and I have done with pain, sorrow, temptation, with having to resist evil, and bear with it. I am with Christ, in perfect happiness with Him, though not yet in glory. I am looking for glory, but if I do die I go and enjoy Christ, I depart "to be with Christ," "absent from the body." In this "vain show" in which we walk, "disquieting ourselves in vain," it is what *faith* gets at that is true. How little those men, when they brake the legs of the thief, thought that they were sending him off to paradise ! "To die is gain," and all I am anxious about, the apostle says, is that when He comes He should find me what He likes, that all I do may be acceptable unto Christ. That was the sanctifying effect on Paul.

"We must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ," and it is useful to think of it. The apostle does not hide what a solemn thing it is, but the effect is that he persuades men—it does not *alarm* him. He has not such a thought. God had wrought him for the glory. It is a blessed thing to see all the wondrous ways and dealings of God in grace with us. There are poor things, not ready, still in their sins ; Paul feels what a solemn thing judgment is, and the love of Christ constrains him when he thinks of their meeting the judgment of God. But we *are* made manifest to God, that is the sanctifying power, as a present thing : he looks at everything as it would appear at the day of judgment—of the believer I mean. By realizing this he is able to look at things and judge them as they would be there. "He that hath this hope in Him

purifieth himself, even as He is pure." I must take Christ as my pattern and measure. I am manifested now, everything I do and think is clear out before God now. *Then* I shall find a Person judging who has put away all my sins, and there can be no question of imputing them to me.

There are three things. First, the bright and glorious hope for which He has wrought us. Then, secondly, he takes up death, and says, "We are always confident." We have a life that death does not touch at all. Thirdly, if he looks at judgment, it only urges him to go and preach to other people.

You will find many a thing that is not made manifest as in the day, if you are going on with your own will, and your own thoughts, and not according to God. It will not be manifest even if you do love Him, but that won't do.

Verse 14 shows that all were *dead*, not merely guilty. What man left for five hours would think of the things of God and of Christ unless God had awakened him? That is more than being guilty. Then he says: if we are beside ourselves it is to God; for then his mind was wrapt in ecstasy; if he began to reflect, it was thinking of other people. He just adds it is all new, the whole thing.

If the greatest sinner in London were here, God is beseeching him to be reconciled; and how terrible if he should have to say in *that* day: Thou wast beseeching me, and I didn't care about it. If I cling to selfishness, I can't be bright. If I am grieving the Spirit, I am uncomfortable, not because I have not got eternal life, but because I *have* got it and am not living up to it.

J. N. D.

December 22nd, 1870.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE MINISTRY OF
ROBERT KENT.

No. 7.

JOB.

JOB was not like David; he had not sinned in deed. He was a perfect man, God said. But there was some legality in his piety, for he was always trying to keep God's judgments from his family by sacrifices, and he says further on, "The thing that I greatly feared is come upon me." God speaks to Satan about him, and Satan replies that he fears God for what he gets. Satan was glad to bring trouble upon him, and ransacks heaven and earth, and uses the elements, and all the surrounding nations, for the trial of Job. First he loses his oxen and asses and servants; then the sheep and servants; then the camels and the servants; and at last Job's own sons and daughters. But Job is a worshipper; he says, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Then, in chapter ii., God allows Satan to have another turn at Job, and he was glad to have it: "Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life." How gracious! However great Satan's power, it is only limited. Was ever a man so tried as Job? He had lost all his property, all his children, and then his health. Moreover, the one from whom he might have looked for a drop of comfort, his wife, tells him to curse God. But Job is victorious. The conflict was between God and Satan; and do you think God would provide for His own defeat? I think Satan

acted in a very foolish way to reach his end. If I wanted to make a person break down, speaking humanly, I should be always grinding at him, and should spread it over a long space of time. Satan brought these trials suddenly upon Job; but a saint in any great trial—suppose the bank breaks, and he loses all his money—rises above it like a cork on the water. He turns to God. It is not the great trials that break one down, but the little wearing things that make a man live the life of a martyr. Speaking from experience, it is in these that we generally break down.

Observe that, after the first two chapters of Job, Satan is off the scene altogether; we hear nothing more about him. Then Job's friends come. One thing was wrong with Job: he thought himself a very good man. In chapter xxix. he says, "When the eye saw me, then it blessed me." But at the end he says to God, "Now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." We may be in Christ, blessed with all spiritual blessings; but there is something more than all this, it is the knowledge of God; as it says, "Some have not the knowledge of God."

Abraham had not sinned like David, and did not need trials like Job; he had been walking with God, and he is a worshipper. In Genesis he says to his servants, "Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." God spoke to him in a way to touch every chord in his heart: "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest." One might say, how cruel! But God had strung a harp in Abraham's heart that He was going to get music from, and said,

I will get something for Myself from him. When God asks us to sacrifice anything for Him, do we worship?—*January 31st, 1892.*

No. 8.

CHRIST OUR FOOD.

I have thought a good deal of late of varied ways in which Christ is presented to us in the holy Word of God as our food. In Philippians the first three chapters seem to open this out. In the first is, may we not say, the gospel, the Lamb of God, the passover-ground of Israel's shelter and deliverance, and ours. Then in chapter ii. is the manna, or food for the wilderness journey of the redeemed; and in chapter iii. the old corn of the land, the risen and glorified Man. How sweet the fact that the *first goes on* and enters into each position—wilderness or Canaan! Yes, we must always feed upon the slain Lamb. How precious is our Lord Jesus in that character! The manna has its distinct place too, but is not enjoyed at the same time as the old corn. It seems to overlap and be found "over Jordan," but not after the old corn is enjoyed. (Joshua v. 12.) What variety is here, beloved, but the *same* Christ. The apprehension of the last, our "*calling on high*," seems to me our weak place. Oh, to know Him! for a more distinct, personal acquaintance with that blessed, glorious Man! to dwell more constantly and undistractedly in spirit with Him, our Head! It is *this* would give us the fervent, longing desire to rise to meet Him, or to depart to be with Him, which our poor cold hearts yearn to know more of.—*May 8th, 1897.*

No. 9.

A GREETING AND A RESPONSE.

Revelation i. 4-6 is divided into three parts, namely, a greeting, a response, and a testimony. The greeting is addressed to the professing Church of God on earth, and tests the reality of the profession by presenting Christ. Where there is life there is a response. What a beautiful greeting it is! Grace and peace from God and from the Holy Ghost in the plenitude of His power, the seven spirits which are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness. When before the high priest Jesus was silent to him. (Matt. xxvi. 62, 63.) Oh, those silences of Jesus! They are very solemn. He never was silent to a poor sinner; but to men like these, who were going down to the pit, He was silent. The high priest was God's representative on the earth, and the Lord did not answer till asked if He were the Christ. He bore witness to the truth about His own blessed Person, and it cost Him His own blessed life. Then they spat in His face—the most contemptuous thing one can do to a fellow-being. He is mocked both by Jew and Gentile.

He bore witness unto the truth, and says, "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice. Pilate saith unto Him, What is truth?" (John xviii. 33-37.) He was the truth, and He revealed in Himself the truth about the Father.

"Unto Him that loved us." The believer can say too, "Who loved me, and gave Himself for me." It is true He loved the Church and gave Himself for it,

but "He loved me." You may tell me of the highest truths, of the union of the Church with Christ, of the kingdom and the glory of the millennial age, of the Holy Ghost dwelling in me; but nothing will touch a chord in my heart like this—He loves me. "And washed us from our sins in His own blood." Think what it cost Him! "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father." We are kings and priests to offer up spiritual sacrifices, and are a royal priesthood to show forth the virtues of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

"Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him." We shall be with Him when He comes; we shall be rapt up in the clouds before. Both are found in 2 Thessalonians i. 7-10. "When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, *and* to be admired in all them that believe." When the world looks at you and at me they will see Christ—it is the joy of our souls to think of it.

Refuse not God's greeting. There are two places in Scripture where greetings were refused. The first was when David sent a beautiful message to Nabal, "Go and say to him that liveth in prosperity, Peace be to thee, and peace be to thy household, and peace be to all that thou hast." But Nabal refused it, and came under the judgment of God. In the second case David sent to comfort Hanun when his father died. But poor Hanun had evil counsellors, who said, Don't listen to it. He doesn't mean what he says. How many dear souls are hindered now in a similar way by bad counsellors.—*October 18th, 1891.*

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

BY THE EDITOR.

(From Shorthand Report.)

LECTURE IX. CHAPTERS VI. AND VII.

WE were noticing last time the change of scene from the fourth chapter onward, according to the division of the book given us in the close of the first chapter, namely, the things which the prophet had seen, the things which were, and the things which were to be after these. "The things that are to be after these" commence with the setting up of the throne. It is God's government of the earth that is now before the mind of God and the Spirit, and to be before us, His government of the world in order to bring the inheritance under the power of His Christ. We were looking at the character of the throne, and the whole occupation of it was with the rights of Christ. The One that sat on the throne had the sealed book in His right hand, and the question was raised who was worthy to take the book. As you remember, the prophet wept much because no man was found to be worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. Nobody could claim the inheritance or answer all its conditions, or had power to put into effect the rights of the One to whom the inheritance belonged. But the elders were in the secret, and when the prophet weeps one of the twenty-four elders tells him that the Lamb, the Lion of

the tribe of Judah, the Root of Jesse, had prevailed to open the book and break the seals thereof.

Here the elder states the rights under which Christ inherits the earth. They are twofold: He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and He is the Root of David; the one being His Jewish rights, for as the Lion of the tribe of Judah He is the Head of Judah; and the other being His Gentile rights, namely, the Root, not the offspring, of David. The Root of David is not Jewish, but is the source from whence David's Judaic rights sprang. Therefore He is the foundation of every right of whatsoever kind, and thus He can call the Gentiles. I was quoting the passage from Jacob's prophecy where he speaks of Judah as a lion's whelp, etc. And then he goes on to say, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah," etc. Thus we see here very distinctly the Jewish rights of Christ, surely as the peace of His people able to overcome every enemy and bring them into blessing.

But as to the Root of David, there is only passage, as far as I know, that speaks precisely in that way; it is quoted in the New Testament by the apostle Paul in Romans xv. to show Christ's rights over the Gentiles. It says that He is the servant of the circumcision to confirm the promises of God made to the fathers (that is Jewish), and that the Gentiles should glorify God for His mercy. Then he quotes two or three scriptures, and finally this from Isaiah xi., "And there shall come a Root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to rule over the Gentiles" (there is His Gentile right); "and in Him shall the Gentiles trust." The apostle quotes this to prove his position—a position which we accept—that Christ is not only Head of the Jews, but also of the

Gentiles. It is a remarkable thing that there is but one Person who could bring any possible claim to embrace in His own person headship over the Jews and also over the Gentiles. Christ is the One in whom these two rights and titles are embraced, and therefore He comes and takes the book out of the right hand of Him that sits on the throne. I need hardly remind you that there will come two confederates by-and-by, pretenders to this claim; but they are not *one*. There is the false head of the Jewish nation—the Antichrist. But he cannot claim to be the head of the Gentiles; nor does he, because the beast is there. Satan has to provide two men to put in a false claim to this title. But Christ is *one*; He is Head of the Jews as Lion of the tribe of Judah, and Head of the Gentiles as Root of Jesse.

It is beautiful to have this brought before us thus, for we are seen as twenty-four elders in association with the central throne; and therefore we give our adhesion to the claim which the blessed Lord puts in on that day to assume His right to the inheritance of this world. We enter into it now, and that is why the elder was able to instruct the prophet.

Those are His rights; but here we find that He has His titles as well as His rights, and He has His capacities as well as His qualifications. A man might have all the rights in the world, but if he had not power to put his rights into effectuation what would be the use of them? The blessed Lord has not only the rights but the power to put them into effect, and that is the way He is presently to uphold His right. He is in the midst of the throne as a Lamb as it had been slain. Upon what does He base His

worthiness to assume this inheritance? On the fact that He was slain, that He is the One who has passed through this world as God's Man, and been utterly rejected. His worthiness resides in the one fact that the glorious Person who is found in the midst of the throne, and takes out of the right hand of God the book of the inheritance, is One who has passed through this world for God in humiliation, who has been here in rejection, and known what it is to die in this very scene. He is a Man to-day, a risen Man, who was rejected in the day of His humiliation and died. But in connection with the fact, an eternal fact, that He was the rejected One, we have this also, that the seven horns and seven eyes belong to Him. This constitutes divine capacity to put into effect His rights. He has omnipotence, omniscience, divine perception, and power to validate all His claims.

"He came and took the book," etc., and then, you observe, the whole heavenly company fall down and worship before Him—they render to Him divine homage. It is very striking to see that this divine homage is rendered to Him in His character as the Lamb. "They fall down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints." Wonderful is the effect of the glory of Christ. It has the same effect to-day, for we do see the glory. What is peculiar to a Christian is that he sees the glory Moses could not see. The most favoured man ever on the earth prior to Christ's advent could not behold the glory of God, for as the Lord said to Moses, "No man can see My face and live." It is impossible to see the glory. But the wonderful thing with grace is that we

are able to look on the unveiled face of the glory of the Lord; and, indeed, unless we behold the glory we have not power to walk as Christ in the world.

The glory has three effects in man, more perhaps, but these three are prominently set before us. In the first place, we are changed morally into the same image from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord. A man whose heart is occupied with the Lord Jesus Christ in His pathway down here, and yet does not know what it is to see Him in the glory, will be the most unhappy person possible; a most pure and beautiful character, I dare say, but the most unhappy person, because he has before him a perfect example with the responsibility resting upon him to walk according to it and no power to do so. But the moment you behold the glory there is no effort required at all, because the peculiarity of the glory is this, that it changes us without any effort on our part. It is by the unveiled glory of the Lord that we are changed, according to the same image, by the Spirit of the Lord. The sight of the glory which a Christian has has the effect of changing him morally into the likeness of the person he sees.

But it also produces worship. Nobody can worship unless they see the glory, because, if not, the veil must be there, and the worship that once was proper to the people of God, outside the veil, no longer exists. You have not such a place of worship now; our place of worship in heaven has no veil, and the worship proper to a Christian does of necessity assume that the glory is seen.

There is just the third thing, namely, the living testimony in the power of the Spirit in a person who sees the glory in Another.

Now observe the effect of the glory upon these elders, because, as a matter of fact, these elders are ourselves, and it is wonderful to see how we act when we get in heaven. Often people say, "What shall we be occupied with in heaven?" One thing is certain, we shall never be occupied with ourselves. What, then, will it be? What is the effect of the glory? The first thing is, they fall down before the Lamb, they render divine homage to this blessed Man, for He is a man, and is seen in His human character—not, of course, in anywise excluding His divine. But what is manifestly before the eyes of the saints, as they see Him take the book out of the hand of Him that sits on the throne, is that He is a Man who was rejected in this world; and the moment He is visible they fall down before Him, and render divine homage—that is, they worship. You cannot worship God in any acceptable way at all unless you have Him presented to you in the person of the Man Christ Jesus, for you cannot know Him at all unless revealed to you in Him. We know from Colossians that "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," and "we are filled up in Him who is the Head of all principality and power." Thus we do get, in the most distinct way, what our occupation is when we are in heaven, and our occupation here and in heaven should be the same in principle. The first thing is worship. They fall down and worship this blessed Man, who is no other than the blessed God; but it is the Lamb we fall down and worship.

And then notice, there is no thought at all about a crown or a throne. We see these in chapter iv., but thrones do not come into the mind when it is a

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

63

question of worship. What have you, then, if not the thrones and the crowns? If you have relinquished these; the harps and the vials come into action. The moment a Christian comes into worship he must have a harp. It is the necessary consequence of redemption, and therefore a man in heaven sings. A heavenly man sings; and though when it is a question of worship the thrones and the crowns are for the moment relinquished, there is the harp and there are the vials, that is to say, the bowls of incense in their place. You do not think of yourself or of the harp and vials. The harp is simply for the praise of another, the blessed Lord Himself. And what is the vial for? It is in one sense a temporary service on our part, for it has its reference to poor things down here who are in trial, not to ourselves.

These twenty-four elders are of necessity men, because you never hear of angels as intercessory beings. It is one of the lies of Satan. Angels excel in strength, but intercession is not a question of power at all, but of dependence upon the power of another, and, therefore, it is a moral necessity that these twenty-four elders should be men. I only mention this in case anybody has a doubt about it, or would question that these twenty-four elders represent the glorified saints. You find them here presenting the prayers of others, and, therefore, intercessors on their behalf. A man is not an intercessor after he has died in this world, unless he is raised; and there is no such thing as the so-called intercession of saints—you cannot pay a certain price and get the Virgin Mary to pray for you. There is no intercession in heaven to-day except in the Man Christ Jesus. Here we have the vials full

of the prayers of the persecuted, tried saints on earth. What is that but intercession? These two things characterise approach to God, and the man who goes to God does not think of himself, but he has a harp to sound forth the praises of the blessed Object before him, and he has the vials or bowls of intercession to think of others—poor, tried people of this world. We do not pray about ourselves there. Do you ever hear a man in a prayer-meeting pray for himself? No, he would go into his private room, and shut the door, and pray about himself; but, in coming into the prayer-meeting, we enter into our true place and privilege as saints of God, and then we pray about other people.

They fall down before the Lamb—there to worship. Christ sings in the midst of the saints. Scripture is precise about that. He is the One who sings praises, who started the song, and who maintains it; and, therefore, He says, "In the midst of the congregation will I sing praise unto Thee." When we are there like Him, and as we get like Christ here, we sing the heavenly song, and the One whom we see there is Him whom we have learned on earth. Nevertheless, unless we see Him in glory, and are thus in living communion with the living Person, and know our association with Him in the place He has earned in *divine righteousness for us*, there is no possibility of being like Him. Here are these persons in divine title in the glory associated with God's throne of government, and they are in the attitude of worship. They behold the blessed Lamb of God, and sing like Himself. There are these two things that characterise Christ. He sings in the midst of the congregation, and He intercedes for them in the glory. Where we

are He sings, and where we are not He intercedes. Well, we are just like Him. Here they had the harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of somebody else—the prayers of the poor saints down here—not their own prayers. These prayers are gathered in the hearts of the heavenly saints, which are not dissociated from this poor earth, but are interested in it, as soon as we have our bodies again. We are interested in whatever goes on in this world as soon as we, if in death, are raised again: I do not say before. As soon as we are raised and clothed in our resurrection bodies our interests are connected with this poor world, and God's saints that are there, because our interests are Christ's.

There is just this other thing, the testimony I give as the result of the glory. So we find a testimony here. They sing a new song, and the song is all about Christ. And remark this, that it is the elders only who address Him personally. They know Him intimately; they do not usurp an extravagant place, but are in immediate association with Him and address Him personally, and they alone do so. They address Him in a testimony to the value and the effects of the work of redemption; and if our worship does not partake of that character it is not worth much. Of course, here it takes its character from what the book is occupied with, but in principle it is the same to-day. If our worship is dissociated from the work of redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ in its effects and as the cause of worship, it is worthless. I will give you an instance from the Old Testament. When the Passover was offered the blood was sprinkled, and they had to eat the lamb; but it was not to be sodden at all with water, but roast with

fire. God was very particular about it. There was not a bone to be broken, and it was in no wise to be sodden with water. There was to be no sentiment, nothing merely human. It was to be closely, absolutely connected with God's glory in the work of redemption—roast with fire. So with the peace offering, or the vow. The offerer and his friends had liberty to enjoy, but it was to be eaten in close association with the altar and the blood sprinkled there; otherwise it was an abhorrent thing to God. I mention this because we are apt to drop into sentiment; but worship has to be kept in immediate connection with the fact of redemption—with God's claims being recognised and met, and His glory maintained, at all costs to the beloved Son our Lord Jesus Christ.

All is about redemption, so we know what heaven is like and what we ought to be like down here. "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed to God" ("us" should be left out) "by Thy blood . . . and made them to our God kings and priests."

They are talking about somebody else—not themselves. Then the angels come in, but angels do not address the Lord Jesus Christ personally. They celebrate His worthiness, but do not presume to address Him personally; in His presence they veil their faces. (See Isaiah vi.) Then every creature comes in for the blessing, and praises Him for the result of the work of redemption, and the elders fall down and worship.

Now I would just remark that these seals which are opened in the sixth chapter depend upon the heavenly throne. There are *seals* opened; a person does not make a great noise in opening seals. A merchant gets

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

67

into his counting-house, and in his private room he opens his letters; then he gives his instructions, and everybody is set moving. So what we have here is the reason of what takes place. The action is known only in the heavenly scene. Consequently the seals are broken only; it is the Lamb who opens the seals, and the voice of the living creatures—the heavenly attributes of God—set in action the providential agents on the earth.

EXTRACT.

“I THINK the real weakness of the defenders of Scripture is that they do not really believe in its perfection. They yield *something* to their adversaries. If it be divine, I cannot yield what is divine; if it be not divine, I have lost all Scripture. If I believe it divine, I seek the divine meaning, and I shall be helped to discover it, and wait till I do. The moment you compromise you are off the ground on which the Bible is of any value, or that contending for it is of any consequence.”

J. N. D.

FOOTSTEPS OF GRACE.

GENESIS i.-iv.

How divinely adapted to man is the Word of God! Like the stars, glorious in their origin and stupendous in their magnitude, yet so ordered in their courses as to gladden with tiny ray the benighted traveller, and, far more, to speak of God to the sons of men, had they but moral sense sufficient to hearken to their voice. So the Scriptures: inspired of God, words come forth from His mouth expressing infinite wisdom and unfathomable depths of knowledge; yet are they conveyed in such a way that the simplest mind may enjoy His communications, and be the subject of their beneficent power.

It is well to remember that the Scriptures themselves are the standing proof of grace, and at the same time of man's position of distance and alienation from God; for such a means of intercourse were out of place at the first, when He blessed man and saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. Then in the cool of the day the *voice* of the Lord God was heard walking in the garden. It was the friendly intimacy of Jehovah with His creature.

Such a state—one of innocency—is past and gone for ever, and to-day where is there the least trace of familiar intercourse between God and man in nature? Man left to himself and his own mind has never

found out God, and never can; on the contrary, he has not liked to retain that knowledge which he had of God by nature, a knowledge manifested to him in creation itself. How terrible man's state—waste and empty and dark, like the earth that was without form and void. Yet then, because it was such, the Spirit of God moved in the supremacy of His grace where the power of darkness held specially its sway.

The earth was not created waste and empty; it became so (Isaiah xlv. 18), doubtless, as a result of judgment (Jer. iv. 23), as with Nineveh. (Nahum ii. 10.) Man, too, was made upright, but he has sought out many inventions and become darkness, a fitting scene in which God may operate in grace. By divine fiat He speaks light out of darkness, shining into our hearts, for the shining forth of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The divine glory is now concentrated in the face of Jesus Christ. All heavenly light is alone received and radiates from Him, the glorious source of it, a heavenly and exalted Man. And only by the knowledge of Him are the senses morally exercised for distinguishing both good and evil.

This positive separation and moral judgment of good and evil is the first great general result of the work of grace in the soul. What was mingled and morally obscure and uncertain stands now plainly out as good and evil—we are become light in the Lord. What before we instinctively shrank from, but were hopelessly involved in, is now repudiated in power.

It is interesting to notice that what stood forth as "good" before the mind of God in creation was first the light (Genesis i. 4); then the place which man

was to occupy (*v.* 10); thirdly, his food (*v.* 12); afterwards the light-bearers to regulate his life (*vv.* 16–18); following this are the living creatures; and lastly man, made in God's image and after His likeness. And what a tale it tells of the grace of our God, that in creating man His first act was to bless them and to provide for them and for every living soul!

Become poor and proud, man would fain forget the material from which he was formed. In the day of his fall he needed to be reminded that dust he was and unto dust should he return. His origin, however, was no shame to him, but should have called forth praise to Jehovah for the marvellous works of His hands. (Psalm cxxxix.) How much more important for the Christian to remember that, if he is in Christ of the new creation, the one new man is formed from the Gentile without God, dead in his sins; and from the Jew equally a child of wrath by nature and under the curse, awful condition! which but for Christ and His work would have been, in spite of grace, an ineffaceable stigma, sullyng the brightest glory with the memory of pollution. But that spotless, glorious sacrifice on account of sin lay in death, and all that was precious to God and had glorified Him was found in the place where sin was wholly and for ever condemned. The glory of the Father raises Him from the dead, and now nothing remains of the memory of sin but the holy devotedness of Him who puts it away by the sacrifice of Himself.

Quickened together with Him out of that death, we are clothed before God in all the effects of that perfect work, and present to His eye the excellencies of His beloved Son displayed on the cross, where the very

memory of our sinful state was lost in the glory of the Son of man.

Thus the Lord God made coats of skin for the sinful pair and clothed them. In all this Jehovah alone acts. He provides the victim and slays it; He covers with its excellency His creatures' shameful state, but nothing is said of an offering to Jehovah. This, as well as the faith which distinguished Abel's more excellent sacrifice, comes out in the offerings of Cain and Abel.

The latter does not speak to us of God's sovereign intervention to clothe His creature suitably according to His mind, but of that which an unsuitable being apprehends by faith to be needful if he is to draw near acceptably to an outraged God. In such a case no fruits of a cursed earth avail, though these might well have been the fruit of skill and diligence and patient toil, and proof, moreover, of obedience to the will of a Creator who had put the man into the garden of Eden. But man was now outside Eden, sent forth to till the ground from which he was taken, to be occupied all the days of his painful life with that which was to be his grave. The womb that gave him birth was to be his sepulchre at last. Upon it rested the curse meanwhile, and all its fruits could only speak of the labour of a sinful, ruined creature. To offer them to God was the grossest callousness and besotted insensibility.

Yet grace alone reveals to any one of us what pleases God; and this Abel apprehends by faith. He brings of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat, and Jehovah looked upon Abel and on his offering. He saw there death—that of a spotless victim, not of the sinful man who had deserved it. This in type met

His righteous claims, according to His will, and at the same time glorified His nature; for He willeth not the death of a sinner, and the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Viewed in his gifts, identified therewith, freely could God look down upon the man as righteous. No sin was there, no disobedience, no indignity, yet all this was recognised as in question between God and man, and judged according to His judgment. Thus the heart of God was free to be wholly occupied with the inward excellencies known to Himself alone of the perfect spotless victim, and to receive the offerer according to His unmingled divine delight in such a sacrifice.

EXTRACT.

“I AM brought into the light, and I am light. When these two things come together, when this divine nature in me and the perfection of the divine nature in itself come together practically and intelligently, what comes of our judgment of other things? It is then that the knowledge of good and evil takes its true and proper character.”

J. N. D.

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

BY J. BARTON.

No. 7 (*continued*).

THE Lord only can give an "ear to hear" and to "heed *how* we hear." The fruit of this hearing is that we become overcomers; and after the address to Pergamos we find the relative order of "hearing" and "overcoming" changed, indicating further declension, so that in the four last churches an ear to hear is only looked for among overcomers. Abel heads the list of God's faithful witnesses in Hebrews xi., and verses 37, 38 record the unchanged attitude of Cain's world toward such; and though the form of Satan's rage may savour at times more of "the wiles of the devil," and even, as in Acts xvi. 17, appear to approve, yet the truth of God ever abides, that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," and so know "the fellowship of His sufferings." An overcomer is ever found in a day of difficulty. Moses was an honoured vessel when he pitched the tabernacle outside Israel's camp, defiled as it was by Aaron's golden calf; and when, in answer to his appeal for help to avenge the name of the Lord, the Levites offered themselves and stood with him, he said, "*Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord.*" This told the gravity of the service to which they were called. John vi. tells of God's bread from heaven, and how the believer feeds on Him, eating His flesh and drinking His blood, and thus dwelling in Christ, and Christ in him. Such

74 SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

a condition of soul will not be at home where Satan's seat is, and where the doctrines of the Nicolaitanes and of Balaam flourish. But how welcome will be the portion of being led to share in God's appreciation, and treasuring up in the golden pot, in the holiest, of that bread which was to Israel so unsatisfying, and at the end of the journey was *loathed as light bread*. Well might heaven open upon that blessed, obedient, and dependent One whose delights were with the sons of men, taking His place with that repentant remnant who had bowed to God's word. Being baptised by John and praying, the Spirit of God anoints and seals Him, while the Father's voice owns His beloved Son. Who can tell how that pathway, in all its perfection, from the manger to the cross is treasured up in the golden pot with a perfect estimation? and of this the overcomer is promised a part. Is that white stone nothing, with its secret approval by the Lord and its new name? We need to ask our hearts, are they satisfied with an approval that none but the Lord and ourselves know of—"No man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." If we are through grace walking as overcomers, associated in heart and life and love with the earth-rejected One, our moral tone will not be as "earth-dwellers," and our eyes shall be anointed to see the 7000 who remain true to the Lord. If we be out-and-out ourselves, and walk with distinctness and as those who have salt in ourselves, devoted and simple, hidden faithful ones will be encouraged too to gird their loins and trim their lamps, and be strengthened with all might according to His glorious power unto all *patience and longsuffering with joyfulness*. "*He is faithful.*"

GOSPEL ADDRESSES.

No. 2.

MATTHEW xvii. 22 TO END.

IN the first three gospels the Lord is presented to the Jews, and they reject Him. In John He is rejected from the first. But He says, "I will have My sheep." Nothing can touch His grace; if man cannot understand the grace in which He came, He goes on with it still. He is always the same. No matter what failure or rejection or stupidity He meets, He is the same.

What poor failing creatures we are. He may have to chasten us and deal with us: it only shows His watchful grace! We can lean on a heart that never changes in grace, and never can change in power. In ups and downs, rejections and receptions, He never changes. The thread runs all through of what He was—God revealed in man: perfect, constant grace.

Then comes His death, without which we could have no part in the blessing. In dying He has taken a new place, founded on redemption; and now I find, not only that *He* is unchanged, but He has wrought a work the value of which is unchanged, and which is the ground of eternal blessedness.

Redemption remains unchanged, and whatever is built on that has an eternal character. He associates us completely with Himself in the effect of that. When He spoke of His death His disciples were "exceeding sorry." We know it as the foundation truth of salvation, but we don't like the cross a bit better for ourselves than they did. He shows them

their association with Himself, and says, "Then are the children free." They were children of the King, Peter as much as Himself. He is Jehovah, and knows and can do all things; and now, this truth of death having come in, He can put them into His place. He brings them all through into the same place with Himself. His heart brings us there; and the thing for us is to walk in the consciousness of it, to walk in the sense that *that* is what is in Christ's heart. He shows us His love by manifesting it down here, but He takes us up too. If I am to walk in the Father's love, I know Christ is in it. Being in this place, I taste the perfect love of Christ to Him in it. I confide and trust in His love, with heart-confidence in the love of Christ which does pass knowledge, but which we know and confide in. I obey and adore Him, but I see the way He has brought my heart back to confidence in Him, in what we have found to be the way He thinks about us.

In the Lord's Table I find He attaches importance to our remembering Him; not that *we* are anything, but if I have a friend I like him to think of me when I am away because I love him. There must be redemption; but this is the expression of the heart of Christ putting us into this place. If Christ takes my heart, I am thinking of pleasing Him. He has possession of my heart; that is really practical sanctification. I judge myself as a poor ruined creature, and walk in intercourse with Christ. Sorrows and troubles I have, but He never changes; and nothing can separate me from His love, for they are only creature things that come on me, and His love is divine, the love of God.

J. N. D.

March 7th, 1871.

EXTRACTS FROM RECENT LETTERS.

No. 10.

"How good to have the Lord on high between us and all trouble!

"I have thought of late of John xiv. 27. Why does it add, 'Neither let it be afraid,' and beyond what verse 1 gives? I think it is akin to Matt. xvii. 7, 'And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.' The Lord felt for them being unable at that time to enter into the new revelation given, and far beyond Peter's thought, linking Moses and Elias and Christ all together. Here Peter's thought does not go beyond Judaism. The revelation from the cloud goes far beyond, and they were sore afraid. Peter, in verse 4, was not a bit afraid; he was in his element in Judaism. How tender the Lord's consideration of them! '*He touched them.*'

"So, too, after the abundant revelation of the new place (beyond Judaism), and all the results of redemption, He says, 'Let not your heart be troubled, *neither let it be afraid.*'"

No. 11.

"Do you know J. N. D.'s definition of faith in his tract on *Repentance*?

"'Faith is the divinely-given perception of what is seen through the revelation of it to the soul by testimony in the power of the Holy Ghost.'

"It is perception—we can't summon it at our will or desire. It comes by hearing, it is a thing of growth—'*increase* our faith,' 'your faith *groweth* exceedingly.' 'God has dealt to every man *a* measure of faith.' (New Trans.) It may be of mustard-seed proportions, but there it is, to grow to a size that can remove mountains.

"In Mark iv. 40 He reproves them for the absence of it as a thing *that might be expected to be there after all they knew and had seen of Him*, and it is in *this way I feel the reproof*. Can we not trust Him yet? A believer finds the *way here* a very chief occasion for it. We want to glorify God *in our bodies*, and here faith is a *sine quâ non*—strong in faith, glorifying God. 'All things are possible to him that believeth.'"

No. 12.

"SWEET it is, each day we near the goal of all our desires, to be with Him who so loves us, to get our house from heaven if He come for us, to see Him as He is and be like Him; or absent from our bodies of humiliation [how truly we feel the reality of this], to be present with Him, *with the Lord*, and for ever. The mighty magnet will draw us each one to Himself. I was thinking the other day, when once free of this body I shall not stand alone to find Him as I may; no, in a moment I shall be there—absent, present, nothing between. How perfectly *this* satisfies our poor hearts."—*November 4th, 1897.*

R. KENT.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE MINISTRY OF ROBERT KENT.

No. 10.

“DAYS” AND “HOURS” IN JOHN.

IN John a “day” often signifies a ministry or a dispensation, and an “hour” a character of period. The Gospel of John starts with His being rejected, not only by the Jews, but also by the world. In chapter i. 10 “the world knew Him not,” and in chapter xvii. we see the same thing in a touching way. In the first three gospels Christ is presented for acceptance—not so in John. All through Scripture we find three things, and then a fourth standing apart as it were.

In John i: 29-42 is the first day—the day of John the Baptist’s ministry. It is in two parts; to verse 34 is his official ministry, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” This does not gather. But when he says, “Behold the Lamb of God!” not an official testimony, but involuntary, the disciples follow the Lord. If a testimony is to have power and freshness it must come from the heart.

The Lord gives to Peter a name, the name signifies what He makes us. As we see so sweetly in Revelation,—the white stone with the new name—there is an individuality, a peculiar beauty, in each of us to the eye of Christ. There are common blessings, but also what we each have individually, the Lord’s appreciation of us.

In verse 43 we have the Lord's ministry, the ministry of Christ in the flesh. He says, "Follow Me." It has been very sweet to me that He says, "Follow Me" in chapter i. and also in the last. Then He says to Peter, "Follow Me"; and when Peter says, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" He repeats with emphasis, "Follow *thou* Me." We are not to be occupied with our brethren, nor Peter with John; we have each to follow the Lord individually. He calls us to association and fellowship and testimony. It has been well said that Adam did not need a path in Paradise; but in this world we are not in Paradise, and have a path. Nathanael's saying, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" is a beautiful little touch. He says not, Is there any good thing in it? showing that if we follow the Lord it must be as the Rejected One whom the world will not have. When we get the outside place we find that we are where all the glories of the Person of the Son of God can be revealed to our hearts. It was so with the blind man in chapter ix., when the Jews had cast him out. Even in Hebrews, which is very much on the ground of Peter, the saint seen down here, we have the camp to go out of, and we are brought inside the veil. "The Father" is not the subject in Hebrews; but the world knows not fellowship with the Father and the Son.

In John ii. 1 it is the millennial day, the day of joy. It is not only a festive scene which the Lord attends in His grace, as we used to think. A good many things in John are mysterious, and we discover their meaning by faith and the Spirit. Though the cross is not mentioned here there is plenty of room for it. The Lord says, "Mine hour is not yet come," the hour when He

will be in association again with Israel in millennial blessing. His mother represents His natural relations with Israel or the tribe of Judah. This was a very near and intimate relationship, but He sets it aside. Further down the chapter His death and resurrection are declared, though the blessing is brought in by judgment, the purging of His Father's house.

We have been seeing that a "day" was a ministry or dispensation, and an "hour" a character of period. As to the "hours," the first is in John ii. 4: "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." The third day in this chapter was the millennial day of glory; but this blessing was to be founded on His death. Wine signifies joy. There is no joy in heaven or earth apart from the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ; as we sometimes sing, "We owe it to Thy blood."

The second "hour" is in chapter iv. 21. It is remarkable how free in spirit the Lord is in this chapter, as also what He speaks of and to such a person. He is outside Jerusalem, and says, "The hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem." He owns the worship at Jerusalem, "We know what we worship." At Jerusalem they had a religion in which man in the flesh could approach God. At Samaria it was a sort of mongrel worship. This "hour" is the setting aside of both of these.

Then in verse 23 there is another "hour." "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." It was coming, and also it was then present, in the Person of Jesus, who revealed the Father, who was God manifest in flesh. "In spirit" is in contrast to the carnal

worship of Judaism, where man worshipped God in a natural way, but knew very little beyond. But here it is Christianity really.

Then again, in chapter v. 25 we have, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." Christ is here the Lifegiver. He executes judgment as Son of man. (v. 27.) Then in verse 28, "The hour is coming, when all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life"; as He says in chapter vi., "I will raise him up at the last day." The several classes are found in Rev. xx. 4, namely, all the Church, and every saint from Adam downwards, as well as all the souls of them that were beheaded. All these are in the first resurrection. The resurrection of the others is after the millennium.

The next "hour" is in chapter vii. 30, and also in viii. 20, "No man laid hands on Him; for His hour was not yet come." This I take to be the hour when the Lord in His blessed grace surrenders Himself into the hands of man, putting Himself—the Shepherd—before the sheep. In John He says, "If ye seek Me, let these go their way"; and again, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." This is a very solemn word for man. He gives Himself up to man's will in doing His Father's will, and man's will always brings Him under the power of Satan.

Again, in chapter xii. 23 we read, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified." This hour is the time of kingdom glory, because the Greeks come up.

Then in verse 27 is the "hour" of the cross. At

various times in His life the shadow of the cross fell upon His path. At other times it says His spirit was troubled, as, in chapter xi., at the grave of Lazarus; but here it says His "soul" was troubled, because the cross was here in view. He says, "Father, save Me from this hour." How could He say otherwise when He thought of the wrath of God and of communion coming to an end? This is found more in Mark than elsewhere: "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from Me: nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt." Only in this place does He say, "Take away this cup from Me." "Abba, Father," is not only the repetition of the name, it is the intensification of the realisation of the relationship in which He was as Son with the Father.

"But for this cause came I unto this hour"; that was, to glorify the Father, which was always the thought of His heart. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." "Father, glorify Thy name. I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." He had glorified it at the resurrection of Lazarus, and "that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." In the resurrection of Christ He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and glorified by Him. One cannot read these verses without worshipping.

Then in chapter xiii. 1, "When Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father." It is not the cross here, but the thought that He was leaving this world to go to the Father. What must it have been to Him to be in this world—a perfect holiness in the midst of all that was contrary to it. He says to His disciples, "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the

Father." We see Him here as the perfectly dependent Man. It says, too, He was going to God. He was not merely going back into deity; but having united manhood to His deity, He remains a blessed Man for ever. He is a pattern to us here of grace, and of this in our relationship with one another. It was the end of one service with Him, as in Exodus xxi., and the beginning of another. It was the preparation for heaven, that we might be with Him where He is now. When we know our heavenly place—for it is not only *Himself*, but the *place* He brings us to—then we can go down to the lowest thing, for "as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly."

The next "hour" is in chapter xvi., "The hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone." It is to the shame of our poor hearts that we left Him alone.

Then in chapter xvii. 1 there is another "hour": "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." This is the hour of His being glorified with the Father. God has many glories for His Son. Chapter xii. gives the kingdom glory; here it is the eternal glory with the Father. He does not take the glory, but as man asks the Father to give it to Him. It is very blessed to see how He keeps the place of man.—*October 9th, 1891.*

EXTRACT.

"I BELIEVE Scripture is precise. I believe Christ died for all. I believe in an elect people." J. N. D.

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

BY THE EDITOR.

(*From Shorthand Report.*)

LECTURE IX. (continued). CHAPTERS VI. AND VII.

To understand the sixth chapter, we must remember the Roman empire is not yet seen to be resuscitated—not what is presented to us there. We shall find it subsequently, but here it is what is preparatory to it, things that may take place very soon. One of the beasts said, “Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse.” The first thing is a triumphal, conquering power set in motion in the earth, a power which may be preparing at this moment,* only we shall be in heaven before this action takes place. You will notice the great means used is a far-reaching weapon of destruction. The people who have the gun that carries furthest are likely to be the most powerful. All the world to-day is seeking to get the weapon that will carry furthest and do the greatest amount of destruction. The man that sits upon this white horse has a bow, which was the weapon known to the ancients that killed at a considerable distance, and the crown was given to him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer. I have no doubt there will be a thorough change in the condition of things in the east, and this is the first providential agent set

* “White” may probably indicate the Roman earth as the scene of display, and “red” the Medo-Persian kingdom. Cf. Zech. i. 7-11.

in motion by the Lord Jesus Christ in order to assume His rights and titles in connection with this earth.

When He had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, "Come and see." The words "and see" might be left out. It is a command to a providential agent to come forth. The Lamb breaks the seal, and the voice of God's attribute gives the energy. "And there went out another red horse, and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth." The consequence of a course of conquest, as in Alexander's case, is that as soon as the conquering power ceases the whole thing falls to pieces. There is no power to consolidate in mere conquest, and an empire founded on conquest is one that breaks up very soon. Alexander's immense empire was divided among his four generals immediately he was dead. Two of those kings are to reappear, one being the king of the north, that part of Syria now occupied by Turkey in Asia, and the other the king of the south, that which we now call Egypt. These two portions of the empire which Alexander, by the power of the sword, brought together, are to reappear most distinctly in the crisis of God's dealings with this world in the coming day. But the first thing is that peace is taken from the earth, and they kill one another indiscriminately.

A third seal is opened, and the third beast says, "Come." Then a black horse appears, and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. What follows a course of mutual destruction is famine. We have seen it often in the history of this world, and here history is repeated, and the result of the universal conflict that follows the course of conquest

is that there is a terrible famine—"a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny, . . . and see thou hurt not the oil and wine." A man by his daily labour just gained enough to feed himself, what was generally given to a slave, just enough to keep body and soul together.

At the fourth seal, behold, a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. Well, we live in good times now, and, as a matter of fact, death has not such terrors for a man to-day as it will have then. Because of the gospel being preached and the light of Christianity, people are always hoping for mercy; but what sort of feeling will there be when all thought of mercy is gone for ever? God, who keeps His finger on the consciences of men, will give the sense then that to die is to be damned. People hear the gospel constantly, and they remain unsaved. They say, "To-morrow is time enough for this, and I hope to live a little while longer. I can leave the question of my salvation for a time." But what a solemn thing it will be when men will have the consciousness, while living in this world, that when death comes damnation comes too irremediably, the consciousness pressed upon the soul by the power of God that death is the precursor of the lake of fire. That will be the character of things in the coming day, when the gospel is no longer preached, no longer the messenger of mercy, no longer the Spirit of God here, and no longer the blessed news of pardon and salvation and eternal life.

Then a new seal is opened: "And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God," etc.

I do not doubt that here we come to Israel once more, and that the movement which is now going on in so many parts to repeople Palestine with the Jews will, by the time this fifth seal is opened, be in a very large measure accomplished. Palestine will be again re-peopled by the Jews; they will be there established, though not formally, as yet; their worship reinstated in unbelief, with a poor, feeble company who want to stand for God, and have to suffer for it. Afterwards it will become a regular formal apostate system, with the Antichrist at the head.

This very cry, "How long?" is descriptive of Jewish faith. You find it constantly in the Psalms—in Psalm xiii. particularly. Those few Psalms throw much light on a passage like this. Psalm ix. gives us God's inquisition for blood—what God sees going on in His land. Psalm x. gives the detail of what the wicked man does therein. Psalms xi., xii., and xiii. are the testimony of faith by the Word among the poor but godly souls in the midst of this terrible wickedness, desiring to keep separate and to be a testimony for God; and they have to suffer accordingly. A few verses of Psalm xciv. develop the whole state of things; it says, "Jehovah, to whom vengeance belongeth, shine forth. Lift up Thyself, thou Judge of the earth; render a reward to the proud." Then there is the cry "How long?" (just as we get it here), "How long shall the wicked triumph? how long shall they speak hard things? They crush Thy people, they afflict Thine heritage: they slay the widow and stranger, and murder the fatherless." Here is everybody trying to get as much as he can, and not caring at all how he gets it; and those who stand for God have to suffer the

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

89

consequences of all this mischief and wickedness. What can the saint do in the midst of it all? He can wait on God and get blessedness even out of all the fear of the enemy. He can say, "Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, and whom Thou teachest out of Thy law." This remains for the saint: he can still find blessedness in all the chastening that comes, because he can say "The throne of iniquity shall not have fellowship with Thee." There is the power of wickedness set up in the throne, and the poor saints are slain for their testimony, and God takes notice of it.

Now I do not suppose that the souls under the altar actually say these words, "How long?" because a person who has died is out of the scene altogether, and no longer knows what goes on; but God takes notice of what has been done, as He did when Abel was slain. He said to Cain, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground." God notices what takes place, and the action appeals to Him to undertake judgment, so that they are represented here crying "How long," etc.

White robes are given to them. They are not yet risen, but they have the testimony in their hearts and consciences that they are approved of God. That is what the white robe means; not the resurrection body, but the testimony of approval from God, though in the disembodied state. Meanwhile they have to rest a little while. The disembodied state is not a time of activity, but is a rest—not a time of unintelligent rest—not sleep, except as regards the body. They are to rest a little season, until their brethren should be killed as they were.

Immediately the cry of the saints comes up into the

ear of God there is the answer in judgment upon the earth, "And I beheld, when He had opened the sixth seal, that lo, there was a great earthquake." We see here who have been concerned in this wickedness and cruel oppression of God's saints and witnesses, because the judgment that comes in response to the cry of the saints falls on those who have been involved in all the guilt of it. If God sends forth His agents in connection with the east, it is the west that has been terribly guilty in oppressing His servants. "There was a great earthquake, etc. . . . and the heaven departed as a scroll."

These are figurative expressions, not what you find in Matthew xxiv. and Mark xiii., where the signs spoken of are physical signs in the heavens. There the time is defined to be immediately after the tribulation of those days, after the whole period of tribulation on Israel is over, and the Lord is about to come immediately. "After the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they see the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." That is different from this. So also in Luke xxi. He speaks of the same thing. The Lord there describes the history of Jerusalem up to the time of its destruction by Vespasian and Titus, and then gives a general description of the succeeding time in connection with Jerusalem up to the end: "They shall be slain with the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

91

Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." The times of the Gentiles go on to the end of the seventieth week of Daniel; that is, to the close of this world's history in connection with God's government by the nations. It comes to its close, and then He says, "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity. . . . And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." That is not what we have here, but is, no doubt, literal; and there will be these heavenly signs, and these physical phenomena occurring, at the actual moment of the Lord's return.

What we have here, however, is figurative. There was a great earthquake; that is, the whole social condition is shaken, the sun is darkened, supreme authority loses its character. The moon, a dependent authority, earthly religion, that which should have been a mild and beneficent light amid the darkness, giving God's testimony at the time of the sun's absence, becomes a thing that is blood, a misery of all kinds to men. The stars, subordinate authorities, fall to the earth; that must be figurative. The dependent authorities and the subordinate authorities lose their heavenly character, and are no longer owned by God in any wise whatsoever, but become corrupt and useless, like a fig-tree casts her untimely figs. Every subordinate authority, from the police-constable upwards, becomes corrupt, not an instrument ordained of God for blessing. It is a terrible state of things; and this is the consequence of a combination of earthly powers—a concert of Europe. They are trying to

exterminate the testimony of God and Christ. A concert can do what no individual will do, or would dare to do, because in a company no responsibility is on anyone specially, but the responsibility is divided in such a way that nobody feels it.

I do not say this is the Roman empire which is to be resuscitated, but here it is a concert combined to stamp out God's testimony because it is an inconvenient thing; and the consequence is that God deals in this way. The heaven departed as a scroll. The whole condition of things in which God's authority was established is gone. Every mountain—that is, all established authority—is moved out of its place, and the “islands” or settled institutions in contrast with the unorganised masses of men. All is moved out of its place. Nothing is based any longer on divine principles, or principles of right and wrong, but all about to be changed to a satanic principle.

Who have been involved in all this? Who have been the means of bringing this about as God's judgment on the present state of things? The kings of the earth (these are the territorial sovereigns, such as we have to-day), the great men, the rich men, etc., everyone, the whole community, who derive their rights, or indeed their disabilities, from the present constitution of things. They are afraid when the whole scene is changed; and instead of God being in power, Satan is. For all this is preparatory to the resuscitation of the Roman empire in a satanic form, authority being derived not from God, but from Satan. They say to the mountains, “Fall on us,” etc. They know that they have been opposing the witnesses of the Lamb. They know they have been banded to-

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

93

gether against the soul of the righteous to condemn innocent blood, as Psalm xciv. says. They know what they have done, and when they see everything shaken in this way they think it can only be that the great day of His wrath has come, and who shall be able to stand? Not that He does come; it is a little bit of conscience, and the conscience does continue, but the worst part of it is they get hardened. If people's consciences are reached, and they do not submit, they get hardened.

Now in chapter vii. the prophet sees four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. These four angels are the overruling, restraining providence of God, in order that His purposes and counsels of blessing should be accomplished, in spite of all the power of evil that opposed itself to the mind of God. Here we take up another scene, a scene connected with the seven trumpets. We have finished the seals; it is no longer a question of mysteries and secret testimony, but God is now dealing immediately with the earth and sending a public testimony with regard to His dealings with man, in order to put His Son again into His inheritance. But before this testimony is given, and these providential agents are set at work, God is careful to seal those who are His, in order that His thoughts of blessing, in spite of all the evil that is coming, might be accomplished.

Now, just a word or two as to the persons called out here. There are the 144,000, that is to say, the whole company from Israel whom God has chosen for blessing. Then there is a great company of Gentiles,

When the Lamb was presented, His titles and rights as head of the Gentiles and Jews were in question; and together with that you have the throne of assessors, the twenty-four thrones, and the seals broken quietly and secretly in the presence of God. But now it is no longer a question of the rights of Christ over man, but of those who shall be brought into blessing under Christ. What we have here is the whole scene of preserved men for millennial blessing, all those who shall escape the judgment coming on the earth, whom God preserves from the terrible doings about to take place, whom He secures for blessing, to be brought through it all into the millennial earth. Whether Jews or Gentiles, they shall be placed under Christ in His millennial reign.

It is very interesting to find in these twelve tribes that Dan and Ephraim are left out. Judah comes first, because, if God is going to bless the world and His people on earth, it can only be done by giving Christ His place. It is only under Christ's rights that the world can be blessed. Consequently, we have the tribe of Judah first, then Reuben. Reuben was disinherited, but he gets his place now, for everything reverts to the natural order under Christ. It is no longer blessing a people in heaven—no longer persons joined to Christ. What we have now is what so many people forget, namely, that the world is going to be blessed under the rights of Christ, and not without Him. He is first, and then Reuben comes, the firstborn. Ephraim is left out. The peculiar place Ephraim had is remarkable. He was the younger son; yet, in spite of Joseph's desire, Jacob, divinely taught, I do not doubt, would insist upon placing his right hand on

the head of the younger. What was the consequence? Ephraim got the inheritance, but without Christ, and he will not have it when Christ comes. Everything reverts to nature's order once more. It is God's blessing for man on earth under Christ. Christ gets His place, nature being brought in and established, and Ephraim is left out; but the elder son, Manasseh, who was passed over, comes into his place. Dan is left out too. Dan, as you know by Jacob's prophecy, is the exponent of apostasy, and, like the serpent biting the horse heels, so that the rider thereof falls backward, he is an image of satanic power that brought in apostasy on Israel's part. Now Israel is restored, Dan is out of the scene altogether—no longer in apostasy.

After the 144,000 of Israel are sealed, we get this great multitude that no man can number. These are men on earth, for they have their place before the throne. Between them and the throne are the angels, and between the angels and the throne are the twenty-four elders. So you get the whole circle of heavenly saints in the twenty-four elders around the throne, then the angelic company, and finally the whole circle of saved and blessed men on earth, apart from the people born into blessing in the millennial day. These are not they, but those who are spared through all the terrible judgments that precede the millennial day, and who are, through the grace of God, preserved and brought into blessing finally.

I propose to conclude the chapter next time, but we know that we are expecting Him, and that before then we may be called to meet Him.

FOOTSTEPS OF GRACE.

No. 2.

GENESIS iv.-vi.

WANT of conscience did not necessarily close the door of mercy against Cain; rather was this due to his insensibility to grace. To have recognised the truth of man's state and God's remedy would have placed natural things in a position far other than they are, for not only man's position with God but with his brother also was involved. "If thou doest not well, sin * lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him" (Gen. iv. 7), was Jehovah's word to him, intimating thus that the acknowledgment of sin by a sacrifice would not only put him right with God, but likewise secure the natural rights of the elder son in respect of his brother. This natural superiority, which man acquired over woman by occasion of her being deceived, was the elder son's by birth, provided that the claims of God, basis of all right, were owned. With obdurate heart, like Esau, Cain despised the birthright thus pledged to him, and rejected the counsel of God, and as the great archetype of primogeniture has entailed upon the race that governmental dealing of God by which the first place has fallen to the younger. It was so with Isaac and so with Jacob, Joseph also, and Ephraim, Moses, David, and Solomon.

In His sovereignty the great principle was laid down by God in the case of Jacob and Esau, "the elder shall serve the younger." Scope is thus made for that elect-

* Or, "a sin offering."

ing grace of God that in the due time would call in the unclean outside Gentile in place of the privileged Jew, who, become profane, rejected the gospel of God for the sake of what the flesh could glory in. Thus the first becomes last and the last first, for many are called but the few chosen.

The beginning of man's history presents us with the development of the two great principles governing the human race which run side by side to-day. On the one hand, man away from God seeks to realise his original rights irrespective of his moral ruin, and, like Cain's posterity, to fill the earth and subdue it, and to have dominion over everything that moveth on the earth. But the brand of the murderer which marked the head of the family could not be effaced by achievements in the arts and crafts; and Lamech's history clearly shows that science and civilisation leave unchanged the homicidal disposition in his children.

On the other hand, Eve as well as Adam recognises God's appointment in the human family instead of man's acquirement. It was a lesson well learned, however solemn and sad the cost. In Seth's descendants we see men bowing to God's judgment on their sin, and at the same time calling on His name; for of each of these antediluvian patriarchs it is recorded, "and he died," a statement wholly omitted as to the race of Cain.

No invention, no new industry, no skill or organised association of men, is remarked of Seth's family, but specially that death was there. Its history began with the recognition of God's appointment, and it closed in Noah with confidence in His mercy. Its prevailing characteristics were a walk with God, and that they

pleased Him, of which both Enoch and Noah are examples.

Noah found favour in the eyes of Jehovah. He was a just man, perfect amongst his generations, and he walked with God. God speaks to him. It was to warn him. In Adam we see the fear natural to a guilty conscience, a fear which more or less sways the heart, unless hardened, of every unconverted man; but Noah was moved with fear produced by the divine warning concerning things not yet seen, and by faith prepared an ark for the saving of his house.

The ark presents us with another beautiful picture of the work of Christ. It is not here God's provision of what was proper for man, or man's recognition of what was suitable to God, but that which faith prepares in fear as divinely warned of, the threatened judgment. Thus Peter preached, "Be saved from this perverse generation," and the Thessalonians turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to await His Son from the heavens, whom He raised from among the dead, Jesus our Deliverer from the coming wrath. Wrath is coming, and moreover the world is about to be judged in righteousness, and the only Deliverer is He who has already borne the judgment and been made sin and a curse for us. This the Saviour has in manhood passed through for us, having annulled death and him that had the power of it, that is, the devil, and brought life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel. Faith in Him places the soul divinely secure from and out of the reach of judgment. The death of the body, if it come, is no longer loss to the believer or the precursor of the lake of fire, but a gain, and far better than life here, for we are thereby present with the Lord to await a glorious resurrection.

GOSPEL ADDRESSES.

No. 3.

GOD IN CHRIST AND MAN IN CHRIST.

THE great point of Colossians ii. is the completeness of the revelation, and our completeness, if we receive it, bringing us out of the old condition into a new. It is remarkable the way the apostle insists here on our completeness before God, and on the completeness of the revelation to us.

It is striking to see—for “there is nothing new under the sun,” as the wise man said—how the apostle had to deal with what we have now to deal with: superstition, traditions—ritualism as we call it now—and rationalism, or man’s reasoning, which ends in infidelity.

We see how imagination runs to tradition, and the reasoning of the human mind to philosophy; but the apostle insists that everything is in Christ, and that we do not want anything else; and this blessed truth is the revelation of God close to us. As to the way we are brought into it, we are quickened, and forgiven all trespasses.

The apostle calls all these workings of man’s mind the “rudiments of the world.” Man’s mind cannot go beyond his mind, and so it cannot get God, for God is beyond his mind. If I trust to my mind, I may be deceived, for another man may have a cleverer mind than mine, and deceive me; but there is no conscience in it, because if I use my mind, it is not conscience. The whole thing is always false. There is no philo-

sophy but what is false, for it leaves God out. I must live according to the relationship I am in, whether husband and wife, or father and child. If I leave out then the greatest relationship of all, namely, with God, all must be false. When God is brought in, it is not my mind working, because if *He* is there, I must be subject to Him.

Tradition does not seem to leave God out so much. There may be piety among ritualists, but they do not know their place in Christ. Philosophy is infidelity; they say there are words of God in the Scripture, but it is not *the Word of God*. Then the mind is to judge it, and everyone takes what he likes. That is man's mind at work.

In ritualism there is no consciousness of our place in Christ; its ordinances are things an unconverted man can do as well as a converted one: he can say prayers—not really pray, of course. There is no worshipping God in spirit. There may be piety, but it goes on the ground that man as man is capable of having to say to God. He can fast, offer money, etc. The Christian does these things in spirit. They are “not holding the Head.” Take the instance of having saints as mediators. If I am one with Christ, how can I get a mediator between us? It looks very fair, humble, and so on, but it denies the whole Christian place. If you are toiling and getting others to go to God for you, then *you* have not been to God. That makes all priesthood essentially false. There was a priesthood in Israel, because the people could not go to God. Now the veil is rent, and to have a priesthood is denying Christianity. Of course we should pray for one another; but now God is fully revealed, you are

completely purged, and you can go to Him: "boldness to enter into the holiest."

A man may be feeling after God, and God working in the conscience to bring him there; but a Christian is one who goes right into the holiest with boldness; he learns he is one with Christ, and he holds the Head.

No one can put the slightest thing between himself and the Head without being *lost*. If a gold-leaf were between my head and my body, my body might as well be at the other end of Europe; I should be *dead*. I may have forgiveness without having *learned* that union.

God treats man now as *lost*; He is not putting him under probation to see how it will turn out, but telling him how it *has* turned out. God in grace is come to seek and to save the lost. He gave up looking for fruit from man because the tree is bad—not that man ought not to bring forth fruit. He said at last, "I will send My Son, they will reverence Him," and they slew Him. Then all was over (not for Christians, of course; He does look for fruit when He has grafted the tree). Now it is *grace*, and he has to *compel* men to come in by the gospel.

The coming of Christ brought out clearly and decidedly, first, that there was no fruit to be had from man; and second, that if all the fatness of God's house is opened up for the marriage of His Son, they won't come to it. For all the patience He exercised, and the pains and goodness He showed, there was no fruit. Then He says: "My oxen and My fatlings are killed; all things are ready, come to the marriage," and they will not come. Then you get the judgment of man—yours and my judgment. The thing tested is what you and I are. It has not produced fruit, and

it will not receive the goodness of God. Repentance cost them too much, and yet it was said, "Except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish."

We see no beauty in Christ that we should desire Him: the things God delights in I *don't*.

He says, "Publicans and harlots shall go into the kingdom of heaven before you," because the moral man does not feel his need so much as the open sinner. But if I find a crab-tree with five apples on it, it is a crab as much as if there were five hundred on it. No one has anything to boast of. If I had been brought up with thieves (it was God's providence I was not), I should have been a thief; but I am just as much a sinner as if I were.

The prodigal was just as much a sinner, though not degraded in the same way, when he turned his back on his father, as when he ate with the swine. Jeremiah says, "If thou wilt return, return to *Me*."

If from being a profligate you turn to being moral, what good is it, if you don't get to heaven? The test of the heart is *Christ*. Christ is presented, and they see no beauty in Him. An infidel can see in Christ a beautiful *character*, but he sees nothing in the Son of God coming to redeem my soul.

We are not in paradise. How did we get out of it? We were *turned* out. Have you got back to God? The last Adam was rejected by man, the first by God (not that there is no mercy for him). Then *the world came in, that God never made, but that He overrules, an immense system made by Satan to distract the heart from God, that it may not want God. But it does want Him.* The prodigal "began to be in want." Is there no heart here that wants? It may

distract itself, but there is a hungering in the soul. "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger." The soul has wants; it may turn to works, hankering after this and that to make you happy, and tired of everything but yourself, which is the only thing you ought to be tired of. Such a one is not at peace with God. You may forget God, and the effect of bringing in the thought of Him makes you miserable. The conscience feels it is not right; you would get away from God if you could; and you can busy yourself with the distractions of the world till judgment comes—then you cannot get away from God.

The world we are in is the world Satan has built up, to make us forget we are out of paradise, and without God. God makes Cain a vagabond, and he goes and builds a city in the land of *Nod*: the word signifies vagabond. He goes and *settles* himself there. Then he must have it as comfortable as he can: he has artificers in brass and iron—so have we; and harps and organs—so have we. Man's cleverness has invented these things to hinder our coming to God.

All that is truth, but it is not gospel in the sense of glad tidings.

In Christ is "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." I get God come into the world—God's side of it towards us—all the fulness of God, love and light, bodily. He looks for no fruit from man here. *He* is the fruit of God's love. He is seeking for no fruit at all, but *He* is the fruit of God's heart. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses." He never said "Come unto Me" until He had come to them. He did not wait in heaven and say, You get right and then come up

here; but He came in sovereign grace where and when they were wrong.

He was the fulness of the Godhead bodily, a Man, born a Man, God thus showing that His delights were with the sons of men; and His dying was the grand testimony to the extent of God's love. He came, sinless, in infinite grace, the light of the world, and God in love in the world, where men were in sins. How *dark* our hearts are! He may well say, "to turn them from darkness to light." See God Himself, as a Man, talking to sinners, the One sufficiently above sin to talk to those who were in sin. The need of the sinner is the everlasting joy of the saint—Christ. When He has fully manifested all that you are in the light, you find yourself in the presence of perfect love, not imputing the things He has revealed to you. You find life and light and love come into the world in Christ. Light, confounding you with your sins. Love, showing you how God is dealing as to your sins. Life, eternal life, to live with Him. He could not have us in our sins. He must reveal them in the light, and bring us into God's presence before the judgment, or it is too late. It is humbling, breaking us down, and making us hate ourselves for the sins, but what a blessed thing to have the love that makes me hate my sins! But the love in itself is not enough, for we could not go to heaven with our sins, and He *died*. "In Him dwells all the completeness of the Godhead" (I alter the word that you may see the connection), "and ye are complete in Him." When I look at His work and at my being in Him, I see I am complete in Him. He found us in death, spiritual death, and He came in grace into actual death: and what has

He done, in going there, for those who believe? He came where we were and bore the curse, putting all our sins away. He is the One who puts our sins away, before ever He is our life; "quickened together with Him," born out of His grave as it were. He has borne our sins, and He is life to a person whose sins He has already put away. We get the quickening by faith in Christ Jesus, the Christ who died for my sins before ever He comes into my heart. We are in the place of the Second Man, Christ, members of His body, of His flesh, and His bones. He is our righteousness before God, always appearing in the presence of God for us, and our Advocate if we fail in anything. My place before God is complete in Him. All that I should have had to answer for before God, that my conscience takes cognisance of, repents for, is put away, and I have Christ—complete in Him, have eternal life—am the righteousness of God in Him, and hereafter the glory. Christ comes in the perfectness of grace to me as a sinner, and I am in the perfectness of righteousness before God in Him. He has quickened us, having forgiven us all trespasses.

Then, if I am in Christ, it is equally true that He is in me, and I am to show forth the life of Christ in my mortal body.

How far can you say these two things? First, all my sins are forgiven. That is one side of it; and if you don't know forgiveness as complete and thorough as Christ's death can give it, you have not got what Christ gives in the gospel. He does not leave us to answer for our sins, or it would surely be judgment.

Then, secondly, can you say you are "complete in Him"?

Having all in Christ, the apostle says he is not going to make Jews of them. *He* has led everything captive for you. In detail you have everything in Him. What a thought! And how we need it, if we honestly know and judge ourselves. We have poor, even evil thoughts, if not deeds; how little the fibre of our hearts is able to take it in. But it is our own fault, for God is our strength.

How great the comfort of knowing we are in Him! He is life, and He has entirely overcome death. He comes in the power of life to the stronghold of death, and destroys it. We are not *subject* to death. We shall die, of course, if the Lord does not come first, but it is a beaten enemy. When I die I leave what is mortal; that is all death is, "absent from the body." It breaks all ties here, of course. We *were* death's prey, now "all things are yours." Death saved me, and death, spiritual death, is my deliverance. Dead to sin and to the world. And when it actually comes, I leave my poor mortal body and go to Christ; and so completely is it overcome that those who live when He comes will not die. "We shall not all die." If Christ came to-night, those who are His would never die.

Have your souls seen the vileness, guilt, self-will, and uncleanness of their condition before God, and seen that you are not *there*, but in Christ? If I am complete in Him, I want nothing else: it is deliverance; and if my eye is single and turned to Him, I have everything.

The Lord give our hearts to know it every day, that they may be *satisfied*. "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and He that believeth on Me shall never thirst."

J. N. D.

October 23rd, 1870.

RECOLLECTIONS OF RALPH EVANS' MINISTRY.

CHRIST, AND WHAT IT IS TO BE COMPLETE IN HIM.

IN Ephesians we have "accepted in the *Beloved*"; in Colossians, "He hath translated us into the kingdom of the *Son of His love*." Along with the position you get an Object, and this Object is first God's, and afterwards becomes ours. To partake of the inheritance of the saints in light is a hope laid up for us in heaven: "That where I am, there ye may be also." This is in contradistinction from "the kingdom of His dear Son," which is the region, the home of light, and may shine down here. We have a revelation of the glory of Christ's Person in Colossians; in John i. the Word created all things, and in Hebrews i. He is the Son. In Hebrews He is exalted above thrones and principalities and powers; in Colossians He created them. He is "the Firstborn of every creature," then He is "before all things." The apostle shows them, in contrast to what the gnostics said, that there was no other representative of God at all. He is the image of God. There is no place left to bring in the demons. The Holy Spirit shows that there was no existence, no being at all, before Christ. As to the Church, He is the Head of it. Then He says this wonderful Person is the dwelling-place of the fulness of the Godhead. In the nature of it there could not be two Godheads. The Epistle to the

108 RECOLLECTIONS OF RALPH EVANS' MINISTRY.

Colossians lays great stress on understanding. The treasures of wisdom and knowledge mainly refer to the One we are united to. The Spirit brings out here the glory of His Person. If He ascended up, He ascended up far above all heavens. We have here, first, His essential glory and His position when ascended; secondly, the Godhead has its house and dwelling-place in Him; thirdly, what He is as a Man, the Man of God's counsels, viz., that God has put Him at the head of everything, and put us in Him. This is all given us in Colossians as a comfort, the knitting together of hearts connected with the revelation of the Man who is the Head of the universe of God.

The Firstborn of every creature coming into creation, He is the Head of it. Heretics have used this to say that He is a creature; but the passage excludes utterly all such false doctrine. In Colossians i. He is before all other beings, for He created them all. The Holy Spirit has the gnostic thoughts directly before Him, "Lest any man spoil you." It really is, "Lest anyone," etc. Satan does it through man. In Hebrews He sets forth the glory of the Son, because He is going to supersede every man upon earth by bringing in Christ.

In Colossians i. the attacks of Satan on the new creation are met; then in chapter ii. Christ is brought out, and our union with Him. God is so engrossed with the blessing of His people that all His wisdom is exhausted, so to speak, in this. It is not only that He is Head of creation and Head of the Church, but all the Godhead is there. Godhead dwells in Him who is the Image of the invisible God, and Head and Sustainer of creation. He who dwelt in them was

RECOLLECTIONS OF RALPH EVANS' MINISTRY. 109

the Christ of glory, and that gave them a title to all His glory. "The mystery" in Colossians is not merely that we are one with Him, we must take in who the Person is. The growth of the soul and its blessedness and power are connected with it, for he says, "That your hearts may be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding." He is the Head of the new creation; that takes us instantly out of the whole thing. The position Christ is in is entirely outside of all that. It puts an end to the ten thousand books that are written now. If they do not deal with Christ in this position, there is no need of them. Out of the religion given them even by God, the whole power of God was required to take them. It has been the ruin of the Church that they have continued practically in the old things.

"How great conflict I have for you." The word "conflict" is deeply interesting. We see the mighty levers he applies to the soul, all divine, all of God, to lift us into the region where God is. Going back to Judaism was in principle going back to heathenism. It is remarkable you cannot introduce the moral element into mere ritualism, because ritualism is in its nature a provision for the flesh. Persons can be as pious and religious as possible all by rule, without any exercise of heart and conscience, nor is God the Object at all. There is no inner connection of Christ with the soul, though the Spirit of God may be in some who are in it, and they break through it all to Him. The terrible thing is that people are going back to the empty form after atonement is accomplished.

There are three distinct things here: first, what

110 RECOLLECTIONS OF RALPH EVANS' MINISTRY.

Christ is, the Image of the invisible God, the Head of creation and of new creation, Creator and Sustainer. Our souls must feed on that. When I see God's object thus, the Holy Spirit bringing out in detail all His glories and positions, it turns my heart to God. Secondly, all the Godhead is in Him. We do not enjoy truth apart from actual communion with God: we do not get much profit by it.

Thirdly, here is God taking His Son, after He had died, and putting Him in that place and piling glory upon glory on Him, putting Him over all He had created, but in a new place. He has reconciled us "in the body of His flesh through death," but that is before He reached that place. In Ephesians ii. it reads, "That He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross." There it is connected with the new creation. Colossians is that I do not find the body of the flesh any more. In Ephesians we come out the other side of the cross, as one body in connection with Himself, the ascended and glorified Christ.

Beware lest any man beguile you with enticing words. Those who tried to do it would be Satan's agents. The way the serpent came in the first creation was with deceiving words. "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." We are to walk in Him in the same kind of absoluteness. If we were asked how we became Christians, we should reply, if taught of God, "We received Christ." And if asked, Did you receive nothing beside? we should say "No." People now want to bring in other things to mould and modify your walk.

There are three elements of worldly religion (v. 8): (1) philosophy, (2) tradition of men, (3) elements of the world.

RECOLLECTIONS OF RALPH EVANS' MINISTRY. 111

Philosophy takes in all ritualism—the whole scene we are passing through. “Elements of the world” is what is adapted to man as man. Take up these three things in detail, and you will find God is not in any of them. Philosophy is to shut out God, but all that I can want of what is God I find in Christ. What then is the use of talking about other things? All the Godhead is there, and all that God wants to find in me He finds without a moment's pause, because He finds me filled up in Christ (v. 10, “complete”). He finds at once all that suits Him. I am in union with Christ. That shuts out the whole world of demons, shuts out everything but Christ. All that God wants as God He finds, and that in regard to me. There is no law, no ritual: we are in another place altogether, in new creation scenes. All the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him, and we are “filled up” in Him. That is a divine way of meeting these things.

Moreover there is no principality or power of which Christ is not Head. All the “religion” was made for this thing that is put off now. “Buried” is an explanation of how it was brought about. The eye and heart are directed towards God, and what He had done. (v. 12.) The principle is that you are not to look into yourselves for your own experience of things, but *what has God done?* It is not what is called “subjective”; it is all “objective,” through faith of the operation of God, who raised Him from the dead. One feels God's atmosphere. If I do not feel that God has raised Him from the dead, I am in a bad state. Power lies here. It is God's work from Himself to Himself. God's eye is on everything—all the subtlety of the enemy and all a believer can discern in his own heart,

112 RECOLLECTIONS OF RALPH EVANS' MINISTRY.

all that man can do. Then His Spirit unfolds the glory of Christ, all His glories, human and divine, to bring us into this place.

"The handwriting of ordinances that was against us": He had Himself given these ordinances. A note in the New Translation reads, "Handwriting, obligation to which a man is subject by his signature." The people had said, "All these things will we do." He has blotted out too what Satan has done; our own poor folly and ruin on the one hand, and all the demons on the other.

It is very easy to understand why a person wishes to get back to popery: it is because it is the continuation of Judaism (*vv.* 16-18).

I do not know any chapter that gives me a better idea of divine power coming out. It is grace and wisdom, "grace upon grace"; the way of the enemy without and of man's flesh within all met. We are united to Christ, the glorified Man, in the midst of the all-pervading glory.—*January 18th, 1884.*

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

BY THE EDITOR.

(*From Shorthand Report.*)

LECTURE X. CHAPTERS VIII. AND IX.

WE were noticing last time the four seals, displaying the providential dealing of God. It was towards the east that these agents of God's providence went forth; but the great centre of Satan's schemes, the hotbed of his plans and practices, was not the east, but the west—that is to say, these countries where we are found to-day. It was in these very countries, of which we form a part, that the persecution of God's saints took place. God always has His saints, and though we are found outside the scene and surrounding the heavenly throne, yet God has His witnesses and His saints still upon earth, and it was in the west where the great power of persecution was found. The dealings of God in consequence of these gross sins were of a character which shook the whole social and governmental condition of this western earth, so that the authorities of the world lost the heavenly and divine character which they have to-day. A Christian recognises that the authorities to-day are ordained of God, and he submits to them accordingly; but when the powers that be fall from the position in which God set them, when they no longer receive their power from above, but surrender entirely the place which God has given them, they can no longer claim the obedience of God's saints. Persecution

E

therefore arises because it becomes a matter of faithfulness and obedience to God no longer to own or be found in obedience to the authorities that exist on the earth. So in answer to the cry of the saints we find the whole governmental and social state in these western lands shaken to pieces in consequence of persecuting God's witnesses and saints in the earth at that time.

Another thing is that a persecuting spirit having arisen against God's testimony, He puts other means into action for the purpose of bringing down the pride and power of the first man and clearing the scene for the second Man to take His place rightfully. But before taking in hand these solemn means and providential agencies by which God will break to pieces the power of the first man, He takes care to provide for the accomplishment of His own eternal thoughts of blessing, for when we come to God's thoughts, they are only thoughts of blessing and nothing else. If He is obliged to take in hand other things because people are stiff-necked, it must be so; but that is not what is in the mind and purpose of God. Therefore, before we see the means put in action by which the power of the first man is brought down, and therefore taken out of the hand of Satan, the vision is given to the prophet by which he sees that all God has purposed and counselled for blessing is infallibly to be accomplished.

That explains why, in this seventh chapter, we see two great companies which will be brought through the terrible things about to be enacted in the world, and who will enter into the millennial scene in perfect, unmingled blessing which will pass on into the new creation.

These two companies are, in the first place, the

144,000 of Israel, and second, the great crowd of Gentiles. They correspond to the double title of Christ over the earth. He has His title as Head of the Jews, and also as Head of the Gentiles, and these are embraced in one person; consequently, before seeing the process and history of His actings in the world, you get the vision of God's accomplished purposes correspondingly.

We understand these two companies are earthly companies, who shall participate in earthly and millennial blessing; but perhaps it is a little difficult to catch the full meaning of this white-robed throng. You observe that they have come, not merely out of great tribulation, but out of *the* great tribulation—that is, the tribulation out of which Philadelphia was kept. This great company in no wise represents the saints of the present time, because the special blessing God guaranteed to the saints in Philadelphia was that they should be kept out of the great day of tribulation to come on all that dwell on the earth.

Secondly, here is a company quite distinct from those represented by Philadelphia, who are kept out of the great tribulation by going to heaven, which is the only possible way of being kept *out* of it. But this company is preserved *through* it, because God is as able to preserve through the trouble as to take out of it. Our special blessing is to be taken out of it; but here we find a throng who are to be preserved through all the power of the enemy, and to be brought in safety into that blessed scene which will last for those thousand years. These are earthly saints, and not Christians, because Christians are heavenly saints. They have come out of the great tribulation, and washed their

robes in the blood of the Lamb. They are the same company that we find in Matthew xxv. You remember the scene there. It is when the Son of Man comes in His glory with His angels; then he sits on the throne of His glory, and all nations—not dead people, people are no longer of nations when dead, but all nations, living people—are gathered before Him, and He separates them as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and He puts the sheep on His right hand and the goats on His left. In that way the Lord separates the nations gathered before the throne of His kingdom on the earth, and He deals with them according to the way in which they have received, and identified themselves with, the messengers whom He sent forth to proclaim His kingdom throughout the world. He says, “I was hungry,” etc. And they answer, “When saw we Thee hungry,” etc. He replies, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.” This white-robed throng were those that received the messengers, when they went forth with the testimony of the coming King; and that is the reason why their robes are washed in the blood of the Lamb. It is not a question of putting away of a person’s sins here; that must be for every soul that is found in blessing, always by reason of the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, that cleanseth from all sin. But here are people who have so identified themselves with Christ’s brethren as witnesses that they are counted as having identified themselves with Him, and with Him, not in His place of power and glory, but with Him in His pathway of rejection and shame, and therefore they are recognised as having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

117

But there is something more; they are before the throne of God, serving day and night in His temple. When the prophet sees the heavenly scene, there is no temple there at all. There is not a temple in the heavenly scene of millennial glory: there is a city, but no temple. Therefore what we find distinctly brought before us here is God's earthly temple, and He has not one to-day. We have now no earthly temple. He has a spiritual house, that is perfectly true, and we are it; but here are those who worship in God's temple night and day—a temple on earth again, a place where His name is put, and the place on this earth of access and approach to Him, where His presence may be enjoyed—I do not say in the same full or intimate or divine or spiritual way in which we do so, but nevertheless it is a blessing which cannot be matched in all the millennial earth. Here is God's temple, where His glory is, His name is, His presence is known. Not His dwelling-place, but His presence known, and where these who have passed through this tribulation in patience and faith have the privilege of entering.

I would only just remark that it is not at all a new subject in the Old Testament. Psalm xv., for instance, puts the very question which we find answered here: "Who shall sojourn in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy place? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart: who reproacheth not his neighbour, who putteth not out his money to usury." (The Jew was not allowed to take usury of his brethren.) That is the sort of man God would have to sojourn in His tabernacle and dwell in His holy place. But nothing is said about anyone going in, though it says, "He that

doeth these things shall never be moved." But the next Psalm presents to you the Lord Jesus Christ, not going into an earthly house, but into the heavenly dwelling-place, to the right hand of God, where there are pleasures for evermore. He is not going into any earthly temple; it would not be a place suitable for Him to dwell in. His soul is not left in the grave, nor does His flesh see corruption. He has the path of life shown to Him from the grave itself, and He goes to the right hand of God, where are pleasures for evermore.

But now in Psalm xxii. atonement is made, and then immediately in Psalm xxiii. not merely Christ Himself, but His saints, are preserved, protected, cared for, refreshed, and carried on through the wilderness. Then in Psalm xxiv. the earth is the Lord's, for He has taken possession of it; not merely does it belong to Him by right, but He has come and claimed His right. So "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For He hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." Not a very stable place for anything to be founded on, but He can do it. And then the question is raised again, "Who shall ascend into His holy hill? who shall stand in His holy place?" What sort of person? It does not say whether Jew or Gentile. "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, and hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity" (because the question of idolatry comes in in the last days) "nor sworn deceitfully" (that is, he will not call upon false gods). "He shall receive blessing from the Lord." But if there is to be any soul of man either in the heavenly dwelling-place or the earthly, he who enters

first must be the Man Christ Jesus, or there will be nobody there at all. That is what we find in Psalm xxiv., for immediately the cry is raised, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is He, this King of glory? Jehovah of hosts Himself." *He* is the Man who enters according to these conditions, and far more. And not merely does He enter that house because He answers to these conditions, He glorifies the house when He enters it. "The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory." It is the house on earth, and that is the house spoken of in this chapter. Thus the moment redemption is accomplished the Lord Jesus Christ is never alone. Separated from sinners and undefiled, the corn of wheat that abode alone in His own personal excellency till He "fell into the ground and died"; but the result of that is He brings forth much fruit. And I say again that atonement being accomplished, you never find the Lord Jesus Christ alone. If it is in the Father's house, He says, "There are many mansions"; and if it is the earthly house, He is not alone when He goes there, but there is the great white-robed throng who serve Him day and night in His temple, and He that sitteth on the throne shall tabernacle not only over the temple, but the glory is seen tabernacling over them. It is the description of the glory of the millennial scene.

But having had God's thoughts before us, and the

anticipatory accomplishment of all He has designed for blessing, and being introduced into communion with His thoughts, now we can view all the curses that are coming, for who can contemplate the curses unless he be clear about the blessing?

When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for half an hour, because a solemn thing is about to be enacted. Consecutively and in historical order the six preceding seals were opened, but we have gone forward beyond these and are now at the breaking of the seventh seal which develops into these seven corresponding trumpets, carrying us on to the end of the history of this world. There are many details, but what the seven trumpets do is to carry us on to the completion of the whole of God's dealings with this world in order to bring down the first man and his power and bring in the second Man—the Lord Jesus Christ.

There was silence; it was just a breathless suspense to see what God was going to do, because you cannot tell *what* God is going to do till you see Him do it. As to His blessing, we *are* sure about it; but in His dealing with the creature He may do as with Jonah—threaten to destroy the city in forty days, and before the forty days are over spare them all because they repented. We can never tell *when* God is going to act till He does so. There is the breathless suspense. All heaven is attentive to see what He will do in the face of such terrible things as these. Satan has got the western countries, where we are, as the very hotbed of all his plans and practices. Just like a gardener sets apart a special place in his garden in order to make it a hotbed for plants, so Satan has laid his hands

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

121

on these western lands. It is here his practices and secret plans are laid and carried out, the focus from whence all his dealings go on throughout the world around. Because if this question is settled on Satan's side in this world it is all over for the universe. The whole question of good and evil, and which is to have the mastery, is settled in this very little world in which we are, and more or less settled in these western countries.

There was silence for half an hour; God is preparing. He does not do things in a hurry when it is a question of judgment, and many are His dealings. "He, that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, it is he who is suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy."

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

BY J. BARTON.

LECTURE VIII.

IN turning to Thyatira (Rev. ii. 18) we find a very marked division, in more ways than one, in the instruction of these addresses. There is such an advance in the state of corruption that no hope of recovery of the state of God's witness on the earth is entertained. Its sentence is pronounced (as seen in Laodicea), though it is not yet executed, and in the meantime the coming of the Lord is presented to the hearts of the faithful to encourage them to hold fast that which they have till He comes. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" had in the three previous churches been addressed to the whole company, followed by the promise to the overcomer, but here and in the three which follow "the ear to hear" is only looked for in the overcomers. In this company we first find a remnant distinctly addressed (v. 24, N.T.): "To you I say *the rest* who [are] in Thyatira," and *they* are instructed not only as to their own reward, but as to the judgment in due time by Him—whose eyes are like unto a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass—on those from whom faithfulness and devotion to the Lord had separated them. But, as ever, the Lord's eye is first turned with approval to the devotedness of this remnant, which was of a very special character, and shone out the more brightly in the midst of the surrounding darkness and corruption, and He does not fail to give them their full value.

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH. 123

So also of Mary's alabaster box of *very precious* ointment, He could say to those indignant disciples who blamed her *waste* of it, "Why do ye trouble the woman? for she hath wrought a good work *towards Me*. . . . She has done it for My burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever these glad tidings shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she has done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." The surroundings within and without lent a *new* preciousness to that ointment.

The Lord knew the works of this faithful remnant—their *love, service, faith*, and *patience*—and the last works to be more than the first. What a happy contrast with His judgment as to Ephesus, where doubtless to the outward eye—as man sees—there was a fairer external testimony even in the mass. Alas! *they* had left their first love, and the Lord had to call on them to repent and do their first works. And we see in the persecution which Smyrna portrays a faithful few overcomers, for whom the Lord has only encouragement. The darkest day has ever produced the brightest witnesses. Imprisonment and death have not always proved the most fatal to the Lord's testimony, for many have, alas! broken down as faithful witnesses, under the *wiles* of the devil and his *seductions*, who would doubtless have resisted even unto death the call to openly renounce the faith. Mary of Bethany won her laurels in the house of Simon the leper, on a field where only one of her school (Luke x. 39, 42) would provoke the challenge which her Lord took up for her in His faithful love. There the most devoted of Thyatira's remnant would have their devotedness and courage, their love, service,

124 SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

faith and patience, and even their *last* works, tested in a hotter fire than Jezebel or her children could kindle, even where that worthy One "was wounded in the house of His friends."

The attitude in which the Lord presents Himself to Thyatira as the Son of God, with eyes like unto a flame of fire and feet like fine brass, speaks of the advance in the state of corruption and the unmingled judgment which it provoked. This is not the attitude in which He delights to present Himself to His saints—it is His strange work. Yet if their sin and corruption call for such an attitude He cannot deny Himself, and His faithfulness must so speak. Rather would He have Himself known to our hearts as John knew Him (John xiii. 23), leaning on His bosom and counting on His love to instruct; or as Mary knew Him, taking her part against the half-heartedness of those who could not appreciate her devotedness. (Matt. xxvi. 10.) If individually our conduct should compel the Lord to meet us with eyes of flaming fire to withstand our perverse way, does it not become us to stop and say, "Search me, O Lord, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there is any way of pain in me, and lead me in the way everlasting"?

How *searching* and *rest-giving* is that "I know thy works." Those eyes of fire and feet of brass have no terrors for the faithful remnant, but only evoke, with solemnised heart, "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." (Heb. xii. 28.) When, on the first day of the week, the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre, though the keepers did shake and became as dead,

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH. 125

the angel said unto the women, "*Fear not* YE: FOR *I know* that ye seek Jesus. . . . *Come*, see the place where the Lord lay."

It is a great comfort to know how the youngest and feeblest witness for Christ is known and cared for in the sufferings which he may be privileged to endure for Christ's sake. John ix. gives us such a one; cast out of the synagogue for his witness. "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him . . ." He grants this babe a further knowledge of Himself, which would enable him to stand. "To him that hath shall more be given."

In Ephesus they *could not bear* them which were evil. In Pergamos they *had among them* those who held the doctrine of Balaam. But in Thyatira they *suffered* Jezebel, a professed *mother* and *prophetess*, to whom children were born. This necessarily called forth the distinct testimony of the Lord's witnesses, and developed in them those traits which their Lord so gladly approves and encourages.

Though both Jezebel's "children" and "those who commit adultery with her" come under judgment, the Lord makes a difference between them. There are those, too, to-day who have openly accepted and are formed by corrupt doctrines, and there are also those who are trifling with such; they call for different treatment, which divine wisdom and faithfulness can only supply. Jude, too, in portraying the characteristics of evil which *have* crept into the house of God to corrupt and will culminate in open apostasy, says, "And of some have compassion, making a difference." The prayer of the apostle for the Philippians (i. 9, 10) may well be ours in this day, when fellow-labourers

126 SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

with Balaam, who are the children of Jannes and Jambres, "resist *the truth*." At Corinth and Galatia the saints had to be reminded that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," both moral and doctrinal leaven. John, in his second epistle, warns a godly woman against receiving into her house, or greeting, one who did not bring the doctrine of Christ, lest she partake in his wicked works. If Timothy is comforted and strengthened to faithfulness in remembering "Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, raised from among the dead," and also that "the Lord knoweth them that are His," the same voice says to him, "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." The apostle found two springs of evil in Corinth (1 Cor. xv. 33, 34), "evil communications" and defective knowledge of God. "Have *salt* in yourselves." But what can be a more pitiable condition and end than "salt that has lost its savour" (Luke xiv. 34, 35), if it be not a saint of God who has so far imbibed the spirit of the world as to neutralise his witness against its corruptions? Lot in Sodom and Samson's head in Delilah's lap have little savour for God, though we remember that Lot went *with* Abraham, and so did not promise much.

The fatal teaching of Rome, her children, and those who commit adultery with her, is the putting so many things between the soul and God, thus practically denying that "one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." It denies, too, our title to access into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which our great High Priest, who is passed into the heavens, hath consecrated for us. The sufferings of the faithful in the days of Jezebel for the

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH. 127

measure of light and truth they possessed rebuke our easy-going ways to-day, more highly privileged though we be with divine light and measure of truth, so often, alas! clouded by ways of expediency and half-hearted compromise, to spare ourselves the reproach and suffering which true witness for Christ and His truth must ever entail on the man of God.

In the providence of God we are allowed to enjoy in quietness our legacy (Acts xx. 32), viz., "God and the word of His grace." May we not each of us profitably challenge our own hearts as to how much suffering or loss we have ever endured for Christ's sake? for it ever remains true that "all that will live *godly* in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." If it be true, as it surely is, that "the corruption of the best thing is the worst corruption," we have little difficulty in understanding the need for the instruction of Paul to Timothy, his like-minded son in the faith, in view of these last and perilous times and of the gravity of the qualifications for the *man of God*, who would be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use and prepared unto every good work. The judgment on Jezebel and her children, and those who commit adultery with her, will make the churches know the Lord as He which searcheth the reins and hearts. To the overcomer the Lord's return is presented in two aspects, as "the Sun of righteousness" and as "the morning Star"; these overcomers are keepers of *Christ's works* unto the end. Not only was He "faithful amidst unfaithfulness, 'mid darkness only light," ever delighting in His Father's will and obedient even unto death, and thus can say, "Even as I also overcame," but we see, too, the meekness, gentleness,

128 SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

patience, and lowly grace which nothing could change, even though for His love He had hatred. He would have them prove what is the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ; waiting for the time when He would reign and they with Him, in the meantime suffering for and with Him. This would encourage them "in patience to possess their souls," in the midst of this corrupt church from which they were suffering—"patience of hope in the Lord Jesus Christ." And for their hearts' affections "the morning Star"—Christ Himself as the coming one to take them *to Himself*, that where He is, there they may be also. Satan offered the Lord the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; but He who had Himself a perfect title to them went onward to the cross and died. He will take the kingdoms from the hand of His Father in due time and with the additional title as Son of Man. The Church, in her Jezebel character, seeks to rule over the nations, and the beast will for a time carry the great whore, but only for her final destruction. The mighty power of God which has raised up the Lord Jesus Christ, the Man of God's counsels, from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, etc., is what gives rest of heart in the midst of the surging billows of *man's day*. The encouragement to the overcomer is identification with Christ in varied ways. So, too, as to rest in Hebrews iv., it is *God's rest* we wait for—till He rests. The traveller through the night is the one who sees and welcomes the morning star—a child of light in the midst of darkness. Scripture records events which must happen before the Lord's *appearing*, but nothing before His coming for His saints. The unfaithful says

LIBERTY AND FRUIT.

129

in his *heart*, "My Lord delayeth His coming." He does not say it in his creed, perhaps, but what does his life in its spring and details say as to it? The scoffer says, "Where is the promise of His coming?"

The fool, too, says in *his heart*, "*No God.*"

The man of God has for his yesterday the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ and its constraining love (2 Cor. v. 14-15), and for his to-morrow His personal return for His Church; and in the meantime his heart is touched on either side by their chastening instruction and strengthened with all might according to the power of Christ's glory unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness. With the Spirit and the Bride, he says "*Come.*"

LIBERTY AND FRUIT.

IN Romans vii. we get the heart and spirit of a man searched out in every principle, movement, and spring that characterises it, and then in result *deliverance*. To be in unison with God, there must be power to judge evil, as well as to lay hold of the good; and the scene of all this judgment of evil is laid in self. The result of it all will be to cast us over as to self entirely upon Christ.

Here this judgment of self is looked at as altogether carried on under law, and although the perception is perhaps keener under grace, yet you never get such a thorough knowledge of self as when looked at as under law. In Philippians the man is looked at as out of it (self), above it, walking in the liberty of the Spirit (Gal. v. 1); the word *sin* does not once occur, and *flesh* only as showing the apostle had no confidence in it.

Now, to arrive at this blessed state of things, flesh must be discerned, and that in such a way that the soul may find out that rest *from it* is not gained by victory *over it*. There can be peace only by the discovery that victory cannot be gained over it only by the death of Christ. This knowledge may come either before or after our acquaintance with Christ as the refuge of the sinner. . . .

Resurrection is the foundation of all the apostle's reasoning. Paul goes a step further than either Peter or John. They speak of our being partakers of the effects of the resurrection, but Paul says we are risen *with Him*. I am not speaking of union here; that is found in Christ ascended as well as risen, but ascension is not mentioned in Romans vii. What we are learning here is our place. . . .

The law produces no fruit. What the law shows out is that there is no fruit to be got out of the flesh. We have all experienced this, but are we seriously attentive to it? Have you discovered the working of *self* and *flesh*? Have your hearts in their working been suffered to say, "That is sin"? The way of deliverance is to know what I have been delivered from. The law shows out the character of flesh as to everything under it; it shows flesh to have abused the grace, kindness, goodness, etc., of God. When I get to know this, then I come to the second step—I get the new nature (*v.* 22); and here the believer finds that he is in an immensely better position, and fancies that now all must go on right. He says, I have got the new nature, and now I shall get rid of the old. But he finds that even with the new nature he does not succeed; this humbles him. Sin puffs us up, this brings us down—"How to perform

that we would, we find not." I cannot think of God without thinking badly of *man*, the creature, as the embodiment of *self*. The real raising up of man is the ability to judge evil in self. *Self* is the exact opposite of *love*, which God is. Undetected self is a most horrible thing. A person may be all right about salvation, and yet there may be a deal of undetected self. A person may get much ease by grace, but getting easy sometimes means getting careless, and is the deceitfulness of the heart. What God wants us to know is not only that He forgives sin, but also to know what the sinner *is*. You must have this ransacking go on in order to know what you are saved from. There are varieties of ways by which we arrive at this knowledge, but it must all result in judged flesh. "O wretched *man*!" It is not forgiveness here so much as it is *deliverance* that is insisted on, and deliverance that sets you free—deliverance out of the condition in which you were before—proving to you that in *you* there is *no good thing*. Of course, it may be discovered, and very frequently is, in its beginning; the prudent gardener does not wait till the weeds spring up into large plants, and it is not necessary that the lusts of the flesh should ripen into mischief.

But now comes the question, "Who shall deliver me?" This we find in Christ alone. In Christ the flesh has been judged (Rom. viii. 3), so that Christ not only died for sin, but there, too, God condemned sin in the flesh. Now then I am *delivered*, and that in Christ. I have died with Him, and have perfect liberty, that I may bring forth fruit as a plant of God's planting. Now I stand not only forgiven, but I am made the righteousness of God in Christ. I have been taken out

of darkness into light, and that in a righteous way. Of course, I have much to learn, but then it is in a place of liberty I learn it. It is here Christian experience begins. Of course there is fear, hope, etc., just like the Israelites in the wilderness; they had conflict, trial, etc., but they never saw an Egyptian again. Then we have strength for victory. We have got the power of Christ. Then we are brought into communion and fellowship with God, with Christ, and with one another. I then speak of love as a thing which I know practically. I speak of what I *must* be before God. I understand the witnessing of the Holy Ghost, who always reasons from what God is to me; but the flesh reasons from what I am to God. Now, how is it with you? Has judged sin found its end in your conscience before Christ? Does the thought of judgment occasion uneasiness? What! Are you going to answer for yourself? You have not yet got hold of redemption. I don't say you are denying it, but you have not yet got hold of it. "*In whom* we have redemption." (Col. i. 14.) The energy of faith is that of walking in the world as not belonging to it. Instead of standing *without*, and longing and looking for what is *within*, we are found *within*, and walking with God in perfect liberty, in the full sense of grace.

Weigh it well, whether you are *delivered*! Not merely forgiven, but delivered and brought into the presence of God. Conflict, of course, there will be, but oh! the blessedness of knowing that we stand *within*.

J. N. D.

November 24th, 1861.

FOOTSTEPS OF GRACE.

No. 3.

GENESIS vii.-viii.

THE ark typically connects the waters of death in judgment, as at the cross, with the resurrection of Christ. Scripture itself is our warrant for so taking it. (1 Peter iii. 21, 22). Christ is thus the Shelter and Saviour of the believer, and He who brings into a new scene. Through water Noah and his company were saved—waters which were God's judgment upon an ungodly world; but entering into the ark eight souls passed safely through it nevertheless, while every other living being was destroyed from the earth. But God remembered Noah, and after five months of solemn pause (including the forty days and nights of rain) the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month—that day on the anniversary of which the blessed Saviour rose from among the dead.

From that moment the effects of judgment on the earth gradually assuaged, until the day which was afterwards appointed for the memorial of blowing of trumpets, that Israel might be remembered before Jehovah their God, on that day (in the first month on the first of the month) the waters were dried up from the earth.

Thus the two great epochs of Noah's sojourn in the ark, standing prominently out as days much to be

remembered, were the one on which the ark rested, and the other when its covering was removed, "and, behold, the face of the ground was dry." These are days which were already before the mind of God to be observed as typically historical of His redeeming grace and intervention on behalf of His chosen. The first was that on which the wave-sheaf was appointed to be offered, type of the resurrection of Christ which actually took place on the seventeenth day of the seventh month (afterwards the first), a resurrection with which we are spiritually identified. The latter, celebrated on the first of the first month, speaks of God's intervention to restore Israel, bringing them again in resurrection nationally from the dead.

Between these salient points the intervening time is marked by periods characteristic rather than of historical importance typically. "Forty," "seven," momentous numbers in Scripture, distinguish the time between the first indications of an earth spared by mercy and the preparation for man's renewed habitation of it. (Gen. viii. 5, 18.) Repeatedly are these numbers used in the Word of God, and certainly not without specific meaning.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE MINISTRY
OF ROBERT KENT.

No. 11.

SONGS IN THE WILDERNESS.

IN Exodus xv. there is the first song in the wilderness. In Numbers xxi. 16-18 we find the last. As to all that came between, the journey began with murmuring and ended with loathing. The people murmured at the rich provision of God for their need, and then they loathed it. Following this are the fiery serpents—result of man's sin. In sovereign grace God brings in the remedy, and afterwards they pitched their tents towards the sunrising (*v.* 11), the coming day of glory. After all this, God in His grace says, "Gather the people together, and I will give them water." Then Israel sang this song: "Ascend, O well. Spring up, O well. Answer ye to it. Sing ye to it." It reminds one of John iv., where the Lord says to the poor woman, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Here we see the eternal life answering to the revelation of Christ on high, the Object of our souls, and in the power of the Spirit rising up to its source. There are two things in *v.* 18, diligence and direction by the Word: "The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the lawgiver." We need diligence of soul and

136 RECOLLECTIONS OF THE MINISTRY OF ROBERT KENT.

direction by the Word. It is solemn to think that of all those who came out of Egypt and sang the first song only three sang this song. Three only of the men were left, Moses, Caleb, and Joshua. There are two numberings of the people in Numbers, one at the beginning of the journey and one at the end; and it is observed that at the end there were only the men of faith. Plenty born in the wilderness, of course, but of those who entered it as men only these three.

What was it drew forth the song? Both at the beginning and at the end it was God's grace. The song in Exodus does not begin about themselves or about their enemies, but about Jehovah: "The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation." The first few verses are full of Him; then it is about their enemies, and finally the future day of glory. There is more triumph in the first song, but in the last there is a deeper note of praise; and so it is with us. At the end of the journey we have learnt ourselves and we have learnt God. We are now on the verge of the wilderness; this may be the last Lord's Day we shall break bread together. We have the coming glory before us, into which we shall enter. We have Christ on high, the Object of our souls; and have we not a song? Yes, we have the Holy Ghost in us, and we have a song for Jehovah, for God, for Christ in His grace to us.—*July 8th, 1894.*

GOSPEL ADDRESSES.

No. 4.

REDEMPTION.

WE get in Exodus xv. the deliverance founded on chapter xii., and God takes, as to His dealings, an entirely new character.

In chapter xii. He was a *Judge*, acting in that character, and He is met by the blood. He does not meet the sin; the blood meets the judgment, and He passes over, but the people are left in Egypt, safe from judgment. That is not all that God does: it is the foundation of all blessing, but they had not got actual deliverance yet. There is not only the value of what Christ has done meeting the eye of God, but He is active in delivering us and bringing us out. Christ went down to the condition we were in, and "by the grace of God tasted death for everything." He came into death where Satan's power was. He could not be holden of it, but in coming down He put away the sin. He came down in the power of divine life—He was God Himself—and He not only put away sin, though He did that in order to deliver us, for it could not be done righteously if the sin had not been put away; but now He is up out of it sitting at God's right hand in glory, and the worth of His work is such that it sets man, in His Person, but as our Forerunner, in the glory of God. There is complete deliverance for us.

God was a *Judge* in chapter xii. Here in chapter xv. He is a *Deliverer*, in virtue of that blood.

The Israelites got to the Red Sea, and found they could not go any further, and that is very humbling. It is a much more humbling thing to learn you are *without strength* than that you are a sinner. God says, 'Trust Me and go forward.' God is a Deliverer, and there was this much sea, that it protected them on the right hand and on the left. The very thing they dreaded was deliverance to them; they walked through it. We dread death and judgment, but it is through them we are delivered: the death of Christ.

Then they have to go through the wilderness, but they have come to God first. Death is gain, and judgment is gone for the believer.

"He guided them in His strength" (when *they* had none) "to His holy habitation." "I have borne you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself." Then there is peace.

We are brought to God by His power and righteousness, and the life that was manifested in Christ's resurrection from the dead; and from that there is a reckoning on divine strength for the way. Divine power has come in to deliver. Then what is Satan's power? There is perfect present deliverance from Pharaoh and Egypt, and the people are brought to God Himself by God's own strength. Then that work forms the ground for reckoning on God for the rest.

We see in verse 17 that God has an inheritance for His people. We have not got that (the glory) yet; but what we have got enables us to reckon on Him for it. He brings us to Himself and now dwells among us, consequent on redemption. (See chapter xxix. 45, 46.)

The moment I get *there*, I say, "Holiness becomes thine house." You cannot speak of holiness to a

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

139

person before he is redeemed; he has nothing to do with it except to say he has none. The Lord is "glorious in holiness," and now He has brought a people to Himself, He must have them holy.

With us it is inward and spiritual. He has redeemed a people to Himself, and He must have their hearts set apart—holy.

In the cleansing of the leper, the blood was to be on the tip of the right ear, on the thumb of the right hand, and on the great toe of the right foot. No thought is to go into our mind, we are to do nothing with our hand, and there is to be nothing in our walk, unfit for the blood of Christ.

J. N. D.

March 9th, 1871.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

ABOVE and beyond all that we are and all that has come from us in our whole course of responsibility here His grace is absolute, and He abides faithful; and in spite of all that the world, the flesh, and the devil can do to the contrary, the coming day will be the answer to all that God has wrought for us and in us.

It strengthens the soul to see the absoluteness of the grace of God.

November, 1898.

[140]

“CONSIDER HIM.”

He came, whose embassy was peace ;
He left His throne above
To prove if enmity would cease
Beneath the power of love.
He came, whose errand was to give ;
His hand was opened wide ;
Yea, at our need, that we might live,
He gave Himself and died.

What had the world for Him ? 'Twas meet
To answer love with love,
With signs of thankful joy to greet
The Stranger from above.
For Him ! With all its proud array
Of kingdom, palace, tower,
He was a wanderer each day,
A mourner every hour.

For Him ! With all its glory spread
Before its Maker's sight,
He had not where to lay His head—
That wearied head—by night.
For Him ! His days were almost past,
His sorrows well-nigh o'er ?
But lo, the world will give at last
From its abundant store !

The shameful cross, the piercing thorn
The vinegar and gall !
The world gives these with cruel scorn,
And He endures them all.
O world ! that cross doth still proclaim
On earth, in heaven above,
The story of thy guilt and shame,
The wonders of His love !

MARY JANE WALKER, 1855.

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

BY THE EDITOR.

(From Shorthand Report.)

LECTURE X. CHAPTERS VIII. AND IX.

(Continued.)

IN respect to the trumpets, what gives energy to God's dealings is the cry of His saints, because that cry always brings God on the scene in this world. When His saints cry God hears and intervenes: He lets things go on otherwise; but when He comes in to act in respect to the cries of His saints it is not merely according to their cries, but according to the excellency of the One who intercedes for them. Now *we* have the place of intercessors, but the difference between the intercession of the heavenly saints and the intercession of this angel who comes and stands by the altar, having a golden censer, is that this angel adds efficacy to the prayers: he gives power and efficacy and acceptance to those poor cries that come up from the saints in this world because it is Christ in opposition to the enemy, who, having once tasted blood, is ravenous for it. The smoke of the incense goes up before God, and the answer is according to the intercession, not according to the prayers. The intercession went up out of the golden censer, and then the golden censer was filled with the coals from off the altar, and they were cast on the earth.

It is the same in Ezekiel. The man clad in linen,

F

with a writer's inkhorn by his side, who went through the city and marked those who sighed and cried for all the abominations, is the one that filled his hand with the coals from the altar in order to scatter them over the city in judgment. So also Christ, who is an intercessor for His saints, is executor of judgment on the ungodly.

Now God's dealings begin, and their character is seen in these lightnings and earthquakes; and the seven angels prepare themselves to sound.

"The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up." The third part is what refers to the Roman Empire, as you will see in the dragon with seven heads and ten horns, which is the form of the Roman Empire, who stands before the woman about to bear the man-child in order to swallow it up; this dragon draws with his tail the third part of the heavenly bodies. Thus we understand that the third part is appropriated to the Roman Empire. You will remember under what condition and character the government of this world conspired against Christ. When He was derided the Roman Empire was in power, and it was the procurator of the Roman Empire who sat in judgment when He was crucified. The Roman Empire is the favourite instrument and form which Satan uses to accomplish his murderous purpose against the Man Christ Jesus, the Christ of God, the Man who for God is going to possess the universe and dispossess the man that Satan raises up. This scene is laid in these western countries, and over the whole sphere of the Roman Empire.

The hail and fire are mingled with blood. When God says "blood" He means blood; that is to say, where blood is used figuratively it means slaughter. "Thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the dust," said the Lord. "Thou art cursed from the ground, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood." It was blood, and in this case it undoubtedly sets forth an indiscriminate slaughter that goes on in consequence of God's dealings with the Roman world, which has become apostate, and is ready to fall into the hands of the adversary. These are the first dealings of God with the Roman world, that has lost its place, in which He set it as governing for Him.

The Roman Empire formed a part of the great image which God ordered in this world in place of Israel. When He removed the government of the world from Israel He made Nebuchadnezzar the head of gold, and the rest silver, brass, and iron. In the latter times of these kingdoms we find the kingdom of iron, which grinds in pieces all the rest of the kingdoms, and here it is that the dealings of God in judgment are expressed. There was hail and fire mingled with blood, indiscriminate slaughter, every man killing his neighbour. Government is subverted and lost to all divine responsibility and position, no longer maintaining those institutions which God has established in this world to keep things in order. Every man is allowed to do as he likes, and with what result? We should all be happy, people think, if allowed to do as we like. Do not the young woman and the young man think that if they could only do as they liked they would be happy enough? But if you want to

make yourself and everybody else miserable, then do as you like. And what is true individually is true collectively. If you can bring in the principle of letting everyone do as he likes that he may be happy, you will only bring in indiscriminate bloodshed. Of course these are principles at work to-day; they deny the rights of property, and say that everyone should have just the same as another, and as to earthly and natural relationships, that they are of no account at all. All these things are useless, and the world will go on far better without any of these social, or political, or divine institutions that we have benefited by for these last 1800 years and more. Very well. God will let you have your own way. The character of these trumpets is this, that Satan is allowed to carry out (man being his instrument) his plans, is allowed to have his way, and to bring in the principles which man thinks would make everyone happy. God says, Go and do it.

The first thing is, they begin killing one another. You have sixpence; I want it. Then there is at once the struggle for it.

The result is that the whole Roman Empire, of which we form part, becomes a scene of strife. But there will be these two particular effects. The trees are burned up; that is to say, every person of distinction, or high in place on the earth, is overthrown. What do we want with nobility and people of rank or position, and all these social duties? We should be far better off if we were all just labouring for our daily wage, and getting a ticket at the end of the day for bed and board.

Such are men's thoughts, but in result not only

the third part of the trees—that is, the whole of whatever is elevated and of distinction and repute in the western empire—goes, but all the grass goes too. People do not think that it is not merely the great that will suffer, but the little ones—the mass of people—also. It is a terrible thing; man's plans do not contemplate this, but this is surely the result.

“The second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.” The same thing as before happened under this second trumpet, only now it happens by reason of a great administrative power established amidst the confusion which is brought in. The mountain is the figure of a great administrative power. Thus a mountain represents the Lord Jesus Christ's kingdom; as in Nebuchadnezzar's vision the little stone which smote the image became a great mountain, so here a great administrative power comes in on the scene of utter confusion produced by man's plans, and establishes itself so that men can kill each other by law, instead of killing each other without law. It is none the better, but far worse. To have God's principles, and God's institutions, and God's establishments in Nature, as well as in government, not only set aside, but made penal, that is far worse. It is a solemn thing that this great power comes in to legalise the horrible principles that have produced murder and all kinds of evil among men, so that now innocent blood is shed legally, and the third part of the creatures in the sea which had life died. I

have referred to this already, that all the institutions which had any claim whatever to what was natural or right, and which God could own providentially, all are destroyed.

Well, people are quite willing to destroy institutions, but when you touch their food and raiment they are not so pleased. Man marks out his plans, but he finds his plans do not answer his expectations. It is not merely that the third part of the living creatures in the sea perish, but the ships are destroyed. You will not get any man to go to his office and sit down for a half-dozen hours a day and exert his brains in order to form plans and enterprises and schemes for the sake of a ticket at the end of the day to get bed and board with; you cannot drive him in gangs to the counting-house to form schemes of commerce. Men love their plans, and God lets them have their way, but the result is misery, and the ships (all commerce) are destroyed.

“And the third angel sounded,” and, behold, a still worse thing. “There fell a great star from heaven . . . upon the third part [that is, these western lands] of the rivers . . . and the name of the star is called Wormwood.” Wormwood is used in Scripture, in Deut. xxix., as representative of idolatrous principles—that is the thing introduced now. It is not merely that the governmental scene is ruined and made satanic in principle, but also the very principles that men imbibe (they are bad enough now, but not so bad as this), as well as those whom they follow, and who set the minds of men at work, are impregnated with “wormwood”—idolatrous principles. What we get here is very striking, and we have more to do with

wormwood than you think. You remember how Paul says that day shall not come until there be a falling away, or apostasy first (this is what we have here), and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped. Here is a man (Satan's man) accepted to be God. He is the tool in Satan's hand for assuming deity in this world, and claiming his kingdom here, if he can bring it to pass. Now, Paul says, "Remember ye not, when I was with you, I told you these things? Now you know what withholdeth . . . for the mystery of iniquity doth already work." This mystery comes out in its full blaze and bloom as wormwood, and impregnates every thought of men, and produces universal idolatry, with a man at the top of it as a mighty head working the principle out. And since the apostle was on the scene the mystery of iniquity has developed much: "Only he that letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall destroy with the breath of His mouth, and with the brightness of His coming: even him, whose coming [the coming of this wicked one] is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." What is seen then in full blaze is working in the same way to-day. May you and I have nothing to do with it. The mystery of iniquity doth already work, and the result brought out here is that the waters become wormwood, and many men die of the waters because they are made bitter; that is to say, almost universal idolatry, with man at the head of it, is established in

these Christian lands instead of God's Christ. It will all come soon enough when God permits.

"The fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars." That is to say, the whole of the government throughout the Roman Empire, in the sphere of the Latin kingdom of these western lands, becomes not merely apostate, but satanic. There is neither day nor night, a thing that is impossible in Nature; but God's judgment on the plans of men, allowed to be carried out to their utmost, has produced this socially and governmentally, plans which affect that earthly power He has established. And when those plans, working in this way, are brought to their accomplishment, all that which was set up of God becomes of Satan. This brings us into the middle of Daniel's seventieth week, so that there is just half a week more to run, and in a few short days—only three and a half years—all hurries on to its climax in judgment.

The next three trumpets are woes on a special class of people—the inhabitants of the earth, persons who do not want to go to heaven. The truth of the matter is, man does not want to go to heaven. There is a heavenly Christ, and a heavenly pathway, but he sticks to the earth. It is the inhabitants of the earth on whom the tribulation comes, and who begin to persecute God's saints. If a man is intent on the earth, and another wants to point him to heaven, he will turn on him just as Cain did on Abel. The one wanted to get to God, and he brought the lamb; the other wanted to keep the earth, and he brought the fruits of it. And he was angry that God accepted his

brother's sacrifice, and not his, and he slew him. The man who does not want heaven, though God has given His Christ to die, that man would kill those who bear God's testimony when it becomes irksome.

These three trumpets are so-called woe trumpets. The two first (chap. ix.) concern the east. We have had the west in the four previous trumpets; now we must change our scene and leave these western lands and turn to the east, where the action now takes place.

The fifth angel sounded, and a star out of heaven falls to the earth. It is the same star that brought wormwood into the water of which the western people drink. Westerns are moved by what they imbibe. Not so in the east; the easterns are moved by what surrounds them and comes clothed with authority. They believe what they are told, and are governed by what is authoritative. Not so with westerns; we want reasons for what we do; we want principles, and that is the way this evil spirit worked when it was a question of the Latin Empire. He brought in a bitter principle—wormwood—idolatrous principles, and he impregnated the principles that move men with it. But now he has come to work in the east he adopts a different practice. He opened the bottomless pit where the wicked spirits are confined, not where they are punished—which is the lake of fire—for they are reserved in chains to the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men; then they will be punished with the wicked man. Meanwhile they are in imprisonment; but here one is permitted, who should have been a source of light, to open the bottomless pit, which gives forth its smoke. I do not doubt that these stars are a pervert of Christianity which will

terminate in full-blown idolatry by-and-by, and is already at work in a mysterious form. So in the east, this influence is a perversion of Christianity. There arose a smoke out of the pit, the sun and the air, what is above and what is around, were darkened; and out of the smoke came these emissaries of mischief. The place specially in question is the land of Israel, because you find men with the seal in their foreheads, and those too, who had not the seal, in the land. Thus the evil influences are allowed to come forth, and have their power over those who are in the land. They appeared as locusts, which are harmless and feed on vegetation simply; but these were a power of evil, and their object was not earthly or natural, but a distinct satanic attempt to introduce evil into the souls of men. They were commanded not to touch the earth, nor any green thing, nor tree; their natural aims were to be suspended, but they were to be the instruments of satanic corruption in these eastern lands where God's people were settled. It was given to them that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months; "and in those days shall men seek death and not find it." I do not think this is death simply; death is used in this book as indicative of apostasy, and it is one of the most terrifying things possible for a man not to be able to think there is no God, and to know that if there is a God he is doomed. Perhaps that could not occur to-day, but after Christ has carried away His own, and the world is sealed for judgment, the state of those who are left here as unbelievers is that they know very well that death is damnation for them, and that if there is a God they are damned for eternity, and that is a dreadful thing. They would seek to avoid such a

thought, but they cannot. The Lord has His finger on men's conscience, and He is bringing the fact home that He is the God of heaven and earth, and that every soul will have to do with Him. They seek death, but it flees from them.

These locusts had the appearance of military power, and also a great profession of divine guidance; they had crowns like gold, just like the twenty-four elders; they pretend to a divine mission. It is what we find in Daniel viii., where he describes Alexander's kingdom and its division into four parts, and takes up one of these parts and says that in the latter days of this kingdom a king shall stand up of fierce countenance and understanding dark sentences, a man who can seduce the Jewish people. There is no Christ in Christianity then, it is a lost thing, and yet there is all the form of it in the east, in that mighty Empire of Russia, whose emissary is this king of the north. He acts by the power of Russia: he shall be mighty, but not by his own power, and he shall destroy marvellously, and practise and prosper, and destroy the mighty and the holy people, that is the Jews, and by his craft he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many. He will be a clever tool in the enemy's hand, able to take up the secret and explain why they have no Christ—it will take a very wise man to do that; he will do it even so as to deceive the elect Jews if possible. It is a so-called great power at work with these Jews, the mass of them as we know bad Jews, unsealed Jews. But here is a so-called great power bringing its energies to work, not so much in military form as in a treacherous character, in order to seduce the Jews from their religion and Jewish

position, and carry them away as apostates to Christianity when there is no Christ in it. Satan is using Christianity in that coming day to apostatise the Jews. Of course, if you get a Jew to accept Christianity to-day you save him, but when Christ is gone out of it it does nothing, and to get a Jew to *apostatise* then is to *damn* him. That is what the enemy is about. If he can blot out the Jew from his place, he has blotted out one great title of Christ. This man shall prosper and shall magnify himself in his heart, and shall stand up against the Prince of Peace. The end of the matter is, having tried plans and practices with the people of the Messiah, he at last emboldens himself to stand up against the Messiah Himself, and he comes to grief then; none shall help him.

That is what we have here in the fifth trumpet, an attempt on Satan's part to deceive the Jews, probably by means of a false Christianity; and I will only just add that in these three attempts of Satan, you get him doing in a different and a world-wide way what he attempted with the Lord Jesus Christ when he met Him in the wilderness of the temptation. He presented these three things; one was the world and all the glory of it, saying, "If Thou wilt fall down and worship me, all shall be Thine." That is what he tries with these western nations, with a Roman world, and what he succeeds in doing; he gets that which is now Christian to bow down to him in his idolatrous form. He presents the world; it is by reason of presenting as a prize the dominion of the world that he succeeds in confederating these western lands, and bringing them to his feet in this idolatrous way. In this second case of the fifth angel, he tempted by what is true, by that which the

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH. 153

Jews knew, just as he tried the Lord Jesus Christ, when he put Him upon the pinnacle of the temple and said, "Cast Thyself down, for it is written," etc. He perverted God's Word in order that he might carry out his purpose with Christ, and that is what he does with the Jews in the coming day. God preserves an elect company, but the mass are destroyed; as Daniel said, "By prosperity shall he destroy many."

Well, God has made it all clear to us to reach our consciences and keep us from these idolatrous and false principles, which are already at work. God grant it may be so!

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

BY J. BARTON.

LECTURE VIII. (*continued*).

IDENTIFICATION with Christ in suffering and in glory is our welcome and honoured portion. This state, figured by Thyatira, continues to the end of "the things that are," though not as *characterising* the professing mass. In Sardis, a new phase as it were is prominent and catches the eye. In a measure the fruit of the faithfulness of the godly remnant in Thyatira, so far as what is approved, is there, but, alas! sadly coloured by what man's unfaithfulness had turned that revival and blessing into. It is man's abuse of the privilege and blessing in the great recovery of truth granted at the time of the Reformation, secured for us at the cost of the lives of so many faithful witnesses, the unspeakable blessing of "an open Bible," with its testimony of the "one Mediator," and of peace made by the blood of His cross. While deeply thankful, as

154. SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

every saint of God must ever be, for the precious truths of God's Word recovered from the darkness in which they lay concealed so long, yet we know that many other precious truths revealed in God's Word remained for many years afterwards hidden in the confusion which the will of man had wrought in the Church, to be recovered in later years for the joy and blessing of those to whom grace was given to value them, not now producing *reformation* or any hope of recovery of the witness of the heavenly calling and oneness of the Church, as presented on the earth for a little moment at Pentecost. Yet these truths shed their light on the present condition of the Church. Its defect as a witness for Christ is made more manifest, and to depart from iniquity is seen to be the path of faith and faithfulness of the man of God; following righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Thus they become witnesses in sackcloth of the failure of that committed to man's responsibility, but of the abiding faithfulness and sufficiency of Him who changes not, in whose hand are the seven stars, and also of the abiding oneness to faith of His body the Church, for "there is one body, and there is one Spirit." If 2 Kings xxii., xxiii., be compared with 2 Chronicles xxxvi. 15-23, Ezra i., iii., the difference between *reformation* and *returning to a divine position* will not be difficult to understand—both were divine revivals. Compare also the instruction in the Epistles to the Corinthians with that of 2 Timothy, and the same difference will be seen.

A very few plain words describe the state of the Church at Sardis to the Lord's eye: "Thou hast a

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH. 155

name that thou livest, and art dead." The all-sufficiency of Him who had the seven spirits of God and the seven stars judges that state as the more inexcusable, and at the same time serves as an encouragement to those who had an ear to hear among the overcomers. The energy of the Spirit of God manifested in those whom He used in the time of Luther to accomplish such blessed results, which were so wide-spread, soon became lost and swamped amidst the mingling of worldly influences with which Satan ever waits to spoil every such revival. Protestantism became a power in the world of which it was not slow to boast, but, alas! as to Christ and His interests and glory, they were withal *dead*. Spiritual energy of life was wanting, for the spirit of the world is ever a withering, blinding, and deadening influence, be it in the hearts, or homes, or assemblies of the saints. The Spirit of God dwelling in and with the saints is His alone power to glorify Christ on the earth; and where human arrangements and confederacies of various popular forms, enlisting under their flag the energies of God's people, usurp the prerogative of the Holy Ghost, we must not marvel at the verdict pronounced on Sardis. The devil ever advisedly sets himself to attack each fresh unveiled purpose of God for the time. The sufficiency of the work of Christ for salvation, the fulness of supply for every need of His Church which is presented in her glorified Head, the presence and power of the Holy Ghost on earth to glorify Christ and care for His saints while they wait His return, giving, too, to be known on earth God's answer to "What is man?"—these have been the special objects of the adversary's attack by his wiles, intruding objects between the members of

156 SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

the body of Christ and their Head. Thus they do not "*hold the Head*," "from which all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." May the good Lord exercise us as to how far we are "*holding the Head*"! Having thus wrought the present state of brokenness, the enemy would present that brokenness in a way to hide from exercised saints of God the sufficiency of the grace in Christ which waits to help them to do His will and be His witnesses in every phase of the Church's decay. The "many who say, Who will show us any good?" and can stand before the Lord, and say, "We are committed to do all these abominations," are found liars by him who is holding the Head. The measure of responsibility by which the state of Sardis is judged is what they had "*received and heard*." In the Middle Ages the darkness of Romanism, to the outward eye, covered the whole professing Church, but through that work of God's Spirit, at the time of the Reformation, light was largely diffused through Christendom; and though many of the evils of Thyatira remained, and will remain to the end, yet Protestantism became the characterising phase of the professing Church, and, succeeded by the states of Philadelphia and Laodicea, will collaterally with them run on to the end. The privileges received by Sardis were ready to die, and they are called to be *watchful* and strengthen the things that remain. The Lord did not find "their works perfect before His God," they did not answer to the grace received, and *He* can never lower His standard because of failure, nor could *His* servant in writing to the Corinthians. (2 Cor. xi. 2, 3.) *He* saw their low state, but he encouraged his heart

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH. 157

for them in the faithfulness of God, by whom they were called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (1 Cor. i. 9.)

The judgment which threatened them if they did not *watch* is very appropriate to their worldly condition; they would be treated as that world with whom they were walking hand in hand, and be surprised as by a thief in the night.

If we turn to 1 Thessalonians v., we understand that this threatened judgment refers to the *vessel* of witness *as such*, and not to those who are true saints of God in it, who will be caught up to heaven prior to the professing vessel being thus dealt with. But the true saints have sunk so low in spiritual energy and discernment of what is due to Christ, that they can find common interests and tastes with the world; they walk together, and suit each other, and so we have to fall back on the foundation of God, which standeth sure, having this seal: "The Lord *knoweth* them that are His." The conscience of the professing Church to-day must be indeed dull if it does not justify this warning of her Lord. The Church is contributing a certain religious status to the world in return for its patronage and support, giving the world, too, a voice in ruling the Church, while the world invites the political support of the Church in the world's rule. Yet does it remain true as ever, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world," however their conduct and associations belie it. The Lord knew the names of the few faithful witnesses who had not defiled their garments, and they should walk with Him in white.

The promise to the overcomer is suited to the character of his witness, white raiment, and that his name

would not be blotted out of the *book of life*. The meaning of the white raiment will be best understood by reference to chapters iv., vi., vii., xix., where the same figure occurs. The general character of Sardis was "a name to live, but dead." Many, outwardly bearing the name of Christ, were dead, and a day coming would declare who only had life. The register of those who bear the name of Christ on earth contains names that are not found in the book of life of Philipians iv., Revelation xiii., xx. The Lord would also confess the overcomer's name before His Father and before His angels. How different that which the Lord approves from what meets man's smile! He could say on earth, "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother. Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it."

FIRST LOVE AND FIRST WORKS.

IN the address to Ephesus in Revelation ii. 1-5, we find two kinds of works, in verses 2 and 5. They are in pointed contrast with each other. In verse 5 the Lord says, Where you are now, you have fallen down from a certain place; and what I want is not the works of the place you are in now, but the *first* works.

There are works connected with our feet treading the wilderness, with our circumstances, keeping from evil, and patience—all right things. Right it is that Christ's glory should be displayed, that His name on us should lead us into quiet endurance in service; but none of those things will have any place when we come into the glory. There will be nothing to try us

there, nothing to which the word "labour" could be applied. There will be service, but not in scenes where the activity of service will produce weariness or fainting; and His name will be so inseparable from us, written on our foreheads, that there will be no danger of not holding fast anything connected with divine glory. There was this He had against them: they had left their first love. When the Lord called Saul of Tarsus, a certain object shone in the beauty of its own light into Saul's heart, and all the works he had done before dropped off. Not that *he* could lay hold of that love to hold it fast; but the love laid such hold of *him*, that it regularly put him into constraint, and made him say, I can't go my own way, since Christ has revealed His love to me. In the sense of that love, and of Christ's thoughts when He laid it on him, he was bound by it. That was Saul's "first love," the thing he loved to turn to in his writings. That extraordinary scene was fresh in his soul, the Lord stripping the veil off his heart, and the power and beauty that was in Him laid hold of Saul. Was there ever such a thing heard of before, such a set of circumstances to throw out in prominence and brightness all that love of Christ? That the champion of Satan, the blotter-out of the name of Nazarene, should have the eternal love of Christ set upon him, and that Christ wants him to be His servant, bows his heart, and takes hold of the man's affections and intelligence by the power of a new nature given, so that it becomes a settled and sure thing. The man finds himself with this love set upon him, and it forms his character, being his first love.

It is remarkable that the Lord chooses Ephesus to

show this fall from first love, for the love of Christ to the Church is brought out so specially to those saints.

In 2 Timothy Paul's heart is as fresh as at the beginning. The dust of the journey had not destroyed the freshness of his love. He was about to lay down his life with a full taste of the freshness of that first love. In Philippians he says, Christ and I so understand one another that all my springs are in Him. The course He walked I have to walk, and to live to Him as He did to the Father; and he went through it all in this first love kept bright.

The Ephesians had had that first love, and he had said to them, Now that you are on the battlements of the place where Christ is, quit you like men; go through all He calls you to, in the power of your union with Christ, understanding the love the only-begotten Son has to you, one spirit with Himself. He is up there; you walk as He did.

The Ephesians did not keep this. They got down to the thought: If He has done so much for us, ought we not to do something for Him? If He has suffered so much for us, ought we not to suffer for Him? If He has given us a good gospel, ought we not to keep it from being corrupted? They could do it on a low grade, do it as a candlestick.

I might say, I am a religious man; I can't do what I did before. I meet my brethren at the Lord's Table; can I do what you propose? That is a circle of standing down here. I may say, and ought to say, "*Who* laid down His life for me?" Can I say of anyone: There is a person who is ready to lay down his life for me? Who was it *did* lay down His life as a matter of fact? It was the blessed Son of God

FIRST LOVE AND FIRST WORKS.

161

come in flesh. He says: I have stood in the place that was yours, I have loved you there, and I wish you now to stand in the place that was Mine. I have cleansed you, poor thing as you are, without anything to call a heritage. I have shared the kingdom and priesthood with you; I have stood under the wrath of God, and borne it for you. Now I look down from heaven, where I am gone to secure your portion, and I want you to stand in My place.

If that is the grade I am on as to works, it is the blessed sense of *His love, not taking long journeys*, or saying, I must be patient.

“Created in Christ Jesus unto good works” is the communication of a nature that makes me one with Christ, connected with truth, love, and light. They swallow up the works of Ephesus, which, without truth and love and light, are poor things in the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ, though they make a show before men, things not fit for His eye.

He has made such a clean transfer from the ground of the first Adam to the last, that there is not a bit of the first for me to stand on if I want to. Christ is the truth of God, loved from before the foundation of the world in Him. Everything would grow up out of that: patience, faithfulness, detection of evil, and what we have been created for: good works, truth, love, and light.

There it was Ephesus failed; they had let that slip. I don't deny responsibility; but the responsibility is the love of Christ set on us, and that nature that connects us and makes us one with Himself. This first love was the spiritual perception of a Man in heaven, who is in the presence of the Father, and

looks down, arresting one poor sinner after another. "Repent, and do the first works," He says. If *I* have let slip that thought, what was His thought from the beginning? What does He look for now individually? He sees the state of chaos things are in; but the heart of an individual remains just what it was, and if we get hold of Christ's action in love to us as meeting His Father's mind, it will be all the more brightly shining into us in contrast with the darkness around.

Get to this question, not of works or outside service, but between our souls and the only-begotten Son. Have the rays of light ceased to shine from Christ to His people? When did they stop? Have *I* tasted them? is the question. He looked in on me His own self when I was a poor thing full of guilt and hatred to God, but I have let it slip perhaps. The Spirit gives one word of warning: "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." It did not with Paul. When we have to face lukewarmness it is important we should draw near the fire, or on a dark night to have a bright light that we never doubt at all.

Can we say we are growing up to Christ in this way? He says, Have I become a secondary Person in your mind? You are occupied with *My* house, *My* service, toiling and labouring; but what about *Myself*? You have forgotten *Me*. "Repent, and do the first works." The first works are brought out in Thessalonians as faith, hope, and love; a thousand things grow up out of that, but the power of them depends on that being kept up. My back is to idols, and my face to the Father. I am looking for a certain Person to come, and then I shall go to meet Him.

Things contrary to this must be met; but if I get occupied with them, I forget the light shining to me from Him.

The apostles were a small number compared to the Christians; but has God to turn and say, I warmed your heart, and gave you power to speak about Christ, and you did not do it? and to another, I have not given you power to speak, but I have given you a taste of that love. I do not blame *you* for not speaking. A cripple may have his part in the work by his prayers, though he cannot preach. You find a happy heart, and a person so identified with the work, that he carries you through all difficulties in the power of his intercession, and so gets his share in it. It is the power of the first love that puts the soul apart from ten thousand things that fret and vex, and trouble and try. You say, I can't go that way; there is a lion. If a person is fresh with Christ his heart does not see it. He says, There is Christ behind. All sorts of things arise as difficulties, but the heart fresh with Christ goes humbly forward.

The One whom God's heart rests on with perfect love, whom the devils know as Heir of all things, by whom blessing comes to all His saints, that One has His heart occupied with me individually; and, no matter if His people have their hearts occupied with Him or not, He has His heart occupied with me, and His mind busy with me. That centralises the heart on Him and gives it power to go forward. Those are the first works. Does our knowledge work in that way, to make the heart bright in this first love, that was from everlasting up there, where no spray from any waves down here can reach to spoil anything?

We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, and cannot say, I cannot walk according to light, love, and truth. If it is a question of speaking to souls, it is the question of the personal love of the individual heart for Christ. What opportunities slip by when we might speak of Christ! Your love is not so bright to Christ as His is to you. "Repent," and go forth as best you can, and speak with the lip as you get opportunity—and then *prayer*. You can pray for poor sinners. You can tell them what you know about Christ, what He has done for you; simplicity is the great thing.

The knowledge of how the love of Christ was set on him carried Paul captive, and gave him courage.

Christ says, I am not satisfied that you can do a great deal; but do you love Me? Do you look for Me, carrying what I have done for you in your hearts?

G. V. W.

February 26th, 1871.

FOOTSTEPS OF GRACE.

No. 4.

GENESIS viii.

"FORTY" may be termed the number of consummation. It is the period during which a certain order of things reaches its climax. Instances of this are found in the forty days and nights of the Deluge, the forty years of Moses' life in Egypt, his sojourn for a like period in the land of Midian, and the forty years' journey through the wilderness. In evil the same number indicates the consummation of iniquity, as, for example, the three forties while the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, the

forty days spent in searching out the land, the forty days of Goliath's challenge; so also the forty years of Saul's reign in contrast with the forty each of David and Solomon. So Christ was forty days tempted of the devil, and when they were ended He afterwards hungered, and the devil said to Him, "If Thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread."

"Seven" has a significance equally precise. It does not complete, while forming part of, what precedes, as "forty" does, but presents what is perfect in itself. Thus no part of creation work was done on the seventh day. It was set apart entirely from the six and sanctified to God, for He rested on the seventh day. The thought of perfection, not consummation, may be traced throughout Scripture in the use of this number.

The instances given in Genesis viii. 6-12 are very noteworthy. At the end of forty days Noah sends forth the raven and the dove, which, interpreted in the light of Scripture, plainly speak of the flesh and Spirit. It was thus in the *consummation* of the ages that Christ was manifested, on whom the Spirit descended in the form of a dove, and abode on Him. It was when the fulness of the time was come God sent forth His Son, come of woman, come under law. But flesh was still there under probation, and all was in vain; the dove found no resting-place for the sole of her foot. The Son came not to abide, but to tabernacle, and by dying to redeem. Till then no man but He was, or could be, the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost. He came from God, and went to God.

Thus the forty days prior to the sending forth of the dove indicate the consummation of the ages; and her return to Noah is significant of Christ's going back to Him who sent Him.

Following this we have in this chapter two seventh days (*vv.* 10, 12) when the dove was again sent out. On the first, at eventide she came back, and, behold, in her beak was an olive leaf plucked off.

The beautiful appropriateness of this symbol cannot fail to strike a spiritual mind. A resting-place had been found of that which had been recovered from the storm of judgment in an earth yet otherwise submerged by the effects of it. But it was only for a passing moment, and she brought back with her into the ark that which had never been sent out of it. Striking analogy of the *perfection* of the Holy Spirit's indwelling of the saints on earth as individually and corporately His temple during the time of Christ's session on high, hidden within the heavens. It is specially a momentary display of what is divinely perfect, however much we fail. It is not a consummation of any prior work of God, nor is anything developed out of it in the order of His ways; it is unique and perfect in itself.

The second seventh day is equally complete by and in itself. The dove returns no more. It has at last found a home on earth, amid earthly scenes and joys. It is no result of the first man's perfectibility or of God's dealings with him under probation; law with or without mercy could not produce it. It is the work of sovereign grace under a new covenant, based upon the death and resurrection of Christ, the sure mercies of David. It is that of which Joel speaks fulfilled in Israel and a millennial earth: "It shall come to pass afterwards that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh."

RECOLLECTIONS OF RALPH EVANS' MINISTRY.

GLORY AND THE EXCELLENT GLORY.

IN 2 Peter ii. we see what an altogether satanic scene the Lord is leading us through. Satan is going about as a roaring lion here below; and if we look upwards, not where God is, but in the heavenly places, there are wicked spirits in heavenly places—the subtlety of Satan.

Peter brings before us the kingdom; he does not speak of the mystery, as Paul does. In Romans xvi. 25, 26, we have the mystery in its practical effects, a mystery which is Christ Head over all things and a body united to Him. Peter speaks of the promises; the Church was not mentioned in the prophets or any Old Testament writing. In chapter i. what a comprehensive view the Spirit of God takes: "Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord"! God and Christ are presented to me as an object outside myself. In v. 8 it is subjective: "Neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge," etc.; that is the state of the soul. We may know much objectively, but here the responsibilities of the divine nature are before us, and because of our state, *do we not often rightly and righteously abhor ourselves?* I should throw myself on the grace of Christ.

He speaks of the glories of the kingdom; and it offends God if we do not care for them. He has called us by glory—the glory of the kingdom, I believe. "He is not ashamed to be called their God." The God of glory appeared to Abraham, setting before him an attractive object.

168 RECOLLECTIONS OF RALPH EVANS' MINISTRY.

Peter had been told by the Lord that he was to suffer martyrdom; he does not speak about it in a sentimental way, as some of us would, talking of our sufferings and saying, "I am going to be a martyr," but he calls it his decease—his "exodus." It was a terrible death at the hands of men, but he is above all that.

"We have not followed cunningly devised fables," he says, as Paul said, "We do not adulterate the Word of God." He gave it pure as he received it. He was also an eye-witness, as John says: "That eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us." Paul, too, saw Him in heavenly glory. On the Mount of Transfiguration His face shone as the sun, and His garments were white as the light; that was the heavenly glory of the kingdom—relative glory, but it paled before the voice, "This is My beloved Son." That was personal, intrinsic. When His face and His garment shone, that was "majesty" and glory too, but He received from God the *Father* honour and glory when the voice was brought to Him. If we study Scripture we shall soon see that Christ is the Father's all; and to us He is all in that new sphere to which we are brought. In the eternal state God will be all in all. We are familiar with the scene in Matthew iii. when Christ, at His baptism, was with the poor people confessing their sins. Here we have *shining* garments, but there we have *fragrant* garments. "All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made Thee glad." The fragrance of His garments penetrated the veil of heaven, and brought down the Holy Ghost upon Him as a seal and a declaration of the Father's love: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

BY THE EDITOR.

(From Shorthand Report.)

LECTURE XI. CHAPTERS X. AND XI.

WE were noticing last time that the character of these seven trumpets is simply the letting loose of the powers of evil, because when there is no other way of bringing people to a sense of what is due to God, then He allows them to go their own way and find out the consequence. It is the giving full scope to the plans and projects of men, the principles and schemes which they have introduced under the guidance of Satan. Man is the responsible being, but Satan is at the back of all that man does for his own glory.

The seals having been opened, and no good effect produced, then God proceeds to give the testimony by the trumpets. And I say again, their character is to give free course to the agencies of evil that have been set in motion under the hand of man. The first four trumpets are mainly concerned with these western nations to which we belong. Though Christians will not be here, the so-called Christian nations will, but as an empty shell of profession. Into these western nations of the last great kingdom which Daniel reveals Satan introduces apostasy as regards the governing powers, and the principle of idolatry too. Everything is ripe for it to-day, but it is really brought in and

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established then. The governing powers have no longer their authority from God, but from Satan, and that is apostasy.

Well, the bait that Satan presented to man in order to produce this disastrous effect has been the empire of the world. It is really the bone of contention to-day, who is to possess the world. There is that mighty empire in the east, and there is the confederated west—of which we have a pretty good example at the present moment*—opposed to the power of the east. But in order to effect that confederation Satan gets these two satanic principles introduced, viz., established idolatry and, on the other hand, apostasy of government brought in on the thorough disruption of society—the break-up and ruin of the whole established state of things, whether social or political, existing at the present moment. It is upon that that this new apostate condition is formed, which is the effect of the first four trumpets as concerned with these western lands.

The last three trumpets are distinguished from the preceding four, and are called woe trumpets. We were noticing the first of these, and what was peculiar about it was the effort of Satan to produce apostasy by means of a perverted system of doctrine, specially among the Jews in the east, in order to seduce them from their Jewish position. The only true position to-day is that of a Christian, but in the coming day that of a Jew. Satan seeks to seduce the Jews from their position as such, trying the very same artifice with them as he did with the blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

* These addresses were delivered at the time of the European concert in respect of Crete.

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

171

The whole world and its glory in no wise was a temptation to Him, but the Roman world will be seduced by it. Here, with respect to the Jews, the scheme that Satan uses is equivalent to the temptation that he presented to the Lord Jesus' Christ when he took Him to the pinnacle of the temple and said, "Cast Thyself down, for it is written," etc. He used Scripture in a satanic and perverted way in order to procure apostasy from the Son of God, become man, and of course he failed. The Lord used the Scripture again to him: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." But what he could not do with the Lord Jesus Christ he succeeds in doing with the mass of Jews in the coming day.

I would only just mention in addition that the emissary sent forth to effect this was the angel of the bottomless pit, who had been kept in security there, but was allowed to come out for this purpose. His name in the Hebrew tongue was Abaddon—that is, destruction, a destruction which came upon the Jews, and therefore the Spirit of God uses his Jewish name. On the other hand, the destruction came from a Greek source, and therefore the Spirit of God gives us his name in Greek, and I have no doubt myself that it is a perverted Christianity, a Christianity without Christ.

Christianity to-day has Christ, but when Christ has come for His Church, and when His Church is gone out of the world and left nothing but an empty shell of profession, all the doctrine that they hold will be called Christian, but there will be no Christ in it.

The second woe trumpet, falling as it does on the

same people in the eastern part of Europe, is more of a military character. It proceeds from the Euphrates. The angels that were bound at the great river Euphrates were loosed, and their loosing gives access to an army of horsemen, an immense military horde set loose by God's providence, and allowed to break over the border of the Roman Empire in that direction, and to inflict enormous injury. I do not doubt that in this case it is an irruption of Mohammedanism. We have not got rid of the Turk. The present state, no doubt, of that kingdom is one of decay, and the whole political condition of that country may be entirely altered, but when driven back, as perhaps they may be, to their natural boundary on the other side of the Euphrates, it will give occasion to a far more dreadful irruption in the coming day. The instrument by which Satan brings the east to bear on a nation that does not care about God (but about their country they do) is probably one great array of Mohammedanism.

"I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone." Their array bore traces of satanic origin—brimstone. "And the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions"—irresistible and merciless military power such as the Turk wields. "Out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone"—again satanic energy at work.

"By these woes was the third part of men killed." But, after all, the military power was but a sort of adjunct to Satan's schemes, because what lay behind it was the apostate system of doctrine by which Satan sought to seduce the Jews from their position. If he

could in that day but obliterate the Jews he had obliterated God's purpose, and that is what he aims at.

"Their power is in their mouth and in their tails"—military power with satanic energy in it, and a merciless cruelty that distinguishes even a Turk to-day.

Scripture says the false prophet is the tail, so their satanic system of doctrine followed up the military power. The Turk always has his system of doctrine behind his military organisation. "Their tails were like unto serpents"—the most perfect representation of satanic energy you can have.

Not to proceed with this further, the solemn thing to be seen is that, let God do what He may, try whatsoever means He can, whether in the more general and providential actings by the seals, or in giving man the opportunity of carrying out his plans and purposes to their completion, and finding what a terrible mistake is made—whatever course God pursues in His government, man is never corrected. You cannot correct him, for there is nothing to correct in him. If grace does not change a man, nothing else will. So we find the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues did not repent "that they should not worship demons and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood."

We find the whole of this question constantly brought to the front in the Psalms which specially refer to the time we have before us in the Revelation. The controversy with idols, "the idols of the nations," you find in Psalms cxv., cxxxv., in the most striking way. The position the godly Jew takes up is, "Where-

fore should the Gentiles say, Where is their God? Our God is in the heavens. Their idols are silver and gold. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes, but they see not: ears, but they hear not," etc. They are nothing but idols, and "they that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them." Men are not cured of idolatry; you have plenty of it to-day in a sort of refined form. "Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornications, nor of their thefts."

Before proceeding to the last woe trumpet I would only just remark that this second one agrees in its character with the third temptation that Satan presented to the Lord Jesus Christ. He had fasted forty days and forty nights, and was afterward a hungered, and when the tempter came to Him he said, "If Thou be the Son of God, make these stones bread." The preservation of His natural life in this world was the temptation which Satan presented to the blessed Man Christ Jesus; and He replied to him, as He always did, from Scripture, "Man shall not live by bread alone." God did not design man to live merely by natural food, but by His own word, by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. The answer to the temptation was thus a competent one, but not so with these poor wretched creatures against whom Satan brings his terrible force, and threatens to destroy their life except they apostatise. The mass of them fall into it.

Suppose the question were presented to you to-night whether you would have your head cut off or apostatise from Christ. If there was reality, and unless some dreadful failure happened—for it is always possible for

a person to fail in such an extremity—but if there was a true knowledge of Christ in your heart, I dare say every saint here would rather die than deny Christ. But it is a decided temptation. Now, the blessed Lord Jesus Christ resisted, but by the Word of God. That is the only way of resisting Satan's temptation. These, of whom we read here, fall into the snare, and apostatise rather than perish.

The third woe trumpet is the seventh trumpet, and that which carries on the whole history to the climax and culmination of God's dealings; but before looking at it the Spirit of God takes up another subject, which has been proceeding contemporaneously, but which He looks upon from a totally different point of view, because it is specially precious to Him.

God's saints are very precious to Him, and they are distinct from every other creature.

God cares for all creatures, but when He comes to His saints they are precious, and He puts their tears into His bottle, and their blood is precious, and it is to this subject He refers.

The prophet sees a mighty angel come down from heaven clothed in a cloud. This angel is no other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, but not revealed as sitting on the cloud. Then every eye shall see Him, and will recognise that He is the Son of man when He comes forth sitting upon the cloud, but here He is clothed with a cloud. He has not come forth to be displayed, but He has come forth in the power of providential action, and consequently it is not His coming out of heaven upon a cloud or white horse, as we read elsewhere, but a coming into the providential scene of man's world in a providential and

unseen way. He is clothed in a cloud, which is a symbol of the divine presence; but the way He comes is very striking and interesting, with a rainbow upon His head, and His face as the sun, and His feet as pillars of fire. The power of supremacy shines in His face; the divine exercise of judgment with respect to everything that is here on the earth is seen in His feet. He is not going to submit to anything that does not come up to the level of His glory and is not worthy of Himself, and therefore His feet, that with which He treads the earth, are as pillars of fire. There is consuming judgment in that which relates to this world below, supremacy in His face, consuming judgment in His feet; but all is designed to support His covenant of mercy with this poor world. The rainbow, you know very well, is ever a sign in Scripture of God's covenant with creation. He set the bow in the clouds after the terrible judgment of the flood. When the renewed earth appeared, and Noah and his family were brought forth to possess it, then it was for the first time God set His bow in the cloud and gave His covenant that He would no more destroy the earth by a flood, but summer and winter, spring-time and harvest, day and night, should not cease. That is God's covenant to-day, and when He comes, or is about to put into effect His rights and claims in this world, and to trample His enemies beneath His feet, and bring in the last desolating judgments, it is in order that He might be true to this covenant of mercy with creation. Supremacy shines in His face, and consuming power of judgment in His feet, with respect to the earth, over which He officiates as always sustaining His covenant of mercy with creation.

He has in His hand a little book open. We have already had the sealed book in the earlier part of the Revelation. He took the sealed book out of the hand of Him that sat on the throne; that is to say, He asserts His claim before the heavenly tribunal of justice, because the sealed book which contained the deeds of the inheritance was held in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne, and the Lamb comes forth. Thus it was in His character as a Lamb He had acquired by redemption the inheritance which was His by right, and He takes the sealed book out of the hand of Him that sat on the throne; He makes good His title before the heavenly tribunal. Now He comes forth on the earth, and it is no longer as a Lamb, but as a mighty angel. A mighty angel was not needed in order to verify his claim before God—the poorest creature, if it is only in righteousness, is owned of God; but if you are going to put into effect your right in this world you must have the power to do it, and therefore when the blessed One enters into the arena of this world, where all the powers of evil are in exercise, to make good His title here, it is in a very different character from that of a lamb. He is as a mighty angel, supremacy in His face, consuming fire of judgment in His feet, and a voice as thunder. He cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth. But the position He takes up is remarkable, His right foot upon the sea, His left foot upon the earth, and it is in that attitude that He claims His rights. I do not doubt that the land is here particularly in view; He stands at the north, and the Holy Land is stretched out before the view. If you look at Ezekiel you will find the power of God in government comes from

178 SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

the north. When God is going to govern the earth (and that in judgment) after Israel had apostatised, and the throne of government was removed from Jerusalem, then the glory of God comes from the north.

He stands with the right foot on the sea and the left on the land; He surveys His inheritance, specially Israel here, but claims it as a right that includes the entire earth.

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

BY J. BARTON.

LECTURE IX.

WHAT especially makes it happy to look at the Church of Philadelphia is because if we are true to Him we always delight to find the Lord getting what pleases Him. We have been occupied necessarily a good deal with failure. We have looked at the Lord giving judgment on the professing Church, and seen that He approves some things, for His heart never passes over anything that pleases Him. But we have seen much that is sorrowful, beginning with Ephesus, first love waning, and going on to a terrible end in Laodicea. Philadelphia is not *perfection*, but it presents what is suited to the Lord in a day of weakness, what He can appreciate and delight in. Therefore He Himself is more before us than in the other churches, for what can there be that is good but what comes from appreciation of Him, from His having His own place in our hearts? He is jealous of it, and His servants are too if they are true to Him.

Paul knew his Master, and his heart longed to

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH. 179

gratify Him, and he knew how to do it. (2 Cor. xi. 1-4.) It is a great thing not only to desire to gratify His heart, but to know *what* gratifies it. How little we know our hearts! How little power there is to stand against that which would depreciate Christ and the truth, and not in the face of Herods and Pilates, but of His own disciples, as Mary did! Are we surprised in following this scene of declension, marked at first by the loss of first love, to see in the end the Lord's heart delight in what is pleasing to Him, an assembly characterised by these traits? Do we read it as a matter of history merely? Surely no; it is given for you and me, whose hearts through grace desire to please Him, and we are thankful He does give expression to what pleases Him.

It is a day of imitation, and *good* imitation, so to say. The enemy has wrought in a very cunning way, to mingle what is evil with what is of Christ. The way the Lord presents Himself lets us into the character of this assembly; it is not what He has *got* as at Sardis, or what He *is doing*, but what He is Himself—"He that is holy, He that is true," a far more precious thing to us. Also as the one "who has the key of David." (See Isaiah xxii.) Isaiah is rebuking a very bad state of things. He rebukes Shebna, the steward, who is set aside (v. 19), and the key is given to Eliakim. (v. 22.) The thought is giving the key to the One who opens and dispenses all the resources, who was over the household. It is a beautiful thought; he has authority to use the resources for the blessing of Jerusalem. Shebna had failed utterly, and now Eliakim opens and dispenses rightly and properly. How beautiful with the Lord when it comes

180 SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

to dispensing the resources; He has the key of all the sure mercies of David. It is to the *babes* it is said, "Ye have an unction from the *Holy One*, and ye know all things"; and 1 John v. 20, "Ye know Him that is *true*." Here is the blessed Lord Jesus before us in a day of failure and brokenness, presenting Himself as the holy and the true, and gathering round Himself—His heart notices a company His grace and love have gathered around Himself, and He says, "I know thy works." He does not say anything about them, because to a heart set on Christ and on pleasing Him it is everything that *He knows them*, and the answer is, Yes, Lord, and we are *glad* Thou knowest them. When everything is closed by the declension around He has set an opened door before them, and the saints at Philadelphia will tell you what they used it for. Not to do grand things, or make a great display, but to "keep His Word and not deny His name." People say, "Is not that a very easy thing to do?" Let the history of the Church answer how Satan has succeeded in hindering it! It is easy with Christ, but the spirit of Satan, of the world, and the flesh are all set *energetically and actively against it*, and we may well thank Him the door is opened. People say, "It is impossible now, we can't do it." Then the Lord made a great mistake. *He* says, "No man can shut it," and you say someone *has* shut it. But we prefer to believe the Lord. People say, "The testimony is gone." It is gone in your poor heart, the world has come in, and you have given it up; but you must answer to Him *why* you have given it up. Here were saints who had used the opened door, and brought glory to Him and joy to His heart. He does not make them feel strong;

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH. 181

they had little strength, but they used that little strength for His glory. Some people think that if they had a lot of faith they would get on smoothly and comfortably, but it would not be so. When the disciples said, "Lord increase our faith," the Lord answered in effect, "Use what you have got." Faith comes from walking in this path and from communion of heart with Himself.

There are two kinds of weakness in Scripture. Samson was an awful picture of weakness when he was grinding in the prison-house with his eyes put out. If *that* is the weakness we know we should be humbled, and get on our faces and seek from the Lord the cause of it. There is plenty of weakness from playing with the world and so grieving the Spirit of God. Thank God, there is a resource even for that. "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just," etc., and "we have an advocate with the Father." On the other hand there is the weakness of 2 Corinthians xii., a *thorn* in the flesh, *lest* he should be exalted above measure; and he prays three times that it may be removed; but the Lord says, No, "My strength is made perfect in weakness"; and Paul says, "Most gladly will I," etc. "When I am weak, then am I strong." If it is the legitimate weakness that belongs to all of us, no communion or devotedness takes us out of the place of weakness. In Ephesians, where all the blessedness of the Christian position is brought out, the armour comes in, and when you have it all on the next thing is "praying always." A man covered with the armour and the sword of the Spirit in his hand is on his knees. That is real weakness; but it is not from grieving the Spirit, but from a sense of who we are, and dependence

182 SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

and confidence in God, and His strength made perfect in weakness. Poor Samson could not say that with his eyes out. Where did *his* weakness come from? From putting his head in Delilah's lap. You say, What a lesson against immorality! No, but against self-pleasing. Samson's ruling motive was, "It pleaseth me well." That was his only argument. How many things we do, and most proper things, may be a Delilah's lap to the servant of the Lord! It is anything that puts my Nazariteship in jeopardy. Do we get into a path, or into associations in which our Nazariteship is in jeopardy?

"Thou hast kept My word"—His whole testimony down here, the whole expression of all He was, learned in His ways and words—"and not denied My name." We know what His name means—*LORD JESUS CHRIST*. It tells out all He is. How much there is in it! Son of the Father, Son of God. We have got Him written before us in His Word. Where do we come to know Him? In His own Word. And what brings Him to our hearts? His own Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. What do we open His Word for? To know more of Him, and if we are going on right we shall be growing in His knowledge. We may put the question to ourselves, "How much have I learned of Christ to-day?" It is not to be occupied with ourselves, but we ought to know Him better every day. When we came to Him as sinners He met all the need we were conscious of then. Did we take in all there was in Him? We can only say each day "the half has not been told." It is all in the Word. We have there all His walk as He went to the cross, brought up from the grave by the glory of the Father, and

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH. 183

seated at His right hand, the Head of His body the Church, and the Spirit is here to unfold it. We may well ask ourselves, "Are we diligent in going on to know Christ?"

Then He speaks of their enemies. (*v.* 9.) We must expect to be troubled. The more distinct we are for Christ, the more we shall be assailed—the characteristic of the enemies is, they are the synagogue of Satan. They say you must come to God by them as channels, and by no one else. Let a soul true to Christ stand, knowing enough of His sufficiency to have to do with Him *directly*, with no authority between—and will the professing Church approve? It is your place and my happy place to have none between us and Christ. We put our questions and our desires and our difficulties to Him direct. He knows every difficulty, and He would have us come simply, freely, and unhinderedly to Him. You must leave these people to Him, and they will own by-and-by that they have been wrong. We go on with the Lord, and leave that in His hand, not forcing them to own we are right.

Another beautiful thing He approves is, "Ye have kept the word of *My* patience"—the patience of Christ, what a wonderful thing! In 2 Thessalonians iii. we see how Paul loved these saints, and would have their hearts led into the love of God and "into the patience of Christ." John was in "the kingdom and patience of Christ" when he received these communications. It characterises the day we are in: the kingdom and *glory* will be by-and-by. He has accomplished redemption, and done everything to entitle Him to have the Church with Himself, and

184 SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

He is waiting for that, and we may well wait too. We must not be in a hurry through this moment; we are apt to be impatient. If we know this we shall think of Him whose heart is yearning to have with Himself the fruit of His death, and we shall remember that "the longsuffering of God is salvation." God in patient grace is gathering a people out of the world. We get disheartened and discouraged when things go a little wrong. We find the spirit of the world coming in, and we get tried as we find the word we preach and all our desires for blessing do not carry everything before us. But turn to Matthew xi. and look at the Lord, who presented it all perfectly. He says you are like children in the market-place, etc. (v. 16.) No one was pleased with John Baptist; then when the Lord had walked about in grace and love among them it was the same thing, and He looks up to His Father and says, "I thank Thee, O Father," in the midst of it all. Look at the rest of heart of the Lord — was it indifference? No one could feel it all as He did, but He was at perfect rest in the presence of His Father. Have you ever noticed when Paul says "I have finished my course," etc., what the state of things around him was? Was everything bright? But he looked at the Lord as triumphing over it all. The Lord is going on His own way, and we want to find out what that way is, and what He is doing. The same power is here to-day that gathered the Church. The Lord has called out a people to be true to Him, and told us how to walk and please Him, and we are not to say we cannot do it. It would be dreadful to know the Lord's will, and to say it is impossible to do it.

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH. 185

Here were men of like passions with ourselves, in the midst of trial and difficulty, and the Lord says, "they are in fellowship with Me"—they were not in a hurry, not like those in John vii. who said, "Show Thyself openly." Do we know how to go on quietly with the Lord? People talk of power. Do you know power when you see it? Is it gathering a crowd? Well, *what* is carrying all before it to-day—quietly but surely and certainly gaining every day, and not losing an inch of what it gets? Rome. Is that the power of God? We have to discern God's power by seeing what it does. At the first they had to learn how to determine what was the Spirit of God and what the spirit of demons. (1 Cor. xii. 1-3.) The Spirit is here to glorify Christ. We know the power of the Holy Ghost when we see Christ glorified—a man in whose heart and life Christ has His place: that is the power of God, and it has to contend against the greatest power—self: keeping self in the place of death, so that it is "not I, but Christ."

"I will keep thee from the hour of temptation"—they will be taken out of the hour of temptation. They were mixed up with confusion and unreality, but He says, "I will keep thee out of that hour." We are looking for Him to come and take us to Himself, that where He is we may be also. That is the joy of our souls. (It is very different to Sardis—"lest I come on thee as a thief.") There will be no amelioration, He tells them; then they will have to continue to stand in all the peril till He comes and takes them out of it. The heart is promised the very thing it longs for above all others: even to see that blessed One. Is it because things are getting

186 SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

more and more difficult that I long to see Him? No, but for His own sake! Verse 11 is a real word to-day; what is testing us to-day is *endurance*, holding fast, amidst the effort of friend and foe to take the truth from us. We get wearied with the breaks, and seeing the brokenness around, we are apt to say it is not worth while. But can you endure? I look to the grace of Christ to keep me holding fast.

Then to the overcomer He says, "I will make thee a pillar in the temple of My God." These people were characterised by little strength here, but they will be pillars above. How sweetly this comes in again to the heart true to Christ! It is association with Him. The Church was set to be the pillar and ground of the truth and utterly failed, and He speaks of the judgment not yet executed, and of their responsibility to-day; but to the few who have kept His word and not denied His name He says, You will be pillars in the temple of My God. There is no failure, no change in that scene I am about to lead you into, and ye shall go no more out.

Why should there be overcomers in Philadelphia? you say. I could understand it in Thyatira, in Sardis, or in Pergamos, refusing these things to do the will of God. Well, let our consciences and hearts answer, and it is not in any way saying *we* are Philadelphia; but if we are going on in the path He approves it is a moral condition. Do not you and I desire to answer to it if we believe He would have us marked by these moral traits? We are conscious we are right; it is not humility to go on with what I have a *doubt* about. (Rom. xiv. 23.) We are to have a good con-

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH. 187

science and a single eye, and to be able to look up and say, I want to answer to what is pleasing to the Lord. Well, we cannot go on a single day in that path without overcoming. If we are right to-day it is no guarantee of being right to-morrow. We must stand against the power that would take us out of it. Have we not to go on in the face of all kinds of efforts to bring in evil, and to link us up with evil and make us allow it, and smile upon it? Have we not to resist every day and every hour, and to *go on* overcoming? There are real adversaries all around us; we know the spirit of the world, and our own hearts, and how ready they are to answer to what is brought before us. Were *we* incapable of finding fault with Mary's precious act? We are ready to let first love wane because of the difficulties, and because of the opposition to fall into traps like Barnabas and Aaron. If through grace we are walking with any desire to be what He would have us, have we not to feel it is only His grace that will keep us? If He does not keep me there is no telling what I would do; but I do not get up in the morning *expecting* to fall, but expecting to be kept, because He is above everything we are passing through. I am not to expect to be turned out of the path. When the Lord calls you into the path of faith He sets before you Philadelphia, and says, "Do you want to know what pleases Me?" and do I say, "Lord, I can't walk in that path" when He has said, "My grace is sufficient for you, My strength is made perfect in weakness"? You must not look around for support or encouragement, but you will have His grace. I do not say there are not difficulties; but what are they to Christ? The very first would overthrow *us*. He puts this narrow

188 SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

path before us, which is pleasing to Him, and He does not put out a miracle to enable us to walk in it; but He calls us to dependence on Himself. How we feel in the Scriptures that One is speaking to us who loves us, and who knows all about us. Many a person might speak in a loving way, but would not know all the history of my path and the need of my poor heart. He says, "I know the whole thing, and I have set before you an open door." There is no vainglory in this path; it is like "all meekness and longsuffering with joyfulness"—that is what comes from the Head—"strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power." (Col. i.) "I will write on Him My new name," not now Messiah and all connected with it; but all that is connected with the cross and the One who was brought up from the dead by the glory of the Father, and is now at His right hand, Head of His body the Church, and Head over all things—a new unfolding of blessing altogether.

THE following papers are from the ministry of the late beloved Mr. Darby, and it is believed have never before been published:—

THE VAIL.

(Translated from the French.)

(1.) THE VAIL ON MOSES' FACE.

2 Cor. iii.

THE excellency of the ministry of the gospel consists in its simplicity. The main difficulty, both for the servant of the gospel and the hearers, lies in keeping this simplicity in view, for the ministry is generally looked upon as capable to be served only by the learned, and Christianity is for most but a tradition. "Seeing, then," says the apostle, "that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech." The excellency of the ministry consists on the one hand in the truth which it presents, and on the other in the saving grace of God which can meet the sinner, who had nothing to expect but His righteous judgment. As to the true condition of man in the presence of God, every distinction disappears before this truth: "There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. iii. 22, 23.) Once this truth is established there is no hindrance to the presentation of the word of the ministry in its power and adaptability to the lost sinner. That there is no difference in the light of the glory of God must

be accepted by every servant of the new covenant. To deny the lost and ruined condition of man is, in fact, to make the death of Christ of none effect, and to rob the ministry of the new covenant of all its excellency, bringing it down to a mere system of morals. It may be allowed to be better than other systems, still it would be but one of the many resources for the moral development of man, not the sole "power of God unto salvation."

It is, therefore, of all importance to have a clear conception of the gospel. It may make it more difficult to use great plainness of speech, but not more so than in the time of Paul. He had succeeded when he had put on the same platform the pious Jew and the idolatrous Gentile, the learned Greek with the uneducated Scythian. In the present day it is just as difficult to convince Christians by birth that they must perish in their sins if they do not give up traditional Christendom for Christ, as it was for Paul to convince the Jews that they were no better than the Gentiles.

"And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished." The apostle contrasts the simplicity and boldness of his ministry—both as regards the hopeless ruin of man and the abounding grace of God—with the dimness in which both these points were seen through the vail of Moses. This dimness had its necessary place for that time. Although God had made known His ways to Moses personally and shown him the mystery of His grace, the public ministry of Moses was that of law and not of grace. "For the law was given by Moses,

but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John i. 17.)

The people had thoughtlessly entered into a covenant with God when they said, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." (Exod. xix. 8.) "But when the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die." (Exod. xx. 18, 19.) There was terror, but no dimness; Moses had no covering over his face when he descended from the mountain after his first stay of forty days. (Exod. xxxii.) The sins of the people caused him to come down. "And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides . . . and the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables." (Exod. xxxii. 15, 16.) Here was the covenant in the hands of the mediator; all was plain and concise. "And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount." (Exod. xxxii. 19.) This action was full of meaning: the people had broken the covenant, and the mediator of the covenant bore testimony to it, and judgment follows. No vail was necessary on that occasion; the mediator had testified that the covenant was broken.

Afterwards he intercedes for the people, and Jehovah proposes to send an angel to bring them

into the land Canaan which He had promised them. (Exod. xxxii. 30, 34, and xxxiii. 1-3.) But this could not satisfy the heart of Moses; he is troubled, and asks Jehovah to show him His way and Himself to go with them. "If Thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? Is it not in that Thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. And Jehovah said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken; for thou hast found favour in My sight, and I know thee by name." Moses encouraged, and anticipating the word of Him to whom he testified—unto him that hath shall be given—continues his intercession and says, "I beseech thee, show me Thy glory." (Exod. xxxiii. 15-18.) Moses had seen the glory of God in a wonderful way when the law was given, but in the tent of the congregation erected outside the camp Jehovah had spoken with Moses face to face, "as a man speaketh unto his friend" (Exod. xxxiii. 11), and he now seeks a more excellent glory than that of the law. For behind the law—the end of the law—a way of God and a glory of God remained, and the glory of the law served only to prepare and introduce these. It was that glory which Moses had to hide, because the time of its manifestation according to the counsels of God had not yet come.

This glory revealed to Moses is in reality the glory of God in the face (*i.e.* in the person) of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. iv. 6.) It was thus proclaimed: "I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and

I will proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." (Exod. xxxiii. 19.) The sovereignty of God in grace is an essential part of His glory. Israel had destroyed itself, and their only resource remained in Jehovah Himself. (Hosea xiii. 9.) When all is lost, then is the time for grace to show itself, but the glory of this grace must be seen from a suitable standpoint. Moses was to be put in the cleft of the rock that he might see the glory. For this purpose Moses, after he had hewn two tables of stone like the first two which were broken, ascends the mount Sinai a second time. "And Jehovah descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of Jehovah." (Exod. xxxiv. 5.) After having passed forty days and forty nights upon the mount (Deut. x. 10), Moses descended from the mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in his hand, and he knew not "that the skin of his face shone while he talked with God." (Exod. xxxiv. 28, 29.)

There is a transforming power inherent in grace. Forty days of intimate intercourse with God had exerted a wonderful influence upon Moses. On the one hand he had learnt, through the experience of his own heart, the blessing of the grace with which he had communed; on the other he remained perfectly unconscious of the visible result which was the outcome of this intercourse. Blessed are we if we know the *secret of communion with divine grace*. The heart is refreshed, while the believer is kept in an humble path wondering that anyone should look at him. In fact, we may be sure that we shall never

be used in the service of God till we have come to count ourselves as nothing. When God makes our face to shine for others we ought to be the very last to know it.

The people fear the glory in the face of Moses more than the two tables in his hands. Such is man! He is quite ready to promise obedience to the law for his whole life, but the nearer God seeks to approach man in grace, the further he draws back. Distance from God is the natural element of man, and gladly does he remain at this distance, even when it is proclaimed that the cross has removed all hindrances, so that a sinner may approach God. Jehovah bore with a people which was under the curse of a broken law, and Moses had thus learned the way of Jehovah. But it was just this glory which he was obliged to veil, "because the children of Israel could not stedfastly look on the end of that which is abolished." (2 Cor. iii. 13.) For Moses the question of human righteousness on the principle of law was settled. He could look on the end, "for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." (Rom. x. 4.) But the majority in Israel could not look beyond the law, but sought for righteousness through it, while all the time they were under the curse. "For His own sake," not on account of their righteousness, God did bring Israel temporarily into the land, but as regards individual dealings He acted as He said to Moses, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious." Everyone, therefore, who was quickened by His grace could, according to this principle, look beyond the law and see the glory in the face of Moses.

As long as the veil remained on the face of Moses grace was necessarily hidden. But now, says the apostle, no darkness exists. The ministry is the ministry of the glad tidings of the grace of God (Eph. iii. 2; Acts xx. 24), the glad tidings of the "glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor. iv. 4), the glad tidings of the blessed God. (1 Tim. i. 11.) It reveals fully the glory of this grace whose rays illuminated the face of Moses, and the tables of the law in his hand could not dim it. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John i. 17.)

Is the proclamation of the "gospel of the grace of God" characterised in our day by this great "plainness of speech" as it was with Paul?

Is not rather the modern preaching of the gospel to be compared to Moses with the two tables of the law in his hand and with the veil hiding the glory of the grace on his face?

The present time resembles much that of the apostles as regards the acceptance of the testimony of God's free grace. Paul, writing to the faithful of the nations, speaks of the veil on Moses' face. Legal righteousness, ceremonial holiness, philosophical wisdom form equally great hindrances to the acceptance and understanding of the grace of God. Modern Christendom in its main characteristics makes the vain attempt to unite the principles of law and grace. The upshot is a conventional righteousness, for grace and formality result only in obedience to traditions and commandments of men and in self-willed ministry, just as grace and wisdom result in philosophy and vain deceit. (Compare Gal. v. and Col. ii.) All these are but reproductions of Moses with the two tables of the

law in his hand and the vail on his face. This is manifest in a remarkable way when we think what importance is given to the tables of the law in the chief religious systems. The doctrine of grace may be expressed with much clearness and conciseness in so-called articles of faith, and may be preached with full understanding from the pulpits. But all this clearness of exposition is much darkened through a ritual which establishes legal righteousness and ascribes a certain efficacy to sacraments. There are many true servants of God who proclaim solemnly that man must be born again to see or enter into the kingdom of God, and who testify to the cross of Christ as the sole power of salvation for sinners. Yet when they minister the sacraments they are like Moses with the vail on his face, and the precious grace which they had preached with great joy and to the edification of many must be kept in the background.

May the Lord give grace to all His servants who labour in the ministry, that they may always be and remain in the position where they may be able to use great plainness of speech.

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

BY THE EDITOR.

(*From Shorthand Report.*)

LECTURE X. CHAPTERS X. AND XI. (*Continued.*)

WE read in Psalm xcv., "Our Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In His hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is His also. The sea is His, and He made it: and His hands formed the dry land." In this chapter He is in angelic form, but it is no other than Jehovah Himself; and in His right and claim and power He asserts His title over the earth.

The seven thunders utter their voice in answer to the claims of Christ over this earth. There is perfect testimony to the divine power that is able to put those claims into effect; but that is not the point at all, for what the seven thunders tell is to be sealed. He has but to say the word and it will be done. But that is not the point here; there is something of deeper importance, and the prophet has to seal what the seven thunders say, and instead he gets this little book out of the hands of the angel and eats it. That is the way the testimony is to be rendered.

It is a truth seen very constantly in Scripture. Take, for instance, the case of Jeremiah. He was in Jerusalem when it was about to be destroyed by the power of Nebuchadnezzar, and God's throne to be removed, and the power of government transferred to the Gentile. But he says, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them." *There* was the consolation:

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he recognised that God was doing it. There might be indeed the Assyrian crushing Israel, and even, as he says afterwards, Nebuchadnezzar breaking her bones, showing no mercy at all—such is the conduct of the Gentiles to God's people, not only slaying but crushing them to pieces; but the comfort of God's saints in such a state of things is that they find God's hand in it. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart."

It produced a serious state of things with him, because the moment he saw God in it he sat not among the assembly of the mockers, he could not go on longer with the people that were disregarding God. It produced separation from evil; as he says, "I sat alone because of Thy hand: for Thou hast filled me with indignation." That is the sort of thing we have to do with here. You will remember, too, that when Daniel received a revelation from God of these great world empires, which were to be brought in upon the removal of Israel—first, the kingdom of Babylon, then the Medo-Persian Empire, thirdly the Grecian, and finally the Roman—and all the course of this world sketched out in connection with God's government transferred from Israel to the Gentiles, Daniel gets the vision, without any special exercise at all, although, of course, he was always a godly man. But when he receives (Daniel ix.) the special revelation with regard to God's own people—in the midst of such a state of things as this—he says, "I set my face to the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes." This was the way he had to eat the words, and he

found them bitter. Sad indeed to know even as a mere fact of history that these things happen, and that God's testimony is to go to the wall: but it is *very* bitter to pass through the experience of it, and Daniel found it so.

God answered him, and the angel Gabriel, whose service was connected with the dominion of the Gentile over God's people, gives the knowledge that when the Gentile rule has reached the climax of its course, then God will bring His people into blessing again. Gabriel gives the information with regard to the dominion of the Gentiles—the times of the Gentiles, as it is called—and tells him how long it will last, and what will be the end of it.

Where God has a testimony in this world the devil is at it, and that is what makes all the trouble and causes the hindrances. Daniel gets the revelation of the seventy weeks of years, right up to the end of the times of the Gentiles, though we have come in between, an indefinite interval, beginning at the cross and continuing till the moment when we are transferred above to our heavenly place, and then time will begin again.

“And the angel which I saw . . . lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore . . . that there should be delay no longer.” God is now about to put into effect what He promised when sin came in. “But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished.” What we are in is a mystery, not to us, but to everybody that does not belong to the Church and has not the Spirit of God. The mystery commenced when man sinned and the devil got the upper hand, and since

then everything has been ruined. God has shown He is above the ruin, but, nevertheless, that has not altered the practical effect in this world. Everything that God has ever set up has been spoiled—creation is spoiled, government is spoiled, priesthood, David's throne, the Church, and the last is the worst. The worst possible corruption is the corruption of the best possible thing, and the Church, which is the best possible thing, is become the worst possible corruption.

The mystery of God shall be finished—what He has purposed—the point He has pursued undeviatingly throughout this terrible history of man's failure, shall be presented according to His own design, and everything He has ever counselled shall be fulfilled; but you must wait till the end of the mystery for that to be seen. It will be finished when the seventy weeks of years are over—490 years (excluding this interval) from the time the decree went forth to build Jerusalem. Only there is this undefined interval come in meanwhile, which has lasted already for 1800 years and more, and nobody can tell you how much longer it will continue. The interval God has never reckoned, but He has reckoned the times of the Gentiles, and those times are 490 years, and they will begin again when the interval is over. We have come to the last week when Christ was cut off, and everything has been in abeyance since; but when this undefined interval is over the last half week is to be accomplished.

“I went to the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.” The same thing happened to Ezekiel when he received his commission,

which was one of mourning, lamentations, and woe; and the scroll on which his commission was engrossed he had to eat, because God will not have a man denounce another unless he has passed through the sorrow of it himself. His servant had to lie 390 days on his left side, and set a tile before him with Jerusalem figured on it and lay siege to Jerusalem, and to have his bread and water measured as if he had passed through the whole of that siege himself; and because Judah had to be brought back and planted in the land and go through the siege of Jerusalem again, so the prophet had to lie on his right side forty days.

"I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter." It is a bitter thing, and ought to be for us, to see God's testimony go to the wall and to see evil come in. We have to separate from evil, otherwise we do not take the true place; but at the same time, to see how the enemy has blasted that which was set up by God in its perfection ought to be a bitter thing to every saint, and it is not bitter until you are separated from it. To go on with it is to take your place with the assembly of the mockers.

Now the prophet has to commence his prophecy again as regards peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings. Having passed the vision, we get into history again. It is a great and important point in reading the Book of Revelation to see the distinction between what is vision and what is history; of course, it is all a vision in one sense, but I mean between what gives you the heavenly and divine principles of action and the action itself. We have had the principles by

which God is acting, and now we see the history He has in view.

"There was given me a reed like unto a rod." Not a golden reed now. Nothing divine goes on in Jerusalem in that day, so the prophet has not a golden rod as when he measured the heavenly city and the temple of God. This is an actual temple that is set up in Jerusalem, and he measures them that worship therein, but the court is left out—the Gentiles are in possession still. The scene is that which Gabriel reveals—the dominion of the Gentiles.

God's people will be back in their own land and Jerusalem once more set up, and the temple erected, and the order of things going on—a Jewish system recognised, and nothing particularly divine about it. Still, there are those who are pure in heart *there*. God says, Measure those: as for the rest, it is nothing more than treading under foot by the Gentiles. The time is measured.

We get now a direct calculation. People calculate when the world is coming to an end, but you cannot count these forty-two months till you know where to begin. The forty-two months are the last half of Daniel's seventieth week, but when that begins nobody can tell. It is all very well when that time comes, and there is a distinct mark given when the time commences, but you cannot tell now. Forty-two months shall the Gentiles tread the city under foot, and then the time of the Gentiles shall be over. Meanwhile God has a company which apparently the devil spoils, but he only spoils the exterior. God maintains that which is divine in the heart. So here He has His own little company which He measures, and the

rest He will take no notice of. But He says, "I will give power to my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy 1260 days"—the same time as the forty-two months, the same time as the Gentiles tread the city under foot, only God formulates it in days here because He takes a delight in what goes on. He took no delight in the Gentiles trampling under foot, but He takes a daily delight in the action of His witnesses, so He says "days."

It is a testimony to what God will establish in the millennial day, as we find in Zechariah, only there the thing is in its due order. The golden candlestick with the seven lamps, and on either side two olive trees pouring out their oil, and so maintaining God's testimony in His king and priest in one person on His throne, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Branch, is the actual accomplishment of it in perfection in the millennial day. What you have here is testimony maintained in anticipation of the time when God will establish it in true order, standing before the God of the earth, which is the character He is taking in the coming day.

Now it is the God of heaven, as Daniel says. Through the time when the Gentiles are in power God retires, lets them go on, orders governmentally, providentially holds the reins. Who knows that He thinks about things (except we do possibly)? But there is coming a day when He will assume His place as God of the earth by the Lord Jesus Christ; but there will be then divine power to execute all His will, and all the enemies shall be crushed. Satan shall be bruised under our feet, and all that destroy the earth shall be destroyed. It is a testimony to His character as God of the earth.

Their testimony is peculiar, very different from ours. "If any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies"; that is to say, their testimony is one of judgment, not of grace. They do not offer mercy to a wicked man; they have nothing to say about God justifying the ungodly. What they have to say, and it is very true, is that God is angry with the wicked every day, and that He is going to judge the earth with righteousness, and the people with equity. They have to say that every evil shall be put down. Such is their testimony, and if any man opposes them he will have to be slain according to their word. I do not think it means at the time, but that the word they pronounce against those that oppose shall be executed. God will not allow their words to fall to the ground.

Power of a peculiar kind accompanies their testimony. "They have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy." Whether this is actually a closing of the heavens, so that there is no rain as a mere literal thing, I am not prepared to say. Very possibly, only I believe it is rather more of a figurative character in this way, that they have nothing whatever to say about mercy, about blessing coming down from heaven. That is not their business at all. It is of abundant judgment against the ungodly.

There is no rain, and that appears to me more figurative. They have power over the waters to turn them to blood. I do not think it is literal, but possibly it is that the testimony given in that day will be such as will produce bloodshed among the people, because when men see that there is nothing before them but judgment, and they will not give up their own

will, it makes them merciless and bitter. As the psalm describes it, they slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless. It is the effect of God's testimony upon hardened hearts and consciences; as in Jerusalem in Hezekiah's day, when expecting to be destroyed by the judgment of the Assyrian, they said, "Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die."

I need hardly tell you that these witnesses are those who have not availed themselves of the Lord's warning, that when they see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains, and let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house, the crisis is so imminent. And then He adds (because there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since the world began, and never shall be), "Woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!"—because these troubles always fall upon the woman more than the man—"and pray that your flight be not in the winter, nor on the Sabbath day: for there shall be such a time of trouble as never was, and except those days were shortened, no flesh should be saved; but those days shall be shortened, for the elect's sake."

Here are those who have not availed themselves of the Lord's permission to escape. I have no doubt, led of God, they remain in Judea, for the sake of maintaining God's testimony in the place against the beast and false prophet, and they maintain God's testimony for the whole time; but after twelve hundred and sixty days, that is Daniel's half week, the beast that arises out of the abyss, the Roman beast, shall make

war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them, and their dead bodies shall lie in the streets of the great city. It is in Jerusalem, called Sodom and Egypt—a form of religion filled with corruption. Egypt is the place of bondage where God dealt with false gods and idolatry, and it is Jerusalem where the Lord was crucified.

Then the peoples, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half; they will not have them buried. No doubt it is in order that it may never be said that they rose again. Their unbelieving thought is, It has been said of their Master that He rose again, when the disciples stole the body, but we will not have it said of these, their bodies shall remain unburied till they putrefy; they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them and make merry. But after three and a half days the spirit of life from God enters into them, and they stand upon their feet, and great fear falls upon them which see them, and they hear a great voice from heaven saying unto them, "Come up hither."

It is not we—nobody will see us go to heaven—but these who, if they were not raised and went to heaven, would lose even their portion here on the earth as well as heaven; and God says you shall have the better. He takes them and raises them for the purpose.

Having ended this scene, we come to the seventh trumpet, the last woe trumpet. Thus you have Satan's woe, and man's woe, and God's woe, which ends the whole matter.

"The seventh trumpet sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever,"

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

BY J. BARTON.

LECTURE X.

THE closing history of God's vessel of witness on the earth, as prophetically portrayed by the state of the church in Laodicea, alas! only follows the way of all responsibility which God has entrusted to the "first man." Though the first downward step in the moral character of this vessel is easily traced to "Ephesus" in her loss of first love, yet is this nauseous lukewarmness and pretentious self-sufficiency the immediate offspring of despite of the gracious intervention of God in the witness of Philadelphia. While historically these seven churches, with their several conditions noted by the Lord, existed in Asia at the time John wrote, yet do they prophetically indicate *successive* phases of the whole professing Church from that time till its humbling close, as spued out of Christ's mouth, the states indicated by the four last churches running on together to the close accounting in some measure for the complicated, indistinct character of witness (?) which marks our day.

The characters in which the Lord presents Himself to Laodicea not only tell what is His controversy with them, measuring their present condition by the purpose of God in their golden candlestick, but at the same time set before them "the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." "All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."

208 SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

(2 Cor. i. 20.) And the Church was set up on the earth in the power of the Holy Ghost "established in Christ," manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, having His name written on the fleshy tables of the heart by the Spirit of the living God. The supply too of all needed grace to enable the Church to "*Amen*" all this responsibility was treasured up in Him who held the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars in His right hand. The responsibility of Judah as God's witness conveyed by Isaiah vii. 9 sheds some light on the import of this significant title of the Lord, and also wherein the Church has failed: "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." Here Judah and the Church failed, not "the Amen."

If the "man of God" would know how to behave himself in the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth, the mystery of *godliness* is now no secret, but has been displayed perfectly on this earth in Him upon whom heaven could open, and the Spirit descend, while the Father's voice declared, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (1 Tim. iii. 16.)

Well might the sun, hitherto the constant witness of God's glory in the firmament (Psalm xix.), veil his face, eclipsed in presence of that new and excellent glory wherewith He was glorified in the cross when "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" is accompanied by, "But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." "Faithful Witness!" from whose pierced side came blood and water; brought up from among the dead by the glory of the Father (Romans vi. 4), "straightway" (John xiii. 32)

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH. 209

glorified on high. As present answer to Thy faithfulness, the Comforter came to earth to glorify Thee, convincing the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment; pledge, too, of new heavens and new earth, that new creation of which Thou art the beginning, where all things are of God and God will be all. Of such a One the Church was privileged and responsible to be the epistle; instead of which, lukewarm indifference as to what is due to Him, and self-sufficiency and self-importance, characterise her, and call forth the judgment here pronounced: "I will spue thee out of My mouth."

A sentence irrevocable, though deferred in grace and patience; for as it was said before, "The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full," so the complete state of apostasy of the professing vessel is not yet ripe, though progressing so fast to that end. We need to remind ourselves, in speaking of the *vessel* of witness being spued out of Christ's mouth, that this has no reference to "the Church which is His body," nor to any member of that body, every one of which will, ere this judgment is executed, be taken in bodies of glory like His own to be with Him for ever. Now, however, all who profess the name of Christ, real and unreal, devoted and half-hearted, are mixed up together in this responsible place of witness, where Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea are all represented. "The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." This will be the consequence of "he that hath an ear" hearing "what the Spirit saith unto the churches." A care for what is due to Christ, and an anointed eye to separate the precious

210 SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

from the vile, will then replace this nauseous indifference and self-complacency, which fails to "discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not." (Mal. iii. 18.)

If we have had to be occupied with this sad and humbling close of the Church's history, we are now (Revelation iii. 14) privileged to contemplate the patient, painstaking love of Him who changes not, yearning over the hearts of His own for their recovery, ere the execution of this just sentence. This faithful love does not flatter, but exposes the cause of their present condition, and wondrous grace "brings the remedy."

Laodicea has not fallen into the sin which specially marked the wilderness—murmuring—but into that danger of which the Lord forewarned them on entering the land, when surrounded with its blessings and failing to appreciate the source of them, as Deut. xi. 10-12 so beautifully presents them: "A land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." The consequences of unfaithfulness when in the land were far more serious than when traversing the wilderness. When possessing the light of God's word, making saints familiar with the spiritual blessings which belong to the Church, if the Lord be not owned as the Source and Sustainer of these good things, the next step is to ascribe them to man, and she says, "*I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.*" "Rationalism" in its various forms would destroy the distinctive truths of Christianity,

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH. 211

and put man in the place which God gives to Christ. The cross, as setting aside all ground for boasting in the first man and declaring that "the flesh profiteth nothing," is little heard of, nor of its companion witness, the presence of the Holy Ghost here on the earth as the alone power for God and to glorify Christ. The Lord's estimate of Laodicean pretension is very withering: "Wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," and so deceived that they *knew it not*. Even so Samson, though he could *tell* Delilah the consequence of his head being shaven, yet when through her treachery his hair was cut—he went out as at other times to shake himself—"he wist not that the Lord was departed from him." (Judges xvi.)

How refreshing to hear the unchanged love of the Lord break in on this dark picture, in His tender, painstaking grace offering such wise counsel, seeking the blessing of any who may have an ear to hear His voice even in the midst of such a company. "Gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich," is divine righteousness, that in which we stand before God in Christ (2 Cor. v. 21); and till we know what it is to "become the righteousness of God in Christ" we have no power to produce the second, which is practical righteousness, the fruit of the Spirit working in the life we possess in Christ, the "white raiment," which Revelation xix. tells us is the righteousness(es) of saints. "Eyesalve," like the other two, must be got from the Lord—bought ("without money and without price"), and is that unction of the Holy One which 1 John ii. 20 tells us the babe in Christ is supposed to possess; then they would not be as the Pharisees, who said "*we see*," and so their sin remained; they

212 SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

would see light in His light, and oh, how changed all would be! Then they would be rich "toward God," through the grace of Him who, though He was rich, yet for their sakes He became poor, that they through His poverty might be rich. Their shame of nakedness would not appear. They would see as He saw them and their surroundings, and occupation with His excellency would leave no room for their self-sufficiency and self-complacency. The same yearning love is heard in Malachi, God's last message in the Old Testament pleading with the remnant brought back from Babylon: "I have loved, you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, Wherein hast Thou loved us?" Here too was a form of godliness without its power. They too were blind as to their true state; and when Jehovah says, "Return unto Me, and I will return unto you," they replied, "*Wherein shall we return?*" When He says, "Ye have robbed Me," they inquire, "Wherein have we robbed Thee?" It will well repay any to trace the patient, faithful grace of which this remnant was the subject from their first return to Jerusalem, when they set up the altar of God again and offered burnt-offerings, and kept the Feast of Tabernacles from the first day of the seventh month—a feeble handful under the shelter of God's altar, and a faith that through His grace to them rose up to count on Him; they gave God His true place, and all was well. But, alas! what a tale has Haggai to disclose of decline and self-seeking, what restoring grace and patience again and again on God's part. And though this *unreality* and lack of what is due to God, and self-justification, which Malachi has to convict of is their response, yet here, as in Laodicea, we hear a pleading voice, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH. 213

there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it"; and this grace was effectual in drawing together—"they that *feared* the Lord," with anointed eyes, returning and repenting.

What patient, painstaking grace is manifested in "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." Their state had forced Him outside; but as pronounced judgment yet lingers, He seeks that His voice may be heard by any of His own whose hearts had been blinded and deceived by the blinding influences prevailing in Laodicea; and if anyone heard His voice, and opened the door of his heart to Him who stood without seeking admission, He would come in and sup with him, and, greatest of all favours, would have that one to *sup with Him*. The heart that heard that voice and opened its door to welcome such a One, bringing with Him such favours, would surely judge Laodicea's characteristics, and be separate in heart and ways to Him who could have no fellowship with that which He was about to spue out of His mouth. He did not come in to Laodicea, but to the heart of one there who with his Lord judged it as hateful. It will not satisfy the Lord to judge as evil and contrary to His word what I continue in association with in the vain and self-deceived hope of improving this corrupt state of things. (Read Haggai ii. 12, 13, and the dishonour to the glory of God uttered by Micah, Judges xvii. 13.)

John xiv. 23 is the rich portion of every saint of God while waiting for God's Son, who loves Him and keeps His word. Such a one delights in the love of the

214 SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH.

Father towards him, and values the company of the Father and the Son; and that he does so is evidenced by his cultivating such associations and conditions as are worthy of such guests and give them a suited welcome. So too John xv. 10 gives us the conditions of abiding in Christ's love, and speaks of how He abode in His Father's love. The object of the Lord washing the feet of His own when needed is (John xiii. 8) that we may have "part with Him." He cannot be indifferent as to this, and having brought us into communion with the Father and with Himself—walking in the light as God is in it—He removes the defilement which would hinder this communion.

When the Lord comes in to sup with the heart of the overcomer, He enters into his things with sympathy and understanding and desire for his blessing, *seeking* his good and the confidence of his heart, making him to know His grace, and so encouraging unreservedness of heart. This leads to the fuller and richer blessing which in perfect love the Lord desires for His own joy, that His own might *sup with Him*, entering into His things as He is pleased to make them known to *His friends*. "I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." (John xv.) His pathway on earth in its details of love fully expressed how He entered into their interests. "He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled." "Where have ye laid him?" "Jesus wept." "Loose him, and let him go." "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" "MARY."

Where, save in Mary of Bethany, can we see a heart enter into His things—that one who sat at His feet and heard His word, "*that good part*," and whose alabaster box gave a voice to devotedness, that *supped*

SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH. 215

with Him as far as "she could" before "the Comforter" came?

In Gethsemane He had to say, "Could ye not watch with Me one hour?" In John xiv. their selfish concern for losing such a Caretaker, as He spoke to them of His departure to His Father, drew forth the loving rebuke, "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for My Father is greater than I"; and again in John xvi., "And none of you asketh Me, *Whither goest Thou?*"

Now that His saints are brought to know His Father as our Father, and His God as our God, and have received the promised Comforter who is here to glorify Christ—receiving of His and showing it unto us, guiding us into *all* truth, even as John could write to the babes, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things" (1 John ii.)—have we not to challenge our hearts as to how much we know, not only of His supping with us, but of that priceless favour which all the failure of the Church as His witness cannot take from the overcomer who hears His voice knocking at the door and opens to Him? We have before seen in these addresses that they but point out to us what the Lord approves and what He disapproves in the seven churches, and so in the prophetic history of the whole professing Church from John's time till its sorrowful close on the earth; and though the only instruction given to us in view of such things is to "hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," yet are we amply furnished by other scriptures with guidance for our hearts and feet "in departing from iniquity, and following righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

THE VAIL.

(Translated from the French.)

(2.) THE VAIL DONE AWAY IN CHRIST.

WE cannot sufficiently admire the wisdom of God who has given us a detailed history of Israel, for it is written especially "for our admonition." It shows clearly and distinctly that man is unable to preserve his position before God when he is put under responsibility. Yet the whole history cannot produce this conviction in the conscience; only the quickening power of the Spirit of God can show man his hopeless ruin brought about through sin. But once truly convicted of sin, he is able to profit by the teaching of the history of Israel as to the fruitlessness of the law. "He that is spiritual judgeth all things." (1 Cor. ii. 15.)

But their history teaches us yet more. It shows us in an especial manner the blinding power of traditional religion, even where it is connected with an originally divinely-appointed organisation. Such a system tends only to blind man as to his position before God. "Their minds are blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament." (2 Cor. iii. 14.) Their own history in the desert, the song of Moses in testimony against them (Deut. xxxii.), the testimony of Samuel against the evil of the priesthood, the ministry of the prophets bringing low their pride (Hoseá vi. 5), while strengthening the saints for the fight through His gracious promises, the captivity of Babylon and the deliverance, the renewal of the word of the Lord through John the Baptist (Luke iii. 2), and that after a sad silence of 400 years, the ministry of the Lord Himself, and later that of His

apostles with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, all was unavailing to remove the vail from the face of Moses. "Even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart." (2 Cor. iii. 15.)

The vail can be taken off the face of Moses only under one condition. Moses and Elias appeared with Jesus at His transfiguration on the holy mount, but disappeared at these solemn words, "This is My beloved Son: hear Him." (Luke ix. 28-36.) Taught of God, we come to Jesus, and then learn to look back upon Moses. We must do this before we can look from Moses to Christ with intelligence and profit. If we know the Lord, the vail drops from the face of Moses, "which is done away in Christ." (2 Cor. iii. 14.) After the disciples had seen the Lord risen from the dead, He opened their understanding that they might know the Scriptures. "And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me." (Luke xxiv. 44.) The conversion of Paul the Pharisee to the faith of Jesus presents us with a remarkable example of the removal of the vail in Christ. From the moment that the Lord appeared to him on the way, and that he saw that the Jesus of Nazareth, against whom he verily thought that he ought to do many things (Acts xxvi. 9), was in truth the Lord of glory, from that moment the vail was removed from the face of Moses as well as from his own heart. The same man, who was more zealous than all his contemporaries for the religion of his fathers, was made especially competent, after he had in his own heart learned the reality (the body of Col. ii. 17), to show others the danger of keeping to the

shadow when the body had been revealed. He too could clearly see the glorious end which previously had been proclaimed in the shadows of the law, viz., "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth" (Rom. x. 4), for the law and the prophets prophesied until John.

The vail was taken off in Christ in such a way that Paul could show the Jews through the history of the people of Israel the sovereign grace of God towards them as a nation, and at the same time prove that as a nation they never could hope to stand before God under the law, as they had imagined in their foolishness. Likewise, the apostle could throw down from their lofty station those who said, "We know that God spake unto Moses" (John ix. 19), and show that they had as little claim to the glory of God as the sinner of the Gentiles. "For He saith unto Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." (Rom. ix. 15.)

The true character of Moses' ministry as the mediator of the old covenant could only be known by a man in Christ after the vail had been removed from the face of Moses. A man who thus is under grace can not only see the glory of this grace under the vail on the face of Moses, but also understand, through the removal of this vail, the true character of the law as the ministration of death and judgment. "Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law." (Rom. iii. 31.) The man in Christ fully owns the authority of the law; he owns that for the man in the flesh the law can only mean death and judgment, and thus establishes the authority of the law. "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good."

(Rom. vii. 12.) For the man in Christ the law has been established, because Christ has magnified it both in life and death. "Jehovah is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will magnify the law, and make it honourable." (Isa. xlii. 21.) Christ was "made under law, to redeem them that were under law." (Gal. iv. 4, 5.) The introduction into the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free—the liberty of worship—gives us a true insight into the bondage from which they had been set free, and into the curse from which they had been redeemed. Those who know these things would not like to frustrate the grace of God, nor make the death of Christ of none effect by going back to the law for help, for they have learned that nothing but the fullest grace could meet their needs. The vail has been removed from the face of Moses, and now grace shines out in clear, bright rays.

To the man in Christ the removal of the vail from the face of Moses is of special importance, because that which was before an insupportable yoke becomes thereby a living reality. See how Peter speaks of it: "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." (Acts xv. 10, 11.) When Peter knew the Lord this whole system, with its heavy yoke of carnal ordinance, was imbued with living power. The moment the vail fell from the face of Moses all the solemn commandments about sacrifices, priesthood, order, fast, etc., became "living oracles"; they all spoke of Christ. The law itself was a prophecy. The shadow received—now that the body, Christ, had appeared—a meaning and an interest,

while by itself it had been uninteresting and insupportable. The shadows can now with profit be used to show the reality, *i.e.* the manifold riches of the graces of Christ, for "the body is of Christ." (Col. ii. 17.) But to impose them again as duties would be to deny Christ, or to imitate them as examples would be to put those far off again who "were made nigh through the blood of Christ." (Eph. ii. 13.)

In Christ, the true Rock cleft for us, the glory of God is manifested and His name proclaimed, "if so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (1 Peter ii. 3); and here is this grace, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious." (Ex. xxxiii. 19, 22.) "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Peter ii. 4, 5.) This is the easy yoke and the light burden which Jesus lays upon those who follow Him, and this is their true honour and glory. They are justified, sanctified, and a royal priesthood, therefore able to show forth the praises of Him who hath called them "out of darkness into His marvellous light." Every dimness regarding Moses is gone; the law is now apprehended 'as that which only ministers condemnation; and instead of making it of none effect by accommodating it to man, it is now seen to reveal the total ruin of man.

The prophetic character of the law is not only made plain, but also rejoices the heart, showing us in beautiful types "the good things to come" which we already enjoy in Christ. Yet the types remain far behind the reality; they are only shadows, not

the things themselves, just as a portrait representing a beautiful scene remains far inferior to the scene itself. The vail is done away in Christ, and Moses shows himself as the herald of grace—grace in electing love, grace which quickens the sinner dead in trespasses and sins, grace which opens the eyes to see the glory of Christ in His Person and in His work, grace which is the way of God bearing the misery of the people, in short, “grace which reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom. v. 21.)

There are two things of deepest importance for us. We read: “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John iii. 3.) A man thus quickened feels the power and knows the blessing of the commandment: “Look unto Me, and be ye saved.” (Isaiah xlv. 22.) He that is born of God finds alone rest by looking away from himself to Christ. For him Jesus the crucified is the power of God and the wisdom of God. But when led on through the Holy Spirit in the teaching of the cross, he understands too the truth about the substitution of Christ, viz., that God “hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. v. 21), then is the one who is born of the Spirit capable of viewing the thing from another standpoint. He can then turn his looks back from Christ to himself, from that which grace has made him in Christ to that which he finds himself to be through painful experience. Christ becomes for him the true light, and he himself “light in the Lord.” The man, new born, is thus able to solve the contradictions which he finds in himself, and to justify God in His ways of grace.

NOTES OF READINGS WITH RALPH EVANS.

1 COR. i.

I SUPPOSE the whole Church of God is contemplated in verse 2: "To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." That would take in the whole Church on earth in that day. Truth characterised the general position then; it does not now. It cost them everything then; it does not now. There is the difference between the body of Christ and the house of God. The word is added, "To all that call on the name of Jesus Christ," as well as those sanctified.

It is interesting the different ways in which he records the history of each church, especially when he recalls the past. In Thessalonians we have the most marked contrast to this. In each church he takes up their past history to the present. There is not a bit of intelligence said of them in 1 Thess. i., but hardly anything else in Corinthians. In the former there is no place for a thought of mere human energy of mind. They were all simply engaged before the Lord in works of love, working—labouring—and waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son from heaven. In Corinthians they were enriched—he owns it was all of God—"awaiting the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ." In Colossians he remembered something else, "We heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which you have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven." Then he begins to bring out the personal glory of Christ. So in Ephesians he is bringing out the mystery. In

NOTES OF READINGS WITH RALPH EVANS. 223

Colossians there is the double headship and His glory. There is nothing of this in Corinthians.

It is interesting to examine the state in which the Spirit of God addressed them. Mr. Darby remarked they were forward in all kinds of gifts, but in no grace. Yet it was a great grace, these gifts of utterance and of knowledge, and all of God; but in Philippians he speaks of their fellowship—quite another thing.

But in each place we have the kind of truth he brings before them, having taken up their present moral condition before God. For instance, in Philippians, "That your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment," the appreciation of things that are more excellent in view of being without offence in the day of Christ. In 1 Corinthians i. he says, "In everything ye are enriched by Him, in all word of doctrine, and in all knowledge; . . . so that ye come behind in no gift: . . . who shall also confirm you to the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful," etc. We are all taught the grace of the Lord in taking up all He could among them, reckoning that by this gracious address their hearts might be awakened up, and capable of listening to all this cutting down of flesh.

In Thessalonians, as well as here, the day of Jesus Christ is much in view. In 1 Thessalonians iii. 12 he says, "But you may the Lord make to exceed and abound in love toward one another, and toward all: . . . in order to the confirming of your hearts, unblameable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints." And in chap. v. 23, "Your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." So in Philippians all is with

224 NOTES OF READINGS WITH RALPH EVANS.

regard to the manifestation of Christ. A few years ago it seemed an entirely new truth to me, and it made me ponder, that the thought of our minds should be carried on beyond the rapture to the day of Jesus Christ. All the thoughts of God have their object in the manifestation of the glory of Jesus Christ, not only here but everywhere.

In Isaiah, when He is speaking of the new covenant, He says He did not make the earth chaos, He formed it to be inhabited, and this He speaks of the *nations*. In John i. is the gospel, He so loved the *world*; and the first time He is called the "Saviour of the world" is among the Samaritans. In Isaiah xlv. 15 we read, "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour. . . . Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end. For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not *void* [or chaotic], He formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else." Again, "There is no God else beside Me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside Me. Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." That is being the Saviour of the world as far as the revelation in the Old Testament is concerned—first the Saviour of Israel, then the Saviour of the world. We find the Spirit of God taking up the very beginning, the very sources of things. He did not make it in vain.

In this epistle we have "Lord Jesus Christ," His full personal name.

BOURNEMOUTH, *April 11th*, 1884,

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

BY THE EDITOR.

(*From Shorthand Report.*)

LECTURE XI. CHAPTERS XII. AND XIII.

WE have now concluded the course of the trumpets, but you will remember that they commenced with the sealing or the preservation on God's part of those who should pass through the time of trial, and be preserved for the millennial kingdom to enjoy the earthly blessing which the Lord will bring in when He takes His power. God secures that to begin with before He gives liberty to the power of evil to set to work. Before He undertakes Himself to enter into dealing with evil, He secures those who shall be for blessing, because you and I know very well that if we are going to heaven it is because God chose us before the world was. It was not to be a matter of chance, but a matter of divine election. God always designs when it is a question of blessing—it is a matter of predestination. He determines beforehand that there shall be blessing, but He never designs that there shall be cursing, for that comes according to the deserts of the creature. So we find that before the course of the trumpets begins He secures those whom He designs for blessing. That is the opening scene in the trumpets, but at the close there are those who get slain in the midst of all the terrible doings that take place, and the power and energy of evil that is let loose.

The two witnesses are slain, and the closing scene of the trumpets is that those who were thus slain through faithfulness to their testimony are raised in that city of their enemies and caught up to heaven, so that there is blessing in spite of everything.

We were noticing that what the trumpets really bring before us is the letting loose of the energy—the instruments of evil which had been for the time being restrained and overruled. That is also the character of the present day; the energy of evil is as much to-day as then, only God's overruling providence is at work. But the moment the restraining influence is removed, then all the plans and purposes of the enemy, and the agents he can get together for his purpose, whether man or demon, are let loose.

The first four trumpets had special reference to the Roman Empire, and the last three were what we call "woe" trumpets, the first two being man's and Satan's woes, and the last God's woe. I think I may refer, before proceeding, to the fact that the testimony under the first two woe trumpets corresponds exactly with the service of Gabriel as brought before us in the Book of Daniel. You remember that Gabriel's service was connected with the apostasy of God's people and their bondage under the Gentiles, and that is what we find here as the ministry of the two witnesses. Its character is that of the ministry of Elijah and Moses—like Elijah who stopped the heavens, and Moses who turned the water into blood. Elijah's ministry was concerned with the people in their apostasy, when all were worshipping Baal, but Moses' ministry was connected with the bondage of the people under Pharaoh. Thus God is consistent in His dealings, and He has

His servants for sending out on different characters of service, and they have to keep to their work.

I might point out that it was Gabriel who was commissioned to announce the birth of John and of Jesus; John whose ministry was, as the angel told Zacharias, in the spirit and power of Elias, and in the midst of an apostate people as Elias' was. "He shall come in the spirit and power of Elias to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the thoughts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just," so that the people might be prepared for the Lord. That was John's mission, and Gabriel was the one that announced it. *So also in connection with the birth of the blessed Saviour Himself, the testimony was in character that of Moses.* That is to say, He was brought before the faith of Zacharias as the One in whom the God of Israel had visited and redeemed His people, and had raised up a horn of deliverance for them in the house of His servant David, giving deliverance from their enemies, so that He might perform the mercy promised to their fathers according to what He spake to Abraham; that being delivered from the hand of their enemies they might worship God in righteousness and holiness all their days. It was deliverance from bondage, just as Moses delivered God's people that they might be brought out to worship Him. So that one sees the consistency of God's dealings.

What we have looked at in Revelation xi. corresponds to the ministry of Gabriel, and what we are going to look at now is like the ministry of Michael. He was a chief prince, as the angel told Daniel, the great prince that stands up for Daniel's people; one who would stand up in the latter day to undertake for

them, so that God's thoughts should be accomplished instead of the will of the enemy who puts pressure on His people to destroy them. That is Michael's service.

I have just said this by the way in order to clear the matter of the trumpets, so that we may go on with what is now presented to us.

You will observe that here the temple of God is opened in heaven. Now there is no temple of God in heaven, but He has one on earth. What is conveyed to us by the temple of God being opened is, that we are admitted into the intimacy of His presence in order to have His thoughts set before us distinct from the circumstances that are apt to come in in this world. When we get into the temple of God we see what the end of the wicked is. So that it very clearly sets before us that the temple of God is the admission into the secret of His presence, in order to get His thoughts brought before us unmixed with the varying circumstances of the scene around. It was the tabernacle that Moses went into when there was apostasy and they had set up a golden calf, and God's judgment had to come on His own people. Then Moses pitched the tabernacle outside the camp afar off, and if anybody wished to worship God he had to go outside the camp, which is a great principle for us. But when Moses, who alone went outside, entered the tabernacle the others stood in their tent doors. That was a solemn thing. They could go a certain distance, but no further—they all stood in their tent doors and looked after Moses as he went in; but when Moses got there the cloud came and stood at the door. There was no going in then. If people do not take their opportunity, the chance is lost. The pillar came down and stood at the

door, and Moses conversed with God. He spoke face to face, as a man speaks to his friend—not by visions, not by dreams, but face to face, even apparently, as the Lord Himself explains afterwards, so that he saw the similitude of the Lord. That is the blessed privilege that Moses had when he had intercourse with God apart from the idolatrous people. But when there he had intercourse with God about God's thoughts, and there he had the revelation of God's ways regarding His people. He learned, inside the tabernacle alone with God, that God would show grace to whom He would, and have mercy upon whom He would have mercy. Moses had just drawn his sword, and so had Levi, and smitten every man his brother, but when he got inside the tabernacle the Lord told him He would show mercy to whom He would. So that it is the place of grace and intimacy. That is just what we have here. We have the wonderful privilege of having God's thoughts brought before us in all their reality and perfection, not mixed with the failure of God's people, nor ruined by the power of the enemy. We see what God has before Him and what He intends to accomplish. And not only that, but there is the answer to the communications which God vouchsafes in His heavenly temple; there is power to put it all into effect, for the moment the temple is opened we see the ark of His covenant. *We* do not need an ark or covenant, except so far as we benefit by the blood of the new covenant; but no covenant is made with Gentiles. The Church needs no covenant, but when the covenant itself is displayed and is about to be put into effect, it is for Israel, just as the old covenant was made with Israel—an old one, as the apostle argues in *Hebrews*, about to

be done away, because the old and new cannot go on together. What we have here is a heavenly tabernacle opened and God's thoughts about His people, not according to their responsibility and failure, as under the covenant made at Sinai, but according to the covenant made in His grace; and there is power to put it into effect, for there were lightnings and thunders. God is going to have His way, and the time has come for it.

Well, now, the first thing that appears, seen as it is in the temple of God, is a great wonder—a sign in heaven. It is a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. Her face does not shine like the sun, as in the case of the mighty angel who came down from heaven and set his right foot on the sea and left foot on the earth, and lifted his hand to heaven and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever. *His* face shone as the sun; supremacy was what belonged to Him by the right of His own nature and person—it was the Lord Jesus Christ. But here the woman is no divine person at all; nevertheless she is invested with supremacy in respect of that scene of things for which it is exercised, for it is supremacy over the earth. It is Israel according to God's thoughts of Israel. It was what He designed and purposed to have when He chose His people and raised up Abraham and started him as the root of the blessing for His people. This was what He designed should be, and when He divided to the sons of Adam their inheritance, He separated the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel. God always has His thoughts in view, and if you only get into

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

231

the temple of God, that is to say, into His presence, then you get God's thoughts and you know all that is going to happen. So here she is clothed with the sun, invested with supremacy.

The moon represents Israel's passing condition as under the legal covenant, that which passes away as the moon completes its circle and begins to fade away, and by-and-by is not seen at all. That was the case with Israel as under the legal covenant. It rose in small beginnings and filled the scene with its light, but quickly went. And where is it to-day? Gone! as *far as anyone can see*. Well, *that is a passed condition* and it is under her feet, and now no longer to be that, but shining as her new moon does, a new moon that abides; no longer a changeable condition, but established according to the ark of the covenant that is in the temple of God in heaven.

She has a crown of twelve stars, because God always designed that the earth should be administered by Israel. I have quoted a passage which shows that He had it in view immediately after the flood, and we cannot doubt also at the founding of the earth. In due time He brought out His people, and not before He had twelve tribes for the purpose. The number 12 is symbolic of earthly administration in man, and it was according to the twelve tribes that He divided to the peoples their inheritance. The whole world is, according to God's design, to be ordered and settled according to the number of the tribes of Israel. *

Well, that gives dignity and character to her, that the administration of the earth in man is under the form of Israel. "She, being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." Because, after

all, it is in man, not in woman, that the rule is to take place. Israel was the vessel by which the ruling man was to come, but it was not Israel in itself that was to rule without Him. The man was to come by her, and undoubtedly this gives you God's mind as to the state of Israel until the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But before the thoughts and purposes of God are brought to their accomplishment there appears another sign in heaven—"And behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads." This is no other than Satan himself, but Satan with a new form, one by which he has thought and designed to frustrate and circumvent the purposes of God as regards the government of the world. For if Satan can only secure permanently for himself the kingdom of man, the kingdom of this little bit of a world, he has practically secured the kingdom of the universe. It is here the battle is fought and the victory won, and if Satan can only succeed here all the rest comes as a matter of course afterwards. So he assumes a certain form and character, in order to meet the form and character in which God brings His plans upon the scene. God is first and the devil follows. God's plan is presented first in bringing in His nation. But no single day suffices to bring in a nation, and Satan soon understood what was in question, and he raised up something else to frustrate and destroy what God was doing.

It is wonderful that the whole conflict between good and evil is here depicted in order that our hearts and consciences may be exercised so that we may be with God in a scene out of which, if we had not His thought before us, we should never know our way.

No person, however godly he might be, could possibly know how to conduct himself in this world, or how to order his path here, unless he had God's mind to go by. It is an enigma, a maze, out of which no creature could see his way except he had the light of God's mind and intelligence about the path. Now we see what the thing is, and here is God's purpose.

This nation, when it was put into existence in the world, failed immediately it was set up, like everything else confided to man, and God's nation and God's Church are no exception. God's nation fails and Satan's plans succeed, but only to bring about his fall and his ruin, just like at the cross. Nevertheless they do succeed.

You see what Satan is about. This great red dragon is the governmental form which Satan has used in order to carry out his purpose of opposing God's nation and the Man that is to come by it. We are reminded a little lower down in this chapter that the first form in which Satan sought to destroy the plans of God was that of a serpent. He appeared as a serpent in the Garden of Eden, and brought about the fall of the first man. Afterwards, when the new world was established under Noah, he takes another form, and does not abide by that of a serpent merely, but adapts himself to the circumstances of his subtle mission. The form which he assumed in connection with a world as set up by Noah was that of Satan, and that is the character in which he appears generally in the Old Testament after the flood. Satan means an adversary; he is the personal adversary setting himself in opposition to the Man he knows is to come, and that by Israel. So we find in the history of the kings how nearly he succeeded in the days of Jehoshaphat and Jehoram.

By bringing that wicked woman Jezebel into affinity with David's seed, he nearly succeeded in exterminating every single scion of the family. There was only one left. Thus the adversary sought to wreak his vengeance on the man whom God had in that day, and there was none like him.

But when you come to the New Testament, though he does not lose his old character, you find he assumes a new one when adapting himself to the new circumstances. And that character is the devil; you will not find him called the devil, as far as I am aware, in the Old Testament. The devil means "the accuser." There are now people to accuse, even those who are in God's eye as having a title to a place in heaven; and the only way of meeting and destroying that title is by bringing accusation. He therefore takes the form of the devil, the accuser. But the point we have come to here (Rev. xii.) in the history of the world is beyond that. We have come to God's dealings with the earth and to the approaching kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ; we have come, here in this book, to the time when He is about to assume His right and reign, and set up His throne. And now what is the enemy to do? The only thing is to assume a new character, that of a dragon—a great red dragon.

As far as I know, you do not find him presented in any other part of the Bible in the precise form of a great red dragon. But in the Book of the Revelation, which is connected with God's plan in bringing in the Man Christ Jesus to assume His rule and to reign upon the earth, Satan takes a new form in order to resist the power of the coming King. It is seen here according to the thoughts of God, because

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

235

the thing is not brought into development yet; but God knows all about it, and He presents it to us in order that we may know all about it before it is developed. .

There is a great red dragon having seven heads, and he has upon his heads a complete display of power. It is remarkable that there is no governmental form of power that has not arisen in the Roman Empire. Seven positive distinct orders of government have succeeded in connection with it, and here we find this great red dragon assuming it in order that he may destroy the power of the coming Christ.

He has ten horns upon his heads. These horns are not crowned, but the heads are; that is, it is seen according to the thoughts of God so far developed as it was at the time of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, for this imperial form of power had then arisen, but the ten horns have not arisen yet. Therefore the crowns are not seen upon the horns, but on the heads, because that was the actual state of things at the time of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE VAIL.

(Translated from the French.)

(3.) THE VAIL ON THE HEART OF ISRAEL.

THE people of Israel, in spite of their vaunted veneration of Moses, did not in reality receive him as the messenger of God. They rejected him in Egypt, saying, "Who made thee a prince or a judge over us?" (Exodus ii. 14.) And afterwards, when, sent of God, he presented himself again with the manifest tokens of the reality of his mission, they murmured against him again and again. At the close too he bears testimony to them, "Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you." (Deut. ix. 24.) "For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord; and how much more after my death?" (Deut. xxxi. 27.) But when Jesus, "the true and faithful witness," "the true light," came, the Jews rejected His claims by putting forth those of Moses. This is one of the traits of the evil heart and perverted will of man. He refuses constantly to own the rights of God. Despisers of His grace in Christ, they pretend to own His rights in the law, and use the law to reject Christ. But Jesus would not admit the pretended submission of the Jews to Moses: "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye

trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how can ye believe My words?" (John v. 45-47.) The vail was upon their hearts when they read Moses.

The gospel of the grace of God is the revelation of the glory of God in the person and the work of His Son Jesus Christ. It is the perfect expression of that name which God had proclaimed to Moses. (Exodus xxxiv. 6.) The word, "true and worthy of all acceptance," is, "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Tim. i. 15.) The only ground on which God addresses man in the ministry of reconciliation is that he is a lost sinner. Peter told Israel as a people, "Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." (Acts iii. 26.) But in spite of the clearness of the testimony the vail remained upon their heart; they looked constantly to Moses. They confirmed their national crime when they rejected the Holy Ghost who spoke to them through Stephen, and killed him, as they had before denied and killed the Son.

When the apostle of the Gentiles was called, he testified of the perfect glory of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) But the vail remained on their hearts. "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from

you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." (Acts xiii. 46.)

Let us turn now our attention to a truth which is much represented in our days, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." (Zech. iv. 6.) It is possible to preach the gospel of the grace of God in a very full and clear manner; but while it is opened to those "that find knowledge" (Prov. viii. 9), it remains as to its true meaning hid without the quickening power of the Spirit, and the grace is not apprehended. In the same manner we may be forced through the clearness of the exposition to accept with the understanding the doctrine of the grace, and all the time the heart remain unconscious of its own needs, and show soon that it rejects the grace of God, and that independence instead of boast in Christ is its sole principle. When the Lord said to the Jews who had been attracted by His miracles, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed," what did they answer? "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" (John vi. 27, 28.) Man with the vail upon his heart is ready to *do*, but refuses a God who gives. He is ready to labour honestly and diligently to establish his own righteousness, but refuses to submit himself to the righteousness of God. To submit is to own God's grace, *i.e.* that God of His own free gift, for His own sake, can give to man what he did not deserve, and what he had no right to demand of God. The vail must be taken from his heart to see these things, and then

the vail drops at the same time both from his heart and from the face of Moses.

"Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away." (2 Cor. iii. 16.) There is only one power which can turn the evil heart of Israel to the Lord; miracles are for this powerless. The history of that people was full of miracles from the beginning; nevertheless they were "a perverted and crooked generation." When Jesus in His great condescension invited them to come to Him, He adds, "But I said unto you, that ye also have seen Me, and believe not." (John vi. 36.) Although Jesus had spoken to them "as never man spake," the servants who testified this of Him were interrupted angrily by the religious leaders, "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?" (John vii. 46-49.) They had been eye-witnesses of His miracles, "but though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him." (John xii. 37.) And when the Holy Ghost came down from heaven as witness of the glory of Him whom they had crucified, enabling uneducated and ignorant men to testify of Him with such clearness and boldness, they are reminded of the word, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." (Acts vii. 51.) What more could God do for Israel that He had not done? They are without excuse and righteously afflicted with blindness till this day.

But though the Lord could do no more *for* Israel, He can for His own sake do the wonderful work *in* them of turning their hearts to Himself. And this will happen. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you,

and ye shall be clean : from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26.) "I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for Mine holy name's sake." (*v.* 22.) "Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you : be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel." (*v.* 32.) The Spirit quickens. God alone has life in Himself; He alone can communicate life. The Spirit, where He works for salvation for this ministry, opens the eyes to see and the ears to hear, and then the veil is removed from the heart and the heart is won for the Lord.

But is it only a question of Israel, or are not the words of the apostle also addressed to us and meant for our instruction? Often we learn our position best when we see it mirrored in that of others. Surely not without a purpose does the apostle, through the Holy Spirit, refer to the future conversion of Israel when writing to the converted of the nations. The Corinthians might easily think that a cultivated civilisation could only be advantageous to the cause of the gospel. But Paul refuses such an auxiliary from the outset. His testimony among them 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." (1 Cor. ii. 4, 5.) Those wise Greeks had drawn the line of civilisation, and considered those barbarians who stood outside of this line. But their wisdom was linked with the grossest superstition.

In distinction to the wise Greek is the pious Jew who testified to the oneness of the Godhead. But the

THE VAIL.

241

testimony of Paul was the same to both, although they stood opposed to one another, "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness." (1 Cor. i. 23.) The vail was on the heart of the latter as well as of the former; they were equally opposed to the doctrines of grace. The apostle counted solely upon the power of God to remove the vail and to open the way for the reception of His testimony. When the Lord Jesus was on the point of leaving His disciples, He gave them the promise, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning." (John xv. 26, 27.) This double testimony is equally necessary, viz., the testimony of the servants of God and the quickening testimony of the Spirit. The clearest exposition and the most pointed proofs are unavailing without the quickening power of the Spirit. And because He is the Spirit of truth, He bears testimony in the soul which is quickened by Him, "because the Spirit is truth." (1 John v. 6-10.)

Although there may be individual cases in which God sends a "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie," it cannot yet be said that the great mass of nominal Christians has been given over to delusion in the judgment of God as Israel has been. Yet morally an equally dense vail rests upon the hearts of the great bulk of those who call themselves Christians, as regards the true gospel, as on the heart of Israel in respect of the coming Messiah. Leaving out popery, which has evidently an anti-Christian character, how does it stand with the great number of Protestants

by birth and tradition, even with those who read the New Testament, if it is really read at all? The Holy Scriptures are read by the light of tradition, *i.e.* with a mirror, which alone is sufficient to make the Word of God void and of none effect. They are read like the writings of any human author, whereas this Word comes to man with divine authority, representing God's thoughts and demanding the obedience of faith; or else one looks in the Holy Scriptures for accounts, annals, histories, without heeding in the least the truths connected with the facts, *i.e.* the teaching of the gospel. Therefore they may be read without the living power of the Spirit being in the least felt—a power which speaks to sinners or disciples now as directly as in the first days of the Church, when this Word issued from the lips of the Lord or of His apostles. (Heb. ii. 3.) And thus the word becomes true: "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." (2 Cor. iii. 6.)

Christianity exists, the presence of the Church is owned; but these two facts only help to keep the veil on the heart when the New Testament is read. To hold fast Christianity as known, to confess one or other of its many forms of worship, is generally considered sufficient to make a Christian. But there is little desire to know God as revealed in Christ. The foundation principles of the gospel are dimmed or made powerless through human additions. The strife between Protestants and Catholics is more regarding the senselessness of the Catholic faith than regarding the vital question of saving faith as it was at the time of the Reformation. Unto this day the veil is upon the mass of the Protestants when they read the Holy Scriptures. They stumble at the threshold: "Except a man be

born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.) Allowing the fullest value to sound criticism, recognising all the light which the discoveries of recent travellers have thrown on Holy Scriptures, and accepting thankfully the many helps which are offered to the student of Scripture, yet we maintain that all these things by themselves are powerless to remove the veil from the heart. The law could not give life, and these things can do it just as little. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." (John vi. 63.)

In this, as in many other cases, the Lord is above men: "Now the Lord is that Spirit." (2 Cor. iii. 17.) God allows man to bring out all his resources to make evident the distance which exists between man and God. Thus in this particular case, where the gift of life is in question, the line of separation is drawn very clearly. "*I am the life,*" says Jesus; "*I am [not shall be] the resurrection and the life.*" "The Son quickeneth whom He will." "The last Adam is a quickening spirit." "The life is the light of men." The quickened soul sees in the Lord Jesus the salvation of God.

When the Lord spake with Nicodemus the subject was, so to speak, "man." "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast-day, many believed in His name, when they saw the miracles which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man. But there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles which thou doest except God be

with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John ii. 23-25; iii. 1-3.)

Nicodemus is presented to us as an honest man who values the miracles of the Lord rightly and owns that they confirm His divine mission. Nicodemus was "ruler of the Jews," one of the religious authorities of that day; yet at the very outset he meets with a statement which confounds him. The vail was on his heart, and he hesitates (an instance of the curious inconsistency of man) to accept a doctrine, although presented by One whom he owns "a teacher come from God," because this doctrine silenced his understanding. It is therefore possible to accept the mission of Jesus, supported as it is by glorious, incontestable proofs; but without the quickening power of the Holy Ghost it is impossible to accept the doctrine. Only he who is born again can see and believe that the same Person can be teacher and doctrine at the same time.

THE CHRISTIAN ARMOUR.

I HAVE got into the habit, from God I believe, of looking at all truth as concentrating in Christ.

"Having your loins girt about with truth!" Some people are rather loose, we are all so, and give full play to thoughts in our minds, and think it of no great consequence. Is that the life of God in a man? Is that like, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of"? or, "I have glorified Thee on the earth"? We shall never be able to meet loose people unless we are the opposite ourselves. We must have the truth applied. It ought to be our joy to take every spare moment to think about the Lord Jesus Christ. It is impossible for a person to get into truth who is not separated to God in thought and affections and interests, and takes delight in it. The Lord Jesus knows how to give us truth to suit our conscience and heart and whole moral being.

First of all I must have the truth revealed to my soul. He has made God known so that I might delight in Him. That ought to make my heart beat with joy; but we have got into such a conventional way of thinking of things, and need to get alone with God. We have not the motives that governed and filled and led out Paul's soul.

"Girt about with truth," so to be under the power of it. In Hebrews we are in our infirmities simply, and have the High Priest for us in them. Then in Romans viii. the Holy Ghost helpeth our infirmities; and in John He says, "Sanctify them by Thy truth."

"And having done all, to stand." Down here there is just wave after wave of trouble, and there are

intermediate waves of blessing and refreshment. I ought to be living in great joy, constant joy; and when trial comes I ought to be anticipating victory over it.

“And having on the breastplate of righteousness”—practical righteousness. I see this in Christ; He never waited for sympathy. There was never a being on earth who enjoyed it like Christ. “When I called, was there none to answer?” It was not that there was not love in His disciples, but they were always short of the present thoughts of God. As to the Father’s glory and the Son’s glory, the counsel of peace shall be between them both. It never was or could have been interrupted for a single moment. So Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said, “Father, I thank Thee.” It is a beautiful thought, the Lord going on there in His solitariness, a holy Man, but communion unbroken, unbreakable.

We are obliged to carry on a war against wicked spirits, but we are to carry on the ways of peace all the time. A very effectual way of keeping out Satan, and keeping out sorrow, too, is to have my heart filled with what is divine.

“Praying always with all prayer”; he takes a place of dependence in all this.

There is a remarkable fulness of expression here—“the *whole* armour.” In this epistle we have a full unfolding of the present mind of God as nowhere else. It is all founded on the counsels of God and the thoughts of God about the Son.

In the first part of chapter i. you have the sinner taken up in all his misery according to God’s al-

mightiness, "to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." The Beloved is before the face of the Father. He has accepted me, and made me to stand before Him in the nearness and blessedness of His own Son. It is God accepting and dealing with me in the all-grace of His nature. There is no reserve whatever, because God does not give Godhead to His Son, it is ever His unchangeably. But whatever God has given to His Son in manhood He has given me. Some say these truths are too high for them, but it is the common portion of all saints since Pentecost. You cannot say these things are too high for me, because all these things are for God the Father. The moment the soul begins to feed on the all-grace of God, you find that Satan is against it. He is an adversary to you and me, because he is an adversary to Christ.

In *Proverbs viii.* we get a blessed revelation of the Son before the foundation of the world—the Father's delight; the Father equally His delight. There you see the Son accomplishing the purpose of God about creation.

The revelation of the Father in the Son is the foundation of all truth. In *Zechariah vi.* is a typical revelation of the earthly glory, and the counsel of peace is between Jehovah and the Branch. "Behold the man whose name is the Branch, and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord; even He shall build the temple of the Lord, and He shall bear the glory." He grows up from His place of lowliness. The earthly glory is supported, carried through to the end by the Branch. He takes the kingdom from the Father's hand, and

glorifies the Father, and delivers it up to the Father—a perfect kingdom.

Now we look on to the heavenly Jerusalem. You do not find “the Father and the Son” there, or “the Creator,” or “Jehovah” and “the Branch,” but “God and the Lamb.” In the heavenly Jerusalem “the Lamb is the light thereof,” just as He bears the glory of the earthly kingdom. But He is the Branch and He is the great Creator.

To be accepted in this wonderful person is a glory of grace—“accepted in the Beloved.”

In Ephesians all is new. The saints are set in a place they were never in before—not only accepted in the Beloved, but united to Christ in glory.

There are two things: I am in the beloved Son in all His glory, and I have His sympathies too in passing through the wilderness, for He was the very “man of sorrows.” As a man down here He was characterised by sorrows, not by sorrow only, but by sorrows; but of nothing higher can He think for His disciples than “that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves.” In Ephesians He goes down below the earth, and He ascends “up *far* above all heavens.” What a mighty track, far above the stars of light, far above all heavens! The eye of God alone views that place where Jesus is the glorious accepted One. He must go up there to get the Holy Ghost for us, that we might put on the armour of God.

No man ever had the Holy Ghost indwelling before, and the conflict is of a new kind entirely. How great the occasion is! and the grace wholly new.

God had acted in grace in Old Testament times, but “grace and truth *came* by Jesus Christ.” There it

was in Christ. This grace is all new. Oh, to know more about Him, and to be wholly absorbed by Him.

Being set there we are engaged necessarily in this conflict. . . . It is the conflict of a new kind of man. His conflict is with wicked spirits in heavenly places, the universal lords of this darkness. Satan accuses the children of God, and we having a place there in the heavenlies, our conflict is with him there. He would deprive the saints of the realisation of what we get in chapter i., our place in Christ there. The whole truth was now revealed. Now we have the *whole* armour of God. "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth." They used to wear flowing garments, and if called to any energetic work the garments had to be girded up. "And having on the breastplate of righteousness." To stand before whom? I set out as accepted before *God*, according to the teaching of this epistle. It is to stand before the lord of this darkness. What am I to meet him with? Personal piety? the remembrance of good works? a good conscience? That will never do. First, I must have my loins girt about with truth. What is truth? The whole truth is in Jesus. He is the truth. Could you show me the "life of God"? Yes, in all its resplendent beauty, glorious and beautiful, before it ever left the heavens. He was the eternal life, and the truth is in Jesus. That was the life of God. In the beginning of the epistle we are accepted before Him. Now he says, "You are not like these Gentiles, alienated from the life of God." The truth in another sense is the putting on of Christ. We have died in His death, and we live in His life—before God. As we go on and deepen

in the knowledge of divine ways, we find that all in heaven and earth has its centre in Christ.

Then there is the breastplate — that is, practical righteousness — but that is not to *stand* before God (though for conflict there certainly must be communion with Him). Who is it that engages in conflict with Satan? A man that is for ever blest by God, and before Him it is not the breastplate of righteousness, but His own righteousness.

We have not merely to meet the wiles of Satan, but his fiery darts. When the conscience is bad we begin to give up truth, or when you want, perhaps, to love Christ, but have been despising grace, then for our punishment God perchance allows doubting thoughts to rise.

When my heart is true and loyal and He is my object and my joy, I can take up the armour, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. He is contemplating conflict with the wicked one, not, as in Hebrews, the Word of God a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* He says in Philippians, "Rejoice in the Lord always." Think of one saying to us by the voice of God, "Rejoice always"! Then he unfolds his own history, sometimes high, sometimes low, sometimes having nothing. See how he links that strength in the Lord with the consciousness of weakness. When I am in a good state I never feel strong; when my heart is depressed and cast down, then Christ says, "You are just the thing for Me, for that is My fixed principle." My strength is made perfect in weakness. Oh, what a blessed place it is to feel poor—

* It is nevertheless applied to oneself as bringing divine authority to bear, as Christ used it with Satan in the wilderness.—ED.

FOOTSTEPS OF GRACE.

251

not with a bad conscience, but when looking into the depths of this glorious place, this glorious Being. That is the thing to feel. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and for me." He counted on their sympathies with himself. May the Spirit by which he wrote be the power of our sympathies, so that we may have the power to communicate these things. —*Ralph Evans, Parkstone, Nov. 26th, 1883.*

FOOTSTEPS OF GRACE.

GENESIS ix.

How bright a ray shines out from the heart of God in this passage! Jehovah had smelled the sweet odour of Noah's sacrifice, and said in His heart that the curse should be no more. Moreover God, ready to forgive, blessed Noah, granting a renewed lease of earthly blessing to man, however unchanged his nature, even evil from his youth. Nor did He cancel any gift, but added in His bounty "every moving thing that liveth" to be food, but "its blood ye shall not eat."

His rights reserved and recognised, and man's life respected, God would still in long-suffering linger over a fallen world, setting His bow in the clouds: the sign of the covenant between Him and all flesh that is upon the earth. Partial floods there may be, but never so as to cut off all flesh or to destroy the earth.

God's first and last thought is blessing, of which blood forbidden and the cloudy bow displayed are proofs. If the curse and corruption come in meanwhile, it is the result of Adam's sin, and in hope that

the creature itself shall be set free into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. But man, the transgressor, brings shame upon himself, and in the heat of anger Noah curses his own offspring, while in almost the same breath he blesses Jehovah, the God of Shem. Miserable himself, he aggravates and gives impulse and direction to the suspended curse. The tongue can no one tame; it is an unsettled evil, full of death-bringing poison. "Therewith bless we the Lord and Father, and therewith curse we men, made after the likeness of God. Out of the same mouth goes forth blessing and cursing."

Such is man's history—hateful and hating one another; and sad the consequences for Ham's posterity of the curse here put on record in the Word of God, so different from the action of Melchisedec, who brought out bread and wine, not to be overcome thereby as Noah, but to refresh God's servant; and if he blessed the Most High God, blessed Abram too. Such is the priest of the Most High God, and such the blessing—life for evermore—that Jehovah hath commanded, like the precious oil upon the head that ran down upon Aaron's beard to the hem of his garments.

But this is when brethren dwell together in unity; whereas man's curse begets a violence, fruit of the want of self-restraint from which it sprang, for Ham's descendants become mighty on the earth (bondmen though they be) and mighty hunters before the Lord, setting up empire here and spreading themselves abroad; a character well to note in such days as these, for this it was gave rise to the first great act of governmental interposition on the part of God subsequent to the flood, an act that marks the state of the world to-day.

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

BY THE EDITOR.

(From Shorthand Report.)

LECTURE XI. CHAPTERS XII. AND XIII. *(continued.)*

By his tail, which is used in Scripture as descriptive of false prophetic influence, this dragon brings under his power the third part of the stars of heaven. That is, by some spiritual influence he subordinates to his will all the governmental authorities that he can control, which is practically the state of things to-day. It was, as a matter of fact, the state of things when Pontius Pilate, the representative of the Roman Emperor, occupying the seat of justice in Jerusalem, gave up the righteous and Holy One into the hands of His enemies.

“And the dragon stood before the woman.” He was not occupied so much with destroying this system which God had introduced into the earth as he was with the destruction of the one that was to come by her. “He stood before the woman to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne.” This is undoubtedly the Lord Jesus Christ. But with Him there is connected all the co-heirs. Personally the Lord was born of a virgin, but that is not the point here. Israel, as a nation, is the vessel, according to the heavenly thoughts of

God, of the introduction of the Man who is to assume the government of the world for God. And you know, for I am speaking to Christians, that if Christ is the Heir, we are the co-heirs. We are joint-heirs with Christ; and if it comes to be a question of the reigning man, Christ does not, and will not reign without us. You will remember that He says to the Church at Thyatira, "To him that overcometh, and keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give authority over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron"—exactly as He does Himself. "As a potter's vessel shall they be broken in pieces." Not that we have to do that part of it, but we do rule in conjunction with Christ. And if we are to enjoy the thoughts of God with respect to the government of the world, we must see, not only that Christ Himself is the One who shall rule and reign, but that those who believe on Him in the day of His rejection are associated with Him in that ruling and reigning.

The prophet Micah also has this question before him, and the rejection of Christ. "They shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek." Here you get Christ's rejection; and he brings out the person of the rejected judge. "O Beth-lehem Ephratah, thou who art little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from everlasting." He is a rejected man, but a Divine Person nevertheless. What are the results of His rejection? He says, "Therefore shall He give them up [the nation who rejected Him] until the time when she that shall have travailed, shall have brought forth; and then shall the remnant of His brethren return unto the children

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

255

of Israel." Israel's travailing and bringing forth is not accomplished until the whole of the present interval is over and all the remnant from among the Jews who are now introduced into the Church have received their heavenly place; and when that is all accomplished you have the remnant once more—no longer Christians, no longer in the Church, but they revert to their Jewish race.

This is not always understood, but it is very clear, according to the Scripture, that those who are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ are associated with Christ, who is the Heir, in all His kingdom and place. And it is also certain that God does not commence times, or begin to count, until all these co-heirs with the heavenly Man, who form part of Himself, are out of the scene.

"Then the woman [Israel] fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared of God, that they should nourish her there." Then immediately God begins to count, and He counts 1260 days, which are the last half of Daniel's seventieth week. It is the closing up—the last three and a half years of the times of the Gentiles, which extend from Daniel's day to the end of the whole of this present dispensation. But there is no account taken until the child is caught up to God and to His throne, and then the woman flees to the wilderness.

Well, it is very instructive to see that immediately there is war in heaven, Michael comes upon the scene. He is the great prince who stands up for Daniel's people at the time of the end. "Your prince," as was said to Daniel; "one of the chief princes." And he is also called "the archangel," the one who contended

with Satan over the body of Moses. He comes into the scene again, but does not commence this warfare until the middle of the last week of Daniel's seventy. "Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; nor was their place found any more in heaven." The devil is there to-day, and our conflict is there. Can you show me the Christian that does not know that Satan is in heaven? At any rate, the apostle Paul tells us that our conflict is not with flesh and blood, but with the hosts of spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. A conflict not with doubts and fears as to our salvation, or with the flesh we carry about with us, but our proper conflict is with no other than the hosts of spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. The moment Satan is cast out of heaven there will be no more of that. I do not think that Michael casts out Satan and his angels. He stands for Daniel's people; and the moment the woman flees into the wilderness Michael enters into conflict with the dragon. We are not told that he drives the accuser out, for no other than the Lord Jesus Christ could cast these mighty powers of evil from the heavenly place they have usurped so long.

The moment the Lord Jesus Christ had taken His place in heaven the whole question of Satan's presence and the scattering God's people was raised. Peter, in preaching after Pentecost, says to the Jews, that if they would repent and be converted, for the blotting out of their sins, God would send to them Jesus Christ. He is ever ready. The moment the Lord Jesus Christ went to heaven, if the people would only have received Him as the ascended Christ, there

was power and right to have cast down Satan and brought the people back to their place of blessing. "And He shall send Jesus Christ, who was fore-ordained, whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things." That could have been done then and there; only instead of listening to God's messengers and receiving the message preached they put them in prison, and it was all over, and the offer was never repeated. But the moment is quickly coming when the last half-week of Daniel's seventy shall have arrived, and God will take in hand to accomplish what the people refused for the moment. Then Michael shall stand up.

Now, immediately Satan was cast down, there was a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down," etc.

The devil has no more place in this character. At the present moment he is doing a great deal of work, I do not doubt, pointing out all sorts of failures. And he ought not to find any. That is why we need to be clothed with the panoply of God. We need the breastplate of righteousness, our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, the helmet of salvation, etc. But *then* he will be cast down, and the kingdom commence as to its heavenly place. The power of the kingdom is then taken as regards heaven.

"And they have overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and have not loved their life even unto death." I think it is we who say this, because we speak of our brethren.

The Christian is supposed to be so clear as to his own place, that there is no conflict with Satan about it. Our place, we know very well, is in Christ. We have a conflict with Satan about the possession and realisation of heavenly privilege, but not as to our place. These brethren had overcome him by the blood of the Lamb. That, being from God, is valid before God; their testimony they bore before men, and they had to die for it. No doubt it refers particularly to those who are slain after the Church is gone, who bear their testimony before Israel is brought into its true place, in the middle of the last week of Daniel. In the meanwhile this persecuting power goes on.

The result of his being cast down is, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth!" etc., and then he sets to work to persecute the woman because he cannot get at the Child. The heavenly King is secure now. The Man that is to govern, and all the co-heirs with Him, are there, and the only thing Satan can do is to persecute the woman. She has given to her two wings of a great eagle; that is, power to escape, not to withstand. She acts upon the admonition which the Lord Jesus Christ gave to His disciples in Matthew xxiv., that when they see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, they that are in the city should flee to the mountain. There is always the privilege of running away, and it is a very great mercy that there is that privilege. Because, if God has admonished us to flee, and the devil rises up against a man to destroy life, you cannot do better than get out of his way.

That is what the woman does. She has two wings of a great eagle given her to flee into the wilderness.

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

259

She gets into a place where no one will find her. Satan cannot get people to follow you if there is nothing to follow you for, and it is a very great safeguard when God puts His people into poverty, because then they have nothing to lose. Satan uses baits to urge on persecution, and if there is nothing to gain by it, he does not find much opportunity to persecute. She flees to the mountains and is secured of God and is nourished for time, times, and a half. He casts out of his mouth water as a flood, in order that she might be carried away; that is, he gets an immense multitude of people (the oppression that we have seen under the two woe trumpets) to follow after the poor persecuted remnant. But this multitude will not go to the mountains, in spite of the devil's purpose. They stop by the cities where there is money, and clothing, and food, and where there is everything that is enticing. The earth helped the woman—the ordered condition of things swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

“And the dragon went and made war with the remnant of her seed.” They are not Christians. They are saved, and keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ; but they are on prophetic ground, in the Jewish position, and are being sustained in that position, and will be brought out by-and-by for blessing.

Now we can look at one or two points connected with the next chapter (xiii.). It is very important to see what the Spirit of God brings before us here. We have not the thing presented as it appears before God, but the instruments of mischief that the power of evil raises up in order to frustrate God's purpose of

blessing. The first instrument raised up is the beast with seven heads and ten horns—just like Satan himself. In fact, it is not Satan in his governmental form, but the form itself—the actual Roman beast revived in satanic energy for the accomplishment of his purpose in assuming the government of the world and keeping Christ out of it. The battle is as regards the government of the world, and God has already distinctly stated that He has not subjected the world to come to angels. Satan says, “I will do my best to have it so”; but the Word of God says, “What is *man*?” It is to be under the hand of man. Satan says, “No! I will do my best to have it under my hand.” And therefore what we find here is the governmental system that Satan raises up for the purpose.

Now, the horns are crowned because it is the last satanic form in which Satan’s plans appear. Upon the horns are ten crowns, and on their heads names of blasphemy. It was like unto a leopard; that is, it had the characteristics of the Greek Empire raised up since Nebuchadnezzar. God having transferred the government of the world from Israel to the Gentiles, we see in Nebuchadnezzar the golden head, and since that time a gradual degradation of power. The governmental powers have assumed four forms: (1) Nebuchadnezzar; (2) the Medo-Persian; (3) the Greek; and (4) the Roman. This beast has the character of all four. It was like to a leopard, the Greek, in its velocity of action that characterised the Grecian Empire under Alexander. Nothing equalled the speed of his conquests, and in a few short years he overran the whole known world. Thus the Roman Empire in its latest form has also that character.

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

261

Its feet are like the feet of a bear, such was the Medo-Persian; immense power, though unwieldy. What can you expect from a confederation but that which is unwieldy? The swiftness is there, but together with that is the unwieldiness of a confederation not well organised.

It has the mouth of a lion. There we see its ferocity and power of destruction, like unto Nebuchadnezzar.

But the chief point about it was that the dragon gave him his throne and great authority. He got his power from beneath, as you find in the former chapter. It arose from the abyss. The Roman Empire did not originate from the abyss, but does so in its final form. This confederation of Western Europe is founded on the subversion of what is divine, in order to get rid of every responsibility that relationship with God has established. That is a solemn thing, and it is only by the surrender of everything that God has established in connection with the world and its government that such a confederation is finally brought about.

We know, then, they get their authority from Satan. It is the dragon that is the final form that Satan assumes in order to crush the power of God's Christ to rule and govern in this world, and be the god of it. It is he who gives the beast power.

One of the heads was wounded to death. That is the imperial form. You cannot see it to-day. Nobody knows where the imperial form of the Roman Empire exists. There have been certain revivals to show that Satan still keeps the thought in his mind, though the thing has never yet been really brought to light; but it will be.

“ And all the world wondered after the beast. And

they worshipped the dragon . . . and they worshipped the beast." That is really the end in view, that the dragon should be worshipped. Satan is seeking to secure the worship of the world. They wonder after the beast because there is no power that can cope with it in warfare. That is what man is seeking to-day. If you can only get an irresistible military power in this world, all the rest of the nations will be feebly running after it.

"There was given to him a mouth speaking great things." He continues the same period as the woman is fed in the wilderness, 1260 days: only God reckons her sojourn in days because He cares about her, but the continuance of the beast by months because He has no pleasure in it. It is a blasphemous power, as you find in Daniel. He spoke great things against God and them that dwell in heaven, and sought to change God's times and seasons in connection with the Jew, and they were given into his hands for a time, times, and half a time. "It was given to him to make war with the saints" (Daniel vii.), "and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, except those whose names were written in the book of life of the slain Lamb from the foundation of the world."

The Spirit of God gives a lesson here in connection with this which will be very important then and is now. "He that leadeth into captivity shall go in captivity; he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword," etc. God will not have Satan resisted by force. The only way by which God meets the power of evil to-day is by submission.

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

263

If there is persecution you can lay down your life, but you are not to take the sword. You remember what the Lord told His disciples. He says, "Ye did not lack anything while I was with you; but now, if any one has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." Peter immediately produced two swords. It exposed Peter's heart. The Lord had no intention to use the sword. The Christian's power is to submit, and not resist.

The second beast whom Satan raises up to accomplish his purpose is perhaps the more important person in regard to us; but this first beast will embrace in his dominion this country in which we live to-day, and Western Europe, of which we form part; all will be brought into apostasy under the leadership of Satan's man.

CHRIST DWELLING IN THE HEART.

(Unrevised Notes of Lecture by J. N. D. on Ephesians iii. 14-21.)

IN the former part of this chapter we have the unsearchable riches of Christ contrasted with all that had been previously revealed. In all the Old Testament scriptures there had been nothing of the mystery as we get it here. There had been glimpses now and then, but nothing more. What strikes the apostle's mind is that he should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. It was outside all the promises. True, it had been written, "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people," but here it is sovereign grace coming in outside all that had been previously thought of.

The gospel came to the Jews first because God had promised it; but they rejected it. Paul was the strongest proof that the Jews would not have Christ. We find him persecuting the Church and consenting to Stephen's death. He is met in grace from the very place where Stephen, looking up, sees the end of his testimony, and, as he says, he was made "a pattern to *all* who should hereafter believe." When the enmity of man had been brought to the highest pitch, then God could come in in sovereign grace, in His own personal will above all that man had done to prevent Him. Paul calls himself the chief of sinners, and justly so too; but we find God rising above him, and hence he goes to people who, like himself, had no title. It is astonishing how the two

apostles, Peter and Paul, are both fitted for their several parts—Peter cursing and swearing ere he was converted and could strengthen his brethren, and Paul breathing out threatenings and slaughters. As we have seen, flesh must be put down. It is only an empty vessel that the Lord can use, that no flesh should glory in His presence; it is very humbling that we should need it, but we do need it. This fits him for preaching to Gentiles who had no promise, and we now find God revealing Himself in all the fulness of that love in which He could bless those who had nothing to say to God. Flesh was judged in the cross of Christ, and it was not now merely a question of promises, but of having Christ. I first find out what God is through the Son, but now I find the divine affections all centred in Christ—“the Father *loveth* the Son,” then “the unsearchable riches,” everything put into Christ’s hands as Heir of all things, and this as man, as we get in Psalm viii. In Proverbs viii. 31 I find Him delighting in man. He passes by the angels—blessed, doubtless, in their places; but He passes by them, and takes man’s nature upon Him. People keep Christmas, but the world’s estimate of Christ when He came is shown by the fact that it could find no better place for Him than a manger. When Christ came the angels sang God’s good pleasure in *man*; but man would not have Him in his life, and so He must die, because if not, like a *corn of wheat*, He must abide alone. But His desire is to get outside of all man’s rejection and to have man notwithstanding. If man would not have Him in life, because man was dead, He must die and take man up in death, to make him partaker of a new

and risen life. This was perfect, infinite love, not merely kindness (we get His goodness every day); but His *love* in coming to take a sinner's place! God's truth is brought out in this. He has taken man clean out of the position in which he was, and the consequence is that now I see man entering into a new position altogether, in the Second Man, who has gone into sin and death and borne the judgment, and now is in the glory of God *as a Man*, and *I* with Him. This is unsearchable riches, far more than promise, and the apostle's heart was here opening out to this.

In the first chapter we find his prayer is to the *God* of our Lord Jesus Christ; we have Christ as Man, and God in power, making the revelation of the inheritance, etc. But in this third chapter he bows his knees to the *Father* of *our* Lord Jesus Christ, who is seen here in His own personal relationship as Son. Mark, it is *our* Lord, not *the* Lord. Thus saints are brought into closer relationship than any other created intelligence, and angels, instead of being jealous, are delighted at it. The poorest saint knows his union with Christ, and knows it by the Holy Ghost. We own Him as Lord, but He is not ashamed to call us brethren. I am brought into Christ's place, and, as Paul says, it is all by grace, it is all of God.

Christ identifies *Himself* with the Church—"Why persecutest thou *Me*?" It is all association with Himself. The apostle asks here that the saints may enter into the fulness of communion; not as in the first chapter, that they might know it outwardly, but that being strengthened by His Spirit in the inner man Christ may *dwell* in their *hearts* by faith—Christ Himself in your own souls, that He may be the centre

of your hearts by the Holy Ghost, a consciousness that Christ fills you, not merely with knowledge, but that you may be rooted and grounded in *love*. The love of God shed abroad by the Holy Ghost should flow in your hearts; then you would rise above everything—trial, tribulation, the result of all is *love*. This is the way the Holy Ghost reasons, not the way man reasons. God's love was shown in giving the *nearest* thing to Him for that which was *farthest* from Him. Solomon was large of heart, but if I could have such a large heart, God must be the centre of it, or else I should find only sorrow and vanity, as Solomon did.

"That ye may be able to comprehend," etc. If I am walking in *self*, I cannot see beyond the petty things of this world; but when I get beyond the region of self I am able to judge about sin, sinners, to have a true judgment about everything; and I am able to understand the breadth and length and depth and height. He does not say of *what*, that has to be filled in; but in order to make all practical I must "know the love of Christ." If I were going into the Queen's presence, how glad I should be if someone would tell me what to do! Well, this *knowledge* of the love of Christ is the very thing that calms my heart when I think of the immensity of the glory that is to be revealed in me. Christ is next me. I have known Him intimately down here and as risen too; for He is just the same as when He said, "Children, have ye any meat?" When I read that the glory of God doth lighten the city, is that too dazzling, too much for my eye? The next words that I read are that "the Lamb is the light thereof." You see, the heart gets into a

condition where it is at home, and therefore the poorest, simplest saint is quite easy in all this glory, because Christ is in it all, and Christ is in his heart. I may be a poor earthen vessel, but then I have got the treasure inside. By faith in my heart He speaks to me; He manifests Himself to me as He does not to the world. It is a wonderful thing for me to say that I *know* Christ's love, at the same time that I can also say it passeth knowledge. And now the apostle, having shown the saints the exalted position, rises up to it, and says it is "that ye might be filled into all the fulness of God." Wondrous place! wondrous purpose of love to have brought me here! *Now* how shall I look on tribulation? Oh, I can glory in it! I can *joy in God*, not merely *joy* amid the circumstances, but joy in God Himself.

"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think"—this is often wrongly put forth as though it said, "able to do *for* us" (quite true, of course, in its place, because He is able and does *do* for us); but it is not the thought here; it is "able to do *in* us"—"according to the power that worketh in us." (v. 20.) The Church has been looked at as all that we have been speaking of, in order that Christ may be glorified *in* us. "He shall come to be glorified *in* His saints, and admired *in* all them that believe in that day," although the apostle is not here looking at what it will be in the future, but what it is *now* by faith. Moses reflected in his face the glory of God when he came down from the mount; *so should the Church now*. The angels are looking on; there is wisdom in the Church, although very feeble. The angels ought to see in the saints the

glory of God; but how little, beloved friends, how terribly little, can be seen! How everything has failed that has been put into the hand of man, as far as man is concerned—the law, the Son of David, Nebuchadnezzar, the Church! Man has spoiled everything, as far as he had the power. And, dear friends, would that you *knew you were weak*, then you would be better able to say, “Now unto *Him* be glory,” etc. When Paul said, “I was with you in much weakness,” we learn God had “much people in that city.” There *must be weakness in the vessel*. The *object known is Christ*; the place, *our hearts*. God is looking for Christ being known by us, and God glorified *in* us, not merely Christ *dwelling* in us by the Holy Ghost, but in *our hearts*—*my* heart; my thoughts, my feelings, the same as Christ’s. The Lord give us to know how God *has treated us*, that we may know the heart’s obligation *to love*, and that obligation not a legal one.—*December 26th, 1861.*

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S TESTIMONY.

THE Lord, in the Gospel of John, often speaks of "going away" and "going to God," but it is remarkable that He does not speak of dying. For Him "the path of life" lay through death. His path out of this world was the way of the cross, but He does not speak of it as He does in the other gospels. In John xvi. 5-15 we have the result of His going away, namely, the presence of the Holy Spirit with the saints in this world. When we think of all the Lord was to the disciples, it gives us a wonderful sense of the gain the presence of the Holy Spirit must be when the Lord could say, "It is expedient for you that I go away." He had been to them "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land"; yea, much more than that. He had been among them a Man the most accessible and gracious. He was their All: they had left everything for Him. When there is any little tiny bit of self-surrender on our part, how much we think of it! how much we make of it! But they had left their homes, their families, and occupations, to be in company with Him; and all their hearts' affections were entwined around Him, as the tendrils of a vine around its support.

The latter part of John's Gospel, from chapter xiii., speaks of the heavenly position, and there are three chapters which speak much of the Holy Spirit. In chapter xvi. the Lord sends Him, but in chapter xiv. the Father sends Him to be the other Comforter. In chapter xv. He comes to testify in the world, and to

be the power of testimony in the disciples. The Holy Spirit is a Divine Person, as much as Christ is a Person and the Father is a Person. He is not merely an influence, though He did not become a man; but neither did the Father become a man.

In chapter xvi. He is here to convict the world of sin. We know that men will be judged for their works, but the crowning sin of all is that men have not believed on the Son of God. Surely it will be the keenest anguish for a lost soul that Christ died for him. Scripture says that He tasted death for every man. There are three things here: "Sin," "righteousness," and "judgment." If we look at the cross, where do we see righteousness? There is divine righteousness in it, I grant that; but, looked at from man's side, where do we see it? There was no *grace* in the Father's raising the Son.* If you speak of grace, it applies to me, a poor worm. But there was *righteousness* in His raising Him from the dead, and seating Him at the pinnacle of glory on the highest seat above the heavens, at the right hand of the Father's throne. The prince of this world led up the world against Christ on the cross, and the world is judged. It was begun by a man who went out from the presence of the Lord after having killed his unresisting brother, because he had offered a sacrifice which was received with favour. Suppose one had killed a beloved child of yours, could you the next day shake hands and be on friendly terms with him? The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world, but the world has rejected its Saviour. And when He comes again, will it be to present Himself

* There was glory.—Ed.

to the world and say, Here I am: believe on Me? No; it will be as the Judge. God will say to the world as such, What have you done with My Son? •

The Holy Spirit shows us things to come; but though these heavenly things are ours who believe, what is the bar to the enjoyment of them? How is it there is so little? We find the answer in that passage, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." He dwells in our bodies, and we can never lose Him, but He may be grieved. We have a heavenly inheritance; it is no unreal thing. But do you say, Is that all? Is there nothing for earth? Yes, there is the *path of identification with a rejected Christ*, the having His approval, His smile.

There are three instances in the Old Testament, often dwelt upon by devoted servants of the Lord now at rest, of the way in which three men respectively treated the inheritance. The first is in the Book of Ruth. Elimelech was in his inheritance, but a time of testing came. Depend upon it the Lord will test every soul gathered to His Name; a time of famine will come to test whether it will turn back into the world. How many souls, alas! once at the Lord's table, who have gone back into the world. A famine came, and Elimelech left the land and went into the country of Moab. But the Lord took him away, and his two sons also. Ah, it is a sad story! So he died, and lost the inheritance. The second is Naboth, the Jezreelite. He had a vineyard hard by the king's palace. In Scripture a vineyard is the type of fruitfulness. The king wanted it for a garden of herbs; and his wife finds him on his bed with his face to the wall, because

FOOTSTEPS OF GRACE.

273

Naboth would not give it him. In reply to her inquiry he tells her, "Naboth will not give me his vineyard, neither for a better one nor for as much money as it is worth." What! give up his vineyard, his inheritance, to be made into a garden of herbs? No, he would rather die; he does die. Persons come to us now, and bring us new things and say, Here is new truth, heavenly truth. And they want us to give up the old truths which we have learnt in past days. Let us *die* rather than give up what we have learnt from God. *Heavenly truth is Christ and all that He has with the Father.*

Chronicles speaks of the third man, Jabez. He prays that he may enjoy more of the inheritance, that he may not be grieved, and that his coast may be enlarged. And though he be the picture of a sorrowful remnant, we may learn from Jabez.—*R. Kent, June 17th, 1894.*

FOOTSTEPS OF GRACE.

GENESIS xi.

THE fig tree with its sweetness and good fruit gave character to a paradise on earth, where God, who had rested from all His work, walked in the cool of the day to commune with the man whom He had formed. But communion there was not, nor rest for man; for, using the leaves of that which is its type, the fig tree, he laboured in vain to hide his guilty nakedness.

But an olive tree may find congenial soil even in a cursed earth; and an olive leaf *plucked off*, not merely

floating on the waters of a deluged world, told that God had not left Himself without a witness, though all was corrupt before Him and full of violence. There had been a testimony, a fatness, whereby they honour God and man, which in Noah could survive the Flood and become an odour of a sweet smell by reason of a sacrifice—pledge of better things in the earth that now is.

For this the earth must needs be governed. If no longer cursed, yet it must be ruled; and the power of death is put in man's hand for the purpose. Established in mercy and faithfulness, a kingdom of righteousness it is that cheereth God and man in a scene where the power of evil has to be trodden underfoot. Of this the vine is the figure; and Noah plants a vineyard, but only to be overcome by the fruits of it in an undue exhilaration, full of sad and shameful consequences.

Man misuses the fig tree and the vine; but the olive stands rooted in the rock and survives Jehovah's judgment. These three trees are symbolic of the three great spheres of man's moral existence, namely, intercourse with God, righteous government in the world, and religious privilege and testimony on earth.

Well had it been for man to have kept himself within the limits thus prescribed; but intercourse with one another substitutes communion with God (xi. 3, 4), and they propose to build themselves a city and a tower to make themselves a name supreme, and to govern in might instead of right. Thus they pervert once more the ways of God expressed in the fig tree and the vine. (*v.* 6.) But Jehovah there confounded the language of the whole earth—an insuperable bar to their ambitious projects, though not to grace, for,

while bowing to the divine decree, the power of the Spirit come down from Christ not only triumphs, but uses the tongues of Babel to declare the wonderful and gracious works of God.

Moreover, in the governmental ways of God Jehovah scattered Babel's builders over the face of the whole earth, and no doubt it is to this event that Genesis x. 25 refers. For in Peleg's days was the earth divided, a division marked by the fact that he was the first to die of all the post-diluvian patriarchs, including Shem, whose sons they were, and even Noah himself. In him, too, the age of man was suddenly reduced by one half, giving us to understand how important an epoch was thus formed in God's administration of the earth.

GENESIS xii.

But in the ordering of God's wisdom a new scene is now introduced on the principle of faith, inaugurated by an absolute separation to the obedience of God's Word in contrast with the world and nature's claims. Not that the duties existing in connection with the latter are ignored or denied, but that a wholly superior and supreme authority has interposed, and all else must be implicitly in subjection to this. The word of the Lord is this authority.

Even when a saint, the man is but slow to discern this new character of things, this world of faith, because, though far more real and substantial before God than that of nature, it is unseen. Thus the God of glory appeared to Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, in Ur of the Chaldeans, and took him from

thence (Joshua xxiv. 3), where they served other gods, saying to him, "Go out of thy land and out of thy kindred, and come into the land which I will show thee." Yet, in the history, it was *Terah* who took Abram *his son*—the claim of natural relationship still controlled him, so that they came as far as Haran only. But the power of death falls on this relationship, and then "Abram departed, as Jehovah had said to him" (Gen. xii. 4), "and into the land of Canaan they came." (v. 5.)

Even now, besides his wife, he took Lot, his brother's son—an encumbrance and cause of strife. For though Lot was a righteous man, and would have sat in the gate administering judgment in the earth, he had no sense whatever of the value of the path of faith, and when tested was no more fit for the seat of judgment than those whose conduct he condemned (2 Peter ii. 6-8), or than Noah, who preceded him, for he sinned from a similar shameful cause. Upright intentions and godly righteous feelings, apart from separation to God and subjection to His Word by faith, cannot preserve the soul from even the grossest evils. But the moment the Word of God becomes eyes to the soul, the most depraved and habituated to sin is delivered from the power of it. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." To be of the world and walk with God is now impossible, for He has distinctly called us out from it into a path of dependence and obedience to His Word.

It is true that since Abraham's day the world and nature have been put on trial again, under law and its righteous ordinances. All that lacked under Noah and Lot was then supplied, but ruin and failure the more

overwhelmingly have alone resulted. It is not of faith: and in man's experience "whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

Observe, that it is in this path of faith that the purposes of God commence to unfold themselves, or rather their subjects and the great principles upon which they will hereafter be established. His revelation of them to Abraham takes two forms, namely, the blessing pronounced before his entering the land, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," a blessing never repeated until the offering up of Isaac; and then the inheritance of the land, bestowed upon his seed. (*vv. 3-7.*)

What distinguishes this, as in contrast with the first man Adam similarly endowed, is that the blessing and the possession in the latter case were made the portion of the race as such, whereas in Abraham and his seed the depositary is an individual. Now worship again arises to Jehovah (*v. 7*), neglected apparently as it had been since Noah's altar; for between them the record was simply one of shame, self-will, degradation, ruin, and apostasy. But it is easier to build an altar—that is, to confess certain established relationships with God—than to walk practically in the power of those relationships. Passing circumstances instead of precious faith affect the mind, dependence fails, and then the path proves how far the heart holds fast the promises. Thus Abraham went down to Egypt because famine was in the land.

But not for this had God called him out of Ur; nor was the land promised to his seed that he should deny his wife. Whence, then, should have been the heir, if Sarai had remained in Pharaoh's house? How little

does God's Word possess the heart even of His saints! But He remains faithful, and idle is the excuse that the land was famine-stricken and Sarai barren. All things are possible to God; it is of the flesh to despise the birthright because of present circumstances.

SCRIPTURE QUERIES.

(Papers under the above title are mainly in answer to Correspondents.)

GENESIS i.-iii.

ADAM was the figure of Him who was to come, a fact which gives its highest interest and importance to the divine history of the first creation. The position and moral faculties appropriated to men are formed after a divine pattern. First (Gen. i. 26), as set in supremacy amid dependent beings in recognised relations. Then the difference is made of the food appointed for men (to whom rule pertained) and that provided for the subordinate creatures—to the former, the fruits of the earth, that which produces seed; to the latter, every green herb. (*vv.* 28-30.) Moreover, the man is put into the garden bringing forth the fruits of which he might freely eat, planned and planted by his Maker's skill, a pattern ever before his eyes, for the earth yet to be subdued. Therein his daily work was set, to till it and to guard it. (*ii.* 15, 16.) Lastly, his intelligent ability to fill the place is proved (*vv.* 19, 20), and a helpmate given him (*vv.* 21-25), bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. In all this the first man Adam was the figure, if the contrast, of the Second Man, whose is the paradise of God. Therein are the

SCRIPTURE QUERIES.

279

river of the water of life and the tree of life which produces twelve fruits, in each month yielding its fruit, but the leaves for healing of the nations. Thus again in the heavenly scene is distinction made between the portion of the ruling and the ruled.

It is, however, needful to note the difference of person between the heavenly One, the Second Man Himself, and the heavenly ones who share in grace with Him. Truly He has His bride; and we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Moreover, He is indeed the Son of Man set over the works of God's hands; but He is the Firstborn, and we are only the many brethren—co-heirs with Him who is the Heir. Thus He needs not the water of life nor tree of life, for He is it, and gives it in grace to those who share with Him. Besides, in manhood, also, He is a divine source of life, having it in Himself; and in His own is their life, the source and power of their spiritual capacities and pattern of their position and relationships, as well as the glorious object and centre in whom alone they are known and enjoyed. It would therefore be fatal and egregious error to lower the Second Man, the Son of Man, to the level of His companions, so as to deny Him any divine attribute (for we have none), though He is the pattern of all that we are or shall be before God in Him. On the contrary, in all things He has "the pre-eminence."

After the Fall the conditions of our altered and ruined state are simply and plainly told. (Gen. iii. 18-19.) Henceforward "the herb of the field" is not alone for the animals, but also for the food of man, growing as it may without labour amid the thorns and thistles of the earth. With little toil, perchance,

but grovelling and precarious would be the existence thus afforded. But if the man desire bread, in the sweat of his face shall he eat it, until he return to the ground out of which he was taken.

After the Flood, when Jehovah smelled the sweet savour of Noah's sacrifice, government, instead of the curse, was established in the earth that now is, and a new world began in which fear of the ruling man was the principle of his relationship with a subject creation. The green herb was still his portion, token of the Fall, but together therewith every moving thing that liveth should be food for him (ix. 3), blood only being forbidden. Doubtless, too, Jehovah, whose heart yearned over His creature, continued to bring forth bread out of the earth, though man had to work for it, and wine which gladdeneth his heart; making his face shine with oil, and with bread strengthening his heart (Psalm civ. 14, 15); but that man's staple food was flesh, and therewith the green herb is peculiar, to a world governed by the sword of justice.

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

BY THE EDITOR.

(*From Shorthand Report.*)

LECTURE XII. CHAPTERS XIII., XIV., AND XV.

THESE three chapters form one series and go together. Chapter xii. set forth the heavenly thoughts of God and Satan's work in relation thereto; then chapter xiii. gave us the special agents which Satan raised up for the purpose of opposing the thoughts and purposes of God. These agents consist particularly of two great world-powers. The first partakes of the characteristics of the empires of the world as revealed by the prophet Daniel. God, who had Himself established the first empire, made known in a dream to Nebuchadnezzar the position assigned to him—the head of gold. Neither Nebuchadnezzar nor his wise men could understand the dream until interpreted by Daniel, in whom was the Spirit of the holy gods, as Nebuchadnezzar said; and before him Daniel set the whole divine history of this world—God's history of that empire which in a variety of forms would dominate this world from the beginning to the end. God knows all His works from the beginning of the world, and chapter xiii. describes the agents Satan is about to set at work. In their final, perfectly developed character, as revealed to the prophet Daniel, they are not really in existence yet.

The first beast is an empire which comes up out

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of the sand of the sea, and partakes of the character of all the great world-powers, from Nebuchadnezzar to the end, having as a special mark that its last form of power had been destroyed. This is its position now. Where is the imperial power of Rome to-day? Many have been the attempts to resuscitate it, showing that the idea is still in existence. Some have been partially successful, as in the case of Napoleon, and indeed the European Concert, in which the idea is by confederation of power to put these nations under one head, so as to dominate the world. But nothing will be of any avail till it gets its head, but that head was wounded unto death. It is a sort of resurrection of what has been.

What distinguishes this great world-power is that it is a blasphemous power. This you cannot say to-day of any of these western powers. It opens its mouth to blaspheme against God. Daniel tells us the same thing, and thus we see how distinctly it gets its power and authority from Satan and not from God. The moment Satan gives this world-empire his throne and great authority, then it will be the point of faith for the saints to render it no obedience at all. This not the case to-day.

Then there is another point. This great world-empire is to continue three and a half years, the time that God has allotted to it. When once it comes forth in its distinctly satanic and blasphemous character as the great opponent of Christ in this world, God limits it to three and a half years.

The second power rises up, not from the sea, as the former, but from the earth, from the ordered state of things. It is a peculiar kind of beast, for it has two

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

283

horns like a lamb. Its appearance is very gentle; its character mild and religious, like that of Christ. But the moment it speaks you can judge of it by what it says. That is the only real test. You cannot judge by appearance, but by what is said. This is just a simple principle, and I put it before you because it is a help for us to-day, and will be an immense help to the saints in that day when they have to face this thing that comes up in so religious an appearance. The moment it speaks you can detect Satan in it. It has the voice of a dragon.

It is a religious thing, but nevertheless has a certain amount of administrative power. But it exercises this in deference to the first beast. It is a sort of subordinate power in league with the great Roman Empire of which the beast is head, and so uses all its authority for the purpose of procuring deference to the great Roman head; and its object is to bring in the worship of man. That is the thing Satan has had in view ever since creation. It is the worship of the first man and idolatry in connection with it; and what characterises this religious power is that it is not merely blasphemous—it does not pretend to be blasphemous, it is not bold in its enmity to Christ—but has a good sort of appearance. But its character in the world is idolatrous, and it uses its power to bring in idolatry.

You would not think it possible that these enlightened nations of which we form part (I would not say “we” because I take it for granted that everyone here is a true Christian, and we shall be in heaven before this takes place) will accept and bow down before this gigantic monster—this reintroduction

of idolatry in the worst possible form. Of course, the groundwork is being laid everywhere. You find things in connection with the worship of God which God could not recognise at all—pictures, crucifixes, images, etc. They are just the thin edge of the wedge. We have these things revealed to us in order that we may reject the thin edge of the wedge, and in nowise give place to the principles by which Satan is seeking to carry off the dominion of this world from Christ. If he can only establish his dominion in this world he has established his dominion in the universe, because it is here the conflict takes place between good and evil; and whichever succeeds in this little world succeeds in the universe. Now it is distinctly declared to us here that he uses his authority (and I do not doubt specially amongst the Jews, but nevertheless his influence extends over the whole scene); he makes use of the authority confided to him to get men to do homage to the beast; and then he deceives these people by means of special miracles to the extent of getting them to make an image to the beast which had a wound by a sword, and did live, and he causes fire to come down out of heaven.

There is nothing in this but what man will be able to do. God originally put the whole of this world under the dominion of man, and the extent to which He may allow man to bring those powers under control it is not for you and me to say. But this man acquires, by whatsoever means, power to call down fire in the sight of men, and, having done that, his object will be to introduce idolatry once more—to get men to make an image to the beast. And he had power to give breath to the image of the beast that

it should speak, and cause them that would not worship it to be killed. So that we see how terrible is the power that is being exercised. It is as the Lord Jesus Christ told His disciples beforehand, "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, who shall do mighty signs and wonders so as to deceive if it were possible even the elect. Behold, I have told you before." It is wonderful how all this was portrayed by the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew xxiv.

Its character, then, is distinctly idolatrous, and not only so, it is perverse. The first beast domineered; but the second beast, this lamb, was perverse, and he brought his perverse power to work by causing all, small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive the mark of the beast in their right hand and forehead, so that none could buy and sell save he that had the mark, the name of the beast, or the number of its name. This is what religious power always does—it permeates and gets to the individual, no matter how low or how high, from the prime minister of the realm to the pauper in the poorhouse. Now this religious power uses its authority for this purpose. It is one of the most oppressive trades-unions that ever was, and, remarkably, it is connected with the government of that day—a government instituted upon the principle of receiving authority from beneath and not from above, a government based upon the subversion of everything God ever established in connection with the creature. It is an institution that has Satan as the leading principle of it instead of God. We have a very clear description of it in Scripture. The apostle John tells us

what its character is in connection with, or rather in opposition to, Christianity. He tells us very distinctly in the First Epistle, chapter ii., "Little children, we are in the last days: and as ye have heard that anti-christ shall come, even now are there many anti-christs; whereby we know it is the last time." Whence did these antichrists come? They went out from *us*—not from the heathen, for they have borne the name of Christ, but have given it all up. This is a very solemn thing for us to remember. "If they were of us they would have continued with us, but they went out from us in order that it might be made manifest that they are not of us."

Now we come to one very striking characteristic of the antichrist—this beast with two horns "who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ. He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son." Here is a man who started with Christianity, and as far as I know he may have been to college and taken orders. He has had the whole truth and doctrine of Christianity, and, having had it, has given it all up and apostatised from it, and then goes out and denies it—denies the Christian revelation.

Let us remember of what immense importance the Person of the Son is to us. The apostle goes on to say, "He that denies the Son has not the Father, but he that confesses the Son has the Father also." Everything depends upon the Son. If you know the true Christian place you will rejoice in the knowledge of the Son of God. You may be a very simple person, but the reality of the truth is yours. On the other hand, if you have not the knowledge of the Son, but presume to understand God by mere knowledge itself,

without having to do with Christ, then all the knowledge you have must be that which will only bud out into apostasy presently. Everything rests for God and the Christian and for blessing upon the Person of the Son.

There is just another passage John takes up. For if the Christian revelation is denied, and if it is that which distinguishes the antichrist, how is it denied? The apostle John warns the Christian of his day, and us too of course, of this apostate principle. He says, "Believe not every spirit." Do you think the spirits are less active to-day than they were eighteen hundred years ago? Not so. They have eighteen hundred years' more experience of how to do their devilish work.

But "try the spirits," whether you find them to be of God, "for many false prophets have gone out into the world." How are you to try them? It is simple enough to a man who knows the Lord Jesus Christ, if he only uses the privileges and the power God has given him for the purpose. But if you surrender your conscience into the hand of your spiritual pastor and master, where are you then? Do not suppose I reject the truth that there are spiritual pastors; by no means, but a spiritual pastor has no right to exclude God from my conscience. So the apostle says, "Try the spirits, whether they be of God." What is the test? "Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ come in flesh is of God." This is a very simple test which any Christian can apply, and it is a distinct and positive test for an antichristian spirit. That blessed Man confessed proves that the whole basis of the Christian revelation is known and understood. *It is not some imaginary*

emanation or morally divine Being that in some abstract way has been manifested here in human form. It is a Man, Jesus Christ, come in flesh. And the other spirit will not own Jesus Christ come in flesh because he will never submit to a man as long as he can avoid it. But it must be; and that Man is Jesus Christ.

“Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ come in flesh.” That is not merely confessing a doctrinal fact, but it is the confession of a Person, the Man Christ Jesus; and every spirit that confesseth Him is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus Christ come in flesh is not of God.

Then the apostle adds, “This is that power of anti-christ of which ye have heard before that he should come into the world, and even now is come.” We have the whole thing laid before us in distinct terms by the Spirit of God for our instruction, in order that we may know the plans and principles that Satan pursues to oppose the purposes of God respecting His Son, and to frustrate them if possible. It is, of course, not possible, but he is doing his best.

But there is another thing. Antichrist is not only an apostate from Christianity; he is also an apostate from Judaism. This is said in Daniel xi., “The king shall do according to his own will.” That is the character of the man. It is of no use to throw stones at other people, for this is our character too, only through sovereign grace we have owned it before God. But here is a man coming out in the last page of this world’s history a perfect presentation of what a wilful person is. “He shall do according to his own will, and magnify himself.” Of course, when it comes to the

real issue, what is a man to do who exalts himself? To exalt himself to the highest place he would be above God Himself. This is what he seeks and assumes. "He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak monstrous words against the God of gods." This man, and it is Satan's man too, shall not regard the God of his fathers, that is Jehovah in His revelation to His people the Jews. He is a Jew, only an apostate Jew; and he was a Christian, but an apostate one. He seems the depository in his own person of all the privileges God ever gave men, and he is apostate from them all. He shall not esteem the God of his fathers or the desire of women, that is Christ among the Jews. He shall exalt himself above all gods. But he has to get power somewhere, for man is a poor, weak thing. So, as Daniel informs us, he practises with a strange god. It is the devil at his back. He honours the god of fortresses, and the god his fathers knew not he honours with gold and silver. What Satan is at is arming the world against the return of Christ, and God only knows what powers they will bring into action presently. This man acts with a strange god in a stronghold of fortresses, and gathers around him all the instruments of his power. That is what Daniel revealed, namely, the apostasy from Judaism. John gives the apostasy from Christianity, and the apostle Paul the link between the two. In 2 Thessalonians Paul says, "That day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and the man of sin be revealed, who exalts himself above everything that is called God and that is worshipped, so that sitting in the temple of God he shows himself that he is God."

This is the man of whom Daniel speaks, and Paul says to these Thessalonians, "Know ye not that I told you these things? Now ye know who withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time . . . and then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming."

How perfect the testimony of Scripture is concerning this man, and how closely we have to do with this religious man who is the expression of human will in the latter day—the opponent of the Lord Jesus Christ, the antichrist. He is the proper development of the principles of the mystery of iniquity which is already working. So that you have to do with it in principle to-day. The thing that is going to be developed and manifested in perfection presently in this apostate man is that which you see working religiously around you every day. There is one thing more about this person in which we are instructed here. He causes both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive the mark of the beast, the number of his name. "Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man." It is a man in question, and his number is 666. This number is that which distinguishes a man when he comes up in his full power and character as set up to be worshipped in this world instead of Christ. When he comes out in his full public character in this way he will have the number 666.

Now this is not the religious beast. I think you have understood it is the religious beast that causes

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

291

all men to receive the number 666; but that number belongs to the Roman beast, though the religious beast it is that brings it down to every individual in the land, so that if a man will not receive the number of the beast, in recognition of his authority and as doing him homage in place of Christ, he shall be killed. But the number 666 itself belongs to the Roman beast, who comes out to be the great head—the great authoritative power in the world to hold the world for Satan instead of Christ. In God's wisdom and intention this man, when he comes out, shall appropriate this number. He appears in the middle of the last half of Daniel's seventieth week, as we find in the earlier part of this chapter, and then he has three and a half years to live; he is allowed to practise and prosper forty-two months.

Very likely this beast may assume the number for reasons of his own; such may be the inconceivable hardihood of the man that in defiance of this scripture he may assume that number. Only when he takes authority at that particular moment this is the number he will bear. It is no magical number, it is not merely figurative, it is a positive number 666 that he will bear. What he dates from I do not know at all. He may have his own reasons for dating from some point; but what God knows and has decided on beforehand is that once this man comes out in the middle of Daniel's last week he shall bear this number 666. God has also revealed to us that afterwards he shall continue three and a half years. If then we add these three and a half years to this number we get 669 or thereabouts.

I would just point you to a passage which gives you

some little light as to this. In Matthew xxiv. the Lord Jesus Christ tells His disciples about His return, and they wanted to know when and all about it, and the Lord Jesus replied, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, but My Father only." And He goes on to give a real spiritual help to the saints: "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be in the coming of the Son of Man . . . they ate and drank, they married, and were given in marriage till the day Noe entered into the ark, when the flood came and took them all away; so shall it be in the coming of the Son of Man." *We have now* something very definite. To see how this will happen, and the principles upon which it will happen, and the course of God's judgment and His epochs, we must go back to the former great governmental dealing of God at the flood. Turning to that passage, and looking at it with the wisdom we are called upon to exercise here, and counting up the number of the beast, we shall find from the departure of Enoch out of the scene which represents the rapture of the saints till the moment that the flood came and drowned them all there were 669 years.

We are told to count, and we are told to have the wisdom and understanding to count, and God has given us all the necessary data. He has given us the actual years of each patriarch and their birth and death; so it is only a matter of adding a few figures together to find that from the departure of Enoch to the coming of the flood was 669 years.

What good is that to the poor saint of that day? Of immense use. The moment the man comes out with his number, they will know in the most positive way

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

293

the man and what his number is; and when this number 666 is pressed home upon the saints with threats of death, they will not only know the man is come and his number, but that they have only to wait and hold on three years more to complete the 669 which ushers in the judgment, three years, times of tribulation such as never were from the beginning of the world. The Lord Jesus Christ says, "In that day he that endureth to the end," he that refuses the man and that refuses homage to the beast, "he shall be saved."

It will be an immense thing to know that his power will only last about three years. Go on patiently, keep the faith, own the rejected Christ, maintain purity of walk, refuse to bow down and adore a man, however great, or an image that has been set up, and trust in God that made heaven and earth. This is the great testimony of that day. How important this number will be in that day when the man will be revealed with his number 666! And the saint will know then that in three years more the Lord will be here, and the power of evil shall be trodden under foot.

TO LIVE—CHRIST.

(Unrevised Notes of Lecture by J. N. D.)

THIS Epistle to the Philippians leads into a very peculiar apprehension of the Christian path. Its object is not doctrine, but Christian experience, and it is well for our souls to look it in the face and see how far our spirit and thought and mind answer to it day by day.

In this epistle salvation is always put at the end of the path as a thing to be attained—"that I may win Christ." This is an important principle for our souls. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," always looking to the end; and we have first to see that we are set in the place of redemption to run to the end of our course.

At the same time you will see a power brought in that supposes that in running we shall always be glorifying Christ, and above the circumstances.

I will say here that there is always an exercise of soul which goes on before we know redemption, and there is a distinct and definite responsibility under which we lie as Christians—not the responsibility of the first man, which inevitably ends in judgment. Our responsibility as sinners refers to acceptance, but that is settled completely: we are accepted in the Beloved. Now the responsibilities are ours as Christians, and duties always flow from the place in which we are already set.

As to man's condition, we get the truth that we

are all lost, but souls individually go through a process shorter or longer before owning this, before submitting themselves to the righteousness of God. It may be learnt suddenly, or it may be a long time about, but the soul has to recognise this, that the flesh is utterly corrupt. "In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwells no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. . . . And when I would do good evil is present with me."

As regards our standing in Adam as sinners, we are redeemed out of it into Christ, accepted in the Beloved, and the believer is in a standing and condition which is made for him in Christ. "At that day" (the Lord said) "ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." Now, that is the only true Christian peace. The angels see us in Christ up there; Christ is in us down here. Do those around us see it, and does the world see it?

The exercises of soul which precede this are all most valuable and useful to thoroughly teach us that our standing is not in the flesh, and we then get settled peace by knowing it. We put our seal to the truth of God in the judgment He passed upon us, and our souls now having divine light say, "In me is no good thing." Not only as a doctrine of Scripture, but in the presence of God we have to own that we cannot stand a moment in His sight. And here we get another thing, that the sins of the flesh were borne by Christ on the cross and put away for ever.

Again, Christ glorified God, and is as man on high sending the Comforter down to dwell in us, so that I can say my standing is no more in the flesh, in the first Adam at all, but in the second Adam.

Well, now there is a responsibility that flows from that condition. You find in this epistle the effect produced by the Spirit of God in the Christian when he is in the place, and we have to judge whether we are using this true liberty as those who are alive to God from among the dead.

Sin is never mentioned in this epistle. It is not that the flesh is altered in Paul or made better—it never grows better. In many things we all offend, and Paul had a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him, to keep the flesh down. But this epistle shows us that a power has come in and dwells in us, which leaves us always without excuse if there is a thought that is contrary to the Spirit of God.

It is not always at the given moment we have the power to resist, but why not? Because I do not put my armour on. But whose fault is that?

There may be liberty of heart with God and confidence in Him to say I am a child of God through Christ Jesus. I have got my place, a place which is the riches of God's mercy, but is there found growth? "Growing up into Him in all things which is the Head." He has given me a place *with* His Son. He has given me to be *in* His Son, that He may unfold His glory through the countless ages of eternity—*now* through the Holy Ghost, and hereafter in glory. We have to enjoy this in Him. Our place is in the last Adam in righteousness. He has redeemed us out of the condition we were in. I am in Christ, and He is in the presence of God for me, and I am in the world for *Him*. That is where God has set us. The old man is reckoned *dead*. "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man

which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him."

And yet as a matter of fact we have the flesh to contend with, and we have to go through a scene where everything is temptation; consequently the character we take is that of overcoming and realising the presence of God in the midst of evil. Uniform, constant, *unvarying* superiority over the evil is the striking characteristic of the apostle's path in this epistle.

Now look at your own hearts, and you will find that in the course of this very day, in many things, looking within it has not been the life of Christ. You could not say as to them, "To me to live is Christ." I assume that it is the purpose of your heart to do so, but from hour to hour during the day there have perhaps been heaps of things travelling over the road of your soul that Christ never let in there and that the Spirit of God could not approve.

The leper in the Old Testament was first cleansed by water, and then the blood was put on the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the great toe of the right foot, afterwards being anointed by the oil put upon the blood. This is a beautiful type—every avenue of the soul guarded, all under the watchful care of the Spirit. But in looking within ourselves we shall find there is that which had passed the blood. We had forgotten "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus."

There is such an occupation of heart with Christ, such a fear of God, and such a walking in the practical guardianship of the Spirit, that a man is able to say, like the apostle, "For me to live is *Christ*." There

is the power of the Spirit of God to lead the Christian through the race, that he may apprehend that for which he is also apprehended of Christ Jesus. Now in every respect you are called upon to have the mind which was in Christ Jesus, always willing to go down—humble—for it is graciousness, the grace of Christ, we get here.

In the first chapter he is determined that Christ shall be magnified in his body; in the second chapter there is the humility; in the third chapter, energy; in the fourth chapter, superiority to circumstances.

The apostle never mentions sin. Christ has run the race, and is set down to show us where the course leads to, that we may have the eye and heart where He is—on the end. That is what we are called to. "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." Christ has set Himself apart in the glory, and the Spirit of God takes Him and unfolds Him to us, that we may be like Him, expressing the same mind which was in Him.

There is positive progress growing up in Him, but no such thing as growing meetness for heaven. Growth is pressed upon us, but you will never find Scripture mingling the two things, meetness and growth. The thief on the cross was as meet for heaven as Paul was. Not that God will overlook Paul's labours. No! but it is that in Christ we are always meet for the glory of God.

We have to get the perception that we are taken clean out of the place we were in. Christ is our life and Christ is our righteousness. We are called to walk (with the blood on the ear) with Him, watching against every inconsistent thing. "He which hath

begun a good work in you shall perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." It is not merely that we are perfect in Christ, but He has begun a work; and the moment it speaks of the path to the glory, the wilderness path, there are "ifs" of every kind. You get the wanderings, the failures, the murmurings, but with these the faithfulness of God.

The armour is there for us, the strength is there also, to lead us to the end. We want that armour, we want that strength; there is danger, and yet I have the consciousness of being in Christ and Christ in me. It is not the path I have to run, but the dangers I have to meet. God says, You must be dependent on Me. You will need to be kept, but do not mix up the two things, and because you have conflict in Canaan say that you are still in Egypt. There was no conflict in Egypt. God suits Himself so blessedly to His people. In Egypt, in their bondage, He comes as their Deliverer. In the wilderness He is with them to guide them night and day by the fiery cloudy pillar, and feed them with manna when they longed for the fleshpots of Egypt. When they have to turn back on the borders of the promised land, through want of faith to enter it, God turns back with them and dwells in a tabernacle. After forty years, when they get to the land and are to have conflict, there is the angel with the drawn sword; and when they are settled in the land He builds a house like one of the palaces of the great ones of the earth.

“HE BREATHED ON THEM.”

It was the first day of the week, the day of resurrection, when for the first time after His betrayal and death the Saviour showed Himself to His assembled disciples. He stood in their midst and greeted them with the joyful words, “Peace be to you.” Seeing His hands and His side, they were not only assured of the identity of His person, but that a death had been accomplished of atoning efficacy, and that the life wherein we were sinners was laid down for ever.

Thus He is our peace, and in His flesh the privileged position of the Jew is annulled, and in Him the Gentile afar off and the Jew that was nigh are formed into one new man, so making peace.

Though John’s doctrine does not deal with these dispensational truths, they are clearly involved in the fact that the blood and water flowed from the side of Christ when dead, which are thus the witness that eternal life is not found in the first man, but is in the Son of God.

But a second time He says, “Peace be to you: as the Father sent Me forth, I also send you.” And having said this, He breathed into them and says to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” Here “peace” is connected with the glad tidings of peace, for He sends His disciples forth as the Father had sent Him, and having breathed into them, says, “Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them.” Indeed, coming thus, He Himself preaches peace to such as were afar off as well as to those who were nigh.

“HE BREATHED ON THEM.” 301

The “breathing into” was not therefore a merely emblematic act, but historically the introduction of spiritual life in power according to a new order, namely in resurrection. All true saints of God from Adam downward had assuredly spiritual life from Christ, but it was never possessed in association with Him until the moment when He in resurrection breathed into His disciples.

What was then introduced is now constantly bestowed in connection with the remission of sins by the glad tidings.

The Christian blessing is that we have spiritual life with God as formed and found in Christ. We receive it from Him as the divine source in manhood, together with the relationships, object, and character manifested in Him as the risen Man. Thus it is eternal life.

Now that Christ has been raised from the dead and exalted, a soul born again has life in resurrection, has eternal life, though he may not yet be sealed so as to be in the power of it.

“Born again,” or “anew,” relates to a new source of life, and is what never existed in the man before. Quickening supposes that a man had lived and died, and receives life in resurrection. “The Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will.” It is said therefore of a person who has had a previous existence. We have lived in flesh, and were found dead in sins, but through sovereign grace have been quickened together with Christ. Here Christ is seen to be dead for us, where we were dead in our sins, and it is not He who quickens, but God who quickens us with Him. Con-

sequently there is a complete change of place, for resurrection follows the position of Christ Himself.

For the realisation and joy of this life, and due occupation with the objects with which it is in relationship, the indwelling of the Spirit is absolutely necessary, but it is quite wrong to say that we do not get eternal life until we are sealed and have realised what it is to be dead.

As the stream is connected with its source, so this life is not separated from the Spirit when He dwells in us; and this is what Romans viii. 1-10 contemplates. But the "breathing into" of John xx. 22 is the fact of the gift of life from Christ in resurrection, according to what He is Himself in place and nature, deity apart. It is that eternal life which He now gives from the glory. (John xvii. 2, 3.) Of this life the Spirit sent down is the only power, and is therefore identified with it in John xx. 19-23, Romans viii. 1-10, though in the latter passage the Spirit's indwelling is supposed, but not so in the former.

FOOTSTEPS OF GRACE.

GENESIS xiii. xiv.

IT should move our hearts to adoration, as well as unfeigned humility, that God has been pleased to reveal Himself not only in the works of His hands, but in making known to us the purposes of His heart. The Old Testament declares them so far as regards the earth, and herein is seen the importance of hearkening in implicit and simple faith to what God says. For far from entering into the question of what man is, whether with or without law, though well known to Him, His first thought was to give the heir whom He had chosen a view of the inheritance He had designed for him. But this must be in the privacy of individual communion, for God gave the inheritance in grace to Abraham by promise. Not until Lot had separated himself from him does Jehovah say to Abram, "Lift up now thine eyes and look . . . for all the land that thou seest will I give to thee and to thy seed for ever." Thus the pathway of the pilgrim is not formed by circumstances, but by the knowledge of God revealed in grace; and each fresh step in it has its altar—a new act of adoration inspired by a fresh perception of that grace divine that brings the soul into ever nearer intimacy and relationship with Him who is the God of glory.

Moreh and Bethel (xii. 7, 8; xiii. 3, 4) mark moral stages in the growth of faith with regard to the inheritance. "The Canaanite was then in the land," holding it in the right of power, possession, and prior occupation, but Jehovah alone can give a valid title,

and He declares at Moreh, "Unto thy seed will I give this land." At Bethel, too, it was still the altar of faith, for "the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling then in the land," which was thus doubly in alien hands. But Lot being separated from him, it is then and there that Abram sees not alone Jehovah as before, but the whole scope and extent of the inheritance, and paces it throughout according to the length and the breadth of it.

With Mamre (xiii. 18) a new scene opens in the life of faith, one of victory over the world, and therewith the revelation of the Most High God. Abram, himself outside this world's politics, is involved in its conflicts by reason of his brother Lot being taken captive by the kings of the nations in their slaughter of the kings in the land. He delivers Lot, but repudiates any share at all in the spoils of victory, save what he gave to the priest of the Most High God, who blessed him of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed the Most High God who had delivered his enemies into his hand.

Growing by the knowledge of Him whom he worshipped at Mamre's altar, Abram learned something of the heavenly side of the blessing and the inheritance. Through victory over the world he received the blessing indeed, but of Him who is the Possessor of heavens and earth, and saw by faith a heavenly inheritance beyond this world which he overcame, not merely by the actual smiting of the kings, but by that far deeper moral victory that refused its gifts. With this, Mamre, that is Hebron, is intimately associated, a true point of progress in the pilgrim path and a firm basis for further revelations.

SCRIPTURE QUERIES.

(Papers under the above title are mainly in answer to Correspondents.)

RIGHTEOUSNESS IN VIEW OF THE RACE.

PHILIPPIANS iii. is a sort of parenthesis or complement, found often in Paul's writings, contrasting Judaism and Christianity as expressed in himself. As to the former he had everything to boast of, and particularly was found blameless touching the righteousness which is in the law. But he had renounced all this as worthless on account of Christ, and now, instead of seeking to build up a righteousness of his own again in connection with Christianity (for after all it would have been on the principle of law), he desired to be found when his course was finished still in Christ and having the righteousness which is of God.

His blamelessness under law was a credit to him; his righteousness in Christ was not a merit and never will be, because it is God's righteousness. Legal righteousness finds its accomplishment here in man. Righteousness in Christ is accomplished in the glory where God has set Him.

Even now our living associations are in the heavens, but we await the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, to conform us to His body of glory; and meanwhile we are racing on to that moment. When it shall have come the apostle wished not that he might have his own righteousness, but to be found in Christ, having the righteousness which is of God through faith. He was

looking forward to the end of his path here, where these heavenly things are not displayed, to the time when they will be, and desired to be on the same terms precisely then as now.

The apostle is not teaching in this chapter (Philippians iii.) the doctrine of righteousness by faith, but expressing his own thoughts and feelings, divinely given, about the blessedness of Christ and of being in Him, and having God's righteousness instead of his own. It is true Christian experience. He was not seeking to procure righteousness, but to gain Christ. The righteousness he desired was that which is by faith of Christ—a condition belonging specially to the present moment.

THE HOUSE OF GOD AND THE BODY OF CHRIST.

When the joy of salvation from the judgment of God and the power of darkness is known, the believer instinctively feels the need of a scene of association with other Christians, where their common thoughts and feelings, objects and interests, joys and hopes may find mutual expression. The first rapture of deliverance past, he tastes with grief the bitterness of a desert world, where he had expected to find nothing but the comforts of a mighty and a reconciled God. The knowledge of a grace that brought Christ into our place, that we might be brought into His, turns this bitterness to the comfort and refreshment of our souls; and in addition the power of a risen and exalted Christ is ministered to us by the Spirit, as well as His love, which, having entered into all our circumstances personally, now does so afresh in sympathy.

This enables us individually to go forward sustaining with fortitude and hope the trials of the way; but all this would not fully meet the longings of the Christian, and above all would not satisfy the thoughts of the Father's heart, designing and desiring as He does, to gather His children into one. Nor would the family tie simply suffice, for God has purposed to dwell among His saints; and Christ has died to possess His Church, Himself the glorious Head and we the members, united, in the power of the Spirit, livingly and divinely to Himself, subject to Him, yet associated with Him and deriving from Him.

These two great spheres of privilege and blessing are constituted by the house of God and the body of Christ. In Israel's history the counterpart and type of the former, though its contrast, is found in the tabernacle set up in the wilderness. Of the latter there was no revelation, in type or otherwise, if the first man and the woman made bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, be it not. Yet in detail are there many spiritual principles manifested in the assembly, which is His body, veiled under the symbols of Israel and the tabernacle.

But for us who are Christians it is of the highest moment for the glory of God and our Lord Jesus Christ that we should clearly distinguish what our privileges, blessings, and responsibilities are in regard to the house of God and the body of Christ respectively.*

* See "Substance of Lectures on the Church," *Words of Grace*, vol. i.

THE JUDGMENT-SEAT.

On the great white throne (Revelation xx.) it is God who sits; and the matter in question is the responsibility of the dead to Him—an exceedingly awful scene.

In Matthew xxv. it is the Son of Man sitting on the throne of His kingdom, and the treatment of Himself in His messengers forms the test and standard of judgment.

At the tribunal of Christ (2 Corinthians v.) we all have to give account of ourselves. Here the living nations are not in view. It is the individual, whether saint or sinner, who will be manifested there, in respect of their whole life, the deeds of which are dealt with in righteousness. It differs from the great white throne in that those who live to God are manifested there as well as the dead who are judged as men in the flesh (1 Peter iv. 6), though not at the same moment.

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

BY THE EDITOR.

*(From Shorthand Report.)*LECTURE XII. *(continued.)*

THUS we have seen in chapter xiii. the agents which Satan raises up in order to frustrate the purposes of God in regard to His people and His Christ. Now in chapter xiv. the issue of these things is shown, viz., who gains the victory. God does not crush Satan in a sort of supreme way while the conflict is proceeding, but lets the conflict go on, and does not crush him till the end is come. An honest man is set up: and if the man turns aside He takes up another. God carries on His conflict meanwhile with the powers of evil by means of His servants, so long as these servants remain faithful, upright, and steadfast. If they give way to satanic principles they are set aside, as, for instance, a Peter refusing to eat with Gentiles, when it is a question of the gospel. Paul has to rebuke him. If it is a Demas who loved the present world, of what good is he?

But this chapter shows us the faithful, and we hear the song of victory. "I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on Mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand."

These have not spoiled the truth of the testimony. They have had the Name of Christ and of His Father, but are not in Christian relationship because, though we bear the Name of Christ, His Father is *our* Father. These people knew Him not in so near a way, but as Father of the Lamb. So they have the Names of the Lamb and His Father in their foreheads.

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True, they stand on Mount Zion, but that is not in heaven. We are sometimes inclined to think Mount Zion is in heaven; that is a mistake. Mount Zion is where David had his city, and where he put the ark. It expresses in principle sovereign grace, coming in where man has failed. That is what we have here. The Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, is on Mount Zion, and with Him an "hundred forty and four thousand," that is, twelve twelves, the whole company of the Judaic remnant—not Israel the twelve tribes, but the Judaic company, those who had been taken out for testimony in a day when the twelve tribes were scattered, those who had the place of Jews. There are Jews to-day, and will be when we are gone, and it is these whom Christ brings out as His messengers, His brethren, as in Matthew xxv., and others like them, to carry His gospel—not the gospel we have now, but the everlasting gospel—to carry His message to the world, the message of salvation for the earth. We get the testimony described in chapter xiv., but before this we have a vision of the safety of those who bear the testimony and who have been preserved through all the trial and conflict and pressure and power of evil, preserved for their blessing on earth, and who have a special blessing in the millennium, for they surround the Lamb for whom they bear testimony.

Some of these faithful ones had to give up their lives. They went to heaven, as we find in verse 2: "I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters: . . . and they sang a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders." The twenty-four elders are ourselves. We are not singing this song. We sang a song in chapter v., and

it was a song of redemption: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." It is the song of redemption in its best character as given in this book. But now there is a song sung *before* the twenty-four elders. We are not told who the singers are, but it is those who suffer for their testimony after the Church has gone. After the rapture there were messengers of Christ who went forth, in spite of all the power of evil, to carry the testimony, and some had to suffer for their faith, and they now sing beforehand the song that the "hundred forty and four thousand" learn who surrounded the Lamb on Mount Zion. This was because they bore the same testimony on earth which those slaughtered ones had done, and therefore they could enter into and enjoy the song those slain ones sang.

The testimony itself is in Psalm xcvi., where you have the new song: "Sing a new song unto Jehovah: sing unto Jehovah, all the earth." They go forth with the testimony that the kingdom is coming, in opposition to the beast or any other agent of Satan. They call on all to sing and "publish His salvation from day to day." He is going to judge the earth in righteousness and establish the world. "Say among the heathen Jehovah reigneth." It is a wonderful testimony they carry, but many of them have to suffer for it.

In Psalm xcvii. we have "Jehovah reigneth," and it is a happy thing when He comes. "Let the earth rejoice; and let the multitude of the isles rejoice." The world is to get the benefit of His coming, whoever else may have to suffer for it. So He says, "Clouds and darkness are round about Him: justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne." It

must be so. If Jehovah comes to reign He cannot allow His adversaries to be here. "A fire goeth before Him, and burneth up His adversaries round about." It is most solemn.

But when Jehovah comes He sends out His emissaries first to announce, The King is coming. People may stop their ears, and they do so, but He comes. "The mountains melted like wax at the presence of Jehovah," and people cannot stop their ears then. "The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the people see His glory." They are confounded that worship graven images. The beast has to go into judgment; he has set up an image and got others to worship it. But "worship Him, all ye gods," and in Hebrews i. you find the "Him" is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Jehovah who reigneth. We sadly forget He is coming, and how He is coming.

Psalm xcvi. shows who get the benefit of His coming, for they are singing the new song. "Sing a new song unto Jehovah, for He hath done wondrous things; He hath remembered His lovingkindness and His faithfulness toward the house of Israel." He is going to have His way at last, and the woman seen in the vision with the moon under her feet, clothed with the sun and the twelve stars on her head, she shall be established on the earth. He will have Israel there, and "all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God." "Our God" appropriated Him to the Jews.

One thing more. In Psalm xcvi. you find the place where His throne is set. If He judges the earth, He has a place on the earth, where His throne is set. If judging from heaven, He has His throne in heaven. But when He comes and takes the earth in hand He

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

313

has His throne there. "Jehovah reigneth; let the people tremble: He sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved. Jehovah is great in Zion." This is what we have here. Zion is not in heaven. It is the place on earth of David's city, and where Christ will have the throne on the earth in the coming day. Here, in chapter xiv., He is on Mount Zion, and has his hundred and forty-four thousand about Him. They were the firstfruits, the people whom He first took up on earth when He had transferred His heavenly people to the place to which they belonged. Then these were taken up as His firstfruits to carry His message on earth, and they learned this song.

Their character was a simple one. They were persons who were governed by the attraction of Christ, not by the flesh. There were many others who should have a part in the millennial blessing, but these are the Jewish firstfruits. As to their personal characters, they did not tell lies and were without fault. Satan is the father of lies, but it is wonderful how many children he has, and the worst part is, they think it a merit. Let us always remember that when God takes things in hand again all must be dealt with on Divine principles. And what He notices and approves in man's character is that he has not lied.

This testimony from verse 6 is what the hundred and forty-four thousand have been messengers of. It is spoken of as that of an angel flying. No doubt the message was made known by providential agencies, and an angel is the messenger of providence. He may smooth the way for carrying the

message, but he never preaches. He cannot understand what it is to carry the gospel; but man, who has known what it is to be a sinner and under the heel of Satan, who has known what it is to carry about with him an evil heart of unbelief, he is a fit agent to carry the message of mercy to such poor ruined things. Though the angel flies, it is the message the hundred and forty-four thousand carry.

It is interesting to notice the particular periods in which these testimonies are set. The first two are prior to the last half-week. First there is the everlasting gospel, of which I have been speaking when quoting from the Psalms: "Say among the heathen Jehovah reigneth," "Sing a new song," and "Bless His Name." That is the message they carry, and here it is the everlasting gospel to all them that dwell on the earth—to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. To "fear God" is the great basis of all. There is testimony a great deal better than this, but it is a good thing to "fear God . . . for the hour of His judgment is come." That is not the way you preach to-day, for you say, The grace of our God is come; but here it is, The judgment is come—a totally different thing. Satan is about to reintroduce idolatry in a sevenfold worse form than before. So He warns them beforehand not to fear him, but to fear God.

Then there follows another testimony. Babylon goes, I believe, before the last half-week, and this moment is the epoch of the second testimony which God sends forth, a declaration that this vast religious system, that has acquired such control and influence over the consciences and minds of men, is a thing He has blasted. The great city is "fallen, is fallen,"

ADDRESSES ON THE REVELATION.

315

for she not only made people drink, but she made them drunk with the wrath of God. That is, she brought them under control for her own purpose in order to get money and position and influence by them, and she brought them, more or less knowingly, under the wrath of God. That is what a fallen religion does. By "fallen religion" I do not mean heathenism, but a false Christianity, a perversion of the truth. It wilfully brings people under the known wrath of God. She is now fallen, and there is no more of that deception.

Now comes the last half-week. The third angel follows with a testimony that commences with the last half-week, for now the image is set up. "If any man worship the beast or his image, or receive his mark in his forehead or his hand, he shall be tormented day and night with fire and brimstone in the presence of the angels and the Lamb."

The conflict really is going on to-day, but will then be in a critical form between God and Satan; and one must go down. All that side to-day with the one that loses must go down too. Who, then, is going to lose? The devil—not God.

It will be as bad for anyone who rejects the gospel, now only the judgment is denounced here. This is the testimony that goes out at the commencement of the last half-week at the setting up of the image and the introduction of the beast.

Verse 13 gives the last testimony. "I heard a voice saying unto me, Blessed from henceforth are the dead that die in the Lord." This testimony comes from heaven, and it is that the resurrection has taken place. Sometimes this verse is put on tombstones, as though it had been accomplished. But it is not accomplished

by death or a tombstone, but by resurrection; and as soon as resurrection has taken place there comes this testimony from heaven. They are blessed from that time forth—blessed before, in a certain sense, but now they are in the full blessedness which God designed for them in the place He purposed to have them, in the likeness of their Master; and from henceforth there is no such thing as death for the saints. There are no saints left in the grave any more, and never will be. The wicked are left in their graves to be called up again a thousand years afterwards, but from this moment every saint is raised.

This closes the last half-week, and then there are two supplementary testimonies. "And I looked, and behold a white cloud," symbol of a Divine manifestation, "and one sat like unto the Son of Man." He has not come to the earth yet. We are with Him, though nothing is said about it, because we do not participate in this act of judgment. He has a golden crown, a sign of dignity—not of rule. In judgment Christ always acts in obedience, and therefore He waits for the signal.

"Another angel comes out of the temple," saying to Him, "Put in thy sickle and reap." It is the harvest of the earth. The harvest is discriminative judgment. The Lord describes the harvest in the parable of the tares of the field, and tells His disciples that the field is the world and the tares the children of the wicked one; the good seed the children of the kingdom; the harvest the completion of the age, and the harvesters the angels. Just as the tares were gathered in bundles to be burned, so shall He send forth His angels to gather out of His kingdom all things that offend,

and they shall be cast into the furnace of fire. The character of the harvest is discriminating judgment between good and bad. The bad are cast into the furnace of fire, but the good carried away into everlasting happiness.

Another angel came out of the temple; he also had a sharp sickle. This was, I dare say, the Lord Jesus Christ in angelic form, because He is acting in that way here. This is special judgment, for it is the direct judgment of God. The harvest is one thing, the vintage another. The harvest is discriminating judgment, the vintage exterminating judgment—nothing spared, all crushed, no gathering out, no mercy, all is brought to an end under absolute judgment.

I refer to Isaiah lxiii. for the character of the judgment, not for the actual occasion. He says, "I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me." It was exterminating judgment. The judgment of Isaiah lxiii. takes place in Edom, but this judgment falls on Jerusalem: "Blood came out of the winepress to the horses' bridles, a thousand and six hundred furlongs." Immense slaughter takes place. It is not, I suppose, the actual appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, but at any rate it is judgment executed in a providential way, not by His own personal intervention, but most probably by the king of the north—a slaughter of such a terrible nature that blood flows out for a hundred and fifty miles. We know how these things can be done. But if God takes in hand to punish an apostate religious system organised to maintain His testimony, but which has fallen under the power of Satan so as to seduce souls and destroy them with everlasting perdition—if Christ

takes up a thing like this He deals with it in absolute extermination.

The winepress was trodden outside the city, that is Jerusalem, and blood came out of the winepress, etc., a thousand and six hundred furlongs—about the entire length of the land.

That which has borne the Name of Christ, and should have carried His testimony, only meets with direst judgment if it is unfaithful. The Lord said unto Jerusalem, "Thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wing, but ye would not! And now is your house left unto you desolate."

May we be preserved from all the terrible apostate principles that are found in activity all around us to-day.

CHRISTIAN PLACE AND POWER.

ROMANS VI.

(Unrevised Notes of Lecture by J. N. D.)

THE more the Christian reads the Word of God the more assured he becomes of its Divine origin. I am not supposing that he has any doubts to remove, but its perfection unfolds itself as he learns its contents. He finds in it truth complete and fitted in all its parts; and in this perfection he sees the Master's hand. The way the apostle takes up the question of sin here led me to these remarks. He does not enter upon Ephesian truth, but we find what is exactly fitted to the subject he is treating. He does not speak of being quickened together with Christ, or of being raised up and seated in

Him in heavenly places, but he says, "If we are planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."

He does not speak either of Christ dying for sin or of bearing our sins. What the apostle speaks of here is the power of sin met by the death of Christ. He died unto sin once. "Likewise reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." First, we are occupied with our sins, and these are met by the propitiation (chap. iii.); but after this he takes up *sin*, and this is a much larger and fuller word. It is our condition. And mark! we could not say, Christ was made sins. He bore sins, but He was *made sin* for us. "Once in the end of the world He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself"—not merely sins, but He took up the whole condition and state of the world, of everything, and before God everything was changed. He was "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin [not sins] of the world." Christ's work took up this principle of total alienation from the life of God and totally did away with it.

All the dealings of God with the world proceeded upon this principle of sin, of man being away from God, for when sin came into the world man was turned out from God. He could have forgiven a particular act by the death of Christ, but the whole condition of sin He could not. He must condemn it and put it away. We could not speak of God forgiving the old nature, but of condemning it and putting it away. Now this condition of man under sin is the fact upon which God had hitherto always dealt, however varied His acts may have been. Why was the seed of the woman promised but because of sin being in the

world? Again, a law given which prohibited lusts and supposes sin? In fact, all God's dealings in the world, whether in mercy or in judgment, proceed on the fact of sin being the condition of man before God. Now the work of Christ has changed this state of things altogether. I speak of what the work is to faith. The final result is not yet fulfilled, but through the cross the whole thing is changed, and there will be in result a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. By faith we anticipate this. It is not merely that our sins are put away, but the whole of God's glory is concerned in it. The creation is ruined by sin. If an angel look on it, what is he to think of the world? or if a saint contemplates the world, what a scene of lusts, passions, sin! All is in confusion. How is God to be glorified in it? Here Christ comes in. God is glorified in all His perfect walk in His suffering; obedience in everything, in spite of Satan. And when we come to the cross we see that all that God was glorified in Christ made sin. My soul anticipates the great result of this obedience of Christ, in that new creation where sin can never enter.

Practically, in our souls we must go through all that sin is before getting into the full consciousness of the blessing of its being put away. It is not only the forgiveness of my sins which I want, but I must get the question concerning the root of these sins settled, and this we find in Romans v. 12-21. The question treated of there is the sin of one man met by the obedience of another. By one man sin entered into the world. By one, death passed upon all men. Adam is looked upon here as the head of a race. It is not

the question of your and my particular sins, but of the sin of one man; and as by one man death came, so by one Man came righteousness. We get the remarkable fact that by one man came in sin, and by one Man righteousness.

The law is introduced that the offence might abound. Mark, not sin, but the offence. But the law came in afterwards. Here the great fact is that by one man sin entered into the world. Each has to answer for his own sins, of course, but here it is sin come by one man. It is the condition into which I have been brought. And so also by one Man righteousness is come. In both cases it is an individual's act which involves not only himself, but all connected with him. It does not deny my sins, but I am made righteous according to this work of Christ and by it; and I can anticipate the result by faith and say, I am the righteousness of God.

The flesh objects to this, and says, If it is entirely by the work of another that you are made righteous, and if it is all of grace, then you can continue in sin that grace may abound. The flesh always objects thus to sovereign grace. Not that the world is very careful about the matter, as if sin were really a trouble to it, but the objection is raised only to oppose the gospel, just as it was with those who brought the woman taken in adultery to Christ, simply to find fault with Him.

The apostle therefore raises this question of continuing in sin, and shows it is an absurdity in itself. Sin is the condition in which I *was*. The question, then, is this, Am I to continue in that from which I am saved? Two points are taken up as regards the condition of soul, and we shall see the apostle argues

on each from different grounds. The first is, "Shall we continue in sin?" and then in *v.* 15, "Shall we sin?" The first question takes up the condition of sin in which we were; the second with being under grace and not under law.

Now, as to continuing in sin, the apostle shows the thing is an impossibility and a contradiction, for no one can be alive and dead at the same time. If you have died with Christ you can't talk of being alive in sin. When you were baptised what were you brought to? You had a part in Christ's death, and you want to live in sin. In saying so you deny the whole thing. Christ has died to sin. Not that He ever had sin, but He was in circumstances where He had to meet temptations, and at last to be made sin upon the cross, though He never knew sin. But now He has died out of that whole condition. He died unto sin once. He once came into the midst of this evil scene, displaying righteousness and holiness in all His ways, and now He has died out of it. If you have been brought unto Christ you are dead, and are out of the other condition. The apostle speaks here of dying unto sin. We know from other scriptures that He also died for sin, and that He bore our sins; but here it is deliverance from sin, and not forgiveness that is spoken of.

Faith has judged this state of the flesh. It is not a question of the fruit being bad, but the tree itself is bad. It is the root of sin and not the fruit only.

God says, "What could I have done more in My vineyard than I have done in it?" And yet when He looked for fruit it brought forth sour grapes. He cared for His vineyard perfectly, but the tree was bad, and the culture only brought forth a larger crop of

CHRISTIAN PLACE AND POWER.

323

sour fruit. As we have often said, Man was lawless without law and a law-breaker under law. The tree was always the same. Its only expression has been that the mind of the flesh is enmity against God.

I come then to Christ, and with Him I have died to sin and out of that condition altogether, and get my life elsewhere, and that too by a work done for me. I say, seeing what the flesh is—what I am—I must die and take a life elsewhere. “Know ye not that as many as were baptised unto Jesus Christ were baptised unto His death?” The apostle says you have taken your place with Him in death, so that you also should walk in newness of life.

He does not speak of our being quickened with Christ. He is bringing out here the source and power of the life. It brings out all the glory of the Father—this raising Christ from the dead. All that God was in His majesty, glory, righteousness, and love was, for faith, engaged in the raising of Christ. His love to Christ, His delight in His obedience, His righteousness and all that He was, was for faith involved in bringing Him up from the grave. Christ had devoted Himself, in blessed perfect obedience, unto death, to His Father; and so the Father must come in in power and take Christ out of the condition of death. Therefore I am to walk in newness of life—not merely not to do wrong things, but to walk in newness of life. If I have died with Christ I shall be in the likeness of His resurrection. Faith gets hold of this place which Christ has taken, and that we live through Him.

All that I was in Adam, to faith, is annulled. I have died out of that condition. And mark! the apostle does not say here, We do live with Him, but

"We shall live with Him." We have not here our sitting in heavenly places in Him—the apostle is pressing truth for practice. We are planted in the likeness of His death and shall be in the likeness of His resurrection. •

Christ has died unto sin once. It is not a question of what He was morally, for the more He was tried the more His perfection came out. But He has died out of that condition in which He had to say to sin, and now He lives to God. There I take my ground; I reckon myself also "to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord." I am alive unto God, and nothing else. If alive at all, I am alive through Christ unto God. He lived, it is true, to God when in this world, but He has gone out of that state altogether and now lives to God where sin is not. Glory will be by-and-by, but now I am to live to God.

He that is dead is free or justified from sin. When a man is dead I cannot charge him with the evil of his past life, for by death he is right out of it altogether. We are thus free from sin. Death is the starting-point for practice. Being set free as dead to sin, now, says the apostle, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." If you are alive with Christ don't let sin reign as if you were still under *its* dominion. "Neither yield ye your members," etc. I can say to sin now, I am no longer your slave, I belong to somebody else now; I've been set free from sin, and I have a life given me to yield to God. Here it is not that we are dead only, but we have been made alive in being set free from sin's service. •

What are we going to do in this new life? Unto what are you going to give yourself? I am going to yield my members as servants to righteousness and to God. I can do this, for I am set in true blessed liberty. I can yield myself up to God. I was a slave of sin, but I am set free and become a slave of righteousness.

The apostle says he uses the word "slave" to explain, speaking after the manner of men. We are to walk and speak now as those who are to be judged by the perfect law of liberty. We are bought with a price: we belong to God. And we have, as those who have died and are alive, the privilege to give ourselves to God and to yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto God. As delivered by death from the power of sin, we have a life to yield. To whom, then, are we going to live? To God; and all our members, which were once yielded to sin, are now to be yielded as instruments of righteousness to *God*.

What a place the Christian has!

Law can never get the better of sin. But if we have now no law to call us to account about sin, are we to sin then? He does not say here, Shall we *continue in sin*? He answered that by showing we were dead, and therefore could not go on as if we were alive in sin. But now he is looking upon us as free men. It is, then, a question where our hearts go. "Ye were slaves of sin"; ye are now slaves of righteousness. Once we were no servants of righteousness, for when following sin we were far from God. What fruit had we then? None: the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, we have become servants to God, and we have our fruit unto holiness,

There is positive fruit in the path of righteousness. As with Moses, when God revealed His grace to him he said, "Lord, shew me Thy way, that I may know Thee, and that I may find grace in Thy sight." If I am in Thy favour Thou must show me Thy own way through the wilderness. When in the path of obedience and the will is not at work, thus walking in God's way I know what delights Him and I get practically separate from evil. I get fruit. It is the way to grow up into the knowledge of God. As in John xiv., "If a man love Me he will keep My words," etc. Thus we have fruit in following Christ. The soul grows up into God's revelation of what Christ is. Alas! we are often dull and need to get our senses exercised to discern good and evil.

But, dear friends, it is important to see where the grace of God has placed us by the work of Christ. You have by faith as entirely done with the world for fellowship as Christ has in fact. You are set free to live to God, and you will be judged according to the perfect law of liberty. If *my* will is to go just where God's will is for me, that is liberty. This is more than obedience to a command by which I surrender my will. If my child wanted to go to the city, and I forbade it, and the child obeyed, that would be the law of restraint. But suppose the next day I told my child I wished it to go to the city, that would be the law of liberty to it, because it wished to go there.

Now the Lord has set us free and He is saying to us, Where are you going to walk? In that which God has freed you from? It is not merely doing right, but obedience to God and fruit unto holiness in a more thorough acquaintance with God and an understanding

TO LIVE—CHRIST.

327

of what Christ is in God's thoughts—our delight His delight.

Before the great results of this work of Christ are produced in the world, it is given to us to anticipate these results and to walk in the power of the new place into which we are brought. We are alive to God, and our privilege is not to give up only our time and money to Him, but to give up ourselves.

WILLIAM ST., *January 18th, 1866.*

TO LIVE—CHRIST.

(*Continued.*)

WHEN I think of redemption it is no question of conflict, it is a delivering God who can completely deliver us out of the place we were in, but He will go through the wilderness with you, He will humble you, He will prove you; you will have to learn what you are, but also prove what He is. That is a different thing from redemption. If we have passed the Red Sea we have done with Egypt; and if I do not see this it may be with me as with Israel, who said, "Because there were no graves in Egypt hast thou brought us to die in the wilderness?" But God said, "I bare you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself." Have you not found the need of grace? He feeds with manna; He provides the garments that wax not old. He meets the need, and He carried the children of Israel through the wilderness for the double purpose, so to speak, to learn what they were and to learn what He was. He was *always* faithful. There is the discovery of what we are (with correction of course), but always the blessed discovery of what He

is. I shall find conflict, and I shall have to go back to Gilgal, where the reproach of Egypt was rolled away, for that is the true circumcision of the flesh. Thus we learn in this way, whether in the wilderness or in conflict, what we are and what God is.

While we are going through the path here we have all the infirmity of the flesh, the dangers and the temptations, but we have the power of God. We get heaps of warnings and "ifs" when it is a question of our getting to the end, but never such a word as "if" applied to the faithfulness of God: "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." The very process is to take us off ourselves back practically to absolute dependence upon absolute faithfulness, so that there is growth.

Paul was not perfect; no one is. He had been four years in prison, chained to a soldier, but he was making request for the Philippians, with joy and with the confident sense that they had him on their heart, acknowledging the love that led them to send help to him a thousand miles away, and he was persuaded that God would accomplish His work in them.

All this humbles us and shows us what the world is. We may learn it slowly or quickly; if slowly we shall learn self, but if we walk with God we learn to trust Him. If we walk with self we learn ourselves and our need of Him, but we do not learn to trust Him. Like a careless child feeling the need of his father, but not knowing or trusting him. If I live with my *friend* I get to know what he is as my friend.

As regards the path we get every kind of warning and "ifs" on our side, but on God's side there are no "ifs." "He will perform it until the day of Jesus

Christ." Surely what blessedness to say we are walking in the light because Christ has rent the veil, and as children of light we ought to be able to know in a higher sense than Israel that wherever we go He will be "a little sanctuary" to us. Is He to us a sanctuary? We look out on the world, what is it? Instead of its being between me and God I have got God between the world and me. We have the secret of the Lord, and go on through the world with the light that He gives. It is a comfort if we are walking with God, to be leaning on *One who never leaves me*. He restores my soul in failure and leads me in the paths of righteousness. If the heart is getting cold, not walking freely and simply with Him as it should do, remember there is Divine power and Divine grace. Recollect this, "He restoreth my soul." He will bring me back to Himself in the light and joy of His presence.

We get in this epistle a lively recollection of all the *good* that is in the saints—he enters into all the details of it. There is the power of individualising which grace gives. Now, where the soul is with God these are constantly kept fresh; it is filled with the recollection of the grace that is in the saints. "It is meet," he writes, "to think this of you all, *because you* have me in your heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye are all partakers of my grace." This is the external means used by the Spirit of God to link the Church together. Instead of the wretched flesh jostling one against another, there is the lively recollection of all that is good; and a knitting together of the hearts by these means. It wakes up the grace that produces

the kindness—not merely the kindness. And another thing we see, he is not afraid to express his praise of them or the feelings of his own heart towards them—a thing which I often find most difficult. He has true liberty to speak, being with the Lord in spirit and simple before Him. “God is my record, how greatly I long after you in the bowels of Jesus Christ,” etc.

It is this, in a great measure, made me take up this chapter: “That your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment.” Is that the idea we have before us? He expects not only the love and desire on their part, but that there should be also *spiritual intelligence*. If I were perfectly spiritual I should know what to do in all things. And this is set before us. We are set to be witnesses of Christ, and we *are* the epistle of Christ, not we ought to be. And just as men read in the children of Israel the law and the ten commandments, so ought men now to read Christ in us—Christ engraved, as it were, in you. It does not say you ought to be what He was then, but you ought to walk as He walked. How impossible, if I am walking with Christ, realising Him, is it that I shall not know the mind of God as to everything! Did not He walk with Him without a cloud? We should be yielding our bodies as living sacrifices to Him.

This is not merely that I will not do wrong, but that which is the perfect will of God. It is the knowledge of Christ and of the mind of God proving what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. If He does not expect this of us, why then does He put it? He *does* expect it of us, that we should have this knowledge of Him, and walk as He walked down

here. (*vv.* 9, 10.) It is not saying, That is wrong; or, There is no harm in that; but it is knowing the perfect will of God.

He that is holy, He that is true, is the character that Christ takes in addressing the Church of Philadelphia; and in these last days nothing is more important than to see Him thus, if you care to be kept out of that terrible day of sifting. He says, I am holy, I am true; you must walk with Me like that. He to whom Christ is all will say, Well, I am not to deny His Name outwardly, nor in anything; I am knit to Him. It requires patience, a broken will, and it requires a sense of our own nothingness; but it is a path of unmixed blessing and of nearness to Christ, and it is the power of hope. He is leading me on in my path, and whatever removes the film from my eyes to see my path clear removes the film from my eye to see Him clearly. When you have the responsibility of the world or the Church, you are referred to the day of Christ. When you get the privileges of the Christian, you have the rapture of the Church—that is, the fruit of completed redemption. We shall be like Christ, and Paul cannot be better than that. But when responsibility comes in we get the reward of labour; and what He looks for is that we should be sincere and without offence. Can we say “without offence” through this past week? You have a nature which has the desires; you have the life of Christ and the faithfulness of God to keep you; now how far can you say with all that, I am walking sincerely and without offence? Paul was no better than others as to flesh or nature—the tree is bad; but there was nothing that soiled

his conscience. He had not indeed already attained, neither was already perfect, but he followed after. It is not the mere existence of flesh that gives me a bad conscience, but the letting it act. It is like a mischievous madman in a house. I must keep him locked up or he will do mischief.

We have to be sincere and without offence "according to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I may be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death." It always had been his hope and always would be. Oh, if we could say this—Christ magnified! The Lord give us to have the eye upon Him, discerning things (that differ) that are excellent, that we may walk so as to glorify Him in our bodies. Would it not make your heart happy to say, "Always so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body?" Well, I say, is there watchfulness to make it so? You are called to walk with that blessed object before you; is there not power in Him? You can't say, No!

It is a thing there will be no opportunity for in heaven. It is here He expects His people to be the living witnesses in the world of what He is to them. Would that our hearts may believe there is power in Him for that. My grace is sufficient for thee. My strength is made perfect in weakness. But we have to remember that the strength is in Him, not in us. May the living earnest desire of our hearts be to glorify Christ, and from moment to moment carrying Christ in our hearts, to do our duties to Christ and for Christ, so that His life may be manifested in our mortal bodies.