

WORDS OF TRUTH.

“The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words:
and that which was written was upright, even words
of truth.” (Eccles. xii. 10).

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WORDS OF TRUTH.

Grace, Godliness and Glory.

“THE carnal mind,” which “is enmity against God,” would always make a bad use of His grace to sinners. It dislikes grace, and will always speak against it. It is contrary to its nature. The apostle had no sooner stated the blessed truth that “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound,” than he anticipates, and answers, the opposition of the natural mind to the sovereign grace of God (Rom. v., vi.). “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?”

The believer is dead to sin in the sense in which Christ is dead to it. This is a deeply precious truth. The following passages make it perfectly plain: “Knowing this, that our old man *is crucified with Him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. . . . *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God* through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. vi. 1-11).

Grace, the pure grace of God, is the only power of a holy, godly walk in this world. As the Lord said to one who was passing through deep trial, “My grace is sufficient for thee:

for My strength is made perfect in weakness ” (2 Cor. xii. 9). It is only by grace that we can “ adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men ; teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world ” (Titus ii. 10-14). The law demands perfect obedience, and will not yield one point ; but it gives no power to obey. The divine favour, which is our only strength, flows to us through the channel of our gracious, blessed Saviour. He is the rule of the believer’s life, and the grace of God is his power to follow Him. “ For He hath left us an example, that we should follow His steps ” (1 Peter ii. 21). The law knows nothing of grace, it shows no favour, it can only condemn the offender. “ The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ ” (John i. 17). From this portion in Titus we learn the three following things :

1. GRACE brings salvation, complete deliverance. The moment that the grace of God in Christ Jesus is received by faith there is complete salvation to the soul, a full deliverance from sin and all its consequences. The condition of the sinner in God’s sight is immediately changed. He has “ passed from death unto life,” from a condition of death unto one

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of eternal life (John v. 24). This is also the source and power of holiness. The believer, being vitally connected with Christ, a partaker of the divine nature, and indwelt by the Holy Ghost; he brings forth fruit unto God. "This only would I learn of you," says the apostle, "received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? We receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal. iii. 2, 14).

2. The same grace that brings salvation leads to true, practical GODLINESS. "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." That is, grace teaches us to deny every thing that is unlike God, and displeasing to Him; and also to deny the tendencies of our own hearts to go out after the world. But grace teaches us to do what is *good* and *right*, as well as to deny what is *evil* and *wrong*. "We should live soberly"; great sobriety, moderation, evenness of mind, temper, and conduct should characterize every believer. Also "righteously," justly and honestly towards men. And "godly"; in all holiness of heart and life towards God. This is true sanctification, namely, separation from the world, set apart for God. Such are the happy fruits of the sovereign, boundless grace of God to lost, ruined sinners in "this present evil world."

3. Grace teaches the believer to look for GLORY. He may be a dull scholar, but the lesson is plain enough: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Here we have set before us Christ Himself, the hope of our hearts, and coming glory, the full display of the millennial glory of our Saviour-God. The grace that brings salvation, and leads to godliness, sets us in the position of waiting, watching, and looking for the Lord from heaven. Alas! that this "blessed hope" should be so little understood, and have so little hold of our hearts. What can be plainer? The grace that brings our salvation sets it before us. It is fitted and intended to govern our affections and form our character for the blessed Lord. His first appearing was in grace. His second appearing will be in glory. In this passage our salvation and walk are sweetly connected with both.

May we be led to a deeper knowledge of GRACE, to a higher character of GODLINESS, and to a more transforming hope of GLORY.

The power of sanctification is wrought above all by the contemplation of the glory of Christ. Beholding this glory, we are changed into the

Christ Seated and Expecting.

READ HEBREWS X.

CONSISTENCY with the divine mind is holiness, at least one character of holiness. Separation to God is, I know, another.

To mourn when the Lord laments, to dance when He pipes, this is holy (see Matt. xi. 16-19). The proposal to make the children of the bridechamber fast while the Bridegroom was with them was an attempt to defile them, however religious it might be deemed (Matt. ix. 14, 15). And Jacob praying, after the hosts of God had met him at Mahanaim, was an exercise of spirit not consistent with the divine mind. It was mourning, when Christ was piping. The Lord by His messengers was greeting him as on his return home, but he himself was trembling and disturbed at the thought of Esau and his four hundred men (Gen. xxxii. 1-12).

Now, in the tenth of Hebrews, this holiness or consistency with the divine mind, is looked for in the people of God, I would say, in two respects. In this chapter we see Christ *seated* and *expecting*. These two things mark Him as One ascended to the right hand of God. He is seated, because He has done with sin for ever, having accomplished atonement by the one offering of Himself, thus having perfected for ever them that are sanctified. But He is also expecting, because He has not yet entered

His kingdom in power and glory ; nor will He till His enemies are made His footstool.

Thus Christ in heaven is witnessing the sufficiency of the already accomplished sacrifice for sin, and also looking onward in hope to the coming day of glory and dominion.

Consistency with the divine mind which, as we have said, is one form of holiness, requires that our condition here on earth, as the people of God, should be according to this condition of Christ in heaven. This chapter, therefore, after shewing us the Lord thus in heaven seated and expecting, calls on us to take a corresponding attitude of soul here ; to enter with boldness within the vail, and there to hold fast the profession of our hope. In spirit we are to be seated and expecting, as He is. We are to bear witness to the sufficiency of the blood of the Lamb of God, by resting in the atonement already perfected, and looking to nothing beside it or beyond it, for the sprinkling of our hearts from an evil conscience ; and at the same time to be unsatisfied with all present condition, longing, as in hope, for the coming day of the glory and presence of the Lord.

Thus we are to rest and yet to wait ; to be settled and quieted in conscience, and yet to be longing and expecting, as for a portion and inheritance. We are to have faith and hope in our souls ; faith, because of the accom-

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plished reconciliation; hope, because of the futurity of glory.

In our way we are to reflect Christ in heaven as He is seated and expecting. In a great sense there is infinite distance between Him and us. That I need not say, save as in this passing way for His glory. He is the Sanctifier, we are the sanctified. That bespeaks this infinite distance. But still, in our way, we, though still here on earth, are to reflect a seated and an expecting Christ in heaven.

But again. This consistency of which I speak is looked for in our *assemblies*, as well as in our souls. Our assemblies are, in this way, also to reflect a seated and an expecting Christ. The services in the house of God are to be of this same character. We are, as this chapter still tells us, to be "exhorting one another," and "so much the more as we see the day approaching." Our business with each other is to provoke one another to love and to good works.

Now, being thus occupied with exhortations to charity and services, if in God's strength we may move each other thereto, we bear witness to ourselves and among ourselves that we are already a reconciled people, having done with the judgment of sin, as a seated Christ has done with it. Were it not so, we should have other work to do than to be provoking one another to love and to good works. But rest-

ing, as Christ himself does, in accomplished atonement, as at the end of sin, this good work of mutual or common exhortation becomes our due and suited business. And further. The apostle goes on to tell us that this ministry of exhortation is to be among us because "the day is approaching"; thus intimating that we are to be an *expecting* as well as a *seated* assembly.

I ask then, What condition of things on earth, or among us down here, can be more blessed than this? In our souls, and in our assemblies we are, after these manners, called to reflect Christ in heaven. It is something like Moses, who of old was to go down and make things (in the midst of the camp of Israel in the wilderness) according to the patterns of things shown to him on the mount.

Surely, I may add, this dignifies as well as gladdens our souls and our assemblies. We are not straitened in the call and provisions of grace; sadly, humbly indeed in our own bowels, in the answer which we make to such a call; but not in the call itself.

But at the close of this teaching which our chapter thus reads to us, we have to listen to a solemn word of warning. See verses 26-31. This passage lets us know that to turn back to the provisions of a worldly sanctuary, and thus to sin against the truth we have now received; to gainsay the mystery of accom-

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plished reconciliation by the blood of the Son of God, by returning to confidence in that which any thing or every thing else could give us, is ruin to the soul. It is treading under foot the Son of God. It is doing despite to the Spirit of grace. It is provoking the vengeance of the Lord, and falling into the hands of the living God. And to such a condition nothing attaches but a fearful looking for of judgment. This unbelief, this confidence in flesh, this living in the world in the return to ordinances, is to un-seat Him that is passed into the heavens.

Is there not a cause nowadays why we should bear in mind ourselves, and remind one another, that the Lord Jesus in heaven is there both seated and expecting?

It is God's rule of action (if we may so say), to choose the weak things. Everything must rest on God's power; otherwise God's work cannot be done according to His mind. One can hardly believe that one must be feeble to do the work of God; but Christ was crucified in weakness, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For the work of God we must be weak, that the strength may be of God; and that work will last when all the earth shall be moved away.

Human Weakness and Divine Strength.

2 COR. XII. 1-10.

IMMEDIATELY upon redemption weakness comes in: "He was crucified through weakness" (2 Cor. xiii. 4). "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24). He could have gone up to heaven as the Son of David, but then He would have had no one with Him.

If the Spirit were given where atonement was not known it could only produce fearful conflict in the soul. There was no such thing as redemption, bringing back, except by the humiliation of God's Son. If He had not become Man, He could not have gone to death, He could not have been the Head of the Gentiles, He could not have been the One amongst men meeting every need. He came down to measure out everything in His own personal presence in grace. He did not stay in heaven and do the work. He said, "I choose to recognise Satan's power, but I will go down and worst him on his own ground."

But He was not only "crucified through weakness"; the great point is, He was raised from the dead; Himself the Resurrection and the Life; and we can look into the grave, and say, "I know Him as the resurrection and the life."

HUMAN WEAKNESS AND DIVINE STRENGTH. II

How does this power work in us? It is resurrection from the dead. When known, it brings in the taste of death into everything connected with ourselves.

Look at Saul of Tarsus; he had everything planned in his own mind for his service, and the Lord Jesus speaks to him from heaven. His first word, "Who art *Thou*, Lord?" shows that he was conscious of the entire end of everything connected with self. Then the next thing was, "What wilt *Thou* have me to do?"

You will not find until Christ really looks into you that you will look at Him as the revelation of the glory of God. Then you say, "There is a Man up there in heaven raised from the dead, the One in whose face all the glory of God shines. If I want to know anything connected with God, I must learn it from that Man. The answer to every question, above, around, within, is found in the face of that One. God centralizes all in that Person."

We often think of this passage of Scripture as the experience of the apostle. True, it was so; but in it we get the principle of Christ's dealing with a soul. God shows me the Man in the glory; but, after that, I look up and see that One bearing me on His heart before God, and that He never forgets me. We get here the principle of God's dealing with a man down here.

There is more than one principle on which the apostle was quite willing to have the fare of a pilgrim down here; but this is one, "My grace is sufficient for thee." If it be a question of service, of suffering, of any power at all, where do I get it? In Christ.

We get another ground in Philippians iii. There his heart was so entranced with Christ that he wanted in everything to be like Him; because Christ suffered, he wanted to bear the marks of suffering too; to be like Him in every possible way; in moral character, in suffering, even in "being made conformable unto His death." Christ was down here as a stranger and pilgrim, and so he wanted to have the marks of one of His disciples, in being conformed to His sufferings; and why? For the love he had to Christ.

But here it is another thing, "My grace is sufficient for thee," etc. I mean to conform you as My disciple to that principle of death and resurrection that was made good in Me before you got any blessing from it, that in everyday life you may have My strength.

Look at the bearing of this on a person down here, the light it casts on his face. It was not only a question of the danger Christ saw, but He used Satan. People lose much when they forget that Christ uses Satan to guard them from sin; he is one of the powers by which He works. Satan gave Paul the thorn in the

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flesh. Christ's purpose is to perfect His strength in His servant's weakness. The whole scene down here is under His hand; and not only are the difficulties here for us to get through, but they are arranged by Christ that He may glorify Himself by taking you through them. Who made the wilderness? God. And had He any special purpose in making it as it was? Why did He not make it like Canaan? Because He wanted a place for His people where He would have to supply their need every day.

The secret of quietness and peace of heart is not to look at things and say, I have got to face them; but Christ has prepared the things as they are that I may not be able to get along a single day without Himself. Have I no bread? no work? Am I sick? Where is Christ? All the things are not only overruled, but *used* by Him that we may learn His strength of love that cripples *us*, that He may be able to say, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

As I go along, and see in my path a large rock, what do I think? How can *I* ever get over it? No; Christ has allowed it. He has put it in my path to try my faith; and somehow or other He will get me over it.

You cannot say in ease and prosperity, There is Christ; but directly the storm begins,

the weakness is felt, the sickness comes, we can certainly count on Christ. An extremity never takes Him by surprise, though often it may be an extremity entirely opposed to His moral character. If He leave a person to himself, it is not that He gives him up, but to prove his heart. If He see a man full of himself, even though his face may be beaming with the glory, He must leave him to himself a little. If the heart will not bow to Christ it must be left to itself. If we do not learn in the quiet of the sanctuary, we shall find ourselves outside, to learn what poor things we are. Christ would rather have His name dishonoured and Peter brought low, than keep him in the ranks of the Church making "a fair show in the flesh" (see Gal. vi. 12).

Look at John in Rev. i. There, an exile in Patmos, he might have thought his apostleship ended; but Christ comes, and gives him a book to write, unfolding things of deep moment to the Church in all ages. What should we do without the Revelation?

We get another instance in Rom. viii. I know not what to ask, but the Spirit makes intercession with groanings, and He that searcheth the heart knoweth it. Do I know what I want? No; but we present our desires before Him, often unable to form them into sentences; but Christ is up there; He knows what the Spirit wants for us.

HUMAN WEAKNESS AND DIVINE STRENGTH. 15

It is only an instance of redemption, working through almighty power, connecting God, Christ in heaven, with *me*, a little, insignificant individual down here. That God is so occupied with me that He brings me into desires after spiritual things connected with the glory of Christ. I present the desire, Christ understands (take the figure in Psalm cvii.; the sailors at their wits' end, then they learn the poverty of nature) I am brought to a sense of weakness by this character of communion, by His "strength made perfect in weakness."

A great deal of the defective Christianity nowadays is owing to the Lord's people coming short in seeing that. Do we understand that the whole wilderness is to be a book of death and resurrection to us? Very often sorrow is taken up from love to Christ; but *here* it is my lifetime all developed by Christ, and He acting upon all to develop the principle of death and resurrection, and that to let me know "My grace is sufficient."

If you look at *Satan* as one of the powers by which God works, at *the wilderness* as the place prepared by Christ, where the tokens of His love are shown out, and at *yourselves*, crippled by Christ in order that you may have no strength but His to act on, you will find sweetness and refreshing of soul.

Strange Fire, and the Fire from Heaven.

READ 2 CHRON. VII. 1-10.

HUMAN thoughts concerning Christ and His sacrificial work are poor at the best.

Men can think of the crucifixion as an historical fact, and write and speak of the nails that pierced His hands and feet, of the thorny crown, and other *external* circumstances connected with His death; and they can come to their own conclusions, too, as to the worth of that sacrifice. In fact, the gigantic Christendom round about us is built up mainly on *man's* miserable thoughts of Christ and things concerning Him. Like Nadab and Abihu, they have mingled "strange fire" with the incense, which God commanded them not; and, like them, judgment and death must be the result.

We are told of these that "they died before the Lord"; and so must all those who are bringing the name of Christ and His work into use simply for present advantage and human exaltation; thus making ordinances and religious things their refuge, or relying upon the false foundation of associating man's opinions and actions with the name of Christ, instead of relying only on Christ Himself and His infinitely efficacious work. Such is "strange fire"; it is not according to God's

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mind; it does not give Him the glory. It is man's religiousness; and the end of these things is death (Lev. x. 1-3).

It was not so, however, when Solomon dedicated the house of the Lord (2 Chron. vii. 1-10). No "strange fire" was offered then; but "the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices." We see God here, and His actings in relation to the sacrifice. This is what the faith of Spirit-taught, sin-convicted souls specially behold in the cross of Christ. They are not ignorant of the external facts of the crucifixion; but until they see God acting in the scene, until they there see God dealing with His own Son as the sin-Bearer, they find no real ground of peace and rest.

In the cross of Christ faith sees the invisible God searching the victim, trying and estimating its worth by the fire of His uncompromising holiness, and condemning sin in the flesh. The cross of Calvary tells us of an unblemished One, who was in Himself infinitely acceptable to God, who fully glorified God in regard to our sins, and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

It is God's estimate of the death of Christ, and nothing short of it, that established our souls in peace before Him. The resurrection, ascension, and glorification of Christ show us the infinite acceptability, the savour of rest, of

that offering in the sight of God, and all combine to tell us that our security is built upon divine righteousness and truth.

If, then, we would have the joy of this immovable security before God, we must have God's thoughts of "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified"; for God has so estimated the priceless value of that finished work on the cross as to raise Him up from the dead, and give us life, righteousness, and completeness in Him. That blessed One, who humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, God has counted worthy of the highest possible exaltation. It is God who tells us that we are "now justified by His blood," and who gives us fullest liberty to come into the holiest of all.

Just, then, as we are seeing God's dealing with Jesus, His own Son, upon the tree, and learning His mind from His word and by His Spirit, His estimate of the infinite perfections of that "one offering" which was once offered, will our hearts be set at liberty, and established in unquestionable security before God. God has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ.

Next observe that, the sacrifices having been consumed with fire from heaven, glory followed. We are told that "the glory of the Lord filled the house." And does not this teach us what a sure title to glory the blood of

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the cross is? There is a most blessed connection between "the sacrifice" and "the glory." Let us well consider this. The death of Christ, like a mighty lever, gives to the one who believes a real title to the very glory of God. Like the rent veil, it removes every obstacle to going at once into God's presence. Glory must follow. We are at this moment between the cross and the glory, with liberty to enter into the holiest by faith. On no other ground whatever could we enter into the cloudless, holy presence of God, but that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures," and that He "was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father." We are therefore told that "the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house" (v. 1).

Is it not most blessed to see this connection between the sacrifice and the glory? How clearly it shows us that we owe all our blessings to the blood of Christ, and that in the glory itself we shall be so deeply conscious of it as to be for ever rejoicing in the infinite value of that blood, and giving unceasing glory to God and the Lamb!

Nothing so really humbles us as the sense of what God has wrought for us in Christ. It leaves no room for self-exaltation. It is a completed work. We are "become the righteous-

ness of God in Him.” This bows the heart before God to praise and give thanks. We are accordingly told, that “when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down from heaven, and the glory of the Lord filled the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever” (v. 3).

It is, then, being in communion with God’s mind as to the glories of Christ, and the unsearchable value of His work on the cross, that the heart is really emptied of self and earth, and filled with praise and gratitude to God. We are taken up with God, and delight to tell God what He is. THIS IS WORSHIP.

Devotedness, too, will be connected with it; for the affections and desires of the heart are stirred by such wondrous mercy; and purposes of soul are formed according to the will of God. Hence this inspired narrative next tells us, that “*then*,” yes, “*THEN* the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the Lord” (v. 4).

How is it that in the present day many Christians feel it so difficult to yield themselves and their substance to the Lord? The answer is plain. It is because Christ is so little understood; God’s estimate of Him so feebly apprehended; His perfections not

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known. Our ignorance of Christ is great, and very culpable. When God's revelation of the glories of His beloved Son is really known, and the infinite acceptability of His work received; when the blessed reality of being in Christ is laid hold of, our nearness to God in Him apprehended, the all-satisfying portion He is, and His all-sufficiency for us under all circumstances *known*; then the affections of our hearts are roused, and our energies drawn forth to serve Him.

We are further told, that the people were "glad and merry in heart" (v. 10). And why? Because of "the goodness that the Lord had showed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel His people."

I ask, then, in conclusion, can we fail to learn from these lessons that our present happiness, devotedness, and worship, all owe their source to God, as He has revealed Himself in Christ?

Learning God's estimate of Christ in His presence, and what He is to us, and has done for us, we cannot but be moved to readiness of heart and purpose to associate ourselves with Him in a world that still rejects Him, and most truly feel that His interests are our interests, His joy our joy, and that what grieves and dishonours Him also grieves and dishonours us.

Studies on the Book of Daniel.

XI. CHAPTER IX., *continued.*

ALL that was necessary on the part of God, in order that the events announced in the verse we have been reading should take place, has been accomplished, and even proposed to the Jewish people; but still nothing has taken place as to the actual accomplishment *to them*; the train of circumstances having been interrupted, and the Church (the heavenly people) having been introduced in the interval, until the time decreed of God, when these events shall be taken up again with the Jewish people, when the due time comes, whether by the apostasy which exists in Christendom, or by the ripe state of the Jewish people, in a bad sense and in a good one (*v. 24*).

Let us consider, for example, the new covenant; it will be established with Israel and Judah (*Jer. xxxi.*) This is not yet accomplished. The Jews are dispersed towards the four winds of heaven. Now, a covenant must be established by the blood of a victim; and so the blood of the new covenant has been shed; and therefore all that is necessary for the bringing in of this covenant with the Jews has been done on the part of God.

But actually nothing as to this nation receiving it has taken place; for they rejected the Messiah, both personally and under the

STUDIES ON THE BOOK OF DANIEL. 23

preaching of the apostles. Meanwhile, the counsels of God as to the Church have occupied and do occupy the interval; this heavenly people having nothing in common, as to their position, with that which God did and will do for the Jews.

This point being ascertained, beloved friends, the verse becomes comparatively easy; indeed, we may say that the special difficulty disappears, for we perceive that, as to the foundation on His part, God has completed everything. He has sent the Messiah; He has presented Him to the people; the blood of the covenant has been shed and propitiation made.

But if it be asked whether these blessings have been efficacious with regard to the Jews as a nation, it must be answered that nothing has been done; and this is our present question. We must not here, then, consider a satisfaction apart from its application; but rather its efficacy as regards the Jewish nation; and thus we shall be led to consider whether the nation is in those circumstances which should precede the time when the application of this blood shall be made to them. Christ died not for that nation only, but that He should gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad (John xi. 51, 52).

Now, in Daniel we have to consider the application of this blood to the Jewish people;

and in the explanation of all the prophecies we must take this fact into consideration. It is clear that the death of the Messiah is, in a certain sense, a fulfilment of this prophecy; for His death is a propitiation made for sin. But what is here said of it, taking into account the object of the passage, is in no wise accomplished. Having prefaced with these remarks, let us examine what is the result of all this for the people.

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people.” There is no reference here to us Christians. The verse refers to the people of Daniel, and to the holy city of Daniel. The seventy weeks are only applicable to them. There may be, in this portion, many events which will also affect us; the Antichrist for example; for both Jews and Gentiles, though not the Church, have to do with that wicked one; and still more have they had to do with the cutting off of the Messiah; but the aim of the prophecy is “thy people and thy holy city”; that is, the Jews and Jerusalem. Once put aside this people and city as objects of the thoughts of God here below, and there is no longer applicability in the prophecy; so that we must set aside Christianity for the moment, as not being the object here. And why? Because Christianity has, in its position before God, nothing to do with either Jew or Gentile. London has as much to do with Christianity

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as Jerusalem. Jerusalem is to a Christian no more holy than any other city. There may be deeply interesting associations connected with it, but it is, in no sense whatever, our "holy city." "Seventy weeks," then, "are determined upon thy [Daniel's] people."

Now for the details. "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks" (v. 25). In the first period, the space of seven weeks, Jerusalem was to be rebuilt, and that in troublous times. This has been accomplished, as we find from Ezra and Nehemiah.

"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and shall have nothing"* (v. 26). We know that this has likewise been accomplished.

As the Head of the Jewish people He has been on earth, and been rejected. As to His inheritance, as to the Holy City, particularly as Messiah, He has had nothing at all. He was cut off; He has had nothing as the Messiah, except spittings and death. And as the Son of David, He has had absolutely nothing. He is now at the right hand of the Father; but in His title of King of the Jews

* "And shall have nothing," i.e., shall have nothing of His dominion as Messiah. This is the undoubted force of the passage, not, "but not for Himself."

He has not yet been owned. He entered Jerusalem as King, riding upon an ass, and was rejected.

“And the people of the prince that shall come” (v. 26). This is some new person, not the Messiah, otherwise how could it be said of this person, he “shall come”? According to this prophecy, Messiah had already come, and had been cut off; besides, it is not the people of Christ, who is cut off, that “shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.” This happened according to the saying of the chief priests and Pharisees, “The Romans will come and take away both our place and nation” (John xi. 48).

Neither is it the prince himself who thus acts. It is *the people* of the future prince who do this, of the prince that shall come; the little horn, the chief of the empire (Roman) of the last beast. The fourth monarchy, namely, the Roman, destroyed the city and the sanctuary, as it is the body of which the little horn, as prince, will be the head.

“And the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined” (v. 26). “And he shall confirm the [margin, a] covenant” (v. 27). If it had been said *the* covenant, one might suppose it of some covenant already existing, whereas there is no such thought in the expression; “he shall confirm covenant”; that is, estab-

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lish it, not with *many*, but with *the many*, or *the mass*. As Christ had but a very small remnant, whilst the *mass* of the Jews rejected Him, the prince who shall come shall establish a covenant with the mass. A remnant will undoubtedly escape, but the covenant which this prince shall confirm will be with the mass of the people.

“ And he shall confirm a covenant with the* many for one week.” This is the week which still remains; for Christ was cut off, it is said, after the sixty-nine weeks. After this period, we are told of “ the people of the prince ” (the Romans under Titus), who destroy the city; and then we have the prince himself confirming a covenant for one week, which is the last, or seventieth, week.

We are to leave off counting from the time the Messiah was cut off, namely, at the end of the sixty-nine weeks. After this period time, so to speak, does not go on; God does not take count of it; it is indefinite. But the seventieth week still remains to be fulfilled.

“ And in the midst of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease ” (v. 17). It is evident that at this time the Jews are re-established, with their sacrifices and oblations. The “ prince that shall come ” will establish an alliance with the Jews during one week : but at the expiration of the half he will

* The Hebrew has the article.

completely change his conduct, and will cause their sacrifices to cease: he thinks, as before explained, to change the times (Jewish festal days) and the law. They are delivered into his hands, and he effaces them. This is the history as far as facts go.*

We, as believers, comprehend that the Lord Jesus made the Jewish sacrifice cease to those who believed on Him; just as to them, that is, to faith, John the Baptist was Elias, according to those words, "If you can receive it, this is Elias which was to come." In like manner, to faith, Christ *was* the Messiah; the Son of man to His disciples, looked at as believing Jews. Nevertheless He says, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come."† But as to the Jewish people itself, the Spirit omits entirely all that we Christians enjoy, because in fact they rejected Jesus.

* Properly speaking, Matthew xxiv. and Mark xiii. only take account of the last half of this week; for the first half belongs to the period of the beginning of sorrows, and of testimony in general, and of the labours mentioned previous to Matthew xxiv. 14.

† He supposes the continuation of their testimony, omitting the whole period, and the testimony, properly called Christian.

Some Homely Lessons.

NOTES OF A LECTURE ON JAMES I. AND II. I-13.

I WOULD follow with you, beloved, for a few minutes the Spirit's teachings in this Epistle of James.

I grant you it is not up to the level of the other epistles; that to the Romans, for instance, which teems in every part of it with dispensational truth. We get there, under the hand of the Spirit, dispensational standing (chaps. iii.-v.); dispensational experience (vi.-viii.); dispensational knowledge (ix.-xi.); dispensational service (xii.).

But our epistle, though not up to this level, as we have said, is still, in the power of the Spirit, of the same high calling. The materials that we have here are commonplace enough, it is true; and I love them the better because they are so; for thus it needs not that the soul be brought into any extraordinary circumstances to learn the lessons to which it is set.

The Spirit looks after us, as it were, follows us into the details of everyday life, and would have us be through all its varied scenes just what we are in the Church, vessels of the Holy Ghost, outside as well inside, in the activities of the new life, as much as when ministering in the Church; and it is to fix our souls emphatically on this truth, that the Spirit in Romans xii. has so blended what may be called ecclesiastical gifts with those that find

their exercise in the varied social relations, that it is impossible to say where the one order of gift ends and the other commences.

It is as members of Christ we are addressed throughout, as men of the Church, whether as teaching, prophesying, or using hospitality. "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." What you are at starting, beloved, that you are even to the end; in every relation, and under every circumstance, *a man of the Church*. If I go out, and become a man of the family, or a man of the neighbourhood, or a man of business, am I to be one whit less a man of the Church? Nay, beloved; and again I would charge both you and myself, never *lay aside* the Church-man. All is to be up to the level, and in the spirit of that consecration to which we are exhorted in Romans xii. 1: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice," etc. It is this, as I judge, which gives that tone and character to the lessons to which we are set down in this epistle, and which I would now look at for a little while with you in the details.

1. *First, then, we are set down to the lesson of trial (vv. 2-4);* a lesson, I need not say, in the full character of the dispensation. A soul under the Solomon-glory could not be set down to such a lesson as this. It had its own proper experiences, beautiful in their day and

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generation, on its own proper teachings too. The law, for instance, the Ten Commandments, very fine in their age and generation; perfect, I need not say, but not fit for this day of grace, in which the mercies of God have been revealed. And it is that which sets us down to learn lessons altogether of another order, even to count it all joy to fall into divers trials. And what, I ask, has authority to set me down to such a lesson as this? What but this, that I am called to follow a rejected Master? I have been led into companionship with a suffering Jesus.

We have been praying that we may heartily welcome all trial and discipline, through which the flesh is made to wither, and the soul is trained into deeper fellowship with the precious peculiarities of our calling; a prayer not one whit too high for such a calling, though perhaps too much for some of us; a little above, it may be, the actual experience of our poor hearts. But, oh! let us yield ourselves to the teaching, if we have any fellowship with the precious peculiarities of our dispensation. Let us never forget that companionship with a sorrowing Jesus is to yield to the heart its best joy in a world that has rejected Him. And let us address ourselves to the little that remains of the journey, in the full power of such a calling, enduring hardness as good soldiers (2 Tim. ii. 3).

2. *Next, we are set down to the lesson of rank and dignities (vv. 9-11).* And here again we are in the power and spirit of the heavenly calling. Will the spirit of social order set me down to such a lesson as this? No, beloved, it is a lesson peculiar to the Church of God; to be appreciated only by those who are breathing the atmosphere peculiar to such a calling. And shall we leave the atmosphere of the Church, and go out and breathe the vitiated, inflated atmosphere in which the men of this world live, and move, and have their being? The Church has learnt that all flesh is grass; what, then, can we do with the varied glories and distinctions in which the flesh would fain array itself?

3. *Then we are set down to the lesson of temptation (vv. 12-17).* "Do not err, my beloved brethren." This is too solemn, too sacred a lesson for man's feeble, erring mind to exercise itself upon. Take heed, see to it that you trace no evil thing to a higher source than your own corrupt heart. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God." "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust." And, on the other hand, be careful to trace up every good and right thing to no spring short of the blessed God Himself, even "the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning"; a fountain that cannot

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send forth sweet water and bitter, but whence flows "every good and every perfect gift."

4. Then we are set down to another lesson; the finest of all (may we not say?) if we may speak of degrees where all is divine; *the lesson of "pure religion"* (vv. 26, 27). Pure religion is just this: To be imitators of the Father in His boundless and rich grace, and to track the footsteps of a rejected Master, a separated Lord. If we are separated in the mere severities of nature, it will not do; we are to be in sympathy with the largeness of the heart of God.

5. *Then, brethren, we are to learn the lesson of glory* (ii. 1-9). "Have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons." How can the faith of glory have respect to the petty distinctions recognized amongst men? The world may well cherish and value its own titles and dignities, honours struck out of its own mint. But what has the faith of glory in common with all this? And let us remember that it is in the light of this faith that we are called to discern glory; and faith only can discern it. The world has no eye for it. And surely we do not need to be told that the whole spirit of things around us is just after the fashion of the world's way of discerning. But let us seek to walk in the light of the glory to which we are called.

6. *The last lesson to which we are set down is the lesson of grace.* It is "the royal law." Is "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," up to the mark of the Church's calling? No, indeed it is not. It was fine, very fine, in its generation, but not up to the measure of the grace that suits us. "So speak and so do as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." If we learn grace from any source short of the perfect law of liberty, we shall miss of the grace that becomes us, even of that infinite grace in which we stand.

And now, beloved, may we, as those who have been called to glory and virtue, who have been made partakers of the heavenly calling, set ourselves down to the study of these homely lessons, addressing ourselves to the little remnant of our journey in the full power of that heavenly calling, in the light of that glory, and in companionship with Him who, though rejected here, has been glorified there. And though, as we pursue our way, our poor hearts will have to learn to the full the ruin of the professing Church, let us ever remember that it is our privilege to learn along with it the blessed sympathies of the Spirit.

Holiness must have God for its object.

Oneness with Christ.

THE security of a believer consists in this, that he is one with Christ; and his peace, his joy, his fruitfulness, are all proportioned to the clearness with which he sees and the constancy with which he realizes this.

Now, it is by faith we know, by faith we realize, this all-important fact. God's word declares it to be a fact; and God's word is that in which faith rests. Faith simply credits, or receives as true, whatever God has spoken, however contrary it may appear to be to reason, to sense, to experience, to frames, feelings, doubts, and fears. Faith hearkens not to these; it regards not fears or doubts, frames or feelings; it considers not experience, sense, or reason; it simply hearkens to God's voice speaking to us in God's word. What that word says, what God Himself thus declares, faith receives: and God declares in His word that the believer is one with Christ. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. vi. 17). "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 13).

It is not merely that Christ is full of grace; and that the guiltiest are welcome to His embraces. This is true, blessed be His name! It was true when He was here in humiliation. It is not merely that, now He is

exalted, we have the assurance that "the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him"; that "whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. x. 13). All this is true, and is revealed in the word of God for the comfort and encouragement of any poor, doubting, fearing, trembling soul, saint or sinner, who may read these pages. His own words assure us, and apply equally whether He speaks on earth or speaks from heaven, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37).

All this is precious encouragement to the weakest, the vilest, the most desponding, to look to Christ, to come to Christ, to cling to Christ. But God's word further gives us God's judgment of those who do so look, or come, or cling. It tells us in what light He looks on such, what He reckons or accounts them to be. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works" (Rom. iv. 5, 6). "Now it was not written for his [Abraham's] sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. There-

fore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. iv. 23-25; vi. 1).

But even this is not the whole. The word of God instructs us, that the very weakest believer, the one who most feebly and tremblingly clings to Christ, *is one with the Christ to whom he clings*. It gives us to understand that the faith by which he does thus cling to Christ is the first pulsation, as it were, of Christ's own life in his soul. It speaks of the exceeding greatness of God's power towards those who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead (Eph. i. 19, 20). It declares how "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. ii. 4-6). It speaks to believers as "buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And you," it says, "being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. ii. 12, 13).

Mark, it is through the faith of the opera-

tion of God, that we are risen with Christ. The life we thus possess is a life we possess in common with Christ, risen with Him. God raised Him from the dead; the faith by which we cling to Him is a faith of the operation of God; and it is through this faith that we are risen with Christ. He died for sins, our sins; we were dead in sins. God raised Him; God has quickened us, who have this faith of His operation; and the life we thus possess we possess with Christ, in common with Him. "You, being dead in your sins, hath He quickened *together with Him*, having forgiven you all trespasses."

In what a position are we thus placed! One with Christ, partakers with Him of the same life, He being our life, as it says, "When Christ, *who is our life*, shall appear," how perfect our acceptance, how complete our security! We are "in Christ." As the hand or the foot is included in the man, so is the believer included "in Christ." And it is thus we inherit all our blessings. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are *in Christ Jesus*" (Rom. viii. 1). "But of Him are ye *in Christ Jesus*, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30). We are "made the righteousness of God *in Him*" (2 Cor. v. 21). We are "accepted *in the beloved*." We "sit together in heavenly

places *in Christ Jesus*'' (Eph. ii. 6). Can any charge be laid against Him? Then, and not till then, it may be against the believer, who is part of Him!

Such is the nature and completeness of the believer's justification, standing, and acceptance before God. The faith by which, as a poor sinner, he clings to Christ, is itself the first breathing or pulsation of a new life, which is, in fact, Christ's own life, a life which he now possesses in common with Christ. How then can the sins which he has committed be laid to his charge? Memory may re-call them; Satan may seek to terrify him by placing them all in array before him. The question is, Can they be laid to Christ's charge? The believer is, as to his life, a part of Christ. He has become such by virtue of Christ having put away all these sins: "*quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.*''

If Christ had not put away my sins, I could not have been made a sharer of His life. If I am a believer, I do share His life, and so am assured that all my sins are put away, all my trespasses forgiven. If they cannot be laid to Christ's charge, they cannot be laid to mine; for I, as a believer, am part of Christ, as a man's eye or ear is a part of a man. The same life animates eye, ear, hand, and all the other members of the body. The same life

animates Christ and the believer. They are one.

Blessed be God for such a settlement of this whole question !

A Famine of the Word of God.

THE inspired prophecy of Amos to God's ancient people is very solemn : " Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but *of hearing the words of the Lord* ; and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro *to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it* " (chap. viii. 11, 12).

In time of plenty who thinks of famine ? But famine sometimes succeeds plenty. It was so in Egypt. There were first seven years of plenty, and then seven years of famine ; and all the plenty was forgotten when the famine consumed the land. So is it sometimes with the ministry of the word of God. At a time when many honoured servants of the Lord are actively engaged in ministering Christ to souls, there are few perhaps who consider the possibility of scarcity following the plenty. It may be that the greatest blessing that God

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gives to souls on earth is a plentiful and seasonable ministry of His precious word which testifies of Christ; and yet some of us can look back and see place after place where this was so, which has now become little more than a state of desolation and almost famine of the Word; so that those who are children of God are barely *existing*, instead of being in holy liberty devoted to the Lord.

About this some believers may be ready to say, "If we are deprived of all the Lord's 'gifts,' we still have the Bible." True; and we would add, "Ye need not that any man teach you"; for you have received the Holy Spirit, who can "guide you into all truth"; and happy are those who thus find daily food for their souls. But there is another side to this. How many are there who read the Bible as a routine, and get nothing for their souls? Why is this? Are we not told that Moses and the prophets were read in the Jewish synagogue every sabbath day? so that, with the Scriptures in their hands, and read at stated intervals, there was such a famine of the word of God, that they knew not Him of whom the Scriptures which they read spake, but actually fulfilled the same in condemning Him. Again, was not Nicodemus well instructed in the facts and letter of Scripture? yet was he not ignorant of the foundation truth that a man "must be born again" either

to “ see ” or to “ enter into the kingdom of God ” ? And is it not in the present day most appalling, with so many Bibles and so many readers, to find so few who declare with divine certainty, founded on God’s word, their present possession of eternal life ; and fewer still who speak of God’s word, because it testifies of Christ, being the daily food of their souls ?

Is there not at this moment with many, and in many places, “ a famine of the word ” ? As in the time to which we have referred, those only who in their need had to do with Joseph had bread, so it is now. Christ is our Life-sustainer ; and many are faint, and in perplexity and uncertainty, because they do not go to Him to be nourished by His truth. As in olden time the people came to Joseph, saying, “ Give us bread,” so all believers have to learn that there is famine everywhere apart from the blessing of the greater than Joseph. We are told, “ There was *no bread* in all the land ; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine. . . . And they came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread : for why should we die in thy presence ? ” (Gen. xlvii. 13-15).

Now Jacob was a man of faith, and he bitterly felt the lack of food. He wanted bread, and knew that it could only be obtained from One who was over all the land of Egypt,

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whatever the instrumentality might be that brought it. This Joseph was a remarkable type of Christ risen and glorified. He had been hated by his brethren, sold by them, falsely accused, put into a dungeon, and, after he had been taken out of it, was highly exalted. *Then* it was he became, by God's ordering, the dispenser of bread *to preserve life*, a striking type of the Lord Jesus, our Life-sustainer.

Jacob and his sons were objects of God's love and care, and they fainted for lack of "*corn.*" They hungered for bread; nothing less than the bruised corn of wheat could satisfy and sustain them; nothing else could meet their need. Have it they must, if possible, for they were famishing; and it could be had only from the typically dead and risen Joseph. May we never separate the Scriptures from Christ, of whom they testify!

Are we, dear Christian readers, panting and longing for more of Christ? Is it Christ, or something else, we are so desiring? Is it with us a settled truth that Christ, whom we have joyfully known as the Saviour of sinners, is the only food and Sustainer of our souls? And can this be enjoyed without personal intercourse with Him through the Scriptures?

It is a good sign when the believer hungers and thirsts for *more of Christ, and has to do with Him where He now is for present bless-*

ing. Such prove that "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength." We may be sure that it is only by personal intercourse and communion with Him that we can be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might"; "strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus"; "strong in faith, giving glory to God."

Truly the famine is sore in many parts of Christendom. Many of God's children seem to be lean and *just existing*, without any power to step out in the ways of faith; and there is no hope of reviving in their souls but by having personally to do *with Christ where He is*. It is to be feared that many seldom read the Scriptures, and others make the serious mistake of reading the Bible as a formal routine, and rest in having done so, instead of through the Scriptures *having intercourse with the Lord Jesus where He is*, "THE OLD CORN OF THE LAND" (see Josh. v. 11). What, then, becomes us but to go to the true Joseph, saying, "Give us bread." Let us go hungry, faint, and needy, and He will not send us empty away; for it is still true that "He filleth the hungry with good things," and "exalteth them of low degree."

Like dear old Jacob, you may not be in utter destitution. You may have some balm and honey, spices and myrrh, nuts and

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almonds; but these things are not "corn," nor can they supply its place. You may perhaps see beautiful things in Scripture; you may have committed to memory some of the sweet incidents there found, be familiar with many of its remarkable historical records, have received solutions of what many call difficult passages of the Word, and know that you belong to God, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jacob knew that he was an object of divine love and care; but he also keenly felt that, good as "balm" and "honey," "spices" and "nuts" were in their proper places, they were not "corn," and could not satisfy his pressing need. He therefore said, "*Go again, buy us a little food.*"

But about this the patriarch, like many now, made a grave mistake; for he did not imagine it was to be had "without money and without price." It is true that, through the tender mercy and care of Joseph, it did not hinder food reaching them, nor did any of them conjecture why the money was returned in every man's sack. When, therefore, they next went for food, Jacob said, "Take a present of the best fruits in the land . . . and take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight" (Gen. xliii. 11, 12).

All this shows how little they knew the heart of Joseph, or the goodness of God in sending him before them to *preserve life*. And is it not often the same now? Does not a legal spirit so invest some minds in having to do with our Lord Jesus for present blessing, as if His goodness could only flow to us on condition of something worthy of it on our part? But, like Jacob and his sons, such have to learn that He does not feed and sustain us because of our goodness or ability, but because

“ ’Tis His great delight to bless us :
Oh, how He loves ! ”

Yes, He freely and lovingly strengthens and cheers those who wait upon Him, and returns all thought of creature-righteousness into their own bosom. All He wants is a heart to have to do with Him; as He said, “ If any man open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me ” (Rev. iii. 20).

Be assured, beloved Christian reader, it is not the discovery of beautiful things in Scripture, the solving of intricate questions; but it is CHRIST, of whom the Word testifies, who is *the food of our souls*. It is not “ a little balm ” or “ honey,” “ spices ” or “ myrrh,” “ nuts ” or “ almonds,” that can sustain and nourish our souls, but “ the old corn of the land,” having *personally to do with Christ Himself*, who is now crowned with glory and

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honour, and soon coming to receive us unto Himself.

Most surely we believe that with many *the famine is sore in the land*. The unbelief as to the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth, our need of Him, and the supposed competency of the natural mind for searching, receiving, and communicating the deep things of God, close the door of access to the true Joseph's store. It is when men and the world are rightly considered by us according to Scripture, and it is settled by us that there is nothing for our souls in what is seen and temporal, that we are in a state for looking to the fulness of Christ as the only source of supply for our spiritual necessities.

When this is not clearly held, the believer easily glides into the refinements of the world for present comfort; such as science, literature, the fine arts, or its so-called innocent amusements, which are often stepping-stones to the coarser, and more absorbing and soul-damaging, departments of the world, socially, commercially, politically, and religiously.

Our first pursuits in the morning generally indicate where our *hearts* are. The children of Israel had to gather their daily food before sunrise, or they would be too late; and if the believer can rise from his bed, and go about the business of this life before he has looked up to the Lord, and turned to the Scriptures

which testify of Him for renewal of the inward man, it is more than probable that his *heart* has got away from God. Nothing can possibly make up for a lack of food, for "Christ is all"; and those who really live upon Him can say, "Farewell to cold and dry formality and routine," can detach themselves from worldly religiousness and every false way, and say—

"None but Christ to me be given,
None but Christ in earth or heaven."

Do not many of the religious books of the day bear evident marks of a famine of the word of God? After reading pages, we have sometimes said, "There is no ministry of Christ here. Where is food for souls?" And why do we thus speak? Is it merely to expose the barrenness of the pages? Far be the thought; but rather to warn Christian writers and readers against wasting their time and energies and money in that which neither honours the Lord nor feeds souls. We are sometimes reminded of the prophet's words, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness" (Isa. lv. 2). Oh, the untold blessedness of looking up without a veil to our Lord Jesus Christ on the Father's

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throne, who is Head over all to the Church which is His body, and finding joy, sustenance, and comfort in the contemplation of the infinite perfectness of His Person, work, excellencies, offices, fulness, and glory, as revealed in Holy Scripture! Then our earnest cry will surely be—

“ Oh, fix our earnest gaze
 So wholly, Lord, on Thee;
 That, with Thy beauty occupied,
 We may transformèd be.”

We are convinced that it is not charity to refrain from looking this weighty subject fairly in the face. That Christians generally are longing after more of Christ, and that many of the books of the present day give a solid ministry of Christ to souls, we fear is far, very far, from being true; but until such is the case all the efforts and devices put in action, and all supposed improvements as to organization, must utterly fail to supply that which *personal enjoyment of the Lord Jesus Christ only can give.*

In all true devotedness, CHRIST is the first and governing object; next, “ His own which are in the world ”; and then our fellow-men; first their souls, then their bodies, and every want they are in.

“There is Nothing like the Cross.”

CHRISTIANITY is light and love come into darkness and selfishness, and in the human heart reaching all its springs, and destroying self, by showing it and replacing it by God; and this, not by the flimsy spinings of the human brain, but by a divine Person; who, if divine desires are wrought in me, takes me out of myself by divine affections, instead of exalting self, by producing in it qualities to be admired, which being by self makes them bad and false. The Christian, as Christian, has divine qualities; but sees, and because he sees, only God. . . .

Did you ever remark that Christianity makes the poorest mind eloquent? What is eloquence? Is it not elevated thoughts, clothed in what is perfectly adapted to the meanest capacity, and enjoyed because it lifts the poor heart, wearied with commonplace life and toil, out of itself?

Now, this is what Christianity does, because it reveals a divine Person, God Himself, who has adapted Himself to the lowest, yea, the vilest; who is holy enough (for He is perfect in it) to bring love into all the recesses of the human heart (because never defiled Himself), and awake, even by its sorrows and its miseries, the want of, and to the enjoyment of, the love that has visited it.

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It has set too, by a glorious redemption and atonement, the poor soul, that by love has learned to delight in light, at liberty to enjoy it, because it is spotless in it, and the adoring object of the love that has brought it there.

I look around. What can I see? Heathenism, men worshipping stocks and stones; Christendom, what would often disgrace a heathen; yet goodness and wisdom evidenced in the midst of it all.

What can I think? All is confusion. The goodness and wisdom I see lead me in spite of me to God, and the thoughts of God confound me when I see all the evil. Philosophy, poor philosophy, would justify evil to justify God.

But when I see Christ, the riddle is gone. I see perfect good in the midst of evil, occupied with it, and then suffering under it. My heart rests. I find one Object that satisfies all it wants, rises above all its cravings. I have what is good in goodness itself. I see what is above evil which was pressing upon me. My heart has got rest in good, and a good which is such in the midst of and above evil, and that is what I want; and I have got relief, because I have found in that One what is power over it.

But I go a little further, and I get a great deal more. I follow this blessed One, from whom all have received good, and who has wrought it with unwearied patience, and I hear

the shouts of a giddy multitude, and I trace the dark plans of jealous enemies, man who cannot bear good. I see high judges who cannot occupy themselves with what is despised in the world, and would quiet malice by letting it have its way, and goodness the victim of it.

But a little thought leads me to see in a nearer view what man is, hatred against God and good. Oh! what a display! The truest friend denies, the nearest betrays, the weaker ones who are honest flee; priests, set to have compassion on ignorant failure, plead furiously against innocence; the judge washing his hands of condemned innocence; goodness absolutely alone, and the world, all men, enmity, universal enmity, against it. Perfect light has brought out the darkness; perfect love, jealous hatred. Self would have its way, and not have God; and THE CROSS closes the scene, as far as man is concerned. The carnal mind is enmity against God.

But, oh, here is what I want. Oh! where can I turn from myself? Can I set up to be better than my neighbours? No, it is myself. The sight of a rejected Christ has discovered myself to myself; the deepest recesses of my heart are laid bare; and self, horrible self, is there. But not on the cross. There is none.

And the infinite love of God rises and shines in its own perfection above it all. I can adore God in love, if I abhor myself. Man is met,

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risen above, set aside in his evil, absolute as it is in itself when searched out. The revelation of God in Christ has proved it in all its extent on the cross. That was hatred against love in God; but it was perfect love to those that were hating it, and love when and where they were such. It was the perfect hatred of man, and the perfect love of God, doing for him that hated Him what put away the hatred, and blotted out the sin that expressed it.

THERE IS NOTHING LIKE THE CROSS, it is the meeting of the perfect sin of man with the perfect love of God, sin risen up to its highest point of evil and gone, put away, and lost in its own worst act.

God is above man even in the height of his sin; not in allowing it, but in putting it away by Christ dying for it in love. The soldier's insulting spear, the witness, if not the instrument, of death, was answered by the blood and water, which expiated and purified from the blow which brought it out.

Sin was known (and, to have a true heart, it must be known), and God was known, known in light (and the upright heart wants that), but known in perfect love, before which we had no need to hide or screen the sin; no sin allowed, but no sin left on the conscience; all our intercourse with God founded on this, grace reigning through righteousness. . . .

It is a wonderful scene. There is, in truth,

nothing like it; nothing in heaven or earth, save He who was there for us. The *glory* we shall *share* with Him; but on the cross He was *alone*. He remains alone in its glory. Associated with Him *there*, nothing can be, save as it is the expression of the nature which was revealed, and glorified in it. That we find ever in God who is thus known. Eternal life is become thus associated with God.

Studies on the Book of Daniel.

XII. CHAPTER IX., *continued*.

IF interpreters insist that Jesus Himself laboured during the first half of the seventieth week, and that account is taken of it (the half-week) for those who believed, but that, as to the nation, this half-week has been lost, on account of their unbelief, and that they will receive the Antichrist, who will present himself in a like manner, I am far from objecting.

He certainly did establish divine relationships with the little remnant of His disciples, whether one hundred and twenty or five hundred; and in consequence, as to their labours, He speaks but of the last half of the seventieth, or last week. At the beginning of this last half their labours are interrupted; the other half is lost in the general history of their previous labours.

STUDIES ON THE BOOK OF DANIEL. 55

For the Jews the whole week is yet to come, because they have not received Christ at all. All that can be said as concerning them is, that the Messiah has been cut off, and has had nothing. For (whatever computation we may incline to, as to the disciples) it is said, there shall be sixty and two weeks (besides the previous seven) unto the Messiah the prince, and after sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off.

The Holy Spirit leaves the matter in the shade, because He counts with reference to the nation, for whom the last week has been null and void, and it is the false prince in whom the thread of the narrative is resumed, as if it were at the end of the sixty-ninth week; although, as we know, the Church, the heavenly people, have meanwhile been introduced, and have already occupied a period, considered as to earth, of more than eighteen hundred years. Thus a place is left for faith, whilst as to the history it is one of unbelief. (Compare Isa. lxi. 1-3; Luke iv. 19).

Christ the Prince has never yet been Prince, nevertheless He was so to faith in His disciples. A question for the consideration of those who examine this most interesting detail of prophecy is whether the Lord presented Himself officially to the Jews as prince or king, before His entry into Jerusalem, according to Zechariah ix. 9. Upon that, we know, He was cut off.

The seventieth week is still to have its accomplishment under Antichrist. The Jews at first, with fair appearances before them, acknowledge him as their chief; as Jesus Christ said, "If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John v. 43). Thus Antichrist offers himself, and the Jews receive him. For the first half of the week* all goes on well, but then the prince turns in anger against them, destroys their system, and exalts himself against God.

That which Jesus did on the part of God, Antichrist counterfeits, according to the word just quoted, "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not. If another shall come," etc. Therefore I allow, in a certain sense, that to faith this cessation of sacrifice (alluded to previously, "he shall cause the sacrifice to cease") has taken place. For the little remnant did own Christ to be there; but for the entire nation there has been as yet no accomplishment of any part of the week.

* You will find this same date of 1,260 days repeated several times: as with regard to the little horn, chap. vii., also to the beast of the Apocalypse, Rev. xiii., and in Daniel xii., with thirty days added, as to the abomination of desolation.

Ecclesiastes and the Canticles Contrasted.

THE soul is much instructed by the different purpose of the Spirit of God in Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. Placed together, as I may say, in the progress of the oracles of God, they may naturally be looked at together, one penman also, under the Divine Author, being employed in both, and they will be found to read our souls very different, though consistent lessons.

In Ecclesiastes we are taught that "he that drinketh of these waters shall thirst again"; in the Song we learn that "he that drinketh of the water that Christ giveth shall never thirst" (see John iv. 13, 14).

In Ecclesiastes the soul is presented as having full capacity to try everything "under the sun." Solomon had been raised up as such a one. What could any man do which he could not do? What, within range of human attainments, was beyond him? He could say, and it was not a vain boast, "What can the man do that cometh after the king?" meaning himself (Eccles. ii. 12). And the only answer is, "Even that which hath been already done."

No one had, or could have, the command of more extended resources than Solomon had, because God had so exalted and appointed him. He commanded wealth, and

honours, and pleasures, and learning; all manner of such various stores of delights were found with him. He could wield the instruments, and traffic in the markets of all human, natural, earthly, and carnal attainments and treasures, without stint and difficulty; and he tried them to the full, he tried them in all their variety, as he eloquently tells us in his Ecclesiastes. He found, however, that they would not do. They left his heart a parched ground and wilderness still. Instead of raising music there, it was all and only "vexation of spirit" that was felt, and "vanity" that was uttered over it all. He that drank those waters thirsted still.

In the Song the soul is altogether differently affected. It is in a different attitude and with a different experience. *It has but one object, but that one is enough.* It is satisfied, and never for a moment thinks of looking for a second. It has "the beloved," and cares for nothing else.

The soul here, it is true, has its griefs as well as in Ecclesiastes. But it is a grief of an entirely different character. Here it sighs over *its want of capacity to enjoy its object fully*; there, as we saw, it sighed over *the insufficiency of its object*, having full capacity to prove all that it was with. "Draw me, we will run after thee," is the ardent language of the heart here. It seeks for nothing but Jesus,

but laments that it is not nearer to Him, more intimate with Him, more fully and altogether with Him. "I sleep; but my heart waketh," tells us, in like measure, that want of power in wakefulness is felt, but no want of an object, as indeed the sequel of that fervent breathing discloses; for when that drowsy soul is questioned about its object, it recounts His beauties from head to foot, and thinks not for a moment of searching for another (chap. v. 9, 16).

Such is the experience here, and such the character of the grief of the heart. It is conscious want of capacity to do justice to the object presented, to answer its worth worthily; a grief that deeply honours it, and I may say, hallows it; and we want a little more of this in ourselves. We want to find in Jesus a full and satisfying Object, a corrective for the wanderings of the heart, which, till it fixes rightly on Him, will, in the spirit of Ecclesiastes, go about and still say, "Who will show us any good?"

The building of palaces, the planting of vineyards, the getting of singing men and singing women, and musical instruments of all sorts, the multiplying of the children of men, all the trammels of the heart should end at the discovery of Jesus. Thus will the grief of the soul change. *Then*, as in the Canticles, it will be sorrow over our want of capacity in

ourselves to enjoy what we have reached; though with the blessed assurance that there is no defect or insufficiency in our portion itself. For he that "drinketh of that water shall never thirst."

"We see Jesus."

IT is very blessed, no doubt, to have right thoughts and feelings about divine things; but the question is how to induce them and maintain them.

A legal spirit, we know, never will; it "gendereth to bondage." The law never made any one happy; for supposing we could keep it perfectly we have only done our duty; but if we break it in the least we incur its awful penalty. A soul occupied with its own feelings is in some respects worse still; for then the feelings govern, and they are ever changing, though seldom in the right direction.

But how different when the heart is set at liberty in the presence of God through the work of Christ! It is then "free indeed," and beyond the government of its feelings; and then it tastes for the first time the sweetness of perfect peace, and the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory.

When Christ is known as the Risen Man in

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heaven, and the eye kept steadily fixed on Him, we shall have thoughts and feelings answering to His position there. And our thoughts and feelings will be *maintained* in the proportion that our contemplation of Him is *maintained*. Our judgment both of heavenly and earthly things will thereby be according to the mind of Christ. Both are seen in their true light when the eye is single. “ But,” as the apostle says, “ now we see not yet all things put under Him. But WE SEE JESUS, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour ” (Heb. xi. 8, 9).

Here the apostle states two things : what we *do* see, and what we do *not* see. With regard to earth, we do not yet see all things put under Christ ; with regard to heaven, we see Him there in power and glory. But, in the intelligence and enjoyment of Christ in resurrection, faith contemplates the lower scene in its relation to Him. When we are near enough to Jesus He covers the eye. Men and things are seen relatively to Him. Thus, and thus only, is our estimate of earthly things correct.

Christ is not in earth's fairest scenes ; the eye sees Him not there. The busy, active, crowded, and it may be gorgeous, scene is empty. The glory of all nations, tongues, and peoples may be concentrated within the limits of the eye's vision ; still He is not there. All

its glory fades before the eye of faith : the thought of His absence dims its brightest lustre.

But alas ! this is not always so. It sometimes happens that Christians have got so far away from Christ in heart that they become engrossed in the affairs of this life ; and some can even visit and enjoy the poor empty, tinselled shows of this world's vanity. What could be more lamentable ? They forget that *death's stamp* is deeply graven on everything this side of resurrection. But such actions clearly prove that the heart must have been away from Christ for some time. Such points are only reached step by step.

Even the natural man himself, although he knows nothing better, will own that such things are but the mere glitter of human vanity, and all "vexation of spirit." But in faith's estimation everything is empty which Christ does not fill ; and there it has to confess that His hand is not seen in the whole assemblage of this world's glories. They are not yet under His hand ; they are not yet the reflection of His glory. Hence, an important question arises, Whose hand are they under ? of whose glory are they the reflection ? Faith's ready answer is : What is not of the Father is of the world ; what is not of Christ is of Satan ; what is not of the Spirit is of the flesh. " We see not yet all things put under Him."

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We have only to wait “ a little while,” and “ the world to come ” shall be put in subjection under the Son of man. The expression, “ world to come,” does not mean either heaven or hell, as is generally supposed, but the dispensation to come, or the Millennial Age. We could not speak of heaven or hell as “ to come ”; they are *now*. But we all know that the Millennium is to come, the period of Christ’s manifested reign over the heavens and the earth, as gathered together in one. Then it will be quite right for the believer to enjoy the world in all its glory to his heart’s content. The Lord’s name will then be excellent in all the earth, and His glory above the heavens (Ps. viii.) But till then he must pass through it as a stranger and a pilgrim. Our citizenship is in heaven; we cannot be citizens of both heaven and earth at the same time. Once we were citizens of this world; now we are citizens of heaven, and ought to walk, though still here, as such. We no longer belong to the old world out of which the Lord has called us, but to the new world into which He is leading us.

What a good report the Spirit gives of the pilgrim fathers on this point! “ And truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly;

wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He hath prepared for them a city" (Heb. xi. 15, 16). What a noble testimony this is! "God is not ashamed to be called their God." Happy for the believer when the Lord is not ashamed of the place he takes in this world, or rather outside of it!

Let us now turn for a moment to the second thing: what we *do* see. "WE SEE JESUS." This is more important to us than the coming millennium. He who bore our sins on the cross, and suffered death for us, is on the throne. What could be more grateful to us? And what a proof to us that our sins are gone! This ought to be the complete settlement of every question, the perfect rest of the heart, and the living spring of joyous worship.

The first glimpse of Jesus "crowned with glory and honour" should separate the heart for ever from the world which crucified Him; and practically unite it to heaven. It should change completely the thoughts and feelings by transferring them all to Him who is there. All we love is there; all our interests are there. This is the only way of becoming heavenly minded. We can never become so by *trying*; we must be occupied with a heavenly object; we must "see Jesus crowned with glory and honour."

True, most true, there are many still here that we love, and many may be the tender ties

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and interests that we cherish; but everything is to be viewed in the light of THE RISEN JESUS, and loved according to our connection with HIM. But there are few things that we realize so little as *our resurrection life*.

We ought ever to bear in mind that in the death of Christ we died with Him, and left the old world by means of death. “ I am crucified with Christ,” says Paul; “ nevertheless I live.” But we arose again from the dead in Christ, and entered the new world in the power of *resurrection life*. We were quickened together with Christ, raised up together, and seated together in heavenly places in Christ. Now, we are said to be “ in Christ Jesus ”; and being in Him we must be where He is. The natural mind may be unable to see the meaning of such truths. But faith has no difficulty; it sees things as God sees them.

What, then, do we see when “ we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour ”? Most surely we see our place and image in Him there. How simple, yet how powerful! It is the proper action and power of faith. Christ is the divine expression, the perfect definition of every Christian’s position in the presence of God. Oh, what a truth this is, and what a power it has when enjoyed in communion with the mind of heaven! The more we contemplate Him, the more intensely and fixedly the eye gazes on Him there, the more will our

thoughts and feelings become heavenly. "But we all, with open [unveiled] face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. iii. 18). This is the only way of becoming spiritually minded, the only path to true happiness, the only ground of heavenly worship and of continual joy in the Lord.

Take then thy rest, thou weary soul; trouble no more! The once humbled Jesus is now on the throne. Surely it is all well with Him there. But oh! marvellous, blessed truth, not more so with Him than with thee, though thou hast not yet actually reached that blessed home above. His title is thine. Keep looking to Him; there is immense power in the eye. How often thine eye may have betrayed thy heart through its wanderings after unworthy objects! But now let thine eye sanctify thy heart undividedly for thy Lord.

His word endureth for ever. And what saith that word, doubting soul, to thee and to me? "As He is, so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17). Hast thou had some difficulty as to the full meaning of the expression, "We see Jesus"? Thou canst have none here, surely. These words, remember, are the words of God. Are they not wonderful? They express our living union with Christ; and they plainly assure us that as He now is amidst all

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the glory and blessedness of heaven SO ARE WE in the sight of God, though still in great weakness, and in a world of sin, condemnation and death. Let nothing, my fellow Christian, rob thy soul of this heaven-born blessedness, though feeble in thyself, and still exposed to many temptations.

Oh that we may calmly, sweetly, happily, continually gaze on JESUS, thus crowned with glory and honour! And may we not forget, when looking on Him in His glory and beauty, that we are looking in one sense on ourselves. “As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly” (1 Cor. xv. 48).

The two passages on which we have been dwelling are fitted and intended to enrich and strengthen the soul. Christ in glory for the eye, and the word of Christ for the heart. Had Peter only kept his eye on the Person of Christ, and His word, “Come,” in his heart, he would have walked as securely on the stormy sea as the Lord Himself.

The soul feeds on the death of Christ when it believes so as to have eternal life; and likewise continues to feed thereon when it has life, in order to nourish and strengthen the life it has (see John vi.).

The Lord Jesus in the midst of His Disciples.

READ LUKE XXII. 19-34.

THAT which is so precious and interesting in this portion is the grouping together of so many various subjects. If you follow the order of events here, and the moral unfoldings, it is most beautiful. It begins with the greatest expression of divine life. In a certain way we begin life every week with the Lord's table.

A week is the summary of one's life, and the first day of the week we begin with the death of Christ, and there is no beginning like that. After the passover is over (the celebration of that which was characteristic of Israel), He comes to that which is for us; and He does it in full view of the future. I am sure if we get right about the Lord's table we are right about all else. "This do in remembrance of Me."

Whatever brings our souls into close contact with Christ is a gain that will never pass away. Our great necessity is NEARNESS TO CHRIST, to have in our souls the sense of what a wondrous reality it is *to speak to Him*. To think that people walking through this world may know that just as really as the disciples could speak to the Lord down here, *we* may speak to Him now. I do not know anything

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to compare to it; His ear ever open to me, His heart ever open to me, and the Spirit ever willing to conduct my soul into His presence. But it is a greater thing for Him to speak to me.

“This do in remembrance of Me” has a peculiar claim on us. He was about to undergo death, and yet there He is in all quietness and calmness, saying, “This do in remembrance of Me.”

How differently a person goes out on a Sunday morning to the other days of the week! Where are you going? I am going to meet the Saviour, according to His own desire, and everything else sinks into utter nothingness. There is no *routine* in it. Could there be routine in worship, adoration, bowing of the heart, and the satisfaction that takes a person out of the world? If there is a hymn sung, it is worship; if there is silence, it should be the silence of adoration. I go and sit down and wait till I have the sense that the Lord is there, and that is *everything*.

It is not repetition. There is no such thing in God's ways with us as repetition. We never pass through two circumstances alike. We are walking to heaven as straight as we can go. In the pathway every circumstance is new, and fresher in divine blessing than before, and there is so much there to take in that we shall never get to the end of it.

But I press the solemn, blessed joy of being able to speak to Christ. Often we pray, and do not get the sense of being near to Him; and then I think the thing is to persevere, and get out of the distractions until the Spirit of God takes us into the quiet place, and we sit down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit is sweet to our taste. When a person is with Christ, and has really got Christ, there really is not room for other things.

Here (v. 23), when the disciples come out for a moment, they are disturbed at the thought that there is to be a betrayer. John xiii. tells us how the secret is known that there was to be a betrayer, and *there*. This is a most expressive verse: "Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom He spake." Immediately after there is a strife among them which should be the greatest; that is *SELF*, pure and simple. It is that kind of working which we have to judge in this day. There was the Son of God, the Lord of glory, going to give Himself for them, for ever to displace from before God's eye that which was unsuitable to Him, and there *they* are making themselves objects of consideration.

They were objects of suspicion in the previous verse, now objects of consideration. John the Baptist is a beautiful contrast to

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them. He calls himself nothing but a "voice," and if we are anything else but voices it is all over with us. It is a beautiful thing to be a voice; and we are only voices *for* Christ, as the voice *of* Christ is the joy of our hearts.

This is the most humiliating picture of man's heart. Immediately after the table, where His love is displayed, then they strive which should be the greatest. When you get near to Christ you feel as if every shred of yourself was gone. Verse 25 shows what goes on in the world; but verse 26 shows that Christianity is the total and entire opposite of it.

It is beautiful, the moral condition of soul that takes a person into the place of being nothing, and glad to be in obscurity. The more we are with Christ, the more we welcome obscurity, and He knows; that is enough. The soul that goes on with Christ can say, "Well, I am content to be nothing"; but this verse 26 is open to us because it is service, and the way He remedies their departure in that day is the way He remedies it for us in this day. We never remedy anyone but by setting Christ before them. "I am among you as He that serveth." Service is where we get tried; but when we are with Christ, nothing but the lowest place will do for us.

The moral order here is so beautiful; first the table, then service. Nothing can disturb

Christ's love; but what must it have been to Him to see His disciples like this! But He removes the entire thing in a moment when He says, "I am among you as he that serveth."

First, we have the full expression of divine love in the supper, and the request of divine affection; the greatest love shown, and the greatest grace in asking them to do something for Him. There is nothing He cares for so much as the affections of His people. Then He comes down, and sees that these loved ones are at issue among themselves as to who should be the greatest. He corrects that by the revelation of Himself, and by doing this He displaces self. We are never displaced but by Christ. Then He says, "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations." The moment the heart reaches what Christ was, immediately He says everything He can in their favour. He rebukes them solemnly first for their selfishness, and shows them that the very opposite marks Christianity: "Ye shall not be so," and then He unfolds the true principle of service. Because He loves them, He delights to say everything He can in their favour. He delights to say all He can for each of us; and when we stand before the judgment-seat, He will surprise us. Little things we had forgotten He will remember, and bring up in our favour.

What a set they were, these disciples, a company of men one would look down upon! That is the best company Christ had in this world. But it brings out what He is. Is this the kind of Christ you have to do with? He will say everything He can for me, He will not pick all the holes He can in me. It is the sense of the *love* of that Christ who looks over my pathway here. He knows what a bungler I am. But He cheers us, and helps us, and puts the best motive for all we do; and when we get home, will He not surprise us? And now think what a moment it was for Him; think of the surroundings in which He was: sorrow and rejection, and those waiting outside to drag Him away to death; and yet He speaks about *the kingdom* (v. 29). The kingdom was *present* to Him, and He says, "I appoint unto you a kingdom." Only a man in power and position can talk about "appointing."

There never was a brighter day for us than the present; but it must be faith. Faith makes what is on before *present*; it makes the kingdom *present*; and the light of that future is enough. You never found a man strong and vigorous in Christianity who was not living in the light of the future.

Put yourselves in company with the disciples, and say, How are things with us? The very men who were appointed a kingdom for-

sook Christ and fled. First, we want personal acquaintance with Christ, and then there must be the acceptance of identification with Christ in rejection. We talk about the Church and house of God; but if a person is not in spirit identified with a rejected Christ, the Church is all Greek to him. No soul has ever taken in the truth of the Church that is not in identification with Christ in rejection. The Church is a heavenly thing. Do you know you are one with Christ outside this world? that there is a breach between Christ and the world, and are you with Him?

Verse 30 is worth looking at. Eating at His table is the highest thing. Sitting on thrones is more for judgment. Intercourse with Christ in the day of glory coming. It would be a terrible thing not to be true to Christ *now*. Let us rise up, and go straight on. Satan will try to hinder, and we get Satanic power here (v. 31). There you find Satan, and what he brings against the soul, and then Christ's priestly service, praying for us. To think that the Lord knows every tactic of Satan! He is above them all, and sees their working towards me. We have not an *inactive Christ* in heaven, but One who cares for us, and watches over us every moment of our lives. What a moment it is for the soul when it can say, "Lord, I know Thou art sufficient; Thou wilt help me through"! To know I am an

object of consideration in heaven. "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2 Chron. xvi. 9). There is nothing like Christianity. A Saviour in heaven, with boundless, measureless resources, who is going to do everything for me. "I have a rich, Almighty Friend."

"When thou art restored, strengthen thy brethren" (v. 32). It is beautiful to see how the Lord contemplates the blessing of His people. He does not say, "When you are restored, take care you do not fall again, but, "When thou art restored, *strengthen thy brethren.*" That is what Christ cares about. You must learn from failure; but when you are restored, strengthen the brethren. That is our business, and we cannot strengthen each other but by the ministry of Christ. "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing [blessing there means the ministry of blessing]; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing" (1 Peter iii. 9). We are going to inherit it, we *do* inherit it, and our only business is to *minister* it.

The one thing we need is to get near to Christ. Can I *speak* to Him? Can I be as near to Him as John or Peter was, and have intercourse with Him? What a wonderful

thing ! And how *He* values it and loves it ! If we are taking the ground of self-sufficiency (*v.* 33), God has to put us to the proof. The first thing is to be so at home and at rest in Christ's presence, that He has no question to put to me. It is no good thinking about service if there is a question between me and Christ.

Peter had to learn himself. The higher thing is not to learn oneself by faults ; because if I rightly accept the cross of Christ, I accept the very worst about myself. If we have learnt the cross, we have learnt the worst about ourselves.

I never had my heart occupied with a living Christ in heaven without finding that His love drew my affections after Him. I never grew careless without there being cold chills. If occupied with Him, you will not be thinking of yourself, your walk, your beauty, or anything except the love which draws the heart after Him. I can give no reason why my heart was wrapped round Christ, save that the grace of God drew me to Him, and has kept me these forty years ; because He loved me, and will love me to the end. Peter cursed and swore, and denied the Lord ; but the Lord had bound Peter to Himself, and He kept him to the end.

Studies on the Book of Daniel.

SCRIPTURE is not silent concerning this covenant of the Jews with Antichrist, and their consequent judgment. In Isa. xxviii. 14 we read, "Wherefore hear ye the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem . . ." "Your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it" (v. 18). These are the threats as to the moral position in which they shall be found in that day.

It is the last half of the week which occupies the mind of the Spirit of God as to these terrible events at the end. Thus the little horn is to continue "a time, times, and half a time"; namely, three years and a half, or the half of a week. Power is given to him for this time. So in the Apocalypse: "There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies, and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months" (Rev. xiii. 5).

I have said that the sacrifice and oblation would be restored. This is noticed in prophecy, although at the same time their re-establishment will be utterly rejected by God. It is written in the last chapter of Isaiah: "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that ye build unto Me? and where

is the place of My rest? For all these things hath Mine hand made" (an intimation of the restoration of the temple, but then) "to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word," namely, the remnant.

The sacrifices are offered, but rejected (read Isaiah lxvi. 3-6). Again, "And (they) shall take away the daily sacrifice," etc. (Dan. xi. 31). Again, in Dan. xii., "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days." This is thirty days over. It will take thirty days more for purification, and yet forty-five more for complete peace. "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days" (v. 12). This latter half-week is still referred to, in which the daily sacrifice being taken away, Antichrist will be there, and the abomination of desolation set up in the holy place. (Compare viii. 11).

In Matthew xxiv. we find this same circumstance exactly. The Lord, having alluded to wars and rumours of wars, becomes more precise. He had spoken until verse 14 in quite a general way, and, like Daniel, declared that the city and temple should be destroyed, and also the people. But as He goes on to speak of the labours of His disciples He enters more

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fully into the general history. "Many shall be offended," etc.; and He counsels His disciples as to their conduct, as witnesses of the truth, and tells them that, before the end came, "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness."

All this was to happen, not at a given time during the seventy weeks, but, generally speaking, before the end, but of course after the discourse and departure (death) of Jesus. Afterwards He says, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth let him understand:)" here is the abomination of desolation placed at Jerusalem; the previous testimony is over, and the disciples have only to fly; "then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains" (v. 15). Jerusalem is then delivered over to the judgment which awaits it.

There is yet another important and interesting circumstance, as to this last half-week. We find it in Rev. xii. We shall see that this date of the abomination fits in exactly with the time of Satan being driven out of heaven. The woman flees into the wilderness, where she is fed one thousand two hundred and sixty days (v. 6). "There was war in heaven, Michael and his angels fought against the dragon" (v. 7). Read to the end of verse 12: "Knowing that he [Satan] hath but a short time."

Now it is exactly during this half-week that the abomination of desolation is set up in the holy place. This is given more in detail in chapter xi.

Further: "He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate"* (Dan. ix. 27). That is, by means or on account of the abominable wings, or literally, "on account of the wing of abominations." The word *abomination* is always in the Old Testament simply an *idol*. For example, the abomination of the Moabites was the idol of the Moabites. Solomon put the abomination of the Ammonites upon the Mount of Olives, that is, the idol. The word *wing* always gives the idea of *protection*. "Under His wings shalt thou trust" (Ps. xci. 4).

"On account of the wing of abominations," that is, as it appears to me, on account of the protection of idols. They take refuge in idolatry for a protection; and this is the finishing stroke of their wickedness, and the consequence is the desolation which descends upon the desolated one, until the end of these

* Rendered in the French, "He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, then by means of the abominable wings which shall cause desolation, even until a consumption determined, the desolation shall fall upon the desolate one (Jerusalem)."—TRANSLATOR.

seventy weeks, a desolation of fearful judgment; not now merely the destruction of the city, as by the people of the prince to come. Antichrist had deceived the people, the little horn has made a covenant with them, and, as it were, holds them in his grip. God is set aside, denied; Antichrist even makes himself God; the sanctuary, if not destroyed, is at least profaned and degraded in every way. The abomination is put into the holy place, and idolatry is introduced. At last Antichrist sits there as God; he allows or confesses nothing at all but himself; until God is no longer able to endure him, or those who are subject to him, and destruction and desolation fall on the people.

There is no account of this in our present chapter, but there is in Dan. vii.; and in the New Testament the Lord thus speaks of the Jewish generation: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places," etc. (Matt. xii. 43. Consult the whole passage). They enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first: "Even so shall it be also with this wicked generation."

This is the history of the Jews. I do not say there may not be other applications of the passage.

What was this wicked spirit? It was idolatry. After the Babylonish captivity there

had been no more idol-worship. The unclean spirit had gone out, and the house was empty; though there was every kind of profession. Then the spirit of idolatry, which found no rest, returns to the house at the end. It will be the case with the Jews, and *then* there will be an open rebellion against God; they will be joined with Antichrist, and join in the war made upon their Messiah. And it will be *then* on account of the protection of these abominations, that "*the desolation shall be poured out upon the desolate one.*"

Compare Dan. x., xi. and xii. In the last chapter we have the complete deliverance, and he adds in this last thirty days, and forty-five days to the half-week. Then all will be happy and blessed. There will be a certain time necessary after the destruction of Antichrist to re-establish everything in order. The whole of this chapter is in affinity with the end of Dan. vii., and with Rev. xiii. and xvii. We shall have to consider it again in connection with chap. xi.

The Intercession and Advocacy of Christ.

THE intercession of Christ as Priest, in HEBREWS, is not for the forgiveness of sins, nor for sins properly at all, but for mercy and help in time of need, to succour them that are tempted; because all the sanctified are

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viewed as perfected by one offering. In 1 John ii. the advocacy is exercised when one has sinned; because there fellowship or communion is spoken of; and that is interrupted by sin. Forgiveness, in the sense of non-imputation, cannot be sought by one set free in Christ; because he does know that sins are not imputed to him. But he confesses his sins; and fatherly forgiveness is given him. Confession goes much deeper into the conscience than mere asking forgiveness.

There is a forgiveness which applies to Christians, and to Christians only (what I may call administrative forgiveness), which has nothing to do with non-imputation or righteousness. (See James v. 15; compare 1 John v. 16, and 2 Cor. ii. 10). In 1 John ii. the advocacy of Christ is founded on righteousness and the efficacy of propitiation being already there in Christ. That pardon is plenary [or full] on coming to Christ is clear; and, to refer to no other scriptures, it is, in Heb. ix., x., largely reasoned out by the Holy Ghost. If not, such sins never could be cleared, as Christ cannot now die over again; and "without *shedding* of blood is no remission." Christ must "often have suffered" (ix. 22, 26).

To make a difference of time (as to all our sins being put away) is to confound the time of the Spirit's operation, in bringing our souls

to faith in Christ and His work, with the work itself. All our sins were future when Christ bore them. The way in which "once for all," "for ever," and "no more" are used in Hebrews ix. and x., is most distinct and characteristic.

As to the Lord's Prayer, it must be remembered that it was given before the Lord's work was accomplished, and, of course, has the characteristics of the time in which it was given; because it was perfect. Nevertheless, statements that accompany it show that where the spirit of forgiveness does not exist forgiveness does not belong, though we are imperfect; and no one in his senses would ask for forgiveness from God in the measure in which our forgiveness is perfect, though in spirit and purpose it is, according to the new nature.

Christendom and Christians have forgotten that our place and standing is that of Christians, consequent on the accomplishment of the Lord's work, and the gift of the Holy Ghost thereupon. The things belonging to the Father's kingdom may be possessed, or partly still desired; but when the Lord's Prayer was given it was not come, and the desires which Christ would teach His disciples are according to the position they were then in. Hence also the Lord's Prayer is not in His name; for the work and plan on which that was founded was not yet accomplished.

The Bright and Morning Star.

REV. XXII. 16.

I WISH to say a few words on what it is that gives the heart of a believer boldness at all times to say, "Come, Lord Jesus."

My own thought as regards this passage is, that nothing but personal affection to the Lord can ever give the heart boldness before Him. The soul must realise that it has been laid hold of by His love, that such a light is shining down upon it from His face as to enable it, under everything coming up against it, in spite of failure, to know that there is nothing but love in the heart of the Lord Jesus Himself towards it.

Yes, through all possible changes we have still His love. I may be a poor thing, as unlike Him as possible; still His love laid hold of me just as I was; and nothing that He can find in me is unforeseen, or can change that love. If the thought of my heart were, "I have been a Christian thirty or forty years, done this or that," would that enable me to stand and say, "Come, Lord Jesus"? No; nothing but love to Himself will.

"I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." All the promises are sure in Him. Have they failed with us or Israel? No; Christ is the guarantee for all.

"Root and offspring." Is the root never to

bud and blossom, and fill the world with fruit? Should we be content to have Him up there, and Satan possessing the earth? No; in my heart He is Lord of lords, and King of kings; I must see every knee bow to Him.

“Bright and morning star.” Not of the night, but of the morning without clouds, har-binger of day, before the glory of the sun lights up the world, as it will do. This glory, brightness, of the morning star, is a glory to be in Himself, seen and admired of His saints, a peculiar glory. It was something to cheer John’s heart in the midst of failure (and ours too), to watch through the night for that bright star, that Lord who loved us, and who gave Himself for us.

Then we find the word, “The Spirit and the bride say, Come.” Why displace God’s thoughts of the bride for my thoughts of myself? Knowing the grace of Christ, cannot I leave myself in the hands of Christ without reference to what I am? If I can do that, I can say, “Come.” If we think we have a multitude of things to do first, we cannot allow the blessedness of waiting and watching for that bright star. John might have said, “I have testified of the failure of all in man.” But what there was in Christ to meet it all was his thought: is it yours?

There is no scene so marvellous in the whole world as the description of the bride, the

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Lamb's wife. Faith identifies the soul that has it with the Lord. You ought to know why you can say "Come, Lord." Testimony may have failed; and, if walking in the Spirit, you can never count you have given Christ what He deserves. How then can you say, "Come"?

The name of "bride," connected as it is with the Lord Jesus, brings one to the conviction that God is acting just to please Himself there; that Son to be enthroned in the heavens with all possible glory, but not alone. He must have companions there. It is God's thought to have an adopted family of poor sinners there; and who shall stop Him?

If a ray of light has come down into my heart from the face of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ray identifies me with the bride. I belong to Jesus; I must be with Him, go where He is. Strange place for such as I; but I am His; I must be there. The most halting, the 'saved so as by fire,' will go up to one common glory, brought in because part of the bride. Rewards, differing according to faithfulness, likeness to the Lord, there will be; but when I think of the Christ there in glory, and myself a part of His body in it, how it does away with all thought of creature merit; and faith understands why Christ must have glory, without reasoning; for "He is worthy."

The heart that loves will never be satisfied

till Christ has all His glory. Oh for softness of heart rather than greatest intelligence! Is there nothing to move the affections in the certainty of those words being so soon accomplished: "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry"? Are you longing for Him? He is coming! Is the hope ever on your heart? Has that part of God's grace told on your souls? The moment a man gets this hope he must begin to act on it. How sweet to have love drawing the heart in separation to Christ; or to fruitfulness, if unfruitful!

Looking, then, at ourselves or our service, there could be nothing but despair; but the moment the person of Christ flits before the mind, then comes a joy that neither light or darkness can dim. He is surely coming, and a bride is surely kept to meet Him. Lift up your eyes in the midst of all your failure; He is coming; it is Jesus; and the heart can say "Come" to Him. I cannot think of Him without breathing out, "Come, Lord, come quickly"; and I cannot get to the love in the bosom of the Father without longing for another to enjoy it too, looking out too for another heart to cry, "Abba, Father" with me.

That word "come" is a sort of plumb-line to our hearts, a touch-stone by which to test the state of your soul. Is it failure that

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hinders? And do you ever expect to meet His face with joy on account of your own faithfulness? No, impossible! All your confidence must spring from what Christ is, not from what you are. If this moment we were caught up to meet Him, His first thought would be surely not to find fault. His first thought would be: These are mine; this is the bride made ready by the Father. He never found fault with anything He did. He does not love to find fault; commendation is sure to come first with Him. He will have a private account to settle with each soul, but not at the hour of meeting: all will be joy then.

Living water is ever streaming from that Rock, and where is the limitation? "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." There may be two states of souls thirsting. With the one God deals to make them find out what they are. If you are one trying to snatch at everything to satisfy yourself, to you I could not say, "Drink freely." Another state of soul is seeing everything in Christ to satisfy; but thinking you have something to do to get hold of Him, there is a grasping, a catching, but a never getting hold; seeing the manna and water, really hungering and thirsting, and crying out, "I see, but cannot lay hold."

Such a soul has to learn that the God, who has showed the blessing, is the One alone to give it. Would the Lord coming to-night find you as those having to do with Christ and not with yourselves?

This portion fits the day we live in! Nothing now remains but for God to introduce Christ to put down all the wickedness of man; and in the sense of this, at the fag end of the Church's failure for nearly 2,000 years, I can still stand and say, "Come, Lord Jesus"; but I could not do so if looking at a single thing around me or in myself. My heart and my eye must be filled with Himself. Then, and then alone, can I cry, "Come, Lord Jesus."

The worship of God is founded upon the knowledge of the heavenly position we are in, being called out of the world into fellowship with Himself. We have not a single thing in common with the world. We can sit and sing of redemption just as if we were now in heaven. Our relationships with God will not be in the least changed when we get home; they will be just the same then as they are now; and there is no ground upon which we shall be there that we are not upon now. He has set us in Christ, and we can say, as in Deut. xxvi. 3, "I profess this day unto the Lord my God that *I am come* unto the the country," not *shall* come.

Standing and State

IN ROMANS I.-VIII.

WE may look on the Epistle to the Romans, speaking generally, as a divine treatise on "The Righteousness of God," for which we have abundant cause for praise and thanksgiving. It consists of four parts.

1. After considering the state of men before law, and the common ruin of Jews and Gentiles since the law (and "all" are proved to "have sinned," to be "under sin," and "guilty before God") the question is, "How can God be just and yet the Justifier of the ungodly?"

This is fully met by God's justifying "freely," or without a cause, by His "*grace*," through the *redemption* which is in Christ Jesus . . . to declare at this time *His righteousness*: that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (chap. iii. 9, 19, 23-26). Thus, Christ having in sovereign *grace* died for the ungodly, and fully glorified God about our sins, God has not only in righteousness raised up from among the dead Him who was delivered for our offences, and given Him glory, but He is also just to Christ in counting us righteous for whom He died. In this way the "ungodly" who believe are "justified"; they are reconciled to God by the death of His

Son, and their faith is reckoned to them for righteousness.

This section of the epistle extends, as has often been noticed, to chap. v. 11. In it we have the righteousness of God *manifested* without law, God imputing *righteousness without works*. The righteousness of God is *revealed* in the gospel, so that instead of God, as by law, demanding righteousness, His righteousness is *declared*, and is “*upon* all them that believe.”

2. The next subject treated of in this marvellous epistle is how God can, consistently with His own righteousness, deliver us from the condemnation to which we were exposed as having an evil nature, “sin in the flesh,” which was enmity against God, not subject to His law, and connected us with the first man Adam. Here again we find we are delivered by *grace* through the death of Christ, on the principle of *divine righteousness*. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, *God sending His own Son* in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin” [a sacrifice for sin], “*condemned sin in the flesh.*” (Chap. viii. 3.) Thus our *old man* has been crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be annulled. We have died with Christ; we have died out of our Adam-standing, and have, by *grace*, a new life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This section extends from chap. v. 12 to the end of chap. viii. How truly it is said, "Where sin abounded, *grace* did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so *might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life* by Jesus Christ our Lord"! (Chap. v. 20, 21.)

3. Another subject is brought before us in chapters ix., x., xi., which show how God can justly reconcile His dealings and purposes concerning law-breaking, covenant-breaking Israel, and yet fulfil His promises to them as a people connected with David and Abraham. Though they utterly failed under a covenant of works, are at this moment under judicial blindness, and in other ways under Jehovah's governmental wrath because of their sins, divine *grace, through righteousness*, will yet be put forth for their blessing, through the redemption-work of *Him who died for that nation*. "So all Israel shall be saved" (all the twelve tribes): "as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." (Chap. xi. 26, 27.)

This will be after "the great tribulation" (see Matt. xxiv. 21) of Jehovah's righteous retribution for the rejection of their true Messiah. Thus wisdom, judgment, mercy, and truth will all be established in connection

with the nation of Israel's future blessing. God will also be vindicated in all His ways, and righteousness and peace will kiss each other. One of their own prophets referring to this says: "*The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.*" Again, "*In righteousness shalt thou be established . . . and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord*" (Isa. xxxii. 15-18; liv. 14, 17).

Now God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have *mercy* upon all. But the word of the prophet must be fulfilled, that "*Zion shall be redeemed with judgment*" (Isa. i. 27). Well might the apostle exclaim, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His *judgments*, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. xi. 33).

4. The remainder of the epistle gives us for the most part instruction and exhortations as to the life and walk of those who are justified and are in Christ Jesus, members of one body, and members one of another; and concludes with affectionate apostolic greetings. Even here, the first-mentioned of the moral ways of the kingdom of God is "*righteousness*" (xiv. 17).

We have, then, in this epistle three different aspects of God's ways of grace to men

through righteousness. The first and second sections show His present goodness and blessing to us; first, as sinners, or *what we have done*; and secondly, as having a sinful nature, or *what we are*. The third section, as we have seen, refers to Israel; but in every case blessing is founded on the death of God's own Son, and flows out in grace and mercy through righteousness.

In reference to the first part, where God is seen bringing such wondrous blessing to sinners (men living in sins) through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, the results stated are :

1. AS TO STANDING, the believer is brought into a new position; for instead of being an enemy, guilty, ungodly, and unrighteous, he is reconciled *to God*, and justified by God; the righteousness of God is upon him, and he is standing in the favour of God. Such is the standing here brought before us; and the believer enters into the enjoyment of it by faith. "By whom" (our Lord Jesus Christ) "also we have access by faith into this *grace wherein we stand*" (chap. v. 2).

2. AS TO STATE. This also is new, and beyond anything we could have thought. When faith is in exercise on God's truth, he has "peace with God," stands consciously in the favour of God, rejoices in hope of the glory of God, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost has

the love of God shed abroad in his heart (chap. v. 15). Thus his thoughts, affections, enjoyment, and hope are bright, peaceful, and spiritual.

When we come to the second section a very different line of instruction meets us. It is not about what we have done, but about *what we were*, as in Adam. For the former, we needed *forgiveness*, for the latter *deliverance*. For "sins" we have remission, and righteousness is reckoned; but "sin in the flesh" (an evil nature) cannot be forgiven; we can only be *delivered from it* by death, from under the judgment of God.

But there is more here than mere deliverance in righteousness; there is the positive "gift" of a new nature; "the gift of God is *eternal life* in Christ Jesus our Lord"; so that the delivered soul has two natures (chap. vi. 23; vii. 25). And more still; for the Holy Spirit is here seen as livingly connecting us with Christ Jesus: "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus"; so that the believer who was in Adam in the flesh, is now "*not in the flesh, but in the Spirit,*" "*in Christ Jesus.*" An experience and walk are necessarily associated with it.

1. AS to STANDING, the believer is looked at in a very different character of standing from what we saw in chap. v., because of the

additional blessings here made known. He is no less a justified person, an object of divine grace and reconciliation, standing in the favour of God, and having the Holy Ghost, than he was in chap. v.; but *besides all these wondrous blessings*, he is IN CHRIST JESUS, IN THE SPIRIT, and therefore NOT IN THE FLESH; though the flesh is still in him, and he is enjoined to mortify (not the body, but) the deeds of the body, through the Spirit. *It is the fixed, unalterable standing of the believer in the One who is on the other side of death and judgment, and who is alive for evermore.* "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." It is true we do not find the Spirit using the word "stand" here as in chap. v., but we have the fact so fully stated, that the believer is no longer looked at as in Adam, or described as in the flesh, but as *in Christ Jesus*. The believer's position, then, is "in Christ Jesus."

2. As to STATE, besides peace, joy, hope of glory, and God's love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit as in chap. v., we have freedom from the dominion of sin, deliverance from self, spiritual power, and a known relationship of children; we have a divine Leader, and a divine Helper in prayer; we know that God is for us, that all things work together for our good, and, though in present groaning and suffering, we are look-

ing for the redemption of the body. We are not only set where there is *no condemnation*, but are associated in life and love with Christ, from whom there is *no separation*.

Such, more or less, is *the state* of the believer who knows deliverance through and in Christ Jesus.

It may be, however, that such spiritual power, liberty, and enjoyment will not be known unless the soul has in some measure learnt *experimentally* what he is in his nature as a child of Adam, and on the authority of God's word sees that God has delivered him. We say "in some measure"; for the sense of these things is always being deepened in those who walk in the truth. When the soul knows that in his flesh dwells nothing good, that it is capable of everything bad, that putting it under law only brings out its opposition to God, and with all his desires for good he has no power over it; then, after continually struggling against it, he is forced to the conclusion that the only way it could be dealt with was by death and judgment. Then, recalling to mind the work of the cross and His resurrection, the believer can say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless *I live*; yet *not I*"; and he now finds that all his *resources* are in a triumphant and glorified Saviour, and that the Holy Spirit is his *power* for all godliness. (See Gal. ii. 20, v. 16).

It is not absolutely necessary that he should be in the truth of chap. v. before he knows his standing as in chap. viii. 1, though it is perhaps the usual course. It is possible that he may see at first from the truth of God that he is in Christ Jesus; and if so, he will not know the power of this deliverance till afterwards, when the *experience* of what he is in the flesh casts him upon the redemption and deliverance God hath wrought for him in and through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We speak of being delivered *experimentally*, because it is a real emancipation from the principle of sin and death, from sin as a master, from our first Adam standing, and a conscious freedom and power to serve and honour the Lord. We are *set free* from the law of sin and death, notwithstanding it is still true that in us (that is, in our flesh) dwelleth no good thing; and, though having the first-fruits of the Spirit, we groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

It is well to bear in mind that deliverance may be accepted as a *doctrine* without deliverance being really known, except so far as informing the mind about it. We believe it is often the case. When this deliverance is known *experimentally*, those who are the subjects of it habitually take their new *position*

as in Christ Jesus on approaching God, and “*walk*, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

We must be careful, however, that we do not confound *experience* with *standing*. Paul was as much “a man in Christ” when buffeted on this earth by Satan as when he was in the third heaven. Nor should we confound *doctrine* with *experience*, though we generally accept doctrine before we have experience. There are, however, some who enjoy much liberty of soul (for they are so occupied with Christ that the Spirit is not grieved) who have but little knowledge of doctrine. They have great nearness to God by knowing Christ their righteousness. Intelligence is not faith. It is by FAITH we understand, and it is by FAITH we have peace and joy. Experience, however otherwise useful, never gives peace with God; for peace has been made. We are justified by faith, reconciled, and delivered through Jesus Christ. God is our Justifier, Reconciler, Deliverer, and Glorifier, and to Him be everlasting praise.

Romans viii. is proper Christian experience. May the Lord give us to know it better! It is founded on redemption accomplished, peace made, the believer justified by the blood, reconciled to God, and reckoned righteous; having died with Christ, and now alive in

Christ, and having the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him. It is, however, blessed to know that every one who is contemplated in chap. v., as justified by God and having the Holy Ghost, is also in Christ Jesus, as spoken of in chap. viii., *whether he knows it or not.*

In chap. v. we have what God has done for us wholly outside ourselves, save giving us the Spirit; and in chaps. vii. and viii. it is God showing how He delivers a distressed soul under law, ready to despair on account of what he finds *in himself*, bringing him deliverance through his having died with Christ; thus *judicially setting him aside altogether as a man in the flesh*, and giving him a totally new standing the other side of death and judgment “in Christ Jesus.”

The difference between chaps v. and viii. is not, therefore, one of attainment, but the way God in grace through righteousness has met every believer as to “sins” and “sin.”

Well might the devoted apostle, after tracing out for us these mercies of God, say, “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost”! (xv. 13).

ATONEMENT signifies life given and accepted as sacrifice for life forfeited.

Christ's Claims to the Affections of the Saints.

(NOTES OF AN ADDRESS).

READ 2 COR. XI.

IT is very rich the manifold ways in which Christ is presented to the heart. The Spirit of God would, by all these different characters of the Lord, form and preserve our affections in the midst of rivals. Nothing short of this will keep us in this scene. A variety of influences are on our right hand and on our left to rival Christ; the god and prince of this world has this object, *to rival Christ*.

When a soul has really Christ, in all His excellencies and grace, that soul will not be an easy prey to these wiles of the devil. It is not when the evil comes in that the remedy is presented; the moment we are set here for Christ, and to know what it is to be in Christ, we have supplied that which will keep us, if used with diligence.

EPHESIANS, where the fullest standing is unfolded, is the Epistle where we get the whole armour of God, and its end. Not when any special failure has come in, but because of what we are as saints it is given us, as only and all-sufficient. The enemy seeks to hinder us. It does not suppose conflict with him, but resistance. Grace has foreseen our path, and provided all things that pertain unto life and godliness (2 Pet. i. 3).

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There is a fulness in the various ways in which the Lord is presented: "The Head of the body," "The coming One," "The One gone to prepare a place for us" (as He said, "that where I am, there ye may be also"). We delight to think of that. "Our life"; we look at Him, the One come up from the dead; He is our life, and that a triumphant one (Rom. viii. 2). Salvation, liberty, pasture.

Then there is His care for us in sending that other Comforter, who has come to take of the things of Christ, and show them to us; our strength to enable us to stand, and withstand the wiles of the devil, and having done all to stand.

In 2 Peter i. diligence is exhorted to, not in view of any special failure, but to the end mentioned in v. 8, "That ye be neither *idle* nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ," adding in the next verse (9) a warning of alternative consequences; and though 2 Peter i. and Eph. vi. 10-20 exhort respectively from different standpoints, yet are their ends morally one, and they mutually contribute to cherish and preserve "*the simplicity that is in Christ*" from the subtilty of to-day of Eden's angel of light, adapting his wiles to corrupt the heart of the bride from the claims of that triumphant love of Him whose pierced side and hands and feet tell the cost

of that redemption, and purchase of that Church for whom His love has such purposes as the Spirit of truth in Eph. v. 26, 27 unfolds.

In Eph. iv., "He led captivity captive." This is the beautiful way the Lord is presented going up on high, after having led captivity captive. The first thing He does is to think of His loved ones down here. He gives gifts for "the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come (each member of His body), in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

He tells us what the perfect man is: Christ, presented where He is now at God's right hand, is the only object for our hearts, and He awakens and meets our desires to know more of Him; each fresh taste we get of His excellency and worthiness making us desire to know more of it, and also fits us to receive more. And again His careful love adds a note of warning of the alternative consequences in Eph. iv. 14, which the sleight of men, and their cunning craftiness, weary not to avail themselves of; though surely we are inexcusable in falling a prey to such.

While valuing these loving warnings, and esteeming them *wholesome*, let us not use them as *motives* for our devotedness, nor cor-

rupt the true spring of *diligence* by the introduction of *effort*, which is fatal to true love.

We have the Word and Spirit of Truth to show us Christ. If you don't go on there is a vacancy in the heart, an inexpressible vacancy that the Lord's thoughtful love would not have the enemy taking advantage of.

We can all understand the special character that draws out the affections; as the bride, the closest; more especially in the midst of rivals. The rivals are turned away by Christ presented in the character of Bridegroom. It is not Christ *and something else*, however good. The heart is expoused to Christ. The bride is passing across the scene, constrained by His dying love (2 Cor. v. 15) to live henceforth "*not to ourselves*, but unto Him who died for us, and rose again."

When it is a question of devotedness to Christ, we see what this entails: "That I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." One that really cares that saints should be true to Christ is conscious of all sorts of means that are used to rival Him in our hearts, but is conscious too of the power of the presentation of Christ in His excellencies and activities of His grace to keep the simple. "As the serpent beguiled Eve" is to-day skilfully adapted to corrupt the heart of this chaste virgin from the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus.

How constantly the Spirit takes us back to

Eden ! We live in a day when the enemy copies the truth, and mixes artfully the precious and the vile. The Spirit goes back to the day before those mixtures had come in. In Timothy we have the warnings concerning Jannes and Jambres. How did they resist Moses ? By grace ? No, by imitation. Their conduct said, " If this is all you have to show to convince these people that you are come from God, we can do that." God allows them to go on a certain distance. Look from Genesis to Revelation ; whatever has been the purpose of God for the moment, *that* the enemy specially attacks.

In Eden he says, (1) " Hath God said ? " (2) He gave them to understand that God did not want their cups of happiness to overflow by a knowledge of good and evil equal to His own, which He knew would be the consequence of eating the forbidden tree, and that this was God's *reason*. These things have a terrible effect. He brings them in to corrupt. " Lest your hearts should be corrupted," not merely hindered. He speaks according to the truth of the thing that has been assailed.

Simplicity is an unmixed motive, " the simplicity that is in Christ." Christ Himself is the all-sufficient motive for the saint of God. It is not only " denying ungodliness and worldly lusts," etc., but, " Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all

iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people." What a word! A people of special possession. The Christian is not the property of any joint stock company. He gave Himself that we might be His peculiar people; not our own, but His. The apostle had so presented Christ, with all the claims of His love on their hearts. As Shepherd, we know not the voice of a stranger. Blessed realities! Our Saviour, our Lord, our Life, our Peace, our Hope, all these things have their welcome claim on our hearts, and their formative power. Here it is as "a chaste virgin unto Christ." He fears lest Satan should corrupt our hearts from the simplicity that is in Christ; the Christian's experience, this our object, pressing on, looking forward to the moment when he will be with Him and like Him.

In Phil. i. 9 (the epistle of Christian experience) the apostle prays that their love may abound in knowledge and in all intelligence, that they may discern things that are excellent, in view of "the day of Christ," when everything that answers to that name will surround it. How are we to get to discern things that are excellent? Our hearts being familiar with the beauties of that One, and the Spirit leads to these things as answering thereto.

In Gen. xxiv. Abraham sends Eliezer, the servant of his house; a beautiful figure of what the Holy Ghost is doing to-day. It is beauti-

ful to see the way Eliezer goes, dependent, acknowledging God every step of the way; consequently he is led to this very woman he is sent to. Then they call the damsel, and put this before her: "Wilt thou go with this man?" A lovely picture of the Holy Ghost come down on a mission for Christ! He does not leave her till she is home; He brings her home.

Here is the Holy Ghost on the earth for Christ and His glory: "Will you go with this man?" There is the association of these two in Rev. xxii. Christ gives His estimate of what He sees here. Remark the first downward step is, "Thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. ii. 4). In chapter xxii. what is the Bright and Morning Star? That which heralds the morning. We are walking whilst it is dark. We see the star shining.

It is needful to lay to heart who are the two who with one voice respond: the Spirit and the bride; one voice, one mind. It shows that the Bride is not influenced by the scene she is passing through. The two voices are one as soon as Christ is announced as the Bright and Morning Star. These two can ever and only go together. When this world is prepared for His outward reign, the response is called forth, and when He is presented as the Bright and Morning Star. The Holy Spirit came to fetch a Bride for Christ. Here they are of one

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voice. If we are true to Christ would not the one voice be heard?

Will the Holy Ghost be the one to draw the world (whom He has to convince of sin) and the Bride together? Never. When the Church goes away the Holy Spirit will go too.

The saints were in the midst of the world; He espouses them as a chaste virgin to Christ. This is not something of the past, it is to-day. The Father is looking on the face of His Anointed. "All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them." He is worthy, and notwithstanding all that we are in the midst of, there is grace for to-day for those that are true to Christ.

There is not anything we can think of but we find there something of the fulness of Christ. If we think of DEATH, we see Christ there; of SIN, we do not know what sin is fully until we see Christ "*made sin*"; of GOD, it is only in Christ we can know God; of MAN, it is only in Christ we can see man raised to the highest of his blessing; of PEACE, it is through Christ we know "*the peace of God*"; of LIFE, Christ "*is our life*"; of GLORY, it is all in Christ. There is not anything, no matter what we think of, whether in creation or above it, or between God and man, but we must think of CHRIST in it all.

Studies on the Book of Daniel.

XIV.—CHAPTER X.

I SHALL take a few verses of this chapter to mark the position of Daniel when he received this answer, and the circumstances by which this reply was introduced.

At the commencement, we shall find, dear friends, some instructive circumstances in the position of Daniel, and in the state of his soul. God also notices this, for the man clothed in linen says to him, “Fear not, Daniel,” etc. (*v.* 12). The position of Daniel was that of affliction in the presence of his God.

The date of the third year of Cyrus is important, because the Jews (the remnant, at least) had returned to their land, from the first year of the reign of this prince; so that it could not be the captivity of Babylon which occupied Daniel’s heart at the moment (*vv.* 1-3).

He had remained at Babylon after the departure of a great number of these Jews for the land of Canaan; but the people were not at all in the state which the prophetic spirit of Daniel could recognise as the fulfilment of blessings; and the consequence of this is that the prophetic Spirit of Christ in Daniel is still occupied with the state of this people, and can in no wise content itself, even although there was a certain degree of blessing with them.

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Cyrus had done much, as we may learn from 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, and Ezra i. The decree to rebuild had already been given in the first year of his reign. But the Spirit of God had caused Daniel to range over the whole period of the Gentiles, and he well understood (though there had been a kind of deliverance, some relief through the goodness of God, a little refreshment from above) that nothing was really accomplished of the divine promises. It was impossible that the prophetic Spirit of Christ in Daniel's person should remain tranquil while awaiting the accomplishment of the intentions of God's love to His people; so that Daniel was then, as if the captivity were not over, bowing down his soul before Him.

There had been, on the occasion of rebuilding the temple, features of sorrow in another quarter (Ezra iii.). The elders of the people, who had seen the old temple, wept; and at the same time the younger, who had not known it, uttered cries of joy. And this sorrow is often felt in like circumstances by those who have apprehended the divine counsels, either as to what God had set up at the beginning, or what He will yet set up. Like Daniel, they weep in the midst of the blessings in which consists the joy of those who only think of the present moment. The cries of joy prevailed without, for it is said these cries were heard afar off; but

amongst the people present they knew not which to distinguish.

But at Jerusalem, as well as at Babylon, he who had a sense, however imperfect, of what the state of the people of God ought to be, would not fail to recognise their wretched condition in the midst of these joyful exclamations. "Behold, we are servants this day; and for the land . . . behold we are servants in it." "And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom Thou hast set over us," etc. (Neh. ix. 36, 37).

And yet these Persian kings to whom Nehemiah alludes were altogether favourable. It is true there was cause of anguish; at one time the counsels of God prevailed, and at another, those of Satan, in hindering the rebuilding; but, generally speaking, the kings of Persia were favourable to the Jews. But so long as the Gentiles were holding dominion over the people of God, it was impossible that the Spirit of God in the prophet could allow that the designs of God regarding His people had been accomplished. He could bless Him for all the good that existed, but even when the decree had gone forth, the elders wept; Nehemiah said, "we are servants," etc.; and Daniel continued to afflict his soul before God.

“Grace and Peace.”

IT is exceedingly beautiful to mark the way of the Spirit in addressing believers.

Knowing, as He does, all their faults and peculiarities, and having some rebuking things to say to them, yet He opens His remarks with these most precious words, “Grace and peace unto you.”

And who were those persons thus saluted? Were they remarkable for their holiness, for their fidelity, for their love? Doubtless many among them were so; but, taking them as a whole, were they most amiable, lovable, consistent people?

Let us inquire.

First, then, I observe, in turning to whatever Epistle I may, and with very little variation, and only three exceptions (namely, the Epistle of James, and John’s First and Third Epistles) I find these words addressed to all.

That to the Hebrews may seem another; but, sweet to relate, if the character of the teaching excludes its use when it opens, the Spirit cannot close, cannot bid farewell, so to speak, to those He so tenderly taught and warned, without using those needed, and, by some, well-known words, “Grace be with you ALL. Amen.”

But what refreshes one most is not the way the Spirit closes as the way He opens His letters (although that also is worthy of atten-

tion, and may occupy us another time). We can all understand how one might close a letter to those they love (after using strong language) with words of comfort; but to know beforehand all the faults and all that required to be said, and still to send such a greeting, this denotes skill in dealing with souls which only a God of perfect goodness could show, and which required to be shown before we could imitate.

Amazing skill! Amazing grace! Who can comprehend or who can give a reason for it? Only the One who possesses the skill, and ministers the grace can; and, blessed be His name, He has made known the *wherefore* of it all.

Hearken to His own words: "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus"; words used doubtless in connection with a different line of thought, but which include all the dealings of God with our souls, from the beginning of our new being till the time when we shall reach the end in a Father's love without end. Sweet thought! When God breaks the silence between Himself and His people, it is to utter first of all these words, "GRACE unto you, and PEACE."

Yet when one thinks of it, what other words could our God have used? for was not

“ GRACE ” reigning? and had not “ PEACE ” been made? And as the salutation was from God the Father, and His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, so the grace of the One could reign, because of the righteousness established through the cross of the other. The “ peace ” had been made by His precious blood.

What a mighty leveller grace is, as well as sin! (Compare Rom. iii. and Rom. x.) “ The grace of God,” as the “ God of all grace,” needing not anything from any man, acting towards man and upon man, as the sun in the heavens shines equally upon the evil and on the good, the wise and the unwise, the peasant and the peer; and makes “ no difference ” between the dew-drop and the mighty ocean, warming and brightening the one as well as the other!

God, viewing His saints from the “ top of the rocks,” beholds neither their perverseness nor their iniquity (when the enemy accuses), but the deep, deep need of their souls for what He alone can supply.

Whether they be saints of Rome, of Corinth, of Colosse, or Thessalonica, it matters not, “ Grace to you,” “ Peace to you,” becomes the common greeting.

Strangers to Paul were the Romans, but their faith in Jesus had come abroad. Some, abusing their liberty (pleasing themselves, instead of pleasing everyone his neighbour) were

setting at nought their weak brethren; while those weak and fettered, in place of using the liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free, were judging their more enlightened brethren, pluming themselves, doubtless, with false ideas of holiness.

Certainly the "strong" required to enter into the "grace" that bore with them, as the "weak" might well avoid their strictures, and thus follow after the things which make for "peace."

If they had their schools of opinion, as at Corinth, making Paul, or Apollos, or Christ but leaders of some sect; or their schools of legality as at Galatia, needing to be exposed and closed; if some at Ephesus were asleep, or others at Thessalonica were lazy, the salutation is alike to all. How blessed to have our opinions dispelled, our hard thoughts exposed, our sleep disturbed, and our laziness corrected in such a manner, for it is our Father and our Lord Jesus who are thus dealing with their people's souls.

Some were leaving their early love, others forgetting what they had received and heard; some were forsaking the assembling of themselves together, as others (grown shortsighted) had forgotten the "purging" of their former sins. But, be they love-leavers, grace-neglecters, assembly-forsakers, or cross-forgetters, the unaltered salutation of "Grace and peace

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unto you," comes from the unalterable God and Father, and from His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

May it be granted unto us so to grow in "GRACE," that the "PEACE" of God, which passes all understanding, may keep our hearts and minds! Amen.

Cleansed, Clothed, and Crowned.

READ ZECHARIAH III.

WHEN the soul has been truly awakened by the voice of God, and the conscience exercised as to its state before Him, the great question then is, How can I meet God? I have been offending Him, and living without Him all my life; how can I stand before Him? Oh! how can I ever be fit to dwell in His holy presence?

These questions, all important to every lost sinner, are fully answered in the scene before us.

"And he shewed me Joshua the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee; is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"

Here Joshua represents Jerusalem, the

Jewish people. But they are guilty and polluted. He "was clothed with filthy garments," a true type of every sinner's condition before God. "There is no difference, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." His "filthy garments," like the rags of the prodigal in the far country, bear witness to his guilt and pollution.

But as he is, he stands before God. And now, what will He do with him? What can He do with such a guilty one? Will He cast him out? Will He say, "Oh, he is blacker than I thought he was; how can I make him whiter than the snow?"

Oh, no! blessed be His name! He will cast out his sins, but not himself. None who so came ever was cast out, and none ever shall be. He has given His word, that "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." On no account, on no consideration whatever will He "cast out." It is His will to save. But Satan is "standing at his right hand to resist him."

Mark the place he takes, "his right hand." He seeks to resist his deliverance; to terrify, degrade, and paralyze him. If he could, he would have him thrown back into the fire, out of which God, in His boundless mercy had plucked him.

But the Lord speaks for the poor trembling sinner. "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan

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... is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" He throws His shield around him. Who can touch him? He has been plucked as a brand out of the fire, by the mighty arm of God's salvation, and all the powers of hell are as nothing; they cannot reach him now. God is everything to him. He spreads the wing of His protection over him; and he is safe for ever. Oh! what a refuge for the soul! and it is open to all, "whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Thus we learn that the presence of God is the only place of safety and blessing for a guilty soul. It is the only place where we can get rid of our sins, our filthy garments; and it is the only hiding-place from the dreadful enemy of souls. How could Joshua have answered Satan? How could he have resisted him? He was guilty, polluted, and unfit for the divine presence. Had he been dealt with as he deserved, the lake of fire would have been his portion for ever. God alone could meet his need, and silence the accuser.

The Lord now takes Joshua's case entirely into His own hands, and answers for him in every matter. Joshua opens not his mouth. What could he say? He was guilty, and as such he was cast upon the grace of God. Divine mercy was his only resource. And now God acts towards him according to what He is Himself. His own love directs him

and He meets all his need in the riches of His own grace. "And He answered and spake unto those that stood before Him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him."

His sins, which were many, are all forgiven; not one is left. They are put away according to the demands of holiness, and the perfectness of the work of the cross. God cannot look on sin; it is unbearable to His nature; but He can put it away, blessed be His name, and this is the first thing He does for the soul that is before Him. "Take away the filthy garments from him."

What can Satan now say? He is silenced for ever. Sin, the armour in which he trusted, is put away. And now, sin gone, the soul saved, and Satan silenced, the God of mercy, with grace and love ineffable, speaks directly to the sinner himself. "And unto him He said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee."

Oh! what tender compassion for a troubled soul, and what a solid ground of peace these words are! What can be more solid, sure, or unchangeable than the word of God? "BEHOLD, I HAVE CAUSED THINE INIQUITY TO PASS FROM THEE." Oh! troubled soul, look again at these blessed words! Think on whose they are! He can never deceive; and be assured that this is God's way in grace with every soul that is

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really cast on what He is. They are fitted and intended to give you immediate peace in His holy presence. Can you ever doubt more, with such an assurance before you? Surely not! It is God who says it, and that is enough. Such are His ways in grace to every soul that believes in Jesus. "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. x. 12, 13).

And, now that the filthy garments are gone, Joshua is clothed with raiment of God's own providing. The best robe is put upon him. "I will clothe thee with change of raiment."

God not only *speaks* for Joshua, but He *acts* for him. Joshua now stands before the Lord, not in "filthy garments," but in divine righteousness. So will it be with Israel in the latter day. The Lord will undertake the cause of His beloved people, and stand up for them against every adversary. He will cleanse them from all their defilements, and clothe them in garments of salvation. It is in His heart to bless them, and they shall be blessed. "Even the LORD that hath *chosen Jerusalem* rebuke thee; is not this a *brand plucked out of the fire?*"

But He cannot clothe a guilty people with a robe of glory; therefore, His way is, first to

cleanse, and then to clothe. This is God's way of dealing with all them that believe. Our filthy garments are displaced by the spotless robe of righteousness. Our sins being washed away in the blood of Jesus, we are clothed in the righteousness of God (2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. iii. 19-26).

But this is not all. The Lord is acting in grace, and He blesses like Himself. He makes Joshua a priest before Him. Not only is he cleansed and clothed, but CROWNED. "And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head." Blessed type of Israel, when, as "a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation," they, being delivered out of the hands of their enemies, will serve the Lord in holiness and righteousness, all the days of their life (Ex. xix.; Luke i.).

True worship is the overflowing of the heart. When we know that our sins are all forgiven, and that we stand before God in divine righteousness, and are accepted in the Beloved, the heart is not only full, but overflowing. In such a condition we can only praise, adore, and worship God, in whom are all our springs. Every desire of the heart has been satisfied, and every wish met, so that we can only give thanks to the Lord for all His mercies.

We have now come to the end of the first division of this interesting chapter, including

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verses 1-5. It naturally divides itself into three.

The first, as we have seen, unfolds God's ways in wondrous grace with a guilty sinner. He acts from Himself.

The second division (verses 6, 7) shews us the responsibility of those who are the subjects of such grace. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My charge, then thou shalt also judge My house, and shalt also keep My courts: and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by." Grace leads to godliness, and is the only power of a holy walk with God (Titus ii. 11-15).

In the third division (verses 8-10) we have the hope of glory. Joshua being brought into the place of blessed nearness to God, and happy fellowship with Him, the bright hope of glory is fully and distinctly set before him. "Behold, I will bring forth My Servant, THE BRANCH." Jesus, who was once the lowly Rod from the stem of Jesse, shall, in that long-looked-for day of glory, come forth as the BRANCH of the Lord, beautiful and glorious. "Even He shall build the temple of the Lord, and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne." "And they shall hang upon Him all the glory of His Father's house the offspring and the issue, all the vessels of small quantity, from

the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons" (Isa. xxii. 24). But He is not only the BRANCH on which all the glory hangs; He is the sure Foundation on which it all rests. "For, behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes; behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig-tree." He will be the sure Foundation-Stone of Israel's blessing in the latter day, and of all blessing and glory throughout the whole millennial scene. The "seven eyes" denote the perfect intelligence of Him who rules over all.

Thus the Lord, in wondrous love, translates the believer in Jesus, from the depths of ruin and misery, to the heights of glory and blessedness. There is no middle ground, no resting-place between. He finds him as a brand in the fire, rescues him from it, and sets him in His own presence "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. i.).

Oh, what an exchange! from the depths of the darksome pit, to the lofty summits of light and glory! from being a child of wrath and an heir of hell, to be a child of God and an heir of heaven! from being black as a smoking brand, to be whiter than the snow, and

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fitted for the paradise of God! from being in the place of utter distance, to be brought near to the throne of God, as a worshipping high priest; crowned with "a fair mitre," and clothed in "garments of glory and beauty."

And what makes all this wondrous blessing so deeply valuable and comforting to the heart is the assurance that GOD HIMSELF does all. Joshua says nothing, and does nothing. He has got to the end of himself, and begun with God, and so leaves all to Him.

Atonement in Type and Accomplishment.

"THE day of atonement" had a very prominent place in "the feasts of Jehovah" which the children of Israel were commanded to observe. It was "an holy convocation" on the tenth day of the seventh month in each year. So important and solemn was it, when carried out according to the direction which Jehovah gave by Moses, that all in Israel were bound to cease from work, and to afflict their souls, or they would be destroyed from among the people. They were to look on, and see how Aaron, by the sin-offering and burnt-offering, made an atonement for all their sins. It was done

“once a year” to typify that one sacrifice which Christ offered once for all.

In the chapter (Lev. xvi.) which gives the details of what was done on the great day of atonement, the word “atonement” occurs fifteen times; and the work is presented to us in three different aspects or parts of the one atonement—propitiation, substitution, and acceptance.

All were fulfilled in the one offering of Christ, for “it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul” (Lev. xvi. 11). Thus, by the atonement made by our Lord Jesus Christ, we are brought to God in the perfect efficacy of His work, and accepted in virtue of His offering. We are thus entitled to present rest and peace, as well as eternal glory; and our hearts are filled with thanksgiving and praise (Lev. xvi.).

1. PROPITIATION was for God, though about our sins. It is brought before us repeatedly in the New Testament and always in reference to sins. “He is the propitiation for our SINS”; “God sent His Son to be the propitiation for our SINS”; “a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the SINS of the people.” Propitiation gives us the God-ward side of the finished work of Christ (see 1 John ii. 2, iv. 9; Heb. ii. 17). As another has said: “God was not as a heathen god, one who had to be pro-

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pitiated that He might not be against us, but He did require that righteousness and holiness should be maintained in the universe."

Man had sinned, had rebelled against God, and dishonoured His throne, which righteously called for the pouring out of divine wrath and judgment; and (though God is love, and loves sinners), yet is He righteous and holy in all His ways.

What, then, was to be done? for the claims of His throne in dealing with His creature man must be absolutely met, and His righteousness and truth vindicated.

God gave His Son. Divine love and wisdom brought in propitiation: "Not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent *His Son to be the propitiation for our sins*" (1 John iv. 10). Propitiation then met the claims of the throne of God as to our sins. Hence, in this, the first part of the work of atonement, the blood of the sin-offering was carried by the high priest into the holiest of all (the presence of God), accompanied with a cloud of burning incense, which covered "the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony," when Aaron took of the blood, and sprinkled it with his finger *upon* the mercy-seat, and then sprinkled it seven times *before* the mercy-seat (*vv.* 12-14).

The cloud of incense set forth the sweetness of the excellencies of Christ, and the blood the

value of His atoning work for us in the presence of God. There was that now before the eye of God which spoke of propitiation for sins, of divine judgment, and blood-shedding for remission. Such was the type on the great day of atonement.

But when we look at the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom all these shadows pointed, we are taught that He "*once* suffered for sins," "died for our sins," rose again from among the dead, and went *into heaven itself by His own blood*, now to appear before the face of God *for us* (Heb. ix. 24). Christ is thus in heaven for us, the everlasting witness that propitiation for sins has been made; and the infinite and eternal efficacy of His blood is always there before God. The claims of God's throne have, therefore, been righteously and fully met for all that come to God by Him; for Christ died for all. Because of this, God can now send out world-wide a message of forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation; and, as "a just God and a Saviour," can welcome and justify from all things, every one that believes in Jesus.

- As we have seen, the whole value of His accomplished work is always before God; for Jesus Christ the Righteous is there, and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the whole world; so that God can now say, as to every sinner who comes

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to Him for salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom," or, as the margin reads, "an atonement" (Job xxxiii. 24). Thus the believer has a place of perfect peace in God's presence in divine righteousness; and the gospel is sent freely to every creature under heaven.

2. SUBSTITUTION is another aspect or part of the work of atonement. If *propitiation* fully met the claims of the throne of God, *substitution* fully meets our need, and purges our conscience.

That another should suffer instead of the guilty, and atonement thereby be made; was often taught by Old Testament types. In Abraham's offering up a ram *in the stead of his son* we have the idea of substitution (Gen. xxii. 13); and in convicted ones bringing sin-offerings, laying their hands upon the head of the offering, and in this way transferring, as it were, their sins to it, then the victim killed, the blood sprinkled, and the fat burnt; and the word of God declaring that in this way atonement was made, and on this account the offerer was forgiven, the blessed truth of substitution was plainly set forth (Lev. iv. 27-31; vii. 2, 7).

In this chapter we find *two* goats set apart for a sin-offering; and on the head of one of them Aaron laid both his hands, and con-

fessed over him *all* the iniquities of the children of Israel, and *all* their transgressions in *all* their sins, *putting them* upon the head of the goat, and sending him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness (Lev. xvi. 21). Thus we see, in type, *all* the sins of the people transferred to another, and taken away. And in a coming age Israel's song of joy and deliverance will be, when calling to mind the sufferings and death of Messiah from their sins, "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. liii. 4-6).

This is *substitution*. Jehovah laid the iniquity of His people upon Christ, and judged it all upon Him. God only could do this. He only could separate sins from us, and lay them on Another. This He did, to the praise of the glory of His grace. For this we praise Him now, and, in millennial days, Israel will triumphantly celebrate this goodness of Jehovah; for not only will they bless Jehovah because He forgiveth all their iniquities, and healeth all their diseases, but

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they will add, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions *from us*" (Ps. ciii. 3, 12). They will see that their sins were taken by Jehovah from them, and laid upon Christ, and that He was wounded and bruised for them. This is *substitution*; and the same principle of dealing with our sins is set before us in the New Testament. Our Lord said that His blood was shed *for many*, for the remission of sins. In Hebrews we are told that Christ was once offered to bear *the sins of many*; and if an ancient prophet declared, "He shall bear *their iniquities*," the apostle to the circumcision says, "Who His own self *bare our sins* in His own body on the tree . . . by whose stripes we are healed" (Matt. xxvi. 28; Heb. ix. 28; Isa. liii. 11; 1 Peter ii. 24).

Here we have substitution plainly set forth. Our sins laid upon Jesus; He Himself bearing them; and we healed by His stripes. Elsewhere we read that He "once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God"; "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3).

So far we see how truly the Lord Jesus Christ has been our Substitute as the Bearer of our sins, and also of the righteous judgment for which they called. But He was not only "delivered for our *offences*," but He who knew no sin was "*made sin* for us," and so

bore instead of us the judgment due to sin in the flesh, our evil nature. Hence we are told that "our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed."

After "the fat of the sin-offering" had been burnt upon the altar, in token of God's estimate of the value of the offering, the flesh and skin and dung of the victim were carried outside the camp, and then burnt; all treated as unclean; thus plainly setting forth Christ "made sin for us," and coming under divine judgment for us, when God condemned "*sin in the flesh*." Thus the nature from which the sins sprang has been judged, and set aside righteously in divine judgment in the death of Christ: "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin [or, by a sacrifice for sin] condemned *sin in the flesh*" (Rom. viii. 3). Therefore we now have no place in the flesh before God. Christ having been raised up from among the dead, and glorified, He hath sent forth His Spirit into our hearts. "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (Rom. viii. 9).

How truly then the type has been fulfilled in the atoning work of Christ, so that *all* our iniquities, *all* our transgressions in *all* our sins are for ever gone by death and divine judgment; and a "just God and a Saviour" can say of all who believe, "Their sins and iniqui-

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ties will I remember no more " (Heb. x. 17), so perfect and real is the work of Christ *for* us! But this is not all. There is a third thing:

3. ACCEPTANCE. After Aaron had carried in the blood and sprinkled it *upon* and *before* the mercy-seat, and had come out and confessed, with hands laid upon the goat, *all* the sins of the children of Israel, and sent him away, we are told that he took his burnt-offering, and the burnt-offering of the people, to make AN ATONEMENT for himself and for the people. The burnt-offering was a sweet-savour offering; it was not, therefore, about sins, like the sin-offering. Yet we find it was killed, the blood sprinkled, etc.; and though the offerer laid his hand upon it, it was not, as in the sin-offering, to typically transfer the sins of the offerer, but to identify himself with its acceptability. We read, therefore, in the inspired account of the burnt-offering, "it shall be accepted for him to make *atonement* for him" (Lev. i. 4).

Atonement, then, in its application includes the precious truth of acceptance by virtue of Christ. The offerer was accepted with the burnt-offering. This, no doubt, is why it was offered after propitiation and substitution had been plainly set forth. The burnt-offering was most acceptable to God. All was burnt on the altar to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord

(Lev. i.). So the death of Christ, under the searching power of divine judgment, showed the perfectness of obedience, love, faith, and entire surrender to the will of God in the most trying circumstances, and was infinitely acceptable to God. In it God found a savour of rest; and as what the Saviour did was for us, as well as for the glory of God, it is accepted for us.

Thus the believer, by the atoning work of Christ, is not only delivered in righteous judgment from guilt and condemnation, but he is brought to God, and has a place always before him of ACCEPTANCE in virtue of that one offering which was once offered. Our faith and hope then are in God. It was God who sent His own Son; it was God who delivered Him up for us all, who raised Him up from among the dead, and glorified Him as Man at His own right hand. It is God who still sends forth the glad tidings of eternal salvation by Christ alone; it is God that justifieth the ungodly who believe; it is God to whom we are now brought through faith in Christ Jesus; it is the love of God which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us; it is God who keeps us by His power through faith unto salvation; and it is His Son from heaven for whom we wait to take us to the Father's house, to be forever to the praise of His glory.

Studies on the Book of Daniel.

XV.—CHAPTER X.

WE often find in Scripture some apparently little circumstance which is an index to us of the thoughts of the Spirit of God. Thus the date of the third of Cyrus opens a field of interesting thought; for the position in which Daniel was found enabled God, so to speak, to continue to reveal to him His intentions about the people. Evidently God had separated Daniel from the things which were doing for the momentary resettling of the people, that He might lead His heart still onward to the "end of the indignation" which really still subsisted.

There is also another subject of instruction here which I would not omit. I allude to the actings of God by means of angels, and how there were demons who sought to hinder the ministry of the providence of God as to His people. "Fear not," says the angel to Daniel; "for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words."

Nevertheless, the answer of God by the angel did not arrive until three weeks after. Then the angel relates to Daniel how this hap-

pened, and the difficulties he had to encounter at the court of Persia, by the opposition of the prince of the kingdom against the Jews, and that Michael, one of the chief princes, had come to help him.

Daniel had known nothing of all this. God in this way exercises the obedience of His angels, and at the same time puts the faith of His servants to the test.

Thus, then, is Daniel pre-occupied with his people, and with the glory of God in their midst; he cannot content himself with anything short of the accomplishment of the promises, and therefore he humbles himself and identifies himself with the misery and affliction of the people, according to the Spirit of Him who said, "In all their affliction He was afflicted" (Isa. lxiii. 9). Then God, who has given His servant grace thus to behave, acts from on high to reveal all His purpose to him, putting at the same time his patience to the proof, whilst the angel is combating at the court of Persia.

I have no doubt it is the same for us. God also puts our faith to the trial. It is not that He does not hear and answer (He knows perfectly beforehand what the end will be), but He will see if faith goes to the end of the difficulty, and then He answers. Faith, which is much more precious than gold which perisheth, is thus put through its trial, and

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“found unto praise . . . at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. i. 7). In another view we see the exercise of the angels in the government of God.

“Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days” (ver. 14). Here is the answer to the affliction of Daniel, but an answer not yet to be accomplished. There are two ways of judging of the thoughts of God as to His people. The first is, to consider the condition in which God had placed them in the beginning, how He had formed and fashioned them of old: the second is, to consider in what state the Church will be found, or (to express it in reference to the case of Daniel) in what condition the people of God will be found at the end, when God shall have accomplished His counsels concerning them, when the Lord comes.

Thus, when Daniel considered the actual condition of his people, they might be found to possess many blessings from God, and chastisements also; but the thoughts of the prophet, or spiritual man, would be either towards the state in which God had placed them in the beginning, or towards that in which they will be found at the end.

The same may be said of man in the abstract. If I think of my actual condition, I may advert back either to Adam without sin, or I may look forward to the resurrection state,

in which I shall be hereafter, and realise in spirit either the one or the other; and compare my present state with the state of Adam in innocence, or of Christ in glory.

So with the Church and the Jew. If I consider the latter, when first established in his privileges, or at the end, in the glory of the Messiah, both the one and the other evidence the state of imperfection which existed at the time of their return from the Babylonish captivity. Again, if I consider the Church at the beginning, I see the effect of the power of the Spirit of God, but I can also by examining the promises of God, view the Church when she will be in glory with Christ; and in either case her present weakness is apparent.

Daniel did these two things. In his confession, in chap. ix., he had considered much more the past condition of the people, whilst here it is much more their future; such as will ensue at the conclusion of the trials of chap. xii.

The introduction of Michael, the great prince who stands for the people of God, necessarily leads us on to the occurrences at the end, according to the counsels of which he assures the accomplishment. The actual circumstances they were in give the leading idea. He begins from that time, and goes on until the time when the counsels of God shall be brought to pass.

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We only need touch upon the historical part. The Persian and Grecian empires form the framework of the historical narrative, but the object of the prophecy is what was to take place in the latter days, as may be seen in v. 14.

“Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? And now I will return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come” (v. 20). These two empires are viewed in relation to the people of God. They were, as we know, the second and third monarchies. The first part of the history of the third or Grecian is given us in chap. xi., 1-4, these verses giving the connecting link of this monarchy with that of Persia.

After its (the Grecian) establishment under the first powerful king, it was divided into four parts. We have already had some notices of it. The two principal kings were those of the north and south; principal, not alone in regard to their power, but because either the one or the other had always possession of the land of Canaan. This is why they are introduced here; the history of the Holy Land, and of the people of God, after the establishment of the Greek or third monarchy, occupies the mind of the Spirit. Everyone is agreed that as to these kings, it is a history of the Ptolemies and Seleucidæ, and *the history is*

so exact that unbelievers have sometimes said that Daniel was written after the events.

At verse 20 we come to the history of the last of these kings. I do not say that what is here related of him will be accomplished at the end; but at all events he is the type of that which will take place at the end. It is not my object to enter into all the details of the historical part; he makes an expedition against the king of the south, then a second. I pass by the details also of these two kings. "At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former [expedition] nor as the latter. For the ships of Chittim shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return" (chap. xi. 29, 30).

Here the power of the west (Chittim) is introduced into this history of the two monarchies. The people of God were situated between the kings of the north and south, exactly as lately the Holy Land became an object of contest between Mahomet Ali and the Sultan.

Now, on the occasion of the last expedition here noticed these ships of Chittim arrive on the scene. A power from the west mixes itself up with these two eastern powers, namely, the king of the north and the king of the south; some power from the other coast of the Mediterranean, whether Italy or Greece.

Christian Exhortation.

THERE are few things less understood than the real nature of exhortation. We are apt to attach to that word an idea of legal effort which is quite foreign to it. Divine exhortation always assumes that a certain relationship exists, that a certain standing is enjoyed, that certain privileges are apprehended. The Spirit never exhorts save on a divine basis. For example: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, *by the mercies of God*" (Rom. xii. 1). Here we have a fine instance of divine exhortation. "The mercies of God" are first put before us, in all their fulness, brightness, and preciousness, ere we are called to hear the voice of exhortation.

Again: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, *whereby ye are sealed* unto the day of redemption" (Eph. iv. 30). Here we are exhorted on the settled ground of our being "sealed." He does not say, "Grieve not the Spirit, lest ye be eternally lost." Such would not be in keeping with the true character of divine exhortation. We "*are sealed,*" not so long as we behave ourselves, but "*until the day of redemption.*" It is absolutely done, and this is the powerful reason why we are not to grieve the Holy Spirit. If that which is the eternal seal of God, set upon us until the day of redemption, be the

Holy Spirit, how careful should we be not to grieve Him !

Again : “ Since ye then are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above ” (Col. iii. 1). As those who *are* risen, what should we seek but “ things above ” ? We do not seek these things in order to be risen, but because we are. In other words, the solid basis of our standing is laid down by the Spirit of grace before ever the voice of exhortation falls on the ear. This is divine. Aught else would be mere legality. To call upon a man to set his affection (or mind) upon things above, before he knows, upon divine authority, that he is “ risen with Christ,” is to begin at the wrong end, and to lose your labour. It is only when I believe that precious, emancipating truth that when Christ died, I died; when He was buried, I was buried; when He rose, I rose; it is only when this grand reality takes possession of my soul that I can lend an open ear and an understanding heart to exhortation’s heavenly voice. It is well for my reader to understand this thoroughly. There is no need whatever for a multitude of words. Let him simply take his New Testament, and, beginning with the Epistle to the Romans, trace throughout the exhortations of the Spirit of God; and he will find, without a single exception, that they are as completely divested of the legal element

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as are the promises which glitter like gems on the page of inspiration.

This subject is not fully understood. Exhortation in the hands of man is widely different from what it is in the hands of the Holy Ghost. How often do we hear men exhorting us to a certain line of action *in order that we may reach* certain privileges! The way of the Spirit is the reverse of this. He sets before us our *standing* in Christ, in the first place, and then He unfolds the *walk*. He first speaks of privilege, free, unconditional, inalienable privilege, and then He sets forth the holy responsibility connected therewith. He first presents the settled and unalterable relationship in which free grace has set us, and then dwells upon the affections belonging thereto.

There is nothing so hateful to the Spirit of God as legality, that hateful system which casts us as *doers* back upon *self*, instead of casting us, as lost *sinner*s, over upon Christ. Man would fain *do* something; but he must be brought to the end of himself, and to the end of all beside, and then as a lost sinner, find his rest in Christ, a full, precious, all-sufficient Christ. In this way alone can he ever expect solid peace and true happiness; and only then will he ever be able to yield an intelligent response to the Spirit's "word of exhortation."

Faith's Choice.

“ As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love ” (Song of Songs ii. 3, 4).

IN our meditation on these verses, we shall find instruction concerning the believer's choice, his rest, his joy, his exercises, and his privileges. Let us consider each of these points separately.

1. THE BELIEVER'S CHOICE. “ My Beloved.” There is none like the Lord Jesus to the believer. He sees none other so attractive and glorious. Christ is the Object of his heart's affections. In Him he beholds the glory of God, the grace of God, the wisdom of God, and the power of God. He finds Him to be incomparably sweet. He esteems Christ as the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely. He has fled to Him for salvation, and found peace to his wounded soul through faith in His blood, so that he can truly say, “ my beloved,” my Redeemer, my righteousness, and my life. Therefore, Christ is very dear to him. Among all the hosts of earth or heaven, he could point to Jesus and say, “ This is my Beloved, and this is my

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Friend." Personal attachment to Jesus is the feeling of every true believer: "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." In whatever aspect Jesus is viewed, in every way, and in every office, He is the Beloved of the believer's soul. He could part with everything rather than Christ. It is Christ Himself that the believer's heart is set upon, and his language is—

" Compared with Christ, in all beside
No comeliness I see;
My heart's desire, all-gracious Lord,
Is to be more like Thee.

" Loved of my Lord, for Him again
With love intense I burn;
Chosen of Thee ere time began,
I choose Thee in return.

" Less than Thyself will not suffice,
But Thou art ample store;
More than Thyself I cannot crave,
Nor canst Thou give me more."

2. THE BELIEVER'S REST. "*I sat down.*" Jesus only gives rest to the burdened soul, and this He does according to His own word: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi.). This the believer realises by faith, according to that scripture, "We which have believed do enter into rest" (Heb. iv.).

The speaker here says, "I sat down under His shadow"; and so the believer not only knows that Christ crucified is the way of salvation, but he avails himself of it, he comes to Him, he enters in, he sits down in peace, because God provides rest for his sin-burdened conscience. A Spirit-led sinner never loses the burden of his sins till he beholds Christ crucified; for there, and there alone, he sees the holy God putting away sin to give him righteousness and peace, and presenting pardon to the guilty, life for the dead, and salvation for the lost. He comes, therefore, and finds rest. He rests in the knowledge that God is his Saviour, that his iniquities were laid upon Jesus, that the stroke of Divine vengeance fell upon Him; thus suffering for sins, the Just for the unjust, to bring him to God. He realises that God loves him, welcomes him, pardons, and justifies him from all things. Every question is answered, every fear removed, and love, gratitude, and hope take possession of his soul. Let none expect rest apart from a believing view of the value of the death of Christ.

There are many anxious souls who have not rest. Why is it? Because they seek it not by faith; they have not sat down under the shadow of the Lord Jesus Christ. They may be taken up with doctrines, and lack rest. They may be diligent in observing ordinances,

and lack rest. They may be much exercised about their frames, feelings, and experiences, and yet lack rest. It must be Christ and His finished work to give rest; Christ Himself, Christ only. If they look anywhere else, they are off the true ground of rest. As long as the eye is turned inward upon self (good self, bad self, or religious self, self in any form), they must lack rest, because Christ is the only Saviour, the only shelter, the only object of faith, the only resting-place that God has provided for sinners. The divine verdict long ago went forth as to man's thoughts being only evil, and that continually, and his heart desperately wicked; in fact, that in him is no good. And when the soul takes this ground before God, and looks simply to His grace, that has met us in our ruin and helplessness in the death of Christ, it finds deliverance from slavish fear and guilt, and the fullest reason for confidence and rest. When we thus find rest, we begin to labour for Christ, and find that His yoke is easy, and His burden light.

3. THE BELIEVER'S JOY. "I sat down under His shadow with *great delight*." Christ is our joy, as well as our rest; yea, we joy in God through Him. We are exhorted to rejoice in the Lord always. The assurance of our being heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ makes us very happy. We can say with the apostle

Peter, "Whom having not seen we love; in whom though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." The new song is put into our mouth. The contemplation of the eternal blessings we have in Christ our Lord gives us great delight. We envy not the worldling's mirth. We know that his joy is like the crackling of thorns under a pot, which continues but for a moment, and then expires for ever; but joy in the Holy Ghost, which we have in Christ, is sometimes too deep, too pure, and too full of blessing to be uttered.

How is it that believers are not happier? Because the death of Christ is not more simply and habitually contemplated as the foundation of all joy and blessing. It may be said, that Jesus is not now on the cross, nor in the sepulchre; but that He is risen from the dead, and glorified at the right hand of the Majesty on high. This is quite true, but it only magnifies the value of the cross. If Jesus entered into heaven by His own blood, and now appears there a Lamb as it had been slain, do we not see the honour God has put upon the cross in heaven? It is Jesus risen and glorified that reflects such eternal value on His death. If we would be happy, if we would be heavenly minded, we must dwell much on the glorious worth and work of the Lamb as it had been slain. The contemplation of the

Lord Jesus in the glory, and of the work He finished on earth, with a believing regard to the testimony of the Holy Ghost in the written word concerning that work, fill the soul with joy and peace; for the word of Christ and the work are both needed for true spiritual joy. We must sit under His shadow, if we would have great delight.

4. THE BELIEVER'S EXERCISES. "His fruit was *sweet to my taste*." The tree planted at Calvary is richly laden with sweetest fruit to the believing soul. There is nothing there to sour the spirit; but all is love, and peace, and blessing. It needs but the hand of faith to pluck and eat the sweet fruit of the tree of life. Looking up to the Lord in the glory, we taste His goodness, and delight our souls in Him. Everything else has more or less of bitterness, but here we find nothing but sweetness. Here we feed on that grace which tells us of pardon, peace, acceptance, righteousness, sonship, and fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. Here we see that we are blessed with all spiritual blessings. Here the fountain of living water is ever freely flowing; and we find that all the promises of God are made sure to us; for they are all yea and amen in Christ, unto the glory of God by us. Here the weary obtain renewal of strength, the disordered spirit finds healing, the mourner is comforted, faith be-

comes increased, and unbelief put to shame; the weak are strengthened, the erring are restored, the poor in spirit are enriched, the hungry are fed, and the thirsty refreshed. All our exercises are profitable, if they lead us to the contemplation of the Lamb as it had been slain; all our necessities are good, if they are only the occasions of our realising our blessings in Christ, and of quickening our appetites to feeding on Him. There is all the difference between seeking satisfaction in the work of the Spirit IN us, and feeding on Christ who gave Himself FOR us. The former engenders pride and bondage, the latter keeps us happy and fruitful.

5. THE BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGES. "He brought me to the banqueting-house, and His banner over me was love." We are made nigh to God in Christ Jesus and by His blood, and our security is in the everlasting, unchangeable love of God. So exceedingly rich is the grace of God, that we cannot have one of the blessings of redemption without having all. So perfect in every way is the atoning work, that we are called into the fellowship of the risen and glorified Son of God, "raised up together, and made to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus." It is done: "He brought me to the banqueting-house." Hence we have liberty to draw near to God, to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. When

Christ died on the cross, we are told that the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; thus showing us that every impediment to man's drawing near was removed, and that, through Christ's sacrifice, we may come with boldness to the throne of grace. The returned prodigal in Luke xv. not only received the kiss of reconciliation, the best robe, the ring, shoes, etc., but he was at once invited to feast at the father's table over the fatted calf, as having all the privileges of sonship: "let us eat and be merry." So the believer is not only reconciled, justified, and blessed, but is at once brought to the Father's bosom, loved with the same love as the Father hath loved Christ; for Jesus died to bring us to God. He undertook to raise us up at the last day, to present His Church without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. He is our life; He hath quickened us, given us the Spirit of adoption, and His blood gives us a sure title to glory; hence, through Him, we have access by the Spirit unto the Father.

This is the ground of true worship. We no longer know Jerusalem, or any other place, where men ought to worship; for "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John iv.). Where Jesus is, in the heavenlies, is the banqueting-house, the house of bread and wine; the blood of Jesus is the way, the Spirit is

the power, a believing and true heart the necessary state, the holiest of all the place. This is worship.

Here it is also that we learn the ways and mind of God. By the teaching of His Spirit, through the written word, our minds become stored with His thoughts, our hearts filled with His love; so that we think as He thinks, hate what He hates, love what He loves; according to our measure walk as Jesus walked, speak His words, etc. This is fellowship; this is the communion of the Holy Spirit.

Here we find the Lamb as it had been slain, ever reminding us of an already accomplished redemption, and of our perfect acceptance in Christ. No obedience of ours could effect this; no legal service or carnal ordinances could possibly bring us into such nearness and blessing; but we are brought to the house of bread and wine by the blood of the Lamb. There we feast our souls. There we drink the cup of blessing. There we realise that His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed. There the various attributes of the God of love and peace shine forth in the slain Lamb with unfading beauty and eternal brightness.

Happy would it be if we all more fully enjoyed the blessed privileges into which the grace of God has brought us.

Waiting for God's Son from Heaven.

READ I THESSALONIANS I.

THE doctrine of the Lord's second coming is brought out in a remarkable way in these two epistles. These Christians were those who *waited for God's Son from heaven*.

If we compare chap. i. 1 with John xx. 17, we shall see in the former that the Lord speaks of the assembly, in the latter individually, in the character of sons.

I have been struck lately with the way the two are often confounded; and frequently the truth connected with those who form the assembly is overlooked. It is important to notice the distinction of the family from the assembly. In Ephesians we see it is the sons of God who make up the assembly. The thought of the Bride carries the mind to the display of His glory, as Eve was the companion of Adam, sharing all with him.

If we think of the family (sons) it is the Father's house that comes before us. Two different spheres of glory, the glory of the palace New Jerusalem, is the sphere of the Bride's glory, and the Father's house that of the children; but the assembly is made up of sons and daughters. They know Christ is in the Father in John xiv. 20, and the assembly as the Bride is in God the Father likewise.

I am brought apart by God to wait for His Son from heaven. God will judge according to what He separated me to. What induced me to wait for God's Son from heaven? What inducement do we find? Why are we unable to be satisfied until we see Himself?

In Thessalonians we do not get circumstantial glory, nothing beyond limit of the glory of Himself. I should be a most unspiritual person if I did not want to see Himself. What is the reason? He is hidden in the Father; I know Him there. I know myself in Him there, and the assembly in Him there. He would say to us, You cannot look at Me in the glory where I am, and separate yourself from Me. There is a Person there on whom the Father pours out all His affection, and we hear the word dropping out, "I in My Father; ye in Me; I in you." He is thinking of me down here.

Many ask, Where is the Church? I might say to such (but it might not be gracious), You will never see it, because you are not looking unto the Father and the Son. Neither the Father nor the Lord Jesus have ever changed their minds about the Bride. We could not say that the saints in any given place are a fair presentation of the Bride, though they form a part of it. Is there not a motive for me to say, I cannot be satisfied till I see Him of whom this is true?

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Another thing there is that is touching to the soul: the Lord is not satisfied with our being down here, and by our gleaning by faith what is true of Him up there. He wants us to be with Himself. In the energy of His love, He brings us into connection with His past, present, and future.

In verse 3 we get three things. When the Lord Jesus shines down into the soul, when the light of Christ gets hold of the soul, it puts me into another position; faith has told its work upon us. When Israel went out of Egypt it was plain to all that they were gone; and when by faith people get hold of the Lord Jesus, it is plain enough, they find, that they have lost those who were their companions before.

The early Christians passed from the company of the priests and Jews to the disciples. We have to do with Christ, who is alive from the dead, and the living Christ has to do with us; then, if we get our conscience soiled, if we have failed, then it is we find in times of weakness the value of a living Christ in heaven. We know Christ who was in humiliation (past) a present Christ in heaven, serving the people for whom He gave Himself.

The early Christians might have been anxious for Him to come; but His eye was *on us*. We should not have been thus in an eternity of blessing had He come then. How

resolute He has been ! He will not sanction the least departure from Himself on the one hand ; but how gentle on the other ! Has He not a claim on us ?

After speaking at Exeter the other night of His coming, an old woman came up to me, and said, " I am so impatient for the Lord to come ; He *won't come.*"

I said, " If He had come a hundred years ago you would have been shut out ; you ought to go home, and thank Him He still tarried. If He had foreclosed the thing, where would the many have been ? Have you any children ? Are they waiting ? Then go home, and thank the Lord He has not yet come."

Ah, how patiently He has waited for us ; and are we to be in a hurry ? It endears Him to us that He did wait so long, that He is waiting still for some dear to our own souls. His love to us, His service as alive from the dead, challenges our hearts. If a servant had been in an office for thirty or forty years, and then had no care for his master, what should we think of him ? Christ is in heaven, busy with poor, wretched beings down here, showing out the exceeding greatness of His love, and gentleness, and patience towards them in all their weakness and infirmity.

Such is the nearness of our position in which we are placed, that we are the only people who know what the next movement of the

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Lord will be. We look to see the Son with joy; we are a peculiar people; peculiar honour is put upon us, to be those who are waiting for Him. When the Son comes down from the throne on high we shall be able to say, "This is our God; and we have waited for Him."

What is the whole *to-morrow* of the Christian and of the children of God? We are not kept to be waiting to see the improvements in the arts and sciences, to see the place prepared for Antichrist, but we are kept individually to wait for the Son from heaven.

The individuality of it strikes me, to wait for Himself (Chap. ii. 19). The eye of the apostle passed over across Jordan. Whom shall I meet there? My Master, the blessed Lord, whose divine fulness has won my heart; who, in the affection of His heart, has brought before me His present, past, and future, and wreathed them round my soul, and called me to wait for Himself.

But there is another thing. All you Thessalonians will be there; I shall see you there, you among whom I have laboured. It will be joy to see those among whom he has laboured surrounding him. People sometimes ask, Shall we know one another? It is evident Paul had no question about it, that then he should know these loved Thessalonians. It was not inconsistent that Paul, who saw the

Lord as his Light and his Hope, should think too of meeting those among whom he laboured.

How this thought makes the scene a home scene! The Lord is there, the one great and distinctive Object through whom and from whom all the joy flows of those who are there filled with joy. Ah! it will be no strange scene; human affections are renewed, and the heart, too, is occupied with those he walked and laboured among down here.

Chapter iii. 12, 13 tells us how we are to go through this wilderness and conflict of the way; it shows all the evil and enemies working, and shows, if people are to go on to the end, the need of abundance of love one to another.

In chap. iv. 13-18 we get what enables us to say, "By the love wherewith He has loved me, made me partaker of all the benefits which flow from His death and resurrection, made me know I shall inherit all things with Him; by that love I wait, I long, to be with Him. Nothing can satisfy me till I am at home with Himself."

There we get the open display of His complete triumph. He is now up there in His solitude, but He is pouring forth the glory and virtue which makes His people triumph over every adverse circumstance. He left His divine glory once, as we read in Phil. ii., and

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He will leave it a second time. He will leave His Father's throne and the glory again, because His heart cannot brook separation. When all His purposes are accomplished He will come forth again, because His love, His heart, is set upon His people.

Is there not something in this for the heart to lay hold upon, that there lives one human heart in heaven who so desires to have His people with Him that He will leave the throne to take a glory which He can share with them?

Do you ever think of the hour when He will come forth? of the state of utter weakness and incompetency those will be in when He comes to take them to glory? Out of every thousand, I suppose, nine hundred and ninety-nine of their bodies will be in the grave; and those who are alive and remain will be in bodies in such a condition as to be impossible to mount up to Him. If we follow up the individuals who are to be in glory to the very last instant before He comes, they will be bearing the mark of death and Satan's work, and they have no power in themselves.

It is not the Lord trying to hide what sin has done; He lets it go on. The Lord comes forth, and then victory! If He were to come now we could not but bound up to meet Him. He uses the condition of His people, their weakness and incompetency, to show forth the virtues of His Person as the Resurrection and

the Life. Some will be in the graves, others in their mortal, corrupt bodies; but He takes occasion of their state to show what sort of a Person He is. *He comes forth, He speaks* the word, the dead in Christ rise first. What makes it so precious is the outshining of His Person, of that which belongs to Him alone, of the Man Christ Jesus, whom God delights to honour.

How came the long list of those who have died, the stream of death that has rolled on? Ah! the resurrection morning will tell us. It is reserved for Him to display Himself as Life and Resurrection. Will it not be most precious to behold Him in that day when He comes in His faithfulness to claim His own? Not one will be forgotten; not one of those who have believed in Him will be passed by. What sort of power is it that can raise up the body of a Stephen or Paul, the bodies of the saints? It is not creation-power. Who is it that keeps the dust of His saints? Who knows where to find the dust of His saints? If we only think of it we can but say that it is a marvellous instance of His faithfulness.

In the confusion and bustle of the night the Israelites went out of Egypt Joseph's bones were not forgotten. The Lord remembers each one. He speaks the word; they rise.

Do you find the circumstances of mortality press upon you? Do you know what Satan's

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fiery darts are? what conflict is? Is it no joy to you to know that One who has graven your names upon His bosom, who sees and watches you in your path of sorrow and rejection, is coming down to claim you and all that are His? Your soul is alive already; so if He came now you would never see death, but He would fill up your body with immortality, and cause all that is mortal and corruptible to go out of it. What victory! I come out of My Father's presence as a *victor*, as the *Resurrection*, as the *Life*, to look for a people whose hearts are set upon Me. What a victory! what a One to come and look for *me*, to claim *me* as His own, and to fill me with Himself, and nothing but Himself! He is showing out the divine perfection of life and incorruptibility, and so death is swallowed up in victory.

I remark in this epistle how little is said of circumstantial glory. It is a question of the bride and Bridegroom, of the children of the Father, and of the only begotten Son. Nothing ought to be before the soul but meeting Him.

I would ask you whether you know what it is to set your soul in the position of *waiting for Him*. I am called to be one who is looking out for Him, reminding myself continually that He is coming, that my soul may be constantly kept in a waiting position.

Studies on the Book of Daniel.

XVI.—CHAPTER XI.

BUT further, we also find apostates from the holy covenant. Thus there are, first, Jews allowed to be the objects of the covenant of God, and those who are apostates to it; secondly, those from the west, north of the Mediterranean, who enter into the previous quarrel; and by these new elements, the scene is completely changed: then in v. 31, we have the last of these kings, namely, of the kings of the north, brought before us. “And arms shall stand on his part,” or more literally, “forces [arms] shall rise from [out of] him.” The expression “shall rise from him,” or “shall come from him,” may be used in two senses: a king’s lieutenant, one who takes his place as commandant, or one who succeeds him in the government. “Arms shall rise from him, and they [the arms] shall pollute the sanctuary of strength [or, which is the fortress], and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and shall place the abomination which maketh desolate.”

This verse is of the highest importance, as giving us an anticipative figure of the last indignation. The Lord Jesus has drawn our particular attention to this in Matt. xxiv. and at v. 11 of chap. xii. of this prophecy, the calculation which serves to mark the time of

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blessing sets out from the event here pre-figured. "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days," etc.

But to return to verse 31 of chapter xi., as to the "forces which shall rise"; it will be some one who will come on the part of the king of the north (I do not say who will be the king of the north); someone will come on the part of him who will be the king of the north in these times; who will introduce his forces, his arms, into the holy place; who will defile the sanctuary, and who will place there "the abomination which causeth desolation."

As to history, this is evidently what did take place. It was the generals of Antiochus Epiphanes who defiled the sanctuary. That was by no means the accomplishment, otherwise the Lord would not have spoken of the event as future. *A long time after the reign of this king*, the Lord Jesus came into the world, and spoke of this prophecy as yet to be. But we have another proof of the time when these things will take place, a proof which is connected with the Lord's word in Matt. xxiv. In Dan. xii. 1 we read, "And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation," etc.; and the Lord Himself speaks exactly thus concerning

the same time; and then the people of God are to be delivered; an event which had not taken place in the time of Jesus; nor has it yet.

It is clear that we must put aside any Christian circumstances, because it is plainly stated that the trouble shall happen to the people of Daniel in the last days. Now, we are not the people of Daniel, and these last days have not yet occurred to them. The verse speaks of arms, forces which come from this king, and which defile the sanctuary, take away the daily sacrifice, and place the abomination which causeth desolation.

All this, while a most important pre-figuring of the results of the last days, in more than one particular, was literally accomplished in Antiochus Epiphanes, the king of the north. Here for the moment we drop these kings, and the prophet proceeds with the general history: "And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall be corrupt by flatteries" (*vv.* 32, 33).

The king of the north "will corrupt those who do wickedly against [or as to] the covenant," namely, those Jews who are not true to Jewish hopes; he will incite them to apostasy; for this is the force of the word rendered by "he will corrupt"; "but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits." Here we have a division of Jews into true and false, and the development of good

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and evil. But we must note that "they that understand among the people shall instruct many" (v. 33) are the same class as those spoken of in chap. xii. 3, 10, and also xi. 35; they are the *maskilim*, or persons instructed in the mind of God, and are a class of persons apart. Thus, at the end also, there will be a remnant of Jews, not only those who are spared in general, but persons instructed in the mind of God; and we find the same specially distinguished in Isaiah lxxv., lxxvi., besides those who will escape the judgment executed against the wicked ones. These understanding ones among the people (v. 33) shall teach the multitude (the many, the mass), or will give instruction to them.

I translate the Hebrew word into "*the multitude*" (the mass), because the word "many" of the text has the article in Hebrew, as if one said "the many"; and the article, in my judgment, throughout these chapters, is special*

"Yet they shall fall by the sword and by flame, by captivity and by spoil, many days." Such is the condition of the people. The *maskilim* are noticed in v. 35: "Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And some of them of under-

* The passages found with the article are ix. 27; xi. 33, 39; xii. 3. In chap. xi. 34, 44 and xii. 4, 10, it is not so.

standing shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end : because it is yet for a time appointed." The trial of faith will be through them, for as faithful Jews, one should have supposed, that such as these might surely count on the help of God ; for they have been encouraging others to " trust in the Lord." Nevertheless, some of these are to fall, and then, unless faith is very strong, the others will say, " Where is their God ? " as in Psalms xlii., xliii., which express, in the language of the Spirit of Christ, the anguish of the remnant, of whom their enemies say, " Where is their God ? " * And when these understanding ones fall, who had hope in Him, the unbelievers will say there is no intervention of God in their behalf ; but these judgments being appointed, the people are left, speaking generally, throughout the period, to go through them, and to undergo the consequence of their position.

Now Christ, in Matt. xxiv., speaks of these times as accomplished, according to Dan. xii., in the last days. First in general of the things (taking, as an occasion, His announcement of the destruction of the Temple) which were to take place after His death. He speaks first of these times in general, and then gives, as the

* Compare the case of our blessed Lord on the cross.

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starting-point of the last sorrows, the similar event, namely, the moment when the times and the law are delivered into the hand of the little horn, of the king who, during 1,260 days, does "his own will"; the moment, namely, when the abomination of desolation is set up in the holy place: an event under and after Antiochus, with the Roman dominion which marks the introduction of the final desolation of Jerusalem.

After this general history of the state of the Jews the idolatrous and wicked king is introduced in v. 36. "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god," etc. "Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women," that is, the Messiah who had been promised, "nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all" (v. 37). This is the wicked one. "But in his estate* shall he honour the God of forces"; namely, in the place of the true God he shall honour *mahuzzim* for God—some idolatry; for *mahuzzim* signifies fortresses, or high places fortified. There is probably some connection between this and the forces of war upon which the king reckons. "And a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold," etc. It is to some invention of

* Rendered by the author "in his place," or "instead."
—TRANSLATOR.

a god that he does this. "Thus shall he do in the most strongholds [*mahuzzim*] with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory : and he shall cause them to rule over many [*the many*], and shall divide the land for gain " (vv. 38, 39).

A difficulty here presents itself : " He shall cause them to rule over the *many*." Who are they whom he shall cause to rule ? It appears that he will establish certain powers in connection with these false gods, and he will be there with these *mahuzzim* in these fortresses, and then it will be the instruments of his power who will join themselves to him ; he will make them (the instruments) rule over the mass of Jews, and he will divide their land into lots as a recompense. This seems to be so far the history of this king.

It is remarkable how he is introduced quite suddenly. We must ever remember that when the prophet is occupied with the purposes of God towards His people at " the end of the indignation," it is in connection with the kings of the north and south, and with the land of Palestine, His own land, which lies between them ; and that in the latter day, when the people will be under the divine judgments in that very land, there will be a small, faithful remnant, who hold fast by the Holy Covenant when the great mass are ready to apostatize.

The Perfection of Speech.

“ Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man ” (Col. iv. 6).

OUR words should be “always with grace,” and prove themselves such by ministering good to the souls of others, “grace unto the hearers” (Eph. iv. 29). This, however, will be oftentimes in the pungency of admonition or rebuke, and at times with severity or decision, or even with indignation and zeal. In this character they will be “seasoned with salt.” And having these fine qualities, being thus gracious and yet salted, they will be such as will bear their own virtues, that we have known how to answer every man.

The Lord Jesus, above all others, illustrated this form of moral perfection. He knew how to answer every man with words which always were with grace, or to the soul's profit, but at times seasoned, or seasoned highly, with salt.

In answering enquiries He did not so much aim at satisfying *them*, as at reaching the conscience or the condition of *those who put them*.

In His silence, as well as in His words, when He had to stand before the Jew or the Gentile at the last, before either the priests,

or Pilate, or Herod, we can trace full moral beauty and perfection, witnessing that at least One among the sons of men knew when to "keep silence" and when "to speak."

Great variety in His style presents itself to us in all this. Sometimes He is gentle, sometimes peremptory; sometimes He reasons, sometimes He rebukes at once, and sometimes conducts calm reasoning up to the heated point of awful condemnation and judgment.

He knows the *moral* of the scene before Him. "By Him actions" were "weighed" in their value as before God; and His words as well as His doings answer them accordingly.

Matthew xv. has struck me as a chapter in which this perfection is specially shown us. In the course of the action there, the Lord is called to answer Pharisees, the multitude, Peter, Syrophœnician, and the disciples again and again in their mistake and stupidity, and selfishness; and His tone of rebuke and of reasoning, of calm, patient teaching, and of deep, wise, and gracious training of the soul, are all precious and admirable in their place and occasion.

And let me ask, Is there not a fitness in its not being said of the Lord in Luke ii. that He was either teaching or learning; though it is said that He was hearing and asking

questions? It seems to me that there is. To *have taught* would not have been in season, a Child as He was in the midst of His elders. To have *learned*, would not have been in full fidelity to the light, the eminent and brighter light which He knew He carried in Himself; for He was wiser than His teachers, and had more understanding than the ancients (Ps. cxix.) we may surely say of Him; I mean not as God, but as One "filled with wisdom," as it is said of Him.

But here again we get *the grace* of which that scripture ("Let your speech be alway with grace") speaks. For of this Child, in the Temple with the doctors, we read that He was "strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him" (Luke ii. 40). So that He knew how in perfection of grace to use the fulness of wisdom that was in Him; and He is therefore not presented to us as either teaching or learning.

Elihu comes to remembrance here. Elihu was silent while years were before him, and while multitude of days was speaking; but he knew that he had the Spirit of God, and the rights of the Spirit he must assert, though otherwise he would have been silent to the end (Job xxxii.).

Jesus Girded.

READ JOHN XIII. 1-10.

THE attitude in which our blessed Lord Jesus appears in this scripture is one of infinite grace. We behold Him furnished with a bason, girded with a towel, and stooping down to wash and wipe His disciples' feet. Yes, Jesus the Son of God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, is here seen laying His holy hands upon the defiled feet of His followers, in order to wash away every soil which, even unknown to themselves, they might have contracted.

The dignity and glory of the Person magnify the grace of the act. There could be nothing higher than the place from which Christ had come; and there could be nothing on earth lower than the defiled feet of a sinner; but such is the glory of Christ's Person that He fills up all the space between. He can lay one hand on the throne of God, and the other on the feet of His saints, and form, in Himself, the mysterious, precious link between the two.

“Jesus knowing that the Father had given *all things* into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a bason, and began

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to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded."

Observe this. Jesus, knowing that all things were in His hands; knowing whence He had come and whither He was going, enters upon the deeply significant work of washing His disciples' feet. What marvellous grace! What full provision is here! How true it is that Jesus meets us, at every stage of our spiritual history, with the very thing we need!

He meets us at the first, when bowed down beneath the crushing load of guilt, and, by His precious blood, removes the load, and casts it into the mighty waters of divine forgetfulness. He meets us day by day, as we pass along through a defiling scene, and with the bason and towel removes the defilement which we may unavoidably contract, so that we may ever appear before God "clean every whit," and tread the courts of the sanctuary with feet as clean as Jesus can make them.

He cleanses our conscience by His blood, and He cleanses our ways by His word.

This gives immense relief to the heart. Jesus has made us clean, and Jesus keeps us clean. There is not a soil on the conscience, not a soil on the feet of the very weakest member of the household of faith. Both the one and the other are cleansed according to the lofty demands of the sanctuary. All that God

saw on my conscience has been washed away by the blood; and all that He sees in my ways is washed away by the word, so that I am "clean every whit."

This is what Christ declares; it is founded upon His perfect work; and it maintains the heart in unruffled repose. The action of the bason and the towel never ceases for one moment. As we pass from the bath to the robing-room, from the fountain where our sins were washed away to the place where we shall put on our robes of immortality, our feet necessarily contract defilement; and if we did not know, upon divine authority, that all that defilement was removed by a divine action continually going on, what should we do?

We should either be in a most wretched state of soul, fearing all was not right, or else we should have a very low apprehension of the holiness of our position and path. But when, by the eye of faith, we see Jesus girded; when we gaze upon that mysterious bason; when, in the light of divine revelation, we interpret the whole mystic scene in John xiii. 1-10; then, while we have the most elevated view of the purity of that position in which the blood of Jesus has set us, our hearts enjoy profound peace; because we know that the One who was nailed to the cross to bring us thereinto, is girded for the gracious purpose of keeping us therein.

Nor need we for one moment question the full application of all this to our own souls, for as surely as Christ washed the feet of those who sat around Him at the last supper, so surely is He washing our feet, yea, and will continue to wash the feet of His saints until we all stand upon the golden pavement of the upper sanctuary. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them *unto the end.*" Yes, right through and through to the very end of time, through all the changes of this ever-changing scene, His love endures. The love of Jesus is not a love for a day, a month, or a year; it is a love for eternity. What He did over eighteen hundred years ago He is doing now, and will continue to do until we shall no longer need to have it done, and then "He will gird Himself, and come forth and serve us" in the glory of the kingdom. We are bound to Him for ever, not only by our deep necessities, but by the powerful attractions of His Person.

Yes, my beloved Christian reader, you are as surely included in the mystic action of John xiii. as you are in the powerful intercession of John xvii. Of the latter, you are assured by His own words of thoughtful, tender love, when He said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word"; and of the former you are assured by the comprehen-

sive expression, "His own . . . unto the end."

Wherefore remember, for the abiding peace and consolation of your heart, Jesus is ever washing your feet. He has washed you already, so that *you* need not be washed over again; but your feet, your *ways*, need to be cleansed, and that He is doing for you, without any interruption, morning, noon, eventide, and midnight. He is always doing it, because you always need it to be done. It is not merely when you have committed some sin of which your conscience takes cognizance, but at all times your feet need to be washed, and this Jesus is doing for you, else you would have no part with Him.

Peter, like many in our day, did not quite understand the meaning or object of Christ's gracious act. He evidently thought it demeaning for His blessed Master to perform such an office, whereas it was but a beauteous outshining of His moral glory. In one sense, the mount of transfiguration itself had not yielded a brighter testimony to the glory of Christ, than that afforded by the bason and towel in John xiii. But the ardent Peter *did* not apprehend this, and hence he refused to allow Jesus to wash his feet; and when told of the terrible consequences of such a refusal, he said, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."

This, as we know, was another mistake, for

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poor Peter was often mistaken, though his heart was right after all. The grand truth is this: the moment a person believes in Jesus, he is as clean as the blood of Jesus can make him, "clean every whit"; and, as a consequence, he does not need to come again and again and be washed. "The worshippers *once purged*, should have *no more conscience of sins*" (Heb. x.).

The idea of repeated washing would lower the blood of Christ to the level of "the blood of bulls and goats." To be washed in the blood of Jesus is to be rendered perfectly and eternally clean, clean enough for God. What more is needed? Jesus replies, Nothing more, "save to wash his feet." And what makes this needful? Because the believer is, in himself, a poor, feeble, failing creature; and, moreover, he is passing through a defiled and defiling place; and hence the unspeakable blessedness of knowing that the Lord Jesus is ever girded on his behalf, in order to wash away every soil which he contracts in his daily walk, so that he may ever be maintained practically in the integrity of the position into which the blood has introduced him. The Lord be praised for such ample provision!

May we enter into the truth and value of all this, and thus be able to follow the blessed example set before us in this chapter. "I have given you," says our Lord, "an example, that

ye should do as I have done to you.” How are we to do this? By walking in communion with Christ, we shall be able to cleanse each other’s ways through the action of the word of God. If I see a brother pursuing a wrong course, adopting a wrong habit, or standing in an unclean association, I should bring the word to bear upon him so that he may be fully delivered from the evil thing.

The Priest’s Place and Portion.

(READ LEV. VI. 14-18).

THESE verses present three subjects to our notice, in connection with “the law of the meat offering,” namely, the priest, his place, and his portion.

1. **THE PRIEST.** All the sons of Aaron were priests. They became such by birth. They were born into this highly privileged position. They did not reach it by effort, but simply by birth. Being sons of Aaron, they were, of necessity, priests. They might be disqualified for the discharge of the functions of their position, through bodily blemish or ceremonial defilement (see Lev. xxi. xxii.); but as to the position itself, it was a necessary result of their being sons of Aaron.

Position is one thing; ability to discharge the functions, or capacity to enjoy the privileges thereof is quite another. A dwarf among

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the sons of Aaron was deprived of many of the higher priestly dignities; but even a dwarf was to "eat the bread of his God, of the most holy, and of the holy." God would not leave the feeblest or most diminutive member of the priestly household without a holy portion. "Only he shall not go in unto the vail, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish, that he profane not My sanctuaries: for I the Lord do sanctify them." A dwarf could not attend upon the altar of God; but the God of the altar took care of the dwarf. The two things are divinely perfect. God's claims have been perfectly answered, and the need of His priestly family perfectly met.

2. THE PLACE. The place where the priest was to partake of his portion teaches us a most valuable lesson of practical holiness. "*With unleavened bread* shall it be eaten *in the holy place*, in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation they shall eat it." That is to say, it is only in the power of personal holiness, and in the immediate presence of God that we can really partake of our priestly portion.

The way in which we get the place exhibits absolute grace. The place which we get demands personal holiness. To speak of effort in reaching the place, is the fallacy of legalism. To think of unholiness in the place is the blasphemy of antinomianism. I reach the position *only* through grace. I occupy

the position *only* in holiness. The pathway to the sanctuary has been thrown open by free grace; but it is to the sanctuary of God that grace has opened the pathway.

These things must never be forgotten. We want to have them graven on the tablets of the conscience, and hidden in the chambers of the heart.

3. THE PORTION. And now, as to the portion. "This is the law of the meat offering: the sons of Aaron shall offer it before the Lord, before the altar. And he shall take of it his handful, of the flour of the meat offering, and of the oil thereof, and all the frankincense which is upon the meat-offering, and shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savour, even the memorial of it unto the Lord. And the remainder thereof shall Aaron and his sons eat."

The fine flour and the oil typify Christ's perfect manhood, conceived of and anointed by the Holy Ghost. This is the portion of God's priests, to be enjoyed in the sanctuary of the divine presence, in separation of heart unto God. It is utterly impossible that we can enjoy Christ anywhere else but in the presence of God; or in any other way than personal holiness. To speak of enjoying Christ while living in worldliness, indulging in pride, gratifying our lusts, giving a loose rein to our temper and passions, is a fatal delu-

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sion. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (1 John i. 6). The two things are wholly incompatible. "Fellowship with God" and "walking in darkness" are as diametrically opposed as heaven and hell.

Thus, then, the place of all true priests, all believers, all members of the priestly household, is to be within the sacred precincts of the sanctuary, in the immediate presence of God, feeding upon Christ in the power of personal holiness. All this we are taught in "the law of the meat offering."

But let the reader note particularly that "ALL the frankincense" was consumed on the altar. Why was this? Because that frankincense typified the fragrance of Christ's manhood as enjoyed exclusively by God Himself. There was that in Christ as a Man down here which only God could duly appreciate. Every thought, every look, every word, every movement, every act of "the Man Christ Jesus" emitted a fragrance which went up directly to the throne of God, and refreshed the heart of Him who sat thereon. Not a single atom of Christ's perfectness or preciousness was ever lost. It might be lost on a cold, heartless world, and even upon carnal and earthly minded disciples; but it was not lost upon God. It all went up to Him according to its true value.

This is a spring of joy and comfort to the spiritual mind. When we think of how the blessed Lord Jesus was depreciated in this world, how little even His own disciples understood or valued Him, how the rarest and most exquisite touches and traits of His perfect humanity were lost upon a rude and unbelieving world, and even upon His own people, what a comfort to remember that He was perfectly understood and appreciated by the One who sat on the throne! There was an unbroken line of communication kept up between the heart of Jesus and the heart of God; the cloud of incense was continually ascending to the throne from the only perfect Man that ever trod this cursed and groaning earth. Not a grain of the incense was lost, because not a grain was entrusted even into the hands of the priests. All went up to God. The world might despise and hate; the disciples might fail to understand or appreciate; what then? Was a single ray of Christ's moral glory to go for nought? Surely not; all was duly estimated by Him for whom it was designed, and who alone could value it aright. This was true in every stage of Christ's precious life down here; and when we reach the end, and see the climax, when one disciple sold Him for thirty pieces of silver, when another cursed and swore he knew Him not, when all forsook Him and fled, when the world nailed Him to an

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ignominious cross between two thieves, then God showed to the universe how much He differed from all the thoughts of men by placing the crucified One on the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

Thus much as to the primary application of the incense, which unquestionably is to Christ. We may also observe that it has a secondary application to the believer, which he should seek to understand. True Christianity is the outflow of the life of Christ in the believer's practical ways; and this is most precious to God, though it may be lost upon an unbelieving world, and even upon a professing church. There is not a movement of the life of Christ in the believer, not an expression of what He is, not the smallest manifestation of His grace, that does not ascend directly, as sweet incense, to the throne of God.

It may not attract the notice, or elicit the applause, of this world; it may not get a place in the records of men; but it goes up to God; and this is enough for the faithful heart. God values all that is of Christ; nothing more, nothing else. There may be much that looks like service, much show, much noise, much that men make a great ado about; but nothing goes up to the throne, nothing is entered in the imperishable records of eternity, but that which is the fruit of the life of Christ in the soul.

The Parable of the Cedar and the two Eagles.

EZEKIEL xvii.

DISCIPLINE preserves us for future blessing, but it does not exalt us in this present world. Connected with this thought, let us read this parable.

This cedar is Judah, or the house of David; the two eagles are the king of Babylon and the king of Egypt. This cedar has incurred the discipline of the Lord, and the Lord used the king of Babylon, one of the eagles, as the rod of His hand, for correction. Under this rod, the house of David would be humbled, but preserved; for correction is for purifying, not for destruction. Discipline plants us in "a fruitful field," and by "great waters"; but we grow there, for the present, only as "a willow tree," as "a spreading vine of low stature," as this parable has it; "base," but kept and sheltered (vv. 5, 6, 14).

Jehoiachin, who was of this cedar, found this to be so. He humbled himself under this eagle, the king of Babylon, the Lord's rod for correction, and he was preserved, though "base" for a season. For thirty-six years he was hid in Babylon; but he was then exalted, proving that he had been planted in "a fruitful field," though, for so long a season he was but "a willow tree." (See 2 Kings xxiv. xxv.)

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But another eagle comes near this cedar; and this cedar, the house of David, in the person of Zedekiah, who succeeded Jehoiachin, solicits him, "bends her roots towards him, and shoots forth her branches towards him, that he might water it by the furrows of her plantation" (see v. 7).

Zedekiah seeks the king of Egypt, "that he might give him horses and much people" (v. 15), might flourish again under his shadow, refusing to be any longer "a willow tree." But this was rebellion against the Lord's rod, and the Lord revisits it as rebellion against Himself; and He enquires, Shall such a cedar prosper? and He answers, He shall not prosper. Zedekiah shall know not merely the *discipline* but the *judgment* of the Lord (vv. 19, 20). What a picture this is! What a moral may be read in it!

Happy is it when the soul bows to the hand of God, accepting the punishment of our sins. It is the place of blessing. Israel's blessing began there. When they stripped off their ornaments, and sought the Lord outside the camp, they were in the way to a blessing (Exod. xxxiii.). And so, after they had failed in the kingdom, as they had failed in the wilderness, their blessing lay in *Babylon*, as before it lay *outside the camp*. They must accept the punishment of their sins, and go there.

It is thus with us individually. We must be broken in order to be blest. Discipline will keep us for future exaltation, but leaves us "base" in this world. It is a "fruitful field" to the soul. But these are terms we do not particularly like. We would rather "bend our roots" towards that which may help us in the world. But that way, which is our own way, will end, as with Zedekiah, in shame and ruin. (See 2 Kings xxv.) Accepting the judgment of God, submitting under His mighty hand, will end, as with Jehoiachin, in blessing and exaltation.

Such is the parable of the cedar and the two eagles in Ezek. xvii. But the close of that chapter, after the parable, must also be looked at. (See vv. 22-24).

The prophet here looks forward to the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, the cedar of this parable in His day, the Heir of the house of David; and this passage presents Him as taking His place as humbled and broken with the nation of Israel or the throne of David, and from thence, according to God, receiving His exaltation and kingdom.

But, though broken, this was neither in *conscience* nor in *relationship*. He could not have been humbled, or broken, or convicted in *conscience* (as we are to be), for He was stainless and spotless, with neither corruption within, nor blemish without. He could not

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have been broken in *relationship*, as the house of David was, because He was no more federally represented by that fallen house, than as Son of man He was federally represented or headed in Adam.

But He was broken in *circumstances*; for the ends of the glory of God, and the blessing of His people, the Lord Jesus was, by His own will, broken in *circumstances*. The Heir of the throne was a carpenter. The Lord of the earth and its fulness had not where to lay His head. He was "a tender twig," a "low tree," a "dry tree." This is the Jesus of Isaiah liii., of whom it is said, "He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, as a root out of a dry ground; He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him." But this "tender twig" shall (in due season) be planted, as this passage tells us, "upon an high mountain and eminent." It shall "bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar; and under it shall dwell all fowls of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell."

And this is the *millennial* Jesus, as the other was the *Nazarene* Jesus. The "tender twig" of our prophet is the Nazarene Jesus; the "goodly cedar" with its boughs and fruit is the millennial Jesus. But it is the same Jesus who thus vindicates and illustrates and glori-

fies all the thoughts and principles and truth of God. As the prophet closes this chapter, giving us the moral of the whole action : " And all the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish : I the Lord have spoken and have done it."

And surely this is very much the common moral of all God's dealings with us in this scene of proud revolt. And I may say again, as at the beginning : His discipline preserves us for a future blessing and exaltation, but it does not make us great in this present world. " Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time " (1 Peter v. 6).

But, in contrast with this, look just for another moment at the history of another famous tree that was once set in the soil of this world. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, whom we have seen in this parable as one of the two eagles, was also a celebrated tree. His branch spread in its day, as the branch of this millennial Jesus will do by-and-by in " the world to come." (See Dan. iv.; Heb. ii. 5.) But Nebuchadnezzar had not previously been " a tender twig," a " low tree," a " dry tree." Accordingly he exalts himself and meets the judgment of God. His leaves are scattered,

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his fruit shaken off, his branches cut down. He is left as "a stump in the earth." And then, being broken and humbled under God's mighty hand, God blesses and exalts him, in His own way, at the latter end; that we may again learn God's way, to make us "tender twigs" ere we become "goodly cedars."

Studies on the Book of Daniel.

XVII.—CHAPTER XI., *continued*.

THIS is the subject which the Spirit brings forward; and inasmuch as the wicked one, this king, will be found in these countries, he is introduced as mixed up with these kings of the north and south. In the New Testament, the sources of wickedness are quite different; for the Spirit of God there considers the moral condition of Christendom, when the apostasy arises; and in consequence, the wicked one is portrayed as a public apostate; but evidently it is the same person.

In chap. vii. we saw the western power, namely, head of the last monarchy, the little horn of the fourth beast,* whilst here the king is seen who has to do geographically with the

* The question relative to the two beasts of Rev. xiii. would recur here.

Eastern countries, and is among the Jewish people.

I shall quote two other passages where this idea of *the king* is found. Observe, he is not called the king of the north, though geographically within his territory; he is called *the king*, because in the eyes of the prophet he holds that position. He it is who exalts himself, and pretends to be the king and the pastor of the people of God: a pretender, and a bad one, to these two offices: but as such he will present himself, and he is so called in Isa. xxx. 33: "Yea, for the king it is prepared." Consult also Isa. lvii. 9: "Thou wentest to the king with ointment." This passage speaks of the condition of the Jews, and of the accusations of God against them. Both these portions touch upon the history of the Antichrist after he has become king.

There is one more observation needed, that we may be able to link this remarkable parenthesis (in which the king is introduced on account of his connection with the kings of the north and south) with the rest of the chapter: it is that from v. 21 to the end of v. 35, the prophet is always speaking of the same person; whilst from v. 36 to the end of v. 39, we have the history of this extraordinary king himself.

These last verses designate the Antichrist properly; and my opinion is, that from

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v. 21 to the end of v. 35, it is the king of the north, but who is also the type of Antichrist. I mention this because many persons who have studied the chapter find great difficulty in deciding whether the history of the Antichrist begins at v. 21 or at v. 36. It is the same person from v. 21 to v. 35; and he was a type of Antichrist, even Antiochus Epiphanes.

The Spirit of God makes no mention of those who followed him; it was he who furnished the typical circumstances, which necessarily, therefore, partially answered to the prophecy. But in v. 36, the Spirit speaks of the Antichrist himself: "The king shall do according to his will." Before this, I judge, they are typical circumstances which apply to Antichrist.

I hope we understand that, although we are a part of the fourth monarchy (materially, not spiritually), these prophecies relate immediately and simply to the Jewish people, the people of Daniel in the latter days. The Antichrist is the link between this history and ours; for it is the spirit of the apostasy described in 2 Thessalonians, which is the effective source of the conduct of this last king here presented to us in his connection with the Jews in the East; but who, morally speaking, is allied with those who have abandoned Christianity or the light now existing. He is

found allied to the Jews at the beginning of his connection with them; afterwards he will deny them, and set up himself as God.

May God preserve us from all trace and appearance of that spirit which will show itself in these days in opposition, whether against the Almighty and most High God, or against the Lord Jesus, the Prince of princes. May He keep us in humility of heart, giving our affections to the Lord Jesus; so shall we be safe. If we are content to be nothing, and that Jesus be everything, we shall be guarded by Him, for Him, and for ever.

We have already said something in general upon this king; we have spoken of him in connection with what went before; but, independent of circumstances, he is is a personage of sufficient importance for us to notice him more fully.

It is generally admitted that he is the same as is called Antichrist, the "Wicked" one (2 Thess. ii. 8), but under a special character, as I mentioned towards the close of the last lecture; that is, in connection with the Jews, and in the land which is an object of dispute between the king of the north and the king of the south. And, in fact, this "wicked one" will unite in his own person every feature of iniquity. He will be a blasphemer against the true God, a persecutor of the saints, the head of the apostasy, and he will encourage

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idolatry; in fine, it is "the king who shall do according to his will."

It is impossible to mistake the character of the person mentioned in 2 Thess. ii., "shewing himself that he is God"; and it would be well if we referred to a few passages which mention the different characters attributed to him, beginning with this chapter of Daniel.

The first trait is that he is in Palestine in the land of the heirs of the holy covenant, and exalts himself and magnifies himself above every god, whether false or true. In spite of this he is to prosper "till the indignation be accomplished." God permits it, because it is the time of His indignation against the Jews (chap. viii. 19). This indignation is the period spoken of in Isaiah x. 5, 24, 25: "For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease." There is an indignation with a certain limit. It is not said that the time of this king is the period of the indignation, but it is a time during which God does not interfere to deliver Israel. He allows the trial to go on, and Israel to suffer the effects of it; and so Antichrist prospers until the indignation is accomplished. It is not said that when the indignation is over Israel will be at once re-established in the enjoyment of all her promises; but Christ can then act for Israel, instead of leaving her under the indignation. He will yet have to subject the nations to the

exercise of His royal power, in the midst of His earthly people.

“Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers . . . for he shall magnify himself above all” (*v.* 37). This is a strong feature of the pride of man; “he magnifies himself above all.” He would efface every idea of the true God; he is indifferent whether about the real religion of the heart, or the religion of his fathers; he dislikes even the name of Christ (called here “the desire of women”); he is even against religious customs, and religious nationality; he has no respect for any god. But arrived at this point, it is necessary to keep the people in restraint, and he needs instruments for this, as well as his gods, *ma-huzzim* (fortresses), some species of idolatry which he introduces when he has denied every god. This idolatry will be connected with the interests of those who govern; he will cause them to rule over many (*the many, the mass*), namely, the people of Israel, and the country will be divided among his chiefs. So far the royal and Judaic history of this king.

We proceed with passages which represent him under other points of view. If, as I suppose, he is the second beast of Rev. xiii., he will be found in intimate connection with the little horn of Dan. viii., where the little horn of the fourth beast is described; and in the seventh chapter the period determined for the

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end of the persecution of the saints, "until the Ancient of Days came" (v. 22), as distinct from the time when He sat upon the throne (v. 9). Thus Christ comes, and "the judgment is given to the saints of the most High," or "of the high places," and "the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom."

These passages determine the general end of the war which the little horn wages against the saints. In the last, it is not said, "the saints of the high places." In fact, three things are marked, namely, the coming of the Ancient of Days; the judgment given to the saints of the high places; and the time when the saints shall take the kingdom.

We turn now to certain portions in the New Testament which again speak of this period, and of the antichristian power of evil under other aspects, just as we may behold Christ under different aspects. In the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians "the man of sin" is described as a person, the result of the apostasy which shall invade Christendom: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not so soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that

man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition " (2 Thess. ii. 1-3).

The first thing is the apostasy, not of the Jews (this we have seen in Daniel), but of Christendom, and it will necessarily happen before the execution of the judgment, before the day of Christ; as must also the appearance of "the man of sin," who is clearly not the apostasy itself, but (I judge) follows and winds it up. The apostle marks the two events before the judgment; namely, the coming of the apostasy, and the revelation of the man of sin—the son of perdition: an expression which signifies that he possesses this name by his nature, his character, and his acts, "who opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God, or is worshipped" (read to verse 10).

This is his character in connection with Christendom, and Christendom in connection with him. First of all there was a mystery of iniquity, which was commencing in the times of the apostles, which was to continue for a certain time, afterwards an apostasy would follow, and then the revelation of the wicked one.* The Lord will destroy him "with the brightness of His coming" (the manifestation of His presence).

* There is much mention made of this *wicked one* in the Psalms.

“Loops of Blue,” and “Taches of Gold.”

READ EXODUS XXVI. 1-6.

IN contemplating the structure of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, we may observe what an important place was assigned to the “loops of blue.” By means of them and the “taches of gold,” the curtains were joined together, and the manifested unity of the whole structure preserved.

These loops and taches might seem to be very insignificant and unimportant; but, without them, there would have been no unity. The curtains, however beautiful in themselves, would have hung apart one from another, and thus one grand feature of the manifestation would have been lost.

Now, looking at the Tabernacle as a figure of Christ, as surely we may, we can easily trace the beauty and significance of those “loops of *blue* and taches of *gold*.” They typified that perfect unity and consistency in the character and ways of “the Man Christ Jesus” which were the result of His *heavenly* grace and *divine* energy.

In the life of the blessed Lord Jesus, and in all the scenes and circumstances of that life, we not only see each distinct phase and feature perfect in itself, but also a perfect combination of all those phases and features, by the power of that which was heavenly and

divine in Him. The curtains of the true Tabernacle were not only beautiful in themselves, but they were beautifully combined, exquisitely linked together by means of those "loops of blue and taches of gold," which can only be discerned and appreciated by those who are, in some measure, instructed in the holy mysteries of the sanctuary.

And let me add, that what is true of the Divine Living Word, is equally true of the divine written word. The spiritual student of Holy Scripture will readily discern the "loops of blue and taches of gold." This is only what we might expect. The Living Word is the divine embodiment of the written word; and the written word is the divine transcript of the Living Word.

Hence we may look for the same heavenly unity, the same divine consistency, the same rare and exquisite combination, in both the one and the other. It would be at once pleasant and profitable to trace, in company with my reader, the various illustrations of the "loops" and "taches," through the Word of God; but to do this fully would demand a volume; whereas, at present, I have merely time and space for a brief suggestive fragment. I should, however, like to give an example or two from the written word which may perhaps lead him to study the subject for himself.

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In 1 Cor. xvi. we have a very lovely and a very practical illustration of our subject. At verse 13 the apostle says, “Quit you like men; *be strong*.” Here we have one fine feature of the Christian character, that manly strength which is so desirable. But this, if taken by itself, might easily degenerate into a rough, rude, high-handed way in dealing with others, the very opposite of what we find in our divine Exemplar. Hence the Spirit in the apostle forms a “loop of blue,” and by means of a “golden tache,” links on to this manly strength, another feature which is so needful, namely, *charity*. “Let all your things be done with charity.” Most precious combination! strength and charity: charity and strength. If you untie this heavenly loop, you will either have a high, haughty, inconsiderate style, or a soft, pliable, enfeebled mode of acting which will sacrifice everything for peace and quietness.

Again, look at that noble definition of pure religion, given at the close of the second chapter of the Epistle of James. There the apostle uses the “loop ” and “tache ” in order to connect together the two phases of divine religion. “To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction ” is looped with unspotted separation from the world. In other words, active benevolence and personal holiness are inseparably linked together.

Untie the loop, and what have you got? Either a sort of benevolence which can go hand in hand with the most intense spirit of worldliness; or a rigid pharisaic separation without a single generous emotion. It is only the presence of that which is heavenly and divine that can secure true unity and consistency of character. And, let it never be forgotten, that true Christianity is simply Christ reproduced, by the Holy Ghost, in the life of the Christian. Dry rules are of no avail; it must be CHRIST in all.

“The God of Peace.”

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.”—Heb. xiii. 20.

THE title under which the Holy Ghost, in this passage, introduces God to our thoughts is peculiarly expressive. He calls Him “the God of peace.” That is what He is to us, in connection with the opening grave of the “great Shepherd of the sheep,” and on the foundation of “the blood of the everlasting covenant.” In short, we have in this most comprehensive passage two Persons and two things. We have the God of peace and the Lord Jesus; the blood of the everlasting

covenant and the resurrection from the dead. All of these we have under the pen of the Holy Ghost.

But there is another title under which God must be seen before the soul can really enjoy Him as “the God of peace,” and that is as the “God of judgment.” To speak of peace while the claims of God, in this latter character, lie unanswered, is the very height of presumptuous folly. God can have no peace with sin, in any shape or form. If sin be not put away, there can be no peace with God, so long as sin remains unjudged. Hence, therefore, it becomes us to inquire, On what ground can the inspired apostle speak of God as “the God of peace”?

The ground is this, and may the anxious reader understand it: The “God of judgment” met the sin-Bearer at the cross, and there went into the entire question of sin, and settled it once and for ever. The Divine Substitute made peace, by the cross, in order that “the God of peace” might meet us *without* judgment, at the opening grave. All the “God of judgment” had against my sins He laid on the head of my Substitute on the cross, in order that I might know and enjoy Him as “the God of peace.” This is the grand fundamental truth of the gospel, which must, when simply believed, give settled peace to the conscience. The justice of God has been per-

fectly satisfied about sin by the death of Christ. Nay, more, God has been glorified, in reference to sin, by the blood of the cross. This must give peace to everyone who simply believes it.

It is truly wonderful to think of the meagre view we take of the gospel, notwithstanding its moral grandeur, as it shines before us in the pages of the Book of God. From the way in which one sometimes hears the gospel put, it would seem as though forgiveness of sins were the fruit of an exercise of mercy at the expense of justice, or as though justice consented to stand aside while mercy pardons and saves.

How different is this from that stupendous scheme of redemption which had its origin in the bosom of God; which was laid in the eternal counsels of the Trinity before the foundation of the world; which was ratified by the blood of the everlasting covenant; which is revealed by the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures of truth, and received by faith into the hearts of all those who, through grace, "set to their seal that God is true"!

In that glorious scheme we behold mercy and truth, righteousness and peace blessedly combined; so that the sinner is as positively saved by righteousness and truth as by mercy and peace. The latter are not more favourable to him than the former. Justice and judgment are the pillars of that blood-sprinkled

“ throne of grace ” to which the sinner approaches in worship and adoration.

Is my reader anxious about salvation? Is he desirous of knowing the pardon of his sins? Does he sigh after the peace of the gospel? If so, let him only pause and think of this: The ‘ God of judgment ’ met Christ on the cross, and then entered into and definitely settled the great question of sin. How is this to be known? Is it by some feeling in my own mind? Is it by my passing through some mental process? Is it aught that I can do, or say, or think, or feel?

Nay. How then? “ The God of peace brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus.” This is the way I am to know that the question of sin has been eternally settled. If it had not been settled we should never have heard aught of “ the God of peace,” or seen aught of “ the great Shepherd’s ” opening grave, or known aught of the changeless efficacy of the blood of “ the everlasting covenant.”

“ The God of peace ” could never have appeared on the scene if all the claims of the “ God of judgment ” had not been divinely answered. How were they answered? By the blood of Jesus; nothing less; nothing more; nothing different. Nought else could avail.

If I had all the good works that were ever performed beneath the canopy of heaven; if

I had all the morality, all the fleshly pietism, all the legal righteousness that ever man could boast of; if I had all the alms that ever were distributed by the hand of benevolence: if I had all these, and ten thousand times ten thousand more besides, placed to my credit, it would not answer the claims of the "God of judgment" with respect to my sins.

But the DEATH OF CHRIST *has* answered for me. That sacrifice stands before the eye of infinite holiness, in all its solitary grandeur, in all its divine sufficiency. It needs no addition. It has met all. What more do I want as the ground of my peace? Nothing more. God is satisfied; so am I; the matter is settled for ever, nor can anyone or anything unsettle it.

Reader, are you satisfied? Is Christ sufficient for you? Has He done enough to meet the claims of your conscience? Do you want to add something of your own doings or feelings to His all-sufficient atonement? If not, what are you waiting for?

You say, "I do not *feel*."

I reply, We are not saved by *feeling*, but "by faith." "The just shall live by faith"; not by *feeling*, but "by faith." Do you not see that while you talk of not feeling, you are still on legal ground, on the ground of works?

You have, it may be, abandoned the idea of *manual* labour, but you are still looking

to your *mental* labour. The one is as worthless as is the other. Give up both as a ground of salvation, and take Christ. This is what you want in order to be happy. If you were to hear a person say, “ I am happy now. I have peace with God because I have given a hundred dollars in charity,” would you not pronounce him self-deceived?

Doubtless; and yet you say, “ If I could *feel* I should be happy.” Where lies the difference between “ do ” and “ feel ”? Is not the one as stable a foundation for a sinner’s peace as the other? Would it not be better to let Christ supplant both? Is there not enough in Him without your feelings as well as without your works? If your feelings or your works had been necessary, then why did “ the God of peace bring again from the dead our Lord Jesus ”? Is it not evident that you are seeking something more, as a ground of peace, than that which is presented to you in the gospel?

Dear friend, do think of this. My heart’s desire is that you may rest now and evermore in a FULL CHRIST; that He may be sufficient for you, as He is sufficient for God. Then feelings and works of the right kind will be forthcoming, not as a ground of peace, but as the fragrant fruits of an enjoyed salvation; not as a title to life, but as the outflow of a life possessed through faith in Christ.

The Unreasonableness of Rationalism.

RATIONALISM is not faith; and "without faith it is impossible to please God." Faith believes what God says, and because He says it. If we believe because we can prove it, or because it is sanctioned by others, it is not faith in God. Faith is subjection of the heart to the testimony of God. Those of whom this is true do not say, We will not believe till we understand, but they say, "By faith we understand." We believe on the authority of God and want no other sanction. "He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true" (John iii. 33).

That man has reasoning faculties capable of arriving at correct conclusions about natural things no one questions, but "the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." If men were unfallen and unalienated, or if God had not spoken, and the Holy Spirit had not come, there might be some excuse for men forming their own opinions, and reasoning out conclusions as to divine things; but, as we have in the Written Word a revelation from God (and all Scripture is given by inspiration of God), every attempt at reasoning about it, instead of receiving it and obeying it, only shows the unreasonableness of such a course, the insubjection of the mind of man to the will of God.

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We shall find that such activities, if closely examined, not only manifest pretension and unbelief, but undermine the foundations of the truth, and give nothing, absolutely nothing, on which a sin-burdened soul may rest.

1st.—The unreasonableness of Rationalism comes out in man's assumption that he is competent to judge what God will do, or ought to do; and that he is capable of deducing opinions about Scripture, instead of bowing to its divine authority. He thus fatally errs in sitting upon a judgment-seat, and arraigning God and His word before it, instead of coming as a creature before the judgment-seat, and receiving the divine verdict. Is it not a totally unreasonable course for men to pursue? Besides, does not Scripture plainly affirm that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"? (1 Cor. ii. 14).

2nd.—The unreasonableness of Rationalism is manifested in its ignoring the fact that man is a *fallen* sinner in Adam, thus "under sin," and exposed to death and judgment. Why is man exposed to death and judgment? Scripture tells us it is because of sin. How came sin into the world? By one man. We read, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. v. 12).

Thus through one man, Adam, all are fallen, all are sinners, all are by nature children of wrath, and therefore exposed to death and judgment. That is why Scripture pronounces the natural man incompetent to deduce opinions and form conclusions in divine things, declaring him to be "dead in trespasses and sins," and that he "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God."

The Rationalist's plea, therefore, that God having given him reasoning powers, he ought not to believe anything he cannot reason out and understand, will not avail, for, since our nature's fall in Adam, "the carnal *mind* is enmity against God," and man is so alienated from God that his *will* is opposed to God, his mind "not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be: so then they that are in the flesh *cannot* please God" (Rom. viii. 7, 8). Where then is his competency to judge or to receive the things of God? Besides, how came man with the knowledge of good and evil? And further, Is it reasonable to suppose that God would bring in atonement for sins at the costly price of the death of His own Son, if men were not guilty and helpless sinners? Is not the thought wholly unreasonable that God would send His Son into the world to accomplish eternal redemption, if we were not under sin, fallen sinners in Adam? And if men were not *lost*, would He have given His

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only begotten Son *to save*? Redemption from what? Whom to save? If men could have become righteous by their own doings, Christ would not, need not have died for sinners; for "if righteousness come by law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. ii. 21).

3rd.—The unreasonableness of Rationalism is also apparent in its active historical and scientific researches for proofs to show whether the Scriptures are true or not; as if God's thoughts and ways must be cast into moulds which are always according to men's notions of science. Were the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ according to scientific principles, or not? To an upright soul, exercised before God, Scripture needs no further proof and witness of its truth than itself. If Moses spake of the commandments which he gave to the children of Israel as the commandments of JEHOVAH their God, and warned them against adding to, or diminishing from those words, their divine authenticity was abundantly confirmed by prophets who were raised up after him, by our Lord Himself, and by the apostles, who quoted freely from the writings of Moses.

As to the imperishable certainty of the word, we find Isaiah saying, "The word of our God shall stand for ever." David said, "For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven." Prophets so uttered the words of God that they

boldly exclaimed, "Thus saith the Lord"; or, "The word of the Lord which came unto Jonah," Micah, Zephaniah, and others.

The Lord also spoke of "the Scriptures," and declared that "the Scripture cannot be broken"; and so endorsed the divine authenticity and authority of the books of Moses that He said, "If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?"

Again, after His resurrection from the dead, He so taught the divine authenticity of the Old Testament that He said to His disciples, "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." As to His own ministry, He authoritatively said, "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day"; and, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."

The Apostle PAUL teaches us that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable," etc. The Apostle PETER says, "The word of the Lord endureth for ever," and he ranks Paul's Epistles with "the other Scriptures." The Apostle JOHN so recognizes the canon of Scripture as the Word of God, and now so complete that he says, "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in

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this book : if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book ” (Rev. xxii. 18, 19). Is it not then most unreasonable, in the face of such manifold testimonies of inspired prophets and apostles, and also of the Lord Himself, that men should still labour to form opinions and to deduce conclusions from the Scriptures, instead of being subject to them as the Word of God?

Besides, the difficulties of geologists about various strata, and marine shells, and boulders being found at great depths and heights, and the antiquaries' fossils and remains showing (as they say) that gigantic beasts once existed not suited to this globe, are all answered by the remarkable silence of Scripture as to what might have occurred between the different periods of the first and second verses of the first chapter of Genesis.

In Genesis i. 1, we are simply told that God in the beginning created the heavens and the earth, and we reckon that what God created must have been perfect.

The second verse describes a chaotic state ; hence the conclusion that some great overthrow must have taken place in the interval between the two different periods referred to by the first two verses.

The present state of the earth began to be formed as said in the third verse, commencing from the chaotic state mentioned in verse 2. Whether thousands of years intervened between verses 1 and 2 or not, or what existed then, we are not told; only the earth seems to have been submerged, for on the third day God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so" (v. 9).

Between the first and second verses the divine record leaves abundant space of duration for vast changes to have taken place.

The truth is that a divinely wrought faith bows to the word of God because it is God's revelation; whereas unbelief is busy with excuses for relying on its own opinions and conclusions. What will men's opinions and traditions be worth when they see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory?

4th.—The unreasonableness of Rationalism is further exhibited by its advocates cavilling with the Word of God, without reading and examining it carefully and continuously; hence the ignorance of Scripture manifested by most of their champions. It is evident that those who merely look at the Bible as a compilation of historical facts, of which the writers were witnesses, and which they recorded as their memory aided them, have not the Word

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of God at all, but only a collection of men's opinions and writings.

The truth, however, is that the prophecy which came in old time was not by the will of man, but "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." It is certain also that instead of giving their own opinions, or merely relating what they knew, they did not fully know the meaning of what they were inspired to communicate; hence we read, they "inquired and searched diligently . . . searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories which should follow" (see 2 Pet. i. 21; 1 Pet. i. 10, 11).

We find, for instance, that though the Apostle JOHN was in the garden of Gethsemane with Jesus, when in an agony He fell on His face and prayed, "and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground," yet he makes no mention of it in his gospel; whereas Matthew, Mark and Luke, who were not present, record it fully.

It is certain, then, that both in the Old Testament and the New we do not find the authors merely writing what they knew and personally understood, as uninspired men generally write their books. We are told, therefore, that, "God" not only "spake in

time past unto the fathers in the *prophets*," but "hath in these last days spoken unto us in His *Son*." We have, then, the inspired Word of God.

5th.—The unreasonableness of Rationalism reaches its climax in the rejection of the only way in which God in grace, in holiness, in truth, and justice, could save a sinner. That which makes the strong man shrink from death, dread the Lord's coming, and tremble at the thought of judgment, is the fear of God's dealing with him in strict justice; whereas in the cross (the death, and shedding of the blood, of Christ) sin is judged already, righteousness established, truth fulfilled according to holiness, God vindicated, satisfied and glorified, and all that believe are justified from all things set free, and brought into new and everlasting relationship with God as His children.

Oh, the unreasonableness of disputing, instead of receiving this great salvation! What utter folly for men to be arguing instead of fleeing from the wrath to come! What can be more foolish than to refuse Him that speaketh from heaven; who brings salvation to us in Christ, and through His blood, to be had at once on the principle of faith, without money and without price?

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

Studies on the Book of Daniel.

XVIII.—CHAPTER XI., *concluded.*

BUT there is something else. The New Testament gives us the moral features of the appearance of this wicked one, namely, that it is according to the power of *Satan*; and what makes these verses remarkable is that the same words which are used to describe the manifestations of this power of Satan, are employed in speaking of the proof of the mission of Jesus Christ as Messiah (Acts ii. 22).

There are two remarkable circumstances, namely, that the coming of Antichrist is spoken of just as the coming of Christ, and a "mystery of iniquity" (v. 7), as well as a "mystery of *godliness*" (1 Tim. iii. 16). As the Son of Man is to come, so also will the Antichrist come; and his coming will be after the power of Satan: he will perform lying miracles; it will not be merely a set of principles at work; the effect will be mighty in seducing those who perish. A positive power of error comes in, because men "received not the love of the truth." "God shall send them *strong delusion* . . . for they had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. ii., 11, 12). It is a judicial blinding.

It is said also in Isaiah, "Make the heart of this people fat" (vi. 10). After a period of

long-suffering on the part of God blindness happened to the Jews when they rejected the Messiah : and when patience has had its perfect work, they will yet be delivered over to a spirit of idolatry, that spirit which shall, meanwhile, have sought out seven spirits more wicked than himself ; and the last state of that people shall be worse than the first. And so when those who call themselves Christians have obstinately refused to receive the truth, although it has been proposed to them, a positive and special blindness shall come upon them from God, "that they all might be damned who believed not the truth."*

We continue our history of this king from Rev. xii. There the dragon is seen (who is the devil or Satan, and who seduces the whole world) cast out of heaven (*vv.* 10, 12). This malicious power no longer occupies the heavenly places† ; but when this occurs, it will be a time of fearful woe to the earth. It is the beginning of his "great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

After this we have a vision of the woman, who "is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time" (*v.* 14). In other words, as soon

* Man, under the light of creation, Rom. i. ; the Jews, Isaiah vi. ; and Christendom, 2 Thess. ii., arrive at the same end.

† This power in heavenly places (Eph. vi.), against which we now wrestle, consequently is no longer there.

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as Satan is cast out of heaven, a period of three and a half years will elapse before he is judged on earth; accordingly, in chap. xiii. we find that the dragon gives the beast his power, throne, and great authority—this beast, of whom we read in the same chapter, that “power was given him to continue forty and two months” (Rev. xiii. 5). He is found with the same characteristics as those before mentioned, only under more detailed historical circumstances. “And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies” (v. L). “And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven” (v. 6). Satan could no longer himself meddle with heaven, and therefore he sets on the beast against those who dwell there. Also “it was given unto him to make war with the saints [on the earth], and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations” (v. 7).

There is a fact here worth observing: it is a kind of imitation of the ways of God. As the Father has given all power to the risen Son, and the Holy Spirit exercises all the power of Christ before Him, so Satan imitates the same thing in evil.

The dragon will give his throne to the beast; and remark what is said of the character under which he will be worshipped: “And I saw

one of his heads as it were wounded to death ; and his deadly wound was healed " (v. 3). It is when this wound is healed, when there shall be a kind of resurrection (not personal, but the power of the beast raised up again), that all the world will wonder after the beast, and the second beast will exercise all the power of the first beast before him (v. 12).

" And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth " . . . which " causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed " (vv. 11, 12). We have here a power which pretends to be that of Christ, not His heavenly power, but which pretends to be like Christ on the earth ; but, in fact, an ear which could hear would discover it to be that of the Dragon himself.

As Pharaoh said to Joseph, " Only in the throne will I be greater than thou," so this second beast will exercise all the power of the first beast before him, this second beast which speaks like a dragon, whilst it has horns like a lamb. " And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven . . . and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth " (vv. 13, 14). These verses speak of what is done before (in the presence of), and in sustaining, this power of the first beast. The second beast causes him to be worshipped, and an image to be made to him, and he seduces them that dwell on the earth.

This second beast is again mentioned in Rev. xix., under the designation of "the false prophet." Here again, as the Spirit of the Father speaking in the disciples, acted for the glory of Christ, so this beast, here called "the false prophet," speaks the language of the Dragon, and supports the glory of the last beast. It will be a spirit, *zealous for idolatry, and who will even execute judgment on the earth*, as the prophets ere now have done.

In the Revelation we find the connection of the first beast with Babylon, which is yet another thing. In chap. xvii. 1-3, it is said, "I will shew thee the judgment of the great whore. . . . And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast . . . having seven heads and ten horns." "The beast which thou sawest was, and is not . . . yet is" (v. 8). This is a kind of death and resurrection. When it appears for the last time, it has a devilish character, it comes out of the pit, and then is destroyed.

"And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is"; or rather, "and it is there." It is a coming* of this beast. When the world beholds this appearance of the beast, it is astonished.

There is another circumstance: "And the

* All the best editions of the Greek Testament employ here the word elsewhere used for the "coming" of Christ.

beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth [king] and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast " (vv. 11, 12). An event which has not yet occurred.

We perceive that these kings will exist at the same time with the beast. Three of them will fall (see Dan. vii.), but the seven others will continue. The beast rules and unites in a single body the power of these kings; but the kings exist; it will be a kind of confederation, in which each horn acts royally in his own sphere, but gives his power to the beast, who blasphemes against God. "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled " (Rev. xvii. 17).

Another feature in his character is "that the ten horns . . . shall hate the whore," who for a long while ruled the beast (v. 16). We remember that in Dan. vii. among the ten horns another arose, who got all the power of the beast, who, in fact, morally becomes the beast, and causes three of the horns to fall before him. This one, in the eyes of Daniel, and in fact, in his conduct, will be the beast. This horn that will have the dominion, will control, and give its tone to everything.

Having touched upon the passages which refer to this period, we must still remember that it is in Palestine, and viewed personally, that we have to do with Antichrist, the king, here.

But to continue with Daniel xi. "And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him": "he shall enter also into the glorious land" (vv. 40, 41). This is the moment when God begins to act. The kings of both the north and south, in their same geographical positions, are at war with *this king*. "And the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind."

This king of the north seems to be a very prominent power, and he possesses the territory of the ancient kings of Syria. My judgment is that the rest of the chapter applies to him; although, formerly, I thought it applied to *the king*. But now I judge it applies to the king of the north.

Daniel now continues the thread of the history (which had been interrupted by the notices concerning *the king*); that is, he resumes that of the Jews, in connection with the kings of the north and south. And there is a fact which confirms me in the opinion of this invasion (v. 41) being that of the king of the north, namely, "he shall enter into the glorious land." Now, if it is a question of "*the king*," he is already there.

“ And many countries shall be overthrown : but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon ” (v. 41). This is a circumstance not to be overlooked because it demonstrates the exactitude of the written word : for in Isaiah xi. 13 you will find that these three powers, which escape the king of the north, are in existence still later : “ Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim ; but they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines towards the west . . . they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon shall obey them.

“ He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries ; and the land of Egypt shall not escape ” ; an announcement that the king of the south loses his kingdom. (v. 42. See Isaiah xi. 15).

“ But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt. . . . But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him ; therefore he shall go forth with great fury, . . . Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him ” (vv. 43-45). This is the end of the king of the north.

I add a general idea of chap. xii. to show the connection. “ And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people ” (v. 1).

Here is special reference to the Jews, in whom Daniel was so much interested, and on whose account he had fasted and mourned for three full weeks. After having described the events pertaining to the kings of the north and south, the angel says that notwithstanding all these desolating scenes, Michael shall stand up for the children of thy people. Nevertheless, "there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation."

This is exactly what is announced in Matt. xxiv. as to take place in Judæa. "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet," etc. (vv. 15-21). It is clear that this cannot happen twice; it is the time of Israel's deliverance: "and at that time thy people shall be delivered." Only it is confined to "every one that shall be found written in the book."

One could not fail to remark, while reading the chapters of which I have given the abridgement in the two preceding lectures, the character of this terrible personage of the last days. The king of the north is fearful enough, as a conqueror and pillaging invader; but this *king* is spoken of as making war against God. It is not merely a desire of conquest, but of open opposition to God and the Lamb. It is the effectual power of Satan and of a lie; it is blasphemy; it is persecution. One feels it to be everything the most terrible in human

hatred, animated by the power of Satan fallen from heaven, and who establishes his throne upon earth, against the God of heaven, and against the *Lamb*. The appearing of this wicked one is the most important point in these chapters, whether as the expression of the iniquity of the Jews and Christendom, or as that of the pride of man.

What Christ does is to bring us into the enjoyment of His own relationship and place with God. The first thing He does is, to secure our being in it by His work of atonement. Then, having wrought this, the next thing is to give us the name by which we are called to know God as the FATHER; and accordingly He gives us all the words of the FATHER, that we may have the joy of this place in which He has set us. (See John xvii.)

The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. He who is in the most perfect intimacy, in the most absolute proximity and enjoyment of the Father's love, the one eternal, sufficient object that knew the love of the Father as His only Son, has revealed Him unto men as He has Himself known Him. (See John i. 18; 1 John iv. 10).

The Glory of the Only Begotten.

“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, . . . full of grace and truth” (John i. 14).

THIS was the manifestation of Christ as Son, and declared through the Spirit by John. And it is this glory, this fulness of grace and truth, which shines throughout the public ministry of the Christ as recorded by John in chapters i.-ix. And in the progress of that ministry I have observed two attributes or actings of this glory.

1. It always refuses to join itself with other glory of any kind whatever.

2. It perseveres in displaying itself in defiance of every kind of resistance.

These two ways, constantly adhering to it, evince the value it had for itself and the fixedness of the divine purpose to bless the sinner, to whose condition and necessities this glory suits itself.

In chapter ii. Jesus is tempted by His mother to let the glory of power break forth from Him. In chapter iii. Nicodemus invites Him to display Himself as a teacher. In chapter vi. the multitude would make Him a king. In chapter vii. His brethren would have Him show Himself to the world. In chapter viii. the Pharisees would lead Him to use the thunders of Mount Sinai in judgment. But no offer or solicitation prevails. Jesus will

not show Himself but as "full of grace and truth," or in the glory of the "only begotten of the Father." He refuses to appear in any other glory or to act in any other character. But then in that glory He will shine, and in that character He will act, be the resistance or hindrance what it may; and in considering this I would at present be a little more particular.

In chapter iv. we see the Lord insisting to shine in the glory of grace and truth, in spite of hindrance and resistance from a most determined quarter: "the law of commandments contained in ordinances." The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. But Jesus the Son of God shines with as bright and diffused a beam in one region as in another, refused to be hindered.

In chapter v. the Lord holds on His course in the same simple, undisturbed character, in defiance of fear or danger. The Jews sought to slay Him because He did these things on the Sabbath Day. But His answer to such danger or threatening was only this: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"; and on He goes, still He perseveres, as the witness of the way of the Father or the grace of God, though this might only sharpen the enmity of the Jews, and dispose them the more to slay Him.

In chapter vi. this peculiar glory, by which

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alone He was tracking His path, again has to meet a sore-hindrance. The Lord evidently feels at a great moral distance from the multitude. They were very much His aversion, as we speak. They had stirred some of the holy loathing of His righteous soul. This is evident, and this the heart knows to be a sore hindrance. But this does not prevent Him from maintaining the display of His proper glory, which was for their blessing. "Labour not for the meat that perisheth," says He to them, "but for that meat that endureth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you; for Him hath God the Father sealed."

And so in chapter vii., as in chapter v., He holds on His way, though enemies were angry and confederating and sending officers to take Him. For after all this, the glory that was full of grace and truth breaks forth into some of its brightest shining on the great last day of the feast, Jesus standing, and saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink."

What vigour in the purpose must there have been which could have thus borne it on in triumph through such a series of opposition and hindrances! And so, to the very last, I may say, this glory appeared in unmeasured regions. In chapter ix. Jesus "passes by"; He goes wherever He may go. But it is still

in the same character. Change of clime, so to speak, makes no difference. The glory is still full of grace and truth, the glory "as of the only begotten of the Father." Jesus sees a man blind from his birth; but He is "the light of the world." And Jesus afterwards finds him cast out, but takes him up for eternity.

I know not that anything can more thoroughly assure the heart of a sinner of his interest in the Son of God than all this. No resistance prevails, no temptation. Nothing can force Him, nothing withdraw Him from His purpose to bless them for a single moment. That glory, and that only which suits their necessities, breaks forth on every occasion in which we see Jesus acting, urging its way through every hindrance, and retiring from every distraction. What intimates fixedness of purpose like this? If you see a man going on with his work, undaunted by opposition and undiverted by allurements, what need we more to know the singleness and decision of his soul? And such is "the Son of the Father" in this action. In the glory that suits the need of sinners He shines, and in that only, be the medium that would obscure it as thick as it may, or the solicitation that would distract it as flattering as it may.

Oh, precious, saving grace! How does all

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this, in other language, tell us that God has found it more blessed to give than to receive! Jesus was "the Word made flesh," "God manifest in the flesh"; and had He pleased, as these chapters show us, He might have received the praises of men, the admiration of the world, the crown of the kingdom. But He passes all by, fixed on the one purpose of carrying blessing to poor sinners in the fulness of grace and truth.

A Religion of Persons and Facts.

I look upon it as a divine mercy and great goodness that Christianity is a religion of Persons and facts. It is more real, more simple, more divine; deeper, yet more accessible. God became a Man! I have not ideas in man's mind about Him, but I have HIMSELF. It is not what love is in my mind, but GOD who is love. So even atonement: it is not a questionable reconciliation in abstract possibilities, but expiation wrought by love. Yet the principles in relationship with God by these facts are so deep and immense that they absorb (especially when He is not really known) the facts in which they are verified.

The Progressive Development of Truth.

WHETHER in the Person of Christ or in the communications of the Holy Ghost (Christ's life being, in one way or other, the light of men), the truth shines out in the living manifestation of God, and in its living application to men; and also, according to the wisdom of God, it is connected with the progressive development inherent to truth when communicated to man, and adapted to the especial wants and to the spiritual capacities of the men to whom it was addressed.

It must be clearly understood that I speak here of the truth revealed in the New Testament. Its communication, *in this revelation*, became gradually more clear, the Holy Ghost having been given after the Lord was glorified. The apostle could say, when speaking of the nature of God Himself, "Which thing is true in Him (Christ) and in you, because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth."

It is a Christ who is the wisdom of God. In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. All the fulness was pleased to dwell in Him. He sanctified Himself that we might be sanctified through the truth. The Holy Ghost, having taken the things of Christ, and revealed them unto the

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apostles, led them into all truth. Now all things that the Father hath are Christ's: therefore He has said that the Holy Ghost should take of His, and should shew it unto them.

This being the case, the question of a subsequent development is judged. Is there anything more than "the fulness of the Godhead"? anything more than "all that the Father hath"? anything clearer than the "true light"? But it is this which is revealed. If one thinks of man, whose ideas originate in himself, as the spider spins a web out of its own substance, development may no doubt be spoken of; but if the question is the revelation of Christ, by the gift of the true light already come, Christ does not increase. And assuredly we shall find nothing good outside "all that the Father hath given Him."

This is what we possess by revelation. The development inherent in the communication of truth to man belongs to his capacity of reception (in this there is progress for each one of us), and to the manifestation of Christ, from the time of John the Baptist unto His full revelation by the Holy Ghost, a revelation which we possess in the New Testament.

No tradition can add to the revelation of that which Christ is. No development can

give us one new truth with respect to His fulness. But this is everything. It is thus that the lofty pretensions of man are brought to nothing.

Crossing the Jordan.

READ JOSHUA III. 9-17.

IN order to get a clear understanding of the instruction connected with Israel's crossing the Jordan, we must endeavour to divest ourselves of the commonly received idea that it is a type of the Christian's experience in the article of death.

The mistake has most likely arisen from not seeing that the gospel brings to us a present salvation, and that each believer is spoken of in the Scriptures as one who "HATH everlasting life," and "*is passed* from death unto life" (John v. 24). From not seeing this, some think of death as before them instead of behind them, and that which they have "passed from."

Hence some speak of daily "dipping their foot in Jordan," that is, being daily exercised about death. A friend of mine once visited a sick Christian, who was much distressed about how she could "cross the Jordan"; and we have heard of others who commonly speak of death as "crossing the Jordan."

The fact is that we who believe are, in

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Christ, delivered from death, and made partakers of a risen life, by the death and resurrection of Christ. The blood of Jesus has removed the sting of death, and though we may fall asleep in Jesus, it is not death, strictly speaking; for Jesus said, "If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death" (John viii. 51). That Israel's crossing the Jordan cannot refer to this is clear, because when they crossed the river they began to fight; whereas, when we "sleep in Jesus" all our fighting is over; we put off our battle garments for ever; we exchange a helmet for a crown, and our conflict for rest.

But what does this scene at Jordan mean? It means that deliverance from death and that spiritual resurrection which we have now, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Our state by nature is that of being dead in trespasses and sins, children of wrath, exposed to death and judgment. But God, in marvellous grace, quickens (or makes alive) dead ones; and those who are so quickened are made nigh to God, delivered from death and from the wrath to come; they have been quickened together, raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Israel's crossing the Jordan therefore sets before us the blessed doctrine that God's children have died with Christ, have been buried with Christ, are risen with Christ, and made

to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Thus we are, as to position, in heavenly places, while actually we are walking in an evil world. But let us now look more particularly at the scripture before us.

1. ISRAEL'S STATE was one of helplessness. Moreover, the fear of death filled their minds; for Jordan with overflowing banks was between them and the promised land. They could not see how they could enter into their much desired inheritance. And is not this exactly what all feel whose consciences are roused to consider their eternal state? They cannot think of heaven, and glory, and fulness of joy, without feeling that they are exposed to death; and they seem to view glory afar off, and know not how to reach it. Their consciences accuse them of sin against God, and they fear death as the consequence: "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. v. 12). They recoil from death, and tremble at its expectation. A death-bed scene makes them quiver, because they dread it for themselves. No one can write or speak on such a solemn subject without the greatest seriousness; yet if the truth of God assures me that Christ has abolished death, and delivered me from it, ought I not to be at peace? Death abases man's pride, it prostrates in the dust earth's most honoured sons, it brings down man's loftiest thoughts, and hurls into oblivion all

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his vain pretensions. Man's inventions and appliances are made to meet almost every other requirement; but in regard to "the king of terrors," as he calls death, he is obliged to content himself with perfuming or smoothing a dying pillow, and garnishing the grave: but death he must bow to: death Christ only has overcome. It is death and judgment that men dread, because conscience accuses; for they have no hope, and are without God in the world.

2. NOW look at GOD'S WAY OF DELIVERANCE. God showed by this that He could bring His people through death and into resurrection. It is the voice of Jesus in Old Testament times that here says, "I am the Resurrection, and the Life" (John xi. 25). Joshua said unto the children of Israel, "Come hither, and hear the words of the Lord your God. . . . Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you. . . . Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan. Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man; and it shall come to pass, that as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above, and they shall stand upon an heap."

Thus we see that the waters of judgment

fled before the ark of the covenant, “a new and living way” was made for the people, and they were delivered from death and its terrors, and at once enabled to enter the land. It was all of God, His wisdom, His power, His grace; and is a vivid illustration of the well-known text, “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. ii. 8, 9).

On referring to the construction of the ark in Exodus xxv., and its use as recorded in Numbers x. 33, we cannot fail to recognize that Christ is prefigured by it. As the ark of the covenant, “going before into Jordan, and resting in the waters of Jordan,” made the way for Israel to enter the land, so it was by Jesus, going into death that He destroyed death, and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and delivered “them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. ii. 14, 15). Does not this clearly show that we have deliverance from death only by the death of Christ? Oh, how blessed is the remembrance of the fact, that the holy and spotless Jesus went into the cold waters of death for us, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God! It is the death of Christ alone that removes the sting of death from us, and enables us to find access with confidence into the presence of God.

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3. CROSSING THE JORDAN we may look upon as the action of faith on God's way of deliverance. Believing that the living God had made this way, this living way, into the land, they "all passed clean over." Their eyes rested on the ark in the river for them, and the wondrous power of that ordinance in delivering from the waters of death, and opening the way into the land. They beheld the liquid wall on the one hand, that the waters failed on the other, "the ark of the covenant" being in the midst, and a straight path made for them to pass over dry shod. Thus they were inspired with confidence, all fear and doubt were removed, and onward they went according to the word of the Lord, and quickly planted their feet upon their promised inheritance, the land flowing with milk and honey.

And so it is now. It is a believing view of the death of Christ, the knowledge of His having died for us; of the curse, and wrath, and death, which we deserved, having fallen on Him instead of us; that He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification; thus seeing the wondrous love of God in providing such a Saviour, and accomplishing such a work for us, that fills us with confidence, delivers us from guilt and fear, and enables us to find rest and peace in the holiest of all, in the presence of God Himself. Knowing that the risen Jesus has entered into

heaven itself with His own blood, now to appear before the face of God for us, we follow Him in there by faith, and know our blessed liberty as blood-washed worshippers in His presence.

It is most important for the believer to see that he not only has forgiveness of sins, but that he is risen with Christ, and belongs to the heavenlies; that he is a partaker of the heavenly calling, a heaven-born, heaven-bound son, having life, resurrection-life, and, by the Holy Ghost, union with the glorified Son of man, a member of Christ's body, of His flesh and of His bones. Not like the earthly people of Israel, who were called from Egypt to an earthly land of promise; but called from a state of death in trespasses and sins to heavenly places, an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. The blood of our sacrifice not sprinkled again and again on a brazen altar, but presented once and for ever in heaven itself. Not having a dying priest to minister in an earthly sanctuary, but having a High Priest for ever in heaven to make intercession for us. Thus we are not of the world, but, knowing its doom, and that the earth and all things therein will be burned up, we find our peace and blessing in heaven, inside the veil, and that "our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." These things, known

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in the soul by the teaching of the Holy Ghost as God's eternal truth, answer a thousand perplexing questions, and plainly mark out for us a path of heavenly mindedness in a self-seeking, Christ-rejecting world.

4. Lastly, let us look at ISRAEL IN THE LAND. We are repeatedly told that they clean passed over, and the waters again returned to their place as before, which facts speak solemn and comforting lessons to our hearts. The people now lived in the promised land. God gave it to them, and now brought them into it dry shod. They were no longer in the desert of drought and barrenness, but in the land flowing with milk and honey, where grapes and pomegranates abounded. The way which God brought them was never to be forgotten; therefore they were to "take twelve stones out of the middle of Jordan, and carry them over with them into the place where they lodged, for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever . . . and they are there unto this day"; so that ages and generations to come should know the exceeding goodness of God to them. (Compare Josh. iv. 4-24 with Eph. ii. 7.) And so in ages to come the Church shall be to the praise and glory of God, for His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. We shall ever remember the cross. It is the death of Christ we specially remember in the Lord's Supper; we "show

the Lord's death till He come." We do not keep the Lord's Supper in order to be saved, but we do it in remembrance of Him, by whose stripes we are healed, by whose death we have life.

We may notice, too, that the people of Israel, when in the land, were circumcised according to the Lord's command. This teaches us that a realization of our heavenly calling and standing in Christ will be connected with self-judgment, and practically putting off the old man and his deeds; we shall reckon ourselves to have died unto sin, and to be alive unto God through Jesus Christ. Hence heavenly worship and rejoicing in Christ Jesus will be associated with having no confidence in the flesh. Circumcision was not practised in the wilderness, which shows us typically that trials and necessities do not give us power over self; hence those Christians who are pressed down with the cares and difficulties of the way will have little power to keep under the flesh; whereas those who know the portion which "perfect love" has given them in a risen and ascended Saviour will judge the flesh to be unfit for God's service, and as unclean in its moral or religious actings as in its grosser workings. We may be assured that abiding in Christ in heavenly places is the secret of true humility.

The people also kept the passover; and oh,

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with what rejoicing they must have celebrated it! (chapter v. 10). They must have valued the blood of the lamb more than ever, when they remembered where it had brought them, as well as what it had delivered them from. And who estimates the redeeming love of God, and the unutterable preciousness of the blood of Christ, like those who know it, as not only blotting out their sins, but as enabling them to enter with boldness into the holiest of all!

We further notice that the manna ceased, and "the people did eat of the old corn in the land" (chapter v. 11, 12). This is very significant. In days of wilderness experience the people were fed by that which came down from heaven; but when in the land they fed and lived upon that which sprung up from the corn of wheat that died. So now those who may be trusting in the blood of the Lamb, who have merely a wilderness experience, will be sustained by the limited, though most blessed, thought of Christ having descended; but those who know their full deliverance from death, and standing in life and righteousness in heavenly places in Christ, find their joy and strength in the blessed knowledge, that "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things" (Eph. iv. 10). They live on resurrection food, on Christ

risen, Christ exalted, Christ the abolisher of death, Christ crowned with glory and honour, Christ our Sacrifice and Priest now in the presence of God for us, Christ our Lord, Head, righteousness, and life, Christ soon coming to take us unto Himself, that where He is, there we may be also.

But though God gave them the land, and brought them there, they had to fight the fight of faith to keep it. So we have to "put on the whole armour of God" to maintain the consciousness and joy of our heavenly standing. Satan and his host only consult to cast us down from our excellency, and we need divine strength, and divine armour, to wrestle with principalities and powers, to enable us to maintain in our souls our conscious standing in the blessing God has given us and brought us into in Christ Jesus in heavenly places (see Eph. vi.).

The wilderness and Canaan prefigure the two parts of Christian life: patience in the world under the hand of God, who is leading us; and victory in our combats with Satan, in order to enjoy, and to cause others to enjoy, spiritual privileges.

Studies on the Book of Daniel.

XIX.—CHAPTER XII.

IN reading this chapter one is struck with the particular character of the book, and more especially with the care which God evinces to comfort, or rather to shew the most entire sympathy with the remnant, in the afflicting circumstances in which they are found.

It is certain that Daniel still remained in captivity at Babylon (which, it appears, he never left), when the remnant had returned to Jerusalem. So that typically he far more represents the state of the people in captivity under the Gentiles, than the prophet of the people when God was acknowledging them.*

It is quite true that the remnant will escape at last; but this Daniel saw afar off. He represents specially the suffering remnant, and the sympathies of God with them. We find in other prophets, as Isaiah and Zechariah, magnificent promises for this remnant to whom the Lord will reveal Himself, when Christ has appeared: He shall make "the house of Judah" "as His goodly horse in the battle," and "he that is feeble among you shall be as

* It is worthy of remark that, in the prophets of the first captivity, God by the Spirit never calls Israel "My people": He declares they shall be, and the Spirit remains among them as when they came up out of Egypt; but "Loammi" remains unrecalled.

David'' (Zech. x. 3;-xii. 8). There we see the power of God in manifestation among the people at Jerusalem; but it is not so in Daniel. The last thing we see here relative to Jerusalem is that the king of the north "plants his tabernacles in the glorious holy mountain." There is no detail in this book of the subsequent full and remarkable deliverance; but it is rather occupied with the Jewish remnant in the land, beaten by the tempest of the Gentile monarchies.

Upon the other hand, there is still the sympathy of God with them; but He is not with His people after an evident manner; for they are still in captivity; and it is rather an intervention of providence, in a hidden way, which delivers and secures, in the midst of trials and difficulties. Compare Ps. xlv. 10, 11, where this state of things is described.

"And at that time shall Michael stand up," etc.; he appears to be the prince of the angels, or *the archangel* (v. 1). It is a custom to speak of *archangels*, but the Word of God mentions only *one*, the chief of the angels. I am silent as to who it is, because the Scripture is; but however this may be, the intervention is a providential angelic one. Michael is there, in relationship with the people of Israel. By this passage we learn who it is that will stand for the children of Daniel's people, as well as the excellency of this an-

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gelic power which God in His providence employs : “ who standeth for the children of Thy people.”

It is a time of trouble, as we have seen, and herein consists the difference of God's acting, as I have just considered it. There is now a providence of God, which is a concealed government; but hereafter there will be a manifest and public rule by Christ, when everything will *appear*, a government direct from God. There is now a government of arrangement by which all things are made to “ work together for good to them that love God,” and for the accomplishment of His purposes; but this action is usually a concealed one. In Esther we have a remarkable instance. The name of God is not found in the book; the Spirit has wished to show that whilst the Jews were in captivity God had His eyes upon them, but that He acted in a hidden manner, and would not *name Himself* in their midst.

In the time of Michael it will be a time of distress. This is the second thought in the chapter, and it is the same in Jeremiah xxx. 7. There could be but one such time; none is to be like it: “ For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?” (Joel ii. 11). Nevertheless it is the day of deliverance for Israel. “ Strangers shall no more serve themselves of him : but they

shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king " (that is, Christ) . . . " but I will not leave thee altogether unpunished " (Jer. xxx. 8, 9, 11). These promises have evidently never yet had their fulfilment; for it will be a final deliverance.

The same time is alluded to in Matt. xxiv. 21 : " For there shall be great tribulation . . . and except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved," etc. This is the terrible distress which is to come upon Israel at the last. Consult also Mark xiii. 19 for the same account. It all occurs at Jerusalem, where the abomination of desolation will be set up, or in its vicinity. In Luke xxi. 22, 24, there is a certain difference, as we shall see presently.

" At that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book " (v. 1). These are the elect : the days are shortened on their account, otherwise no flesh would be saved. Jerusalem would have been as Sodom or as Gomorrah, except the Lord had left a very small remnant (Isa. i.; Rom. ix.).

" And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt " (v. 2). The angel, as it appears to me, speaks in this place of the deliverance of the people brought back from among the

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Gentiles : " Many of them," etc. It is only a question of the people of Daniel.* No doubt judgments will fall upon the Gentiles; but in speaking of those with whom God is more immediately occupied as the object of His thoughts, only the people of Danial are intended. I recall to your minds Dan. x. 14 : " For I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days." The fulfilment of this declaration is taken up in chapters x., xi., xii. " Many of them which sleep," namely, a multitude of Jews in general, but not all, will appear on the scene : as for some, it will be " to everlasting life "; and as to others, " to shame and everlasting contempt."

The expression " dust of the earth " is common in the writings of the prophets, when a person is in captivity and overwhelmed, as in Isaiah xxvi. 14. In pronouncing judgment upon the nations, the prophet says, " They are dead " (those who despised the Jews, " other lords besides Thee have had dominion

* It seems to me that these words are added to complete the picture : for the principal part of the prophecy is occupied with the details of that part of the people who are found in the land when the wicked one shall be in the exercise of his terrible and malicious power. But in this verse the lot of those who had been lost and were to be gathered from among the nations, is given to us. These only enter as accessory into the scheme of the prophecy : this portion of the people having been without the limits of the prophecy, not having entered into the land to figure as the Jewish people. It is for this reason that they are represented as " sleeping in the dust of the earth."

over us," v. 13); "they are deceased . . . therefore Thou hast visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish." But in v. 19, speaking of the Jews, he says, "Thy dead men shall live (together with) my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead." Here is the resurrection of the Jews. "Come, My people, enter into thy chambers . . . hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast" (this same indignation of which we have been speaking, v. 21). "For behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth" (v. 20).

God had been, so to speak, concealed; He had allowed the evil to go on. But, dear friends, think of God coming out of His place. What a thought! When we consider our inability to make head against wickedness; how Christians tremble at the sight of the increase of evil, hardly knowing what to do; while they see on the one hand the proud self-will of man, and on the other this unexpected and inexplicable tendency to superstition; the powers of darkness under this form having invaded even countries which were delivered from it, and who are trembling at it: I say, then it is precious, in face of all this, to know that *God will come out of His place.*

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True, it will be in anger for the moment, in anger against the wickedness, and to put it away ; but also that good may be before His face and before our eyes who are fatigued with what we behold. On this account we can bear the idea of judgment, and even cry, "How long?" And, oh ! how happy to think of an indignation which will change active evil into rest, blessing, peace, liberty, and freedom from the yoke of sin, as soon as the Lord Jesus shall have executed His judgment ! We are not now speaking of the Church (although this is the most precious part), but of this poor world labouring under the yoke of Satan. For even when good has been effected, evil gains ground on all sides.

The apostle could well say, "The whole creation groaneth." We understand (we who know the secret of the goodness of God) that it groans : "ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit," must "groan within ourselves," unless we should withdraw ourselves from the love of God, and from the groanings of the Spirit within us. And the more we observe the progress of evil the more we shall feel the need of this indignation of God, that His power may be felt in executing judgment in this world, and if faith is strong in our hearts it will engage us in helping out, by the activity of love, all those we can from this necessary judgment, whether this fearful

act is likely to fall on them owing to the natural energy of sin in their hearts, or from the superstitions and errors to which they are attached by education; for it will fall upon whatever seduces the heart, as it is said: "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins," etc. (Rev. xviii.). We see, then, that it is the judgment which will take away the power of evil, and for this it is, that the appeal is made to the saints, etc., in the Apocalypse, to rejoice in the destruction of Babylon. It will be a terrible judgment; but, until it happens, a poison, a venom, corrupts every thing, when even one's own self is withdrawn from it.

I have been led into this digression on the subject of the judgment of God on account of the ending of Isaiah xxvi., which I quoted, and to explain the application of the resurrection to the Jewish people. I will mention another passage in Ezekiel xxxvii., that as to the dry bones, which will help you to understand this point. It is often quoted as having reference to souls; and morally, no doubt, the same effect happens to those who are quickened of God; but the only subject of the chapter is the nation of Israel, and *not at all* souls: "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: Behold, they say [in captivity], Our bones are dried" (v. 11). This is not what dead souls say. "Therefore pro-

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phesy . . . Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel" (v. 12). The Israelites, when they return, are treated as if they had been buried among the nations. "And ye shall know that I am the Lord" (v. 13). It would be sad to remain there in the land, if it were a literal resurrection; for the hope of those who are literally raised is far higher.

The prophet continues with the history of the two sticks, Judah and Israel, which are to become one, when "one king shall be king to them all" (Ezek. xxxvii. 22). Nothing can be clearer than that the subject of the chapter is the deliverance and blessing of Israel by Jesus Christ. Daniel xii. also treats of Israel coming out of the graves (buried among the Gentiles); but it omits the final result under Christ. *Many*, it says, shall awake (not all); and of these some shall be for everlasting contempt, as some will be for eternal life. This part is added, as I said before, because the main concern of the prophecy was with the Holy Land, and the Jews residing there. But other Jews will be manifested in the times which precede the final deliverance of Israel; and the Spirit of God, consequently, speaks of these latter in this passage.

The contents of these first verses apply in

their results to the Jewish remnant, whose deliverance terminates that time of distress during which Michael stood fast, and delineates all that takes place during that period. It is the deliverance of the remnant and that of the people, all those written in the book.

But besides, among those who are delivered will be some who will be in the front of the battle, as being occupied with the things of God, and who will discern the times. Thus: "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." If you have paid attention to the preceding chapter, you will recognize these wise ones: they are a remnant who have been often mentioned; as in chapter xi. 35, "and some of them of understanding," etc., also "they that understand" (*maschilim*). It will be an enlightened remnant, persons who will discern the times, and who will occupy themselves with the welfare of the mass of the people, and that faithfully, according to the light they will possess: "And they that turn [*the*] many to righteousness"; or rather, "instructed the many in righteousness"; this was the object of their labours.

There is no thought about evangelizing, nor of those who are blessed through evangelizing.

God's Call out of the Earth.

IN the midst of the increased and still growing corruption of the whole scene around us, and of the threatened dissolving of all things, it is much laid upon one's mind to consider with simplicity and clearness the character of our calling.

The call of God out of the earth, and God's assertion of title to the earth, are things that greatly differ, and should be morally and practically distinguished by the saints.

The call of God proceeds on the principle that God Himself is outside the earth, and that He is not seeking it, but seeking a people to be His in His place outside and above it. The earth, therefore, by this call, is left just as it was. For it is a stranger to the purpose of God.

This call of God out of the earth was exhibited in the family of Seth, before the Flood. Cain's family were in possession of the earth; and Seth does not interfere with them. Not at all. All he and his generation have to do with the earth is to call on the name of the Lord while they are on it (not to engrave, like Cain, their own name there, Gen. iv. 17), and then to lay their dead bodies in it.

So was it exhibited afterwards in Abraham. He is called of God. But such call leaves the Canaanites without a rival. He does not contend with the potsherds of the earth. He does

not dispute their right as lords of the soil. He desires only to pitch his wandering tent upon the face of it, or to lay his bones in the bowels of it.

And so the Church or heavenly family of this dispensation. Their call leaves the Gentiles in power. The Church has nothing to say to "the powers that be," but either to obey unreluctantly, or to suffer patiently, according as the demand made by the powers be such or not as involves their subjection to Christ.

This determines at once our *duties*. We render to the powers ordained of God their dues, without in any wise seeking to disturb them, knowing also that even if they behave themselves unrighteously, we are not constituted their judges.

But the character of our *service* is likewise determined by this call of God. Service to God is wanting in its true character, if it do not intimate that He is not now re-asserting His title to the earth; or, in other words, our service to Christ must be to Him as the *rejected* Christ. For such a One He is all the time He remains in the "far country." The cry has followed Him there from the earth, "We will not have this Man to reign over us." And is that cry to be answered by the servants who occupy their talents during His absence? Surely not. They

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serve Him all the time in the patient sense of His rejection . . .

In like manner, moreover, this determines what our *habits* should be. Our habits should tell that the earth is not *our place*, as our *services* should tell that it is not *our Lord's* place. This affords a holy and serious admonition to our souls.

Our call does not connect us with the earth. Our necessities do so, it is true. We need the fruit of the ground, the toil of the hand, and the skill of the heart, to provide things needful for the body. Our necessities thus connect us with the earth, and we may attend to it for the supply of such necessities. But our call does not connect us with it, but rather separates us from it.

To link the Church and the earth is acting at once on apostate principles. To aim at changing the character or condition of Christ in the world, or to serve Him *save as the rejected One*, is not service rendered in spiritual discernment.

These things we may know well, and admit easily. But if we refuse to link *the Church* with the world, are we daily watching to refuse to link *the heart* with it, the *hopes* with it, the *calculations of the mind* with it? If it be easy to see the Church now on the eve of losing the world, and to see this without regret, is it alike easy to see our interests losing it, our

name and distinction losing it? Such a one was Paul. He would not reign as king yet; but he had learnt how to have and how to want, how to abound and how to suffer need.

In God's dealing by Israel there was an assertion of title to the earth. Joshua went into "the possession of the Gentiles" and took with him "the ark of the Lord of all the earth," that his sword might make it the possession of the Lord and His people. But Paul went into the possessions of Jews and Gentiles, not to disturb their tenure of anything there, but to take out of them a people unto God, to link souls with the disallowed Stone, and to teach them that their blessings were spiritual and heavenly.

So according to the Lord's teaching in the two parables in Luke xix., xx. In settling Israel, the Lord gave them a vineyard, *a portion of the earth*, and told them to till it for Him, rendering Him dues as the Lord of the soil. In settling the saints of this age, He gave them talents, *such gifts and opportunities of service as were suited to the fact of His absence and rejection by the world*, having no estate or kingdom here till He should return. Practically to forget such distinctions, or to act on the principle that the Church is God's instrument for asserting His claim to the earth, is apostasy from her calling of God.

In His ministry the Lord was judging

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Satan, but refusing to judge the sinner. And, according to this, at the end of His ministry, He tells Peter to put up the sword; and Pilate, that His servants could not fight. The way of His saints is to be according to all this. They are to judge morally or spiritually (that is, defilements within themselves), but not contend about the interests of the world. The apostle condemns those at Corinth for not doing the one, and for doing the other; with this difference however: their duty in the *first* matter is peremptory; their way in the second is left more and more to their measure of grace (1 Cor. v., vi.).

And according to this also the apostle tells us that our weapons are not carnal but spiritual, our warfare not with flesh and blood but with spiritual wickedness (2 Cor. x., Eph. vi.). We are really or spiritually defeated when we fight carnally; for the devil has raised in us that temper which has sent us forth to the carnal fight.

In order to make progress in spiritual life we must study the Lord Jesus, whether in the grace of His Person, in the circumstances of His life, or in the glorious position which He has near the Father, and which we shall by and by share with Him.

Jesus in Company with a Religious Man and a Sinner.

READ LUKE VII. 36-50.

THIS brief narrative records the ways of Jesus when in company with a sinner, a religious man (Simon the Pharisee), and others who sat at meat with Him.

The circumstances were very simple. The Pharisee, like religious people in our own day, had a certain respect for one who had the reputation of being a prophet, or a teacher sent from God. Jesus was therefore an object of interest to him, though he knew Him not as the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners. It is lamentable how many seem to make the Lord, or even the Bible, a matter of *interest*, instead of being a matter of *salvation*.

The Pharisee had invited the Lord to eat with him; and as He came, not to judge the world, but to save, He accordingly went. While there, a notoriously wicked woman came into the house, and, among all the guests, her heart singled out the Lord as the One who alone could meet her need. She cast herself down at His feet behind Him, and it was evident that her soul-distress was very considerable.

This fact was enough to appeal loudly to the *conscience* of the religious Pharisee. He was surprised at his guest allowing a woman of that character to *touch* Him; so that he really

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began to suspect whether he had not been estimating Him too highly in thinking Him to be a prophet. Thus was the way opened for the Lord of glory to set forth, in the presence of them all, the blessed testimony of divine *grace*, the grace of God which bringeth salvation; and to manifest the fact that He came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Simon little thought that his guest was the Son of God. Little either did he suspect that his heart and conscience were laid bare to the eyes of Him whom he had desired to eat with him. The Pharisee feared to tell out his thoughts; but “ *he spake within himself*, saying, This man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him; for she is a sinner ” (v. 39).

Yes, *he spake within himself*; but the Lord searches the heart. He can read the inmost thought. All is naked to His eye; and He declares that *every* imagination of the thoughts of man’s *heart* is *only* evil, and that *continually* (Gen. vi. 5). Such is man before the eye of God: only and continually evil. But Simon, like many others, thought himself righteous, and therefore he despised this sinful woman; he was evidently grieved to see her in his house, and was astonished that his guest should have allowed such a person to

touch Him. He marvelled how Jesus could welcome such a sinner; and it is a wonder to unbelieving hearts still, because they think that it is religious or good people that Christ embraces; and they do not believe the blessed fact, that Christ died for the ungodly, and that He saves sinners, guilty, hell-deserving sinners.

How does the Lord meet these unbelieving and self-righteous thoughts of the blind Pharisee?

In perfect wisdom, gentleness, and kindness He says, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on."

And then, if I mistake not, He draws a portrait of both the sinner and the Pharisee as an appeal to this self-righteous conscience. "A certain creditor had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both."

As much as to say, Suppose, then, that it is true that this woman is an open transgressor of God's laws, and that her flagrant sins are manifest, so that she is considered ten times as great a violater of right principles as some others; and call her a five hundred pence debtor; and then suppose that little can be said of Simon as to outward misconduct; suppose even that his transgressions against outward morality are few, and seldom repeated,

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so that he is only a fifty pence debtor; still, the fact is, that whether the debt be little or much, both are so thoroughly bankrupt as to have nothing whatever to pay their creditor's demand.

This is most important; because it is not now a question of a person being a great sinner, or a little sinner; the question is, Are your sins forgiven? How can you meet God on the judgment of your sins? for you are in debt, and cannot pay. The answer is, that God is the God of all grace, and frankly, unasked, proclaims forgiveness in pity and mercy, because you cannot pay any portion of the debt yourself. This is grace; God in rich mercy forgiving sins, and justly so too, on the ground of the atoning death of His beloved Son. "Christ died for the ungodly." He "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (Rom. v. 6; 1 Pet. iii. 18).

Then the Lord appeals to Simon as to which would love the forgiving creditor most; for the prostrate woman was lavishing, as it were, the love of her grateful heart over the sacred feet of her newly found Saviour.

To this question he answered, "I suppose he to whom he forgave most." This is clear enough: hence the Saviour said, "Thou hast rightly judged."

The principles of divine grace and truth

being thus laid down, the application follows; and the Lord (having drawn a portrait showing each person guilty and undone before God, alike in need, alike dependent on the free mercy of God), now brings out the difference between a soul that apprehends Him as the Saviour of sinners, and one who, however religious, knows Him not. How wonderfully skilful was this perfect Preacher in using the truth! Simon indeed needed to be awakened to a sense of his guilt, and the hollowness of his religious pretensions; the woman needed to be comforted, and filled with that joy and peace which the Saviour brought for broken-hearted, sin-convicted people.

He turns then to the woman, but still addresses the Pharisee. Directing Simon's attention to the woman, He says, "I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet"; that is, you have not even shown me a common mark of respect and attention: "but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss," did not salute me with an ordinary mark of affection: "but since I came in she hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My *head* with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my *feet* with ointment."

Thus the blessed Lord shows Simon how much there was in the ways of this despised,

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sinful woman superior to himself, and, as He afterwards teaches, the spring of all is love, the fruit of a heart moved with gratitude to the Lord. Because of deep-felt need, she clung to Him as the only Saviour, and knew that none other could make her crimson sins white as wool.

She had found Him. Her soul had been longing after personal dealing with this Friend of sinners; and, now she had found Him, she counted Him worthy of the costliest service; anointed, bathed His feet with tears of grateful love; wiped them with the hairs of her head; and then anointed them with the precious ointment she had brought. Her love was the fruit of the forgiveness of her *many* sins. She therefore loved much. Hence Jesus added, "Wherefore I say unto *thee*, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for *she loved much*: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little" (v. 47).

But further. The Lord thus far has only addressed Himself to Simon. The woman seems to have been all this time lying at His feet. She must be comforted, and learn from the Lord Himself that her filthiness is cleansed, her iniquity pardoned. For this reason Jesus said to her, "Thy sins *are* forgiven."

Nor is this all; for He again addresses Himself to her: "Thy faith hath *saved* thee; go in *peace*." So that we have here three present

blessings of eternal importance : (1) Present forgiveness of sins ; (2) present salvation ; (3) present peace.

If we had met this woman the next day, and said to her, "Are your sins forgiven? are you saved?" what would have been her reply? "Yes, I have forgiveness; I am saved." And then, if asked, "Are you quite sure that your sins are forgiven?" would she not have said, "Yes, quite sure, because the Saviour told me so; and *His word* can never fail!"

It is present peace, present forgiveness, present salvation, that so many are denying in our day. They say that we cannot know these things till we come to die. But we have seen what the Lord taught; and there are many more Scripture testimonies to the same effect; and the Scripture cannot be broken. The Lord certainly gave this woman the fullest warrant for taking her stand as a *saved* person, and that, too, in the way of *faith*. "Thy *faith* hath *saved* thee."

It was not her tears, the ointment, or anything else that saved, blessed fruits as they were; but Jesus alone is the Saviour, and those who accept Him are perfectly secure. It was not doctrines about Christ, or religious duties, or prayers, or anything else, but CHRIST HIMSELF to whom she had clung, and had known as her very own Saviour. It was

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Himself, the Son who came forth from the Father, whom she made her refuge, and in whom alone her confidence rested.

Blessed sample of simple faith! Blessed testimony, too, of the reality of present forgiveness of sins, present salvation, and present peace; leaving no room for fear or doubt, or a moment's misgiving, as to the security of that soul whose simple trust is in the Lord Jesus, the Saviour of lost guilty sinners.

But those who sat at meat with Him were extremely offended. Man hates grace. He cannot bear to hear of the free unmerited love of God. "Who is this," they said within themselves, "that forgiveth sins also?"

Yes, who is this? That has always been the question, and so it is still. "Who is this?"

Listen to the Baptist's witness: "Behold the Lamb of God"; to Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God"; to Paul's preaching, "The Son of God, Jesus Christ"; to John's record, "This is the true God"; to the Father's voice from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

He was in the world, the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace

and truth.” And so He said, “ I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world : again I leave the world, and go to My Father.”

He fulfilled the purpose of His coming by dying upon the cross to save sinners, and “ after He had offered one sacrifice for sins [He] for ever sat down on the right hand of God : from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool ” (Heb. x. 12, 13).

Observe three things in Leviticus xvi. : (1) the blood presented to God in the holiest ; (2) the sanctuary and tabernacle and altar cleansed by the blood from defilement ; (3) the iniquities of the children of Israel confessed over the scapegoat.

To these correspond : (1) Christ gone by His own blood into heaven, where God dwells in inaccessible light ; (2) this world in relationship with God, where Christ suffered ; our altar of burnt-offering, where we find our Saviour in His sacrifice the ground of reconciling all things ; (3) sins confessed and borne by the great Substitute, which literally belongs to the (Jewish) people beholding Him come forth (from heaven) at the end of the age ; but of course true of us (believers) now.

Epaphras ; or, The Service of Prayer.

(COL. IV. 12).

THERE is a very striking difference between the inspired records of the people of God, and all human biographies. The former may truly be said to be "*much in little*," while many of the latter may as truly be said to be "*little in much*."

The history of one of the Old Testament saints, a history stretching over a period of 365 years, is summed up in three short clauses : " Enoch walked with God ; and he was not ; for God took him " (Gen. v. 24). How brief ! but yet how full ; how comprehensive ! How many volumes would man have filled with the record of such a life ? And yet what more could he have said ?

To walk with God comprehends all that could possibly be said of anyone. A man may travel round the globe ; he may preach the gospel in every clime ; he may suffer in the cause of Christ ; he may feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick ; he may read, write, print, and publish ; in short, he may do all that man ever could or did do ; and yet it may all be summed up in that brief clause, he " walked with God."

And right well will it be for him if it can be so summed up. One may do nearly all that has been enumerated and yet never walk

with God one hour; yea, he may not even know the meaning of a walk with God. The thought of this is deeply solemnizing and practical. It should lead us to the earnest cultivation of the hidden life, without which the most showy services will prove to be but mere flash and smoke.

There is something peculiarly touching in the mode in which the name of Epaphras is introduced to our notice in the New Testament. The allusions to him are very brief but very pithy. He seems to have been the very stamp of man which is so much needed at the present moment. His labours, so far as the inspired penman has recorded them, do not seem to have been very showy or attractive. They were not calculated to meet the human eye or elicit human praise. But oh! they were most precious labours, peerless, priceless labours. They were the labours of the closet, labours within the closed door, labours in the sanctuary, labours without which all beside must prove barren and worthless.

He is not placed before us by the sacred biographer as a powerful preacher, a laborious writer, a great traveller, which he may have been, and which are all truly valuable in their place. The Holy Ghost, however, has not told us that Epaphras was any one of the three; but then, my reader, He has placed this singularly interesting person before us in a man-

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ner calculated to stir the very depths of our moral and spiritual being. He has presented him to us as *a man of prayer*, earnest, fervent, agonizing prayer; prayer, not for himself, but for others. Let us hearken to the inspired testimony.

“ Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently ” (agonizing) “ for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis ” (Col. iv. 12, 13).

Such was Epaphras! Would there were hundreds like him in this our day! We are thankful for preachers, thankful for writers, thankful for travellers in the cause of Christ; but we want men of prayer, men of the closet, men like Epaphras. We are happy to see men on their feet, preaching Christ; happy to see them able to ply the pen of a ready writer in the noble cause; happy to see them making their way, in the true evangelistic spirit, into “ the regions beyond ”; happy to see them, in the true pastoral spirit, going again and again to visit their brethren in every city. God forbid we should undervalue or speak disparagingly of such honourable services; yea, we prize them more highly than words could convey.

But then at the back of all we want a spirit of prayer, fervent, agonizing, persevering prayer. Without this nothing can prosper. A prayerless man is a sapless man. A prayerless preacher is a profitless preacher. A prayerless writer will send forth barren pages. A prayerless evangelist will do but little good. A prayerless pastor will have but little food for the flock. We want men of prayer, men like Epaphras, men whose closet walls witness their agonizing labours. These are unquestionably the men for the present moment.

There are immense advantages attending upon the labours of the closet, advantages quite peculiar, advantages for those who engage in them, and advantages for those who are the subjects of them. They are quiet, unobtrusive labours. They are carried on in retirement, in the hallowed, soul-subduing solitude of the divine presence, outside the range of mortal vision. How little would the Colossians have known of the loving, earnest labours of Epaphras had the Holy Ghost not mentioned them! It is possible that some of them might have deemed him deficient in zealous care on their behalf. It is probable that there were persons then, as there are now, who would measure a man's care or sympathy by his visits or letters.

This would be a false standard. They should see him on his knees, to know the

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amount of his care and sympathy. A love of travel *might* take me from London to Edinburgh to visit the brethren. A love of scribbling might lead me to write letters by every mail. Nought save a love for souls, a love for Christ, could ever lead me to agonize as Epaphras did on behalf of the people of God, "that they may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."

Again, the precious labours of the closet demand no special gift, no peculiar talents, no pre-eminent mental endowments. Every Christian can engage in them. A man may not have the ability to preach, teach, write or travel; but every man can pray.

One sometimes hears of a *gift* of prayer. It is not a pleasant expression. It falls gratingly on the ear. It often means a mere fluent utterance of certain known truths which the memory retains and the lips give forth. This is poor work to be at.

This was not the way with Epaphras. This is not what we want and long for just now. We want a real *spirit* of prayer. We want a spirit that enters into the present need of the Church, and bears that need in persevering, fervent, believing intercession before the throne of grace. This spirit may be exercised at all times and under all circumstances. Morning, noon, eventide, or midnight will answer for the closet labourer. The heart can

spring upward to the throne in prayer and supplication at any time.

Our Father's ear is ever open; His presence chamber is ever accessible. Come when or with what we may, God is always ready to hear, to answer. He is the Hearer, the Answerer, the Lover of importunate prayer. There are no accents He likes better than, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." He Himself has said, "Ask," "Seek," "Knock"; "Men ought *always* to pray, and not to faint"; "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing ye shall receive"; "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God."

These words are of universal application. They are intended for all God's children. The feeblest child of God can pray, can watch, can get an answer, and return thanks.

Furthermore, nothing is so calculated to give one a deep interest in people as the habit of praying constantly for them. Epaphras would be intensely interested in the Christians at Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis. His interest made him pray, and his prayers made him interested. The more we are interested for anyone the more we shall pray for him, and the more we pray the more interested we become. Whenever we are drawn out in prayer for people, we are sure to rejoice in their growth and prosperity.

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So also in reference to the unconverted. When we are led to wait on God about them, their conversion is looked for with the deepest anxiety, and hailed, when it comes, with unfeigned thankfulness. The thought of this should stir us up to imitate Epaphras, on whom the Holy Ghost has bestowed the honourable epithet of "a servant of Christ," in connection with his fervent prayers for the people of God.

Finally, the highest inducement that can be presented to cultivate the spirit of Epaphras is the fact of its being so directly in unison with the spirit of Christ. This is the most elevated motive. Christ is engaged in behalf of His people. He desires that they should "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God"; and those who are led forth in prayer in reference to this object, are privileged to enjoy high communion with the great Intercessor. How marvellous that poor feeble creatures down here should be permitted to pray about that which engages the thoughts and interests of the Lord of glory! What a powerful link there was between the heart of Epaphras and the heart of Christ, when the former was labouring fervently for his brethren at Colosse!

Christian reader, let us ponder the example of Epaphras. Let us imitate it. Let us fix our eye upon some Colosse or other, and labour

ferverently in prayer for the Christians therein. The present is a deeply solemn moment. It makes us feel our urgent need of men like Epaphras, men who are willing to labour on their knees for the cause of Christ, or to wear, if it should be so, the noble bonds of the gospel. Such was Epaphras. The first notice we have of him is as a man of prayer, and the last notice of him is as a companion in bonds with the devoted apostle of the Gentiles (Col. iv. 12; Philemon 23).

May the Lord stir up amongst us a spirit of earnest prayer and intercession. May He raise up many of those who shall be cast in the same spiritual mould as Epaphras. These are the men for the crisis.

It is a great comfort that in looking at Christ I not only *see* the thing I ought to be, but I *get* the thing I ought to be. "We all with open face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." There is real growth there; not in fitness and acceptance, but in likeness to Christ; and it ought to be growth every instant.

Studies on the Book of Daniel.

XX. CHAPTER XII.

THE prophet is speaking solely of those Jews who shall be engaged in the instruction of the mass of the people, with a view of withdrawing them from the deceitful ways of Antichrist, and from all the evil which he will carry on. Those who have thus laboured among *the many*, will shine “as the stars for ever and ever.” This special remnant is mentioned, as before said, in Isaiah lxxv., lxxvi.* These are the closing circumstances of the remnant; namely, this time of distress; the people delivered, that is, the remnant; many who were buried, as it were, among the nations, who shall awake, whether for good or evil; and the special lot of the understanding ones.

There is still, at the end of the chapter, the reply to the question of Daniel as to the duration of these things, of which the solution for the Jews was concealed until the time of the end. We are in the time of the end, for it is to be hoped that all will soon finish; but, in another sense, the Church is always in the time of the end, because the Church does not belong to the present age; as it is said: “As ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we

* Some little doubt has been thrown on my mind as to this.

know that it is the last time " (1 John ii. 18).

Now, seeing this, " they that be wise " will apply morally to the Church, so far as she preserves the place which the Word of God gives her; although she is not the direct object of the prophecy. The Church is supposed to know that the last days are arrived, and that the prophetic warnings are important, in order that that day overtake us not as a thief; for to be overtaken is not the proper portion of the Church. Compare 1 Thess. v. 4, etc., and Rev. iii. 3. And hence also in the Apocalypse (feeble as we are in the comprehension of it,) it is written: " Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand " (Rev. xxii. 10).

What is said to Daniel is exactly the reverse of the position of the Church, which, having an unction from the Holy One, knows all things. But in Daniel it is said: " Shut up the words, and seal the book to the time of the end " (v. 4). " And when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. And I heard, but I understood not. . . . And he said . . . The words are closed and sealed up till the time of the end . . . But the wise shall understand " (vv. 7, 9, 10).

Now, so to speak, the Church is the faithful remnant, for the Church commenced with the understanding remnant of the Jews: such was

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its beginning. Thus in the Apocalypse one is encouraged to hear and to keep the words of the book, and intelligence* is supposed among Christians.

“ And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be 1,290 days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the 1,335 days ” (v. 11).

There is something striking in this answer, as concerns the Jews. The Lord Jesus uses the same date, omitting these days added at the end: otherwise He gives the same point of departure. The date does not begin until the last half-week; because until then there is no event to furnish an epoch from which one can commence counting, the position being then also definite and decided. There is a previous half-week, during which the prince that shall come will be in covenant with the people at Jerusalem; but that which notably fixes the time of distress to the Jews (and this is the subject before us) is the abomination of desolation set up in the holy place at Jerusalem; and this is at the beginning of the last half-week.

This being the principal thing, I doubt

* We must distinguish between the intelligence of, and the application to oneself of, these prophecies, whatever the application may be. What was revealed to Abraham concerned Lot.

whether there is any doubt whatever in the Word as to the general course of the prophecy, or for the time which elapses between the rejection of Jesus and His return. That there may have been events adapted to the prophetic facts, analogous in principle, during the interval, I do not doubt; and events most important to recognize in their moral features.

Many eminent Christians have sought to calculate these dates; but my conviction is that all these will be found wrong in the fact. Some have indicated 1844, and some 1847. I have made them myself in my time. It is not, then, to blame others that I say I do not think there is any basis for a true calculation: and I doubt whether the Lord has fixed any other date than that of the half-week of Daniel, when the abomination, etc., is set up.

The prophecy speaks of seventy weeks; but almost all Christians allow that these have passed, except the seventieth one, and that at the end of the sixty-ninth the Lord was upon earth. Moreover, the date of a time, times, and half a time, has reference entirely to Jerusalem; and it is not a period of years at all, but simply of days; for this date is given us at the end of the chapter, after the sacrifice has been taken away, and after the setting up of the abomination.

Now, the words of the Lord Himself afford a complete proof that it has no reference to

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centuries any more than to Christendom : for He speaks of a special time ; of certain persons in peculiar circumstances, interested in and occupied with what occurs at Jerusalem : of women with child ; of the time which it takes to flee to the mountains ; of the season of the year suiting that flight ; and of the Sabbath Day. Neither could we suppose that there would be signs in the sun during centuries, etc. It is of these things that Matt. xxiv. speaks as being identified with "the 1260 days," and "a time, and times, and half a time" (Rev. xii.).

I will just recall to your memories my previous division of Matt. xxiv. We must keep in mind the occasion of the reply of our Lord to His disciples. He had passed judgment on the Jewish people at the end of chapter xxiii : "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets," etc. . . . "for I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Here is a positive judgment passed, and upon the nation as such. There is no question of individuals ; for He does not say to individuals, "Ye shall not see Me." And so it must be the nation, or a remnant of it at least, and at a time yet to come, who will say to Jesus, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." The high priests themselves

have never said it; on the contrary, their language was, "Away with Him, crucify Him." The Lord had previously pronounced their judgment; but it is of the nation that He says, "Ye shall not see Me henceforth, *until*," etc. It is a quotation from Ps. cxviii., remarkable for its prophetic announcement of the rejection of Him who was to be acknowledged at a later time.

There are three elements of Christian life.

The first is to be in the light as God is in the light, without a veil. One must be found in the presence of God fully revealed. If one does not keep one's self there, one cannot be in communion with Him.

The second is that being in His presence it is not with us egotism of the individual, but the fellowship of the saints by the Holy Ghost in the enjoyment of the full revelation of God Himself.

The third is that we are white as snow, so that we find ourselves with joy in this light, which only makes manifest that we are all that the mind and heart of God desires in this respect, that which our heart desires also before Him. The idea is abstract and absolute: it is the value and efficacy of Christ's blood.

Privilege and Responsibility.

(READ DEUTERONOMY XX. 1-9).

I.

PRIVILEGE and responsibility! Yes, this is the divine order; and how important it is, in dealing with the things of God, to place them in the order in which He places them, and leave them there! The human mind is ever prone to displace things; and hence it is that we so frequently find the responsibilities which attach to the people of God pressed upon those who are yet in their sins.

This is a great mistake. I must be in a position before I can fulfil the responsibilities attaching thereto. I must be in a relationship before I can know the affections which belong to it. If I am not a father, how can I know or exhibit the affections of a father's heart? Impossible. I may descant upon them, and attempt to describe them; but, in order to *feel* them, I must be a father. Thus it is in the things of God. I must be in a position before I can enter into the responsibilities which belong to it. I must be in a relationship before I can understand the affections which flow out of it.

Man has been tested in every possible way. He has been tried in creation. He has been tried under divine government. He has been tried under law. He has been tried with

ordinances. He has been tried by the ministry of the prophets. He has been tried by the ministry of righteousness, in the person of John the Baptist. He has been tried by the ministry of grace, in the Person of Christ. He has been tried by the ministry of the Holy Ghost.

What has been the result? Total failure! An unbroken chain of testimony from Paradise to Pentecost has only tended to make manifest man's utter failure in every possible way. In every position of responsibility in which man has been set he has broken down. Not so much as a single exception can be adduced. So much for man's responsibility. He has proved himself unfaithful in every thing. He has not a single inch of ground to stand upon. He has destroyed himself.

But in God is his help. Grace has come in, in the Person of Christ, and perfectly met man's desperate case. The cross is the divine remedy for all the ruin, and by that cross the believer is introduced into a place of divine and everlasting privilege. Christ has met all the need, answered all the demands, discharged all the responsibilities, and, having done so by His death upon the cross, He has become, in resurrection, the basis of all the believer's privileges.

We have all of them in Christ, and we get Him, not because we have fulfilled

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our responsibilities, but because God loved us even when we had failed in everything. We find ourselves, unconditionally, in a place of unspeakable privilege. We did not work ourselves into it; we did not weep ourselves into it; we did not pray ourselves into it; we did not fast ourselves into it. We were taken up from the depth of our ruin, from that deep, deep pit into which we had fallen, in consequence of having failed in all our responsibilities; we have been set down, by God's free grace, in a position of unspeakable blessedness and privilege, of which nothing can ever deprive us. Not all the powers of hell and earth combined; not all the malice of Satan and his emissaries; not all the power of sin, death, and the grave, arrayed in their most terrific form, can ever rob the believer in Jesus of that place of privilege in which, through grace, he stands.

My reader cannot be too simple in his apprehension of this. We do not reach our place of privilege as the result of faithfulness in the place of responsibility. Quite the reverse. We have failed in everything. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23). We deserved death; but we have received life. We deserved hell; but we have received heaven. We deserved eternal wrath; but we have received eternal favour. Grace has entered the scene, and it "reigns

through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 21).

Hence, then, in the economy of grace, privilege becomes the basis of responsibility, and this is beautifully illustrated in the passage of Scripture referred to at the head of this paper. I shall quote it for my reader, lest he should not have his Bible at hand. "When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them : for the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach, and speak unto the people, and shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel; ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies; let not your hearts faint; fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them; for the Lord your God is He that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you."

Here we have Israel's privileges distinctly set forth. "The Lord thy God is with thee," and that, moreover, in the very character in which He had brought them up out of the land of Egypt. He was with them in the power of that sovereign grace which had delivered them from the iron grasp of Pharaoh, and the iron bondage of Egypt, which had conducted them through the sea,

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and led them across "the great and terrible wilderness." This made victory sure. No enemy could possibly stand before Jehovah acting in unqualified grace on behalf of His people.

And let my reader note carefully, that there is not a single condition proposed by the priest in the above quotation. He states, in the most absolute way, the relationship and consequent privilege of the Israel of God. He does not say, "The Lord thy God *will be* with you, *if* you do so and so." This would not be the proper language of one who stood before the people of God as the exponent of those privileges which grace had conferred upon them. Grace proposes no conditions, raises no barriers, makes no stipulations. Its language is, "The Lord *thy* God *is* with thee . . . He goeth *with* you . . . to fight *for* you . . . to *save* you." When Jehovah fights for His people they are sure of victory. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Grant me but this, that God is with me, and I argue full victory over every spiritual foe.

Thus much as to the question of privilege. Let us now turn, for a moment, to the question of responsibility.

"And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he

die in battle, and another man dedicate it. And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? Let him also go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it. And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? Let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her. And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart."

There is uncommon moral beauty in the order in which the *priest* and the *officer* are introduced in this passage. The former is the exponent of Israel's privileges; the latter, of Israel's responsibilities. But how interesting it is to see that, before the officers were permitted to address the assembly on the grand question of responsibility, the priest had established them in the knowledge of their precious privilege.

Imagine the case reversed. Suppose the officer's voice had first been heard, and what would have been the result? Fear, depression, and discouragement. To press responsibility *before I know my position*; to call for affections ere I am in the relationship; is to place an intolerable yoke upon the neck,

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an insufferable burden upon the shoulder. This is not God's way. If you search from Genesis to Revelation, you will find, without so much as a single exception, that the divine order is privilege and responsibility. Set me upon the rock of privilege, and I am in a position to understand and fulfil my responsibility; but talk to me of responsibility while yet in the pit of ruin, the mire of legality, or the slough of despond, and you rob me of all hope of ever rising into that hallowed sphere upon which the sunlight of divine favour pours itself in living lustre, and where alone responsibilities can be discharged to the glory of the name of Jesus.

The SUBJECTIVE measure of our path is the truth as it is in Jesus; namely, the having put off the old man, which corrupts itself according to the deceitful lusts, and the having put on the new man, created after God; and not grieving the Holy Ghost. The OBJECTIVE measure, the blessed Lord, Christ manifesting God in this world as love and light. Only remark that we are said to be light in the Lord, not love, though we are to walk in it. For we have the purity of the divine nature in the new man, and, as born of God, cannot sin. But love, after all, is sovereign goodness in God.

Certain Christians and their Doctrines.

(A LETTER.)

DEAR SIR,—

My reply to the letter which you were good enough to address to me has been delayed by unceasing work, which has left me no leisure. I have no difficulty as to informing you what my belief is; but a public newspaper is scarcely the place where I should wish to use my pen.

I believe that the Christian calling is a heavenly one, that the Christian is not of the world as His Master is not of it, and that he is placed down here as an epistle of Christ to manifest the life of Jesus amongst men, whilst waiting for the Lord to come to take him to be with Himself in the glory.

As Editor of the *Français* you will quite understand that articles written in order to inculcate such principles as these would little suit a political newspaper. Now I live only for these things: a life feebly realized, I am quite ready to confess; but I live only for them. However, I will communicate to you what appears to interest you, namely, what has led me, and others with me, to take up the position in which we find ourselves as Christians.

It is well, perhaps, in view of the infidelity

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which is spreading everywhere, to begin by saying that I hold, and I can add that we firmly hold, all the foundations of the Christian faith: the divinity of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God, eternally blessed; the divinity and humanity of the Lord Jesus, two natures in one Person; His resurrection and His glorification at the right hand of God; the presence of the Holy Ghost here below, having descended on the day of Pentecost; the return of the Lord Jesus according to His promise. We believe also that the Father in His love has sent the Son to accomplish the work of redemption and grace towards men; that the Son came, in that same love, to accomplish it, and that He has finished the work which the Father gave Him to do on earth. We believe that He has made propitiation for our sins, and that after having accomplished it, He ascended to heaven, the High Priest seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Other truths are connected with these, such as the miraculous birth of the Saviour, who was absolutely without sin: and yet others; but you will readily understand, sir, that my object is not to give a course of lectures or a theological summary, but to make it quite clear that it is in nowise on the giving up of the great foundations of the Christian faith that our position is based. Anyone who would

deny one or other of these fundamental truths would not be received amongst us, and anyone who, being amongst us, adopted some doctrine which would undermine one or other of these same truths would be excluded; but only after all proper means to bring him back to the truth had been exhausted. For although these are dogmas, we hold them as essential to living faith and to salvation, to the spiritual and Christian life of which we live as born of God.

But you wish, sir, to know not only the great truths which we hold in common with others, but also what distinguishes us from others.

Now, without in the least professing to give a course of Christian doctrine in connection with the truths I have just pointed out, I am anxious (indeed, I would heartily desire) to set them forth as the foundation, recognizing as true Christians and members of the body of Christ all those who, by the grace of God, and by the operation of the Holy Ghost, who has been given to them, truly believe these things in their souls.

Converted by the grace of God, I spent six or seven years under the rod of the Law; feeling that Christ was the only Saviour, but not being able to say that I possessed Him, or that *I* was saved by Him; fasting, praying, giving alms (always good things when done spiritually), but not possessing peace; whilst

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at the same time feeling that if the Son of God had Himself forgiven me, I owed myself to Him : my body, soul, and means.

At length God gave me to understand that I was in Christ, united to Him by the Holy Ghost : “ At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you ” (John xiv. 20); which means that when the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, should have come, the disciples would *know* these things. With this were connected other blessed and reassuring truths : “ There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus ” (Rom. viii. 1).

The promise of the Spirit is given to all those who have part in the remission of their sins, for “ he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit ” (1 Cor. vi. 17). Hence Christians are temples of the Holy Ghost : “ Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost who is in you ” (1 Cor. vi. 19).

[I should say that at this time the Word of God became for me an *absolute authority* as to faith and practice : not that I doubted it previously ; but it had now become such from conviction, implanted by God Himself in my heart.]

In this way the assurance of salvation through the work of Christ, the presence of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, by whom, “ having believed, ye have been sealed for

the day of redemption " (Eph. i. 13, 14), salvation known and possessed, and this indwelling of the Holy Ghost giving us the assurance of it, constitute the normal state of the Christian. He is no longer of this world, save to pass through it peacefully, doing the will of God. Bought with a great price, he is to glorify God in his conduct.

This brings in the thought of the Church and of its unity. For me the body of Christ was now composed of those who were united by the Holy Ghost to the Head: Christ in heaven. If we were seated in the heavenly places *in Christ* ("Even when we were dead in sins . . . hath He quickened us together with Christ: by grace ye are saved."—Ephes. ii. 1, 5) what were we still waiting for? For Christ to come to place us up there in fact. "I will come again," said the Lord, "and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John xiv. 3). "Our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, who shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory" (Phil. iii. 20, 21). We have been converted "to wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. i. 9, 10).

Hence the presence of the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, and the attitude of waiting for the Lord, constitute the normal state of

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the Christian. But all those who possess this Spirit are, by that very fact, one body. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. xii. 13). Now, this baptism took place on the day of Pentecost. "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts i. 5).

All those around me had not reached that point; at any rate they did not profess to have; and it was easy, reading Acts ii. and iv., to see how far we had got from what God had set up on the earth. Where was I to look for the Church? I gave up Anglicanism as not being it. Rome, at the beginning of my conversion, had not failed to attract me. But the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews had made that impossible for me: "For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified . . . Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin" (Heb. x. 14, 18).

Then again it rendered impossible the idea of a sacrificing priesthood down here between me and God; seeing that our position, as the result of the work of Christ, is that we have direct access to God in all confidence. "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. x. 19).

I am stating facts, sir; I am not entering into controversy: but faith in an accom

plished salvation, and, later on, the consciousness that I possessed it, hindered me from turning in that direction; while, having grasped the fact of the unity of the body of Christ, the various dissenting sects no longer attracted me. As to the unity to which, as we all know, Rome pretends, I found everything in ruins. The most ancient Churches did not want to have anything to say to her; nor did Protestants either; so that the great majority of those who profess Christianity are outside her pale. On the other hand, it was not a question of seeking this unity amongst the Protestant sects. Besides, whatever their ecclesiastical position might be, most of those who call themselves Christians are of the world, just as much as a pagan might be.

Now the twelfth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians shows clearly that there is a Church formed on the earth by the descent of the Holy Ghost. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body"; and it is evident that this is on the earth: for, "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (1 Cor. xii. 27). Besides, the apostle speaks of gifts of healing and of tongues, which only apply to the state of the Assembly down here.

The Assembly of God, then, has been formed on the earth, and ought always to

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have been manifested. Alas ! it has not been so. In the first place, with regard to individuals, the Lord had pointed this out beforehand : " The wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep." But, thank God, " No one shall catch them out of My hand," said the same faithful Shepherd (John x. 12, 28).

But this is not all. The apostle Paul, bidding farewell to the faithful of Asia, said, " I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them " (Acts xx. 29, 30). Jude declares that already in his time deceitful men had crept in among the Christians; and (which is of all importance,) they are marked out as being the object of the judgment of the Lord when He comes again : " Certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation; ungodly men." " The Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all " (Jude 4 and 15).

These men were corrupters within the Church; but there will be those who will entirely abandon the Christian faith : " Little children," says the apostle John, " it is the last time : and as ye have heard that anti-christ shall come, even now are there many antichrists : whereby we know that it is the

last time. They went out from us," etc. (1 John ii. 18, 19).

But even this is not all. The apostle Paul tells us, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel to honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. ii. 19-21). Here is the Church: it is a great house with vessels of all kinds, and a call comes to the faithful man to purify himself from the vessels to dishonour.

The following chapter is still more definite: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud," etc. (2 Tim. iii. 1-5). These are almost exactly the same terms as he uses when he charges the heathen with sin (Rom. i. 29-31); but he adds here, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (2 Tim. iii. 5).

He warns us that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse" (2 Tim. iii. 12, 13). But he gives us

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as a safeguard the knowledge of the person from whom we have learnt those things which we believe : it is the apostle himself, with the Scriptures, which can make us wise to salvation by the faith which is in Christ Jesus. He assures us that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof," etc. (vv. 14-16).

Thus we have the proof that evil, having entered into the Church, would continue and would not be healed. "The mystery of iniquity," says the apostle, "doth already work; only he who now hinders will hinder until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the breath of His mouth, and shall destroy by the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. ii. 7, 8). The evil which was already working in the time of the apostle was, then, to continue until the wicked one himself should be revealed. The Lord will destroy him then by His coming; and although it be not spoken of the Church properly so called, the same thing is revealed to us in regard to Christendom; for we learn that tares have been sown in the place where the Lord had sown good grain. When the servants desire to pull up the tares, the Lord forbids them, saying, "Let both grow together until the harvest" (Matt. xiii. 24-30). The evil done to the Kingdom of God was to

remain in the field of this world until the judgment. Christ will doubtless gather the good grain into His garner, but the crop is spoiled down here.

You will tell me, "But the gates of hell are not to prevail against that which Christ has built." Granted, and I bless God for it with all my heart, but we must distinguish here as the Word of God does. There is, on the one hand, the work of Christ; and, on the other, what is done by men and under their responsibility. The enemy will never destroy what Christ built (we speak of the Church of God), nor will he prevail against the work of the Lord. Whatever be the evil that has come in (for that there are heresies and schisms we do not deny), that which Christ works has endured, and will endure for ever.

It is the house which we find in 1 Peter ii., the living stones coming to Christ as to the living stone, and built to be a spiritual house. I find this house also in Ephes. ii.: "Ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord" (Ephes. ii. 19-21). Here it is again the work of the Lord Himself; living stones who come,

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a building composed of saints, growing to be a temple which is not yet completely built.

But, in Scripture, the house of God on earth is viewed in another way also. "As a wise master-builder," said the apostle Paul, "I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. . . . If any man build upon this foundation gold . . . wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is." "Know ye not," he adds, "that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. iii. 10-13; 16-17).

Here, then, I find the responsibility of man and the judgment of his work; the whole is called the temple of God, and the judgment of God commences there, at His house, says the apostle Peter. Already, during the lifetime of the apostle, the time had come for that (1 Pet. iv. 17), although the patience of God, acting in grace, still waited.

I recognize, therefore, the responsibility of the house of God, of the whole of Christendom. That which Christ Himself builds is one thing, and the fruit of His labours will not be lost; that which responsible man builds

is another thing. At the beginning "the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved" (Acts ii. 47). Soon "false brethren" crept in, tares were sown, and the house was filled with all kinds of vessels, from which faithfulness was to purge itself; and with a form of godliness without power, from which the faithful one was to turn away.

This is what the Word of God presents to us historically and prophetically in the New Testament: this Word, addressed by the teachers to the faithful, is our resource when these perilous times should come; and, if that were necessary, the facts have borne out all that it says.

What is to be done? The Word declares to us that where two or three are gathered to the name of Jesus, He will be in their midst (Matt. xviii. 20). This is what we have done. There were only four of us to do it at the first; not, I hope, in a spirit of pride or presumption, but deeply grieved at seeing the state of that which surrounded us, praying for all Christians, and recognizing all those who possessed the Spirit of God, every true Christian wherever he might be found ecclesiastically, as members of the body of Christ. We were not thinking of anything else, dear sir, than of satisfying the need of our souls according to the Word of God, and we had no thought that the thing would have

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gone any further. We have thus found the promised presence of the Lord. Salvation through Christ has been preached, when there was gift to do so.

The same needs caused others to follow the same road, and thus the work has extended in a way of which we had not the remotest idea. It commenced in Dublin, to spread in the British Isles, in France, where a great number of persons, open unbelievers, were converted; in Switzerland, where the work on the Continent had commenced; in Germany, in Holland, in Denmark, where it is commencing; in Sweden, where a great religious movement is going on at this moment. The path we follow has spread to a considerable extent in the British Colonies, and more recently in the United States, in Asia, in Africa, and elsewhere.

The Spirit of God acts and produces needs of soul to which the religious systems offer no answer. In a word, this is definitely the position of those brethren who rest on the authority of the Word of God. Christ is seen, in this Word, as the Saviour, in three different positions: first, as accomplishing redemption on the cross; then, as seated at the Father's right hand, the Holy Ghost being thereupon sent down here; finally, as coming back to take His own to be with Himself.

These Christians believe these things, have

the assurance of their salvation, having faith in the efficacy of this redemption; and finally, being sealed with the Holy Spirit, who dwells in every true Christian, they wait for the Son of God from heaven, without knowing the moment of His coming. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. viii. 15). We believe in the promise, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John xiv. 3). Absolute faith in the efficacy of redemption; the seal of the Spirit, which gives the assurance of salvation and the consciousness of being children of God; the attitude of waiting for the Lord: this is what characterizes these Christians. Bought with a great price, they are bound to regard themselves as no longer belonging to themselves, but to the Lord Jesus, to please Him in everything, and to live only for Him.

I do not mean to say, sir, that we all walk at the full height of the heavenly calling; but we acknowledge the obligation to do so. If anyone fails openly in what becomes a Christian (in point of morality, or in what concerns the faith,) he is excluded. We abstain from the pleasures and amusements of the world. If we have evening parties, it is for the purpose of studying the Word and of

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edifying ourselves together. We do not mix in politics; we are not of the world. We do not vote. We submit to the established authorities, whatever they may be, in so far as they command nothing expressly contrary to the will of Christ. We take the Lord's Supper every Sunday, and those who have gift for it preach the gospel of salvation to sinners, or teach believers. Everyone is bound to seek the salvation or good of his neighbour according to the capacity which God has given him. Feeling that Christendom is corrupt, we are outside the church-world, by whatever name it is called.

As to the number of those who follow this course, I cannot tell you what it is: we do not number ourselves, wishing to remain in the littleness which becomes Christians. Besides, we reckon as a brother in Christ every person who has the Spirit of Christ.

I do not know that I have anything else to put before you. I am almost ashamed, sir, to have given such a long explanation of the principles which govern the walk of the Christians in question. We recognize that the Church is one, the body of Christ: then, too, the house of God by the Spirit.

You ask me what is the advantage of this course. Obedience to the Word of God suffices to decide us. To obey Christ is the first requirement of the soul which knows itself

saved by Him, and even of every soul acknowledging Him as the Son of God, who has loved us so much, and has given Himself for us. But in fact, in obeying Him, in spite of weakness, faults and failures (which, on my part, I own), His presence manifests itself to the soul as an ineffable source of joy, as the earnest of a bliss where failures (blessed be His name for it!) will no longer be found, and where He will be fully glorified in all believers.

You will tell me that these pages scarcely suit a newspaper. I admit it, but it is because the current of my thoughts scarcely flows in that line. I have explained to you, in all simplicity, what you asked me, and as well as I could.

Having had to take up my work more than once, owing to unavoidable interruptions, I much fear that it may contain some repetitions. Please excuse them, and accept the assurance of my esteem.

1878.

We may look up in affection, or look down. The higher the object, if we look up, the nobler the affection. Here (Eph. v.) it is to GOD HIMSELF. If we look down, the more unworthy the object the greater the love. So Christ FOR US; and Him we are to follow.

Studies on the Book of Daniel.

XXI.—CHAPTER XII.

TO pass then to Matt. xxiv. 1, etc: “And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple; and His disciples came to Him for to show Him the buildings of the temple”; for they were yet imbued with a Jewish feeling. “And . . . the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]?” They supposed that what the Lord had said about the temple would take place when the Messiah should return; and they asked when these things should happen.

Observe the expression, “end of the age.” When the Lord uses it, He does not speak of Christianity: it was not then established. When His disciples said “*the age*,” they had no thought about Christianity. They spoke about the Jewish age, in which the Messiah was expected; the age of the Law until the Messiah should come for the Jews. Their question was, When shall the end of that age be?

Now, from vv. 4—14, Jesus tells them the circumstances which should take place. These are warnings. And He adds some circumstances which should happen before “the end

of the age"; that is to say, He closes the account of the Jewish remnant which should endure to the end. At v. 14 Jesus details another event: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world . . .; and then shall the end come." That is, not only certain things should happen to His disciples, but also there should be the preaching of the gospel of *the kingdom* throughout the habitable world; and then should the end come.

Then He commences His particular instructions to His disciples who should be at Jerusalem at "the end of the age." As He had spoken of the Jewish nation, so here He speaks to His disciples; addressing in their persons the remnant which should be found at the end: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination . . . stand in the holy place, then let them which be in Judæa flee unto the mountains" (vv. 15, 16). Nothing can be more evident than that the Lord speaks of a precise time, and not of something which happens morally, and which may be distributed, so to speak, over centuries. Thus, "neither let him which is in the field"; "woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck," etc.; "pray that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath Day." It is impossible not to perceive that the last allusion is to Jews, who would not venture to go

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further than a certain distance on the Sabbath Day.

“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (v. 21). We are here absolutely in the time of distress (predicted in Dan. xii. and Jeremiah xxx. 7) at Jerusalem, to be followed by the deliverance of the people of Daniel, at least of the remnant, and by the establishment of the Jews in Palestine, with David (Christ) as their king.

But before this unequalled period of tribulation, there will be “the beginning of sorrows” (Matt. xxiv. 8). And whenever the abomination is placed, there will be 1290 days, with 45 added, before there is a complete deliverance at Jerusalem. The 45 days added will introduce all that the faithful remnant could desire in order to their happiness. Mark agrees with Matthew as to all this; they both pursue the history until the manifestation of Jesus: “Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not,* for there shall arise false Christs . . . For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also

* This, to me, is a convincing proof that this passage does not apply, properly speaking, to the Church; because our expectation is to be caught up into the air to meet Jesus. To tell us He is in the desert would, of itself, prove an impostor, for we are to be in the air with Him before He can be there.

the coming of the Son of man be; for wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together" (v. 27). There, where the dead body of the Jewish people is, the visitation of God will come.

"What shall be the sign of Thy coming?" The nation will have no sign for its instruction, although fearful signs will be there. This is the answer to the nation: Christ shall come as the lightning. In heaven only there will be a sign at the moment of His appearing suddenly; I do not say what the sign is, but there will be one there when He comes: "They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. xxiv. 30).

The question for a soul now is Christ, that blessed Person who reveals the Father; the truth of a living, acting Spirit, the Comforter, given; and the revealed written Word of God, the only source and standard of truth; and that that which we are called on to confess is the truth, known by the Spirit from that Word, known in the heart with God; and, while acknowledging we may be mistaken in a hundred points, knowing that we have the truth for which martyrs have died, and that we would rather give up our lives than lose or deny it.

Privilege and Responsibility.

(READ DEUTERONOMY XX. 1-9).

II.

SOME there are who talk to us of “gospel conditions.” Who ever heard of a *gospel* fenced with *conditions*? We can understand *law conditions*; but a *gospel* with conditions is “a different gospel, which is not another” (Gal. i. 5, 7). Conditions to be fulfilled by the creature pertain not to the gospel, but to the law. Man has been tried under all possible conditions. And what has been the issue? Failure! Yes, failure only, failure continually. Man is a ruin, a wreck, a bankrupt. Of what use can it ever be to place such a one under conditions, even though you should call them by the anomalous title of “gospel conditions”? None whatever. Man, under any kind of conditions, can only prove unfaithful. He has been weighed in the balance, and found wanting. He has been condemned, root and branch. “They that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. viii. 8). It does not say, “they that are in *the body*.” No: but “they that are in *the flesh*.”

But the believer is not in the flesh, though in the body. He is not looked at in his old creation standing, in his old Adamic conditions, in which he has been tried and condemned. Christ has come down, and died

under the full weight of his guilt. He has taken the sinner's place, with all its liabilities, and by His death settled every thing. He lay in the grave after having answered every claim, and silenced every enemy. Justice, law, sin, death, wrath, judgment, Satan, everything and everyone. There lay the divine Surety in the silent tomb; and God entered the scene, raised Him from the dead, set Him at His own right hand in the heavens, sent down the Holy Ghost to testify to a risen and exalted Saviour, and to unite to Him, as thus risen and exalted, all who believe in His name.

Here, then, we get on to new ground altogether. We can now listen to the officer as he tells out in our hearing the claims of Christ upon all those who are united to Him. The priest has spoken to us, and told us of the imperishable ground which we occupy, the indestructible relationship in which we stand, and now we are in a position to listen to the one who stands before us as the exponent of our high and holy responsibilities. Had "the officer" come first, we should have fled from his presence, discouraged and dismayed by the weight and solemnity of his words, and giving utterance to the despairing inquiry, "Who then can be saved?" But, inasmuch as "the priest," the minister of grace, the exponent of privilege, has set us upon our feet in the new

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creation, and strengthened our hearts by unfolding the unconditional grace in which we stand, we can listen to the "commandments" of the officer, and find them "not grievous," because they come to us from off the mercy-seat (1 John v. 3).

And what does the officer say to us? Just this: "No man that *warreth entangleth* himself with the affairs of this life" (2 Tim. ii. 4). This is the sum and substance of the officer's message. He demands, on the part of God's warriors, a disentangled heart. It is not a question of salvation, of being a child of God, of being a true Israelite; it is simply a question of ability to wage an effectual warfare; and clearly a man cannot fight well if his heart is entangled with "a house," "a vineyard," or "a wife."

Nor was it a question of *having* such things. By no means. Thousands of those who went forth to tread the battle-field, and gather the spoils of victory, had houses, and lands, and domestic ties. The officers had no quarrel with the possessors of these things; the only point was, not to be *entangled* with them. The apostle does not say, "No man that warreth *engages* in the affairs of this life." Had he said this, we should all have to live in idleness and isolation, whereas he distinctly teaches us, elsewhere, that, "if any man would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thess. iii. 10). The

grand point is to keep the heart disentangled. God's warriors must have free hearts, and the only way to be free is to cast all our care upon Him who careth for us. I can stand in the battle-field with a free heart when I have placed my house, my vineyard, and my wife, in the divine keeping.

But, further, God's warriors must have courageous hearts as well as free hearts. "The fearful and the faint-hearted" can never stand in the battle, or wear the laurel of victory. Our hearts must be disentangled from the world, and bold by reason of our artless confidence in God; and, be it well remembered, that these things are not "*gospel conditions*," but *gospel results*: a deeply important distinction. What a mistake to speak of *gospel conditions*! It is simply the old leaven of legality presented in a new and strange form, and dubbed with a name which, in itself, involves a contradiction. If those precious clusters which are the result of union with the living Vine, be set forth as the necessary conditions of that union, what must become of the sinner? Where shall we get them if not in Christ? And how do we become united to Christ? Is it by conditions? Nay; but by FAITH.

May the Holy Ghost instruct my reader as to the divine order of PRIVILEGE AND RESPONSIBILITY.

Paul Preaching at Antioch in Pisidia.

READ ACTS XIII.

AS Paul and Barnabas entered the synagogue at Antioch they were invited, after the reading of the law and the prophets, to give the people a word of exhortation.

Paul had readiness in his heart to address them, for he carried and represented the gospel of God, that system of divine active love that is ever waiting on sinners. And when out of the abundance of such a heart his mouth speaks, it is in a way the synagogue could not have expected. He does not make the people his subject, giving them exhortation as out of the law or the prophets, but he makes God and His acts his subjects, out of the historical books. He details a series of divine acts, from the day of the Exodus to the resurrection of Jesus; acts of grace, every one of them, which displayed God rising, in the supremacy of His own love and power, over all the various sad and evil conditions of Israel, whether such had been brought on them by themselves or by their enemies, through their own folly and wickedness or by the hand of them that hated them.

He deals with *facts*, such facts as displayed God in grace, and humbled man. He brings *God* into the synagogue, and makes *Him* the

great object of notice to the soul. And this, let me say, is God's own way in the Gospel. He makes room for Himself, as I may express it, in both our hearts and our consciences. He breaks us to pieces, leaving us without a word to say for ourselves, exposed, convicted, and condemned, that He may introduce His own salvation to the conscience and to the heart; that the one may find peace made by Himself for it, and the other be for ever drinking of a love that flows to everlasting, as it has been flowing from everlasting.

This story of grace, which Paul reads in the synagogue at Antioch, brings out various actings of God's hand in behalf of His people. After choosing the fathers, He had of old delivered Israel out of Egypt, in spite of Egypt's strength and enmity. He had then carried them through the wilderness for the space of forty years, well supplying all their need, in spite of their manners and their murmurings. Then He had beaten down the nations of Canaan before their face, and divided their lands among them. He had, after that, raised up a long line of Judges or deliverers for them, to deliver them out of the hand of those oppressors whom their own folly and faithlessness had armed against them. And still further, He had given them David, a man of His own choice, to be their shepherd, after they had proved the bitterness

of the days of Saul, who had been the man of their choice. Thus, in so many ways, and for so long a time, had He magnified His grace, and continued in it; unwearied by their need, changeful as it was, and unhindered by their faithlessness, persevering and rebellious as it was. With this tale of grace Paul fills the synagogue at Antioch.

But there was still another chapter in that story : Jesus the Messiah had been given to the nation, refused and crucified by the nation; but by God raised up and given again to them; and, in the name of this crucified and risen Jesus, "the forgiveness of sins" is now preached, and Israel called on to accept it.

Now, this was a tale of the constancy and variousness of the grace of God. Israel is seen to have enjoyed a series of accomplished blessings at the hand of God. Redemption, support, victory, deliverance, and a kingdom, all had been theirs, in spite of the strength of enemies and of their own unfaithfulness; and now, added to these, there was provision for the forgiveness of all their sins.

And, blessed to tell it, this crowning mercy, the forgiveness of sins, which Paul now preached, was a blessing as sure as any, established by as sure an arm, and made theirs by as clear a title. It was set upon the resurrection of Jesus. Redemption, and inheritance, and deliverance, and the like, had been, each

and all in their day, infallible, and each and all in their turn and time enjoyed by Israel. And all had stood on solid ground, and in good warranty.

The rod of Moses, adapted by the God of all power and might, was equal to work redemption, and Israel enjoyed redemption. The presence of God had supplied the camp, and the sword of the Lord in the hand of Joshua had conquered and divided the land. Judges could deliver from all oppressors, since the Lord of heaven and earth had raised them up; and the man after God's own heart had guided the flock of God with integrity and skilfulness. And now "the forgiveness of sins" takes its place among these blessings, for Jesus in resurrection in like infallibility can secure and dispense it. The manna from heaven had no more virtue to feed the camp morning by morning (and who could question that?) than the resurrection of the Lord Jesus had to publish the forgiveness of sins to all that believe. Death is "the wages of sin," and cannot be put away, but by sin being put away. To get rid of death we must get rid of sin.

But Jesus had risen. He was alive from the dead, and on the ground of such a fact as that, of such accomplished victory as His resurrection bespeaks, the forgiveness of sins is as infallibly named, as surely and boldly

published, as redemption was wrought by the rod of Moses, or victory and the division of the land by the sword of the Lord and of Joshua.

“Forgiveness of sins” thus takes its place among the sure and accomplished blessings of grace. We can account for it as simply as for any of those wrought out of old for Israel by Jehovah. We can see why sins may now be forgiven, as once we saw why Pharaoh’s host lay dead on the sea-shore. Jehovah looked from the cloud then, and that was enough; Jesus is risen from the dead now, having been made sin for us, and that is enough. The danger is in despising, as the apostle closes his preaching: “Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye will in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.”

This was the apostle’s exhortation.

The law and the prophets had been read in the synagogue, as we noticed, and the apostles were invited to give the people a word of exhortation. But Paul read to the synagogue from the *history* of Israel. He stated FACTS, God’s facts, such as told what He had done for His people, and thus what He was to them. And his exhortation is not to despise those acts of grace.

The resurrection is one of those acts. Jesus had died to sin. Sin and Jesus were in colli-

sion on the cross; or rather, Jesus owned the claim and fruit of sin there, and answered it, and bore it. Sin was never, we may say, in so intense a sense "the sting of death" as then; nor was death ever in so solemn a judgment paid as "the wages of sin." But armed as it was in that hour of its power, it was slain. The enmity was slain. Sin was put away. The veil of the temple was rent, and the graves of the saints were opened. "Made sin, He sin o'erthrew." The claims of God in judgment upon sin were all vindicated, and he that had the power of death was destroyed. So that we may well say, with our apostle, looking at the death and resurrection of Jesus, "By this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins."

This preaching at Antioch thus gives us a sweet witness how grace has been abounding in the ways of God from the beginning hitherto. But, for further confirmation of our souls in God, let me observe that both *holiness* and *grace* have had their several witnesses from the beginning; for God cannot but be just, while He is a Justifier; and the stability and rest of our consciences before Him come from this, that "truth" and "mercy," "righteousness" and "peace," together dispense salvation to us. GOD IS NEVER MORE HOLY THAN WHEN FORGIVING SINS, as has been long since said.

The ordinance of clean and unclean told of God's holiness from the beginning, separating Him from the fallen and defiled creation. This ordinance, we know, is recognised so early as Genesis viii. His promise had already witnessed His grace, and that we get in Genesis iii. And so all through, that He is a just God and a Saviour, has been His memorial here. He has ever had His two witnesses in this world of corruption and of misery; a witness to His holiness, and a witness to His grace and goodness. And the cross has redeemed all these pledges; for clean and unclean were distinguished there, and separated for ever, and yet "the forgiveness of sins" was secured; and the soul, ruined of old by the serpent, is delivered for ever.

Thus Paul brings *God* into the synagogue. The rulers would have the *people exhorted*; but the Spirit in the apostle will have *God revealed*; revealed, too, as is His way, by His own acts, that simplest, surest, most blessed way of revealing Him, the way in which "the wayfaring man" may not err, in which a child need not mistake the lesson. It is not by treatises or discourses, but by ACTS, that God makes Himself known to us. We might miss our lesson had the former been His method; but His method is such that the simpler we are the surer we shall reach Him and find Him and know Him.

And Paul thus deals with the synagogue at Antioch. He brings God in, Christ in, and that too in the divine way, in the light and revelation of His doings in the midst of us and for us. The law and the prophets had already been in the synagogue, as Moses and Elias were on the holy hill. But the voice from the exalted glory would draw Peter away from Moses and Elias, and fix him on Jesus, saying, "This is My beloved Son; hear Him," when Peter would have made equal tabernacles for Moses and Elias. And so here, Paul will leave the law and the prophets, and fix the assembly on God and His Christ.

And what was thus done in the synagogue at Antioch is not only like what had been already done on the holy hill, but it is after the manner of the divine wisdom in all dispensations from the beginning; that the Christ of God should be the great object of faith, and the one great issue and result of all the education and learning of our souls; that we should be *brought* to Him, and then *left* with Him..

A judged world, a broken Law, persecuted prophets, the slain Just One, a resisted Spirit, sum up the history of man, the history of original sin. Man must be "born again."

Death and Judgment past for the Believer.

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation ” (Heb. ix. 27, 28).

THERE are three different appearings of the Lord spoken of at the end of the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

1. We read of Christ having appeared at the end of the world (the end of the ages) to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (v. 26). You see it was not simply to make a way for the sinner that Christ died, but to do what nothing else ever did or could do, to *put away sin*; and so completely has the work been done, that we read elsewhere of sins being purged, blotted out, cast into the depths of the sea, cast behind God's back, never more to be remembered, and the like, to show us God's estimate of the value of Christ's work. Some say that they must every now and then look at their sins; but how much better is it to look to Jesus, and see how completely they have been “put away”! Observe, the Scripture says, “PUT AWAY”!

2. Then you find Christ spoken of as appear-

ing somewhere now. Where is it? In heaven. He is gone back again to the Father, gone into heaven by that which has accomplished our eternal redemption. He entered into heaven itself by His own blood. He is there as a great High Priest for all believers. He is only a High Priest for such: not for the unbeliever, who is far from God. Jesus, then, is now appearing in the presence of God for us. He is our righteousness, life, redemption, so that we appear before God as He is; we are perfect in Christ Jesus.

3. Then we have another appearing mentioned in the closing words of the chapter, which is yet future, though we know not how near it may be; but I shall hope to refer to that soon. Meanwhile, I would call attention to the very solemn truth recorded in verses 27, 28: "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." The AS and so here are very emphatic.

Death and judgment are God's appointments for men, because they are sinners. The divine verdict is not only that "all have sinned," but that all are "under sin," "servants of sin"; so that sin to the natural man is something agreeable to his nature; hence we read of the "pleasures of sin." Death is the result of sin, and so is judgment; and what can God's condemnation of sin be but eternal?

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Hence we read of the "second death," the lake of fire (Rev. xx. 14). Death, then, is God's just sentence on men because of sin: "The wages of sin is death."

There was one Man here below on whom death had no claim, because in Him was no sin; sin having been laid upon Him, sin in the flesh was condemned in Him, and He died; but He saw no corruption. "It was not possible that He should be holden of death." This was the spotless, holy Jesus, the Saviour of sinners.

Men know they must die, and therefore try to make it, by comfortable circumstances, as agreeable as they can; but they cannot bear to think of "judgment." Nevertheless, it is God's appointment, and cannot be altered. *Men* are exposed to *death* and *judgment*; for they are under the dominion of sin as well as the guilt of sin; they are, therefore, "servants of sin," and "the wages of sin is death." This is very plain. It is not simply the death of the body; but if a man die in his sins, he will be raised again, and judged for those sins before the great white throne, and then cast into the lake of fire, the "second death" of everlasting darkness and misery.

We have here, as it were, two parallel columns. The one headed "men," and having written under it "death" and "judgment"; the other headed, "them that look

for Him"—“believers,” and under that is written, “Christ put away their sins, and consequently delivered them from death and judgment.” How wide the contrast! The one clouded with darkness and misery, the other bright with light and glory. Observe the *AS* and so. As death and judgment were the doom of *men* because of sin, so Christ bare the sins, and death and judgment. He bare “the sins of many.” How blessed is the portion of those who have Christ for their Saviour! They can rest in sweetest confidence and peace, knowing that their sins were purged by the sacrifice of Christ, and that they will not come into judgment. They are already on the other side of death. They have passed from death unto life.

The believer, then, is delivered from what every unbeliever is exposed to: death and judgment. How is it that he is delivered from death? for do not we see that saints die just the same as sinners? They may appear to as to their bodies; but the wages of sin is not simply the separation of soul and body, but there is a “sting” and “terror” connected with death that knows no rest or solace. The believer is so completely delivered from these things that he can say, “O death, where is thy sting?” for the sting of death being “sin,” it is removed by the precious blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin. The

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“terror,” too, is gone, because he knows that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. The believer’s death, therefore, is not called *death* in the New Testament, but *falling asleep in Jesus*. Hence, too, the blessed Lord said, “If a man keep My saying, he shall never *see* death”; “he shall never *taste* of death.” Blessed, glorious fact, that the soul that knows Christ for its Saviour is so completely delivered from death that, when Jesus comes, those who are alive will at once, in a moment, be changed, and caught up into the air to meet Him! (1 Cor. xv.; 2 Thess. iv.).

As to “judgment,” nothing can be more contrary to the teaching of Scripture than to suppose that saints are going to be judged as to whether they shall have eternal life or not. I refer to the wrong use made of our Lord’s teaching on the sheep and the goats. On referring to Matt. xxv. 31-46, you will see that there is no idea of resurrection there. Not one dead person is raised; but, instead of that, it is the King coming to the earth, and judging the nations as to how they dealt with His brethren, a remnant of Jews who will go forth with “the gospel of the kingdom” after we Christians have been caught up at the Lord’s coming. It is Christ’s assembling and judging living people.

Nothing can be more opposed to the pre-

cious truth that every believer now has everlasting life, is a child of God, is passed from death unto life, than the false idea of God's children going to be judged. That every believer will appear before the judgment-seat of Christ is quite true; but there will be no question of salvation then, but of reward for service; and we shall appear there in glorified bodies like that of Christ Himself.

It is most blessed, then, to see that God teaches us that death and judgment have been already met for us by Jesus on the cross, and that what is before us is not, as some say, a day of judgment, a great assize, to decide who shall be saved and who not; for I affirm that Scripture nowhere teaches *us* to expect that, but to expect Christ. Hence the 28th verse concludes with: "And to them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." There will be no question with Christ and believers about sin, and therefore not of its consequences, namely, death and judgment. Christ will then put forth His redemption power on our bodies, and thus not only give us full and everlasting deliverance from sorrow and all the consequences of sin, but, in a moment, change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto His glorious body, so that we may have full capacities for ceaseless and untiring enjoyment of Himself (Phil. iii.). Blessed hope indeed!

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Precious portion! now children of God, delivered from death and judgment, and having the blessed hope of being for ever with the Lord, and for ever like Him! The believer is therefore instructed to look back on the cross, and see that Christ there *put away* his sins, and delivered him from death and judgment; to look up to the throne, and see Jesus now appearing in God's presence for him, his righteousness and great High Priest; and to look for His coming to bring him into eternal enjoyment with Himself.

The history of the Bible is the history of original sin, of one who had to confess, if he knew himself, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Accompanied by marvellous long-suffering and gracious dealings, but which only brought out this sin, till, the tree having been digged about and duned, it was proved that no care could make a bad tree bring forth good fruit; and the Lord Jesus says, "Now is the judgment of this world." "The world seeth Me no more." But this only to bring in REDEMPTION, and set man on a wholly new footing, beyond evil, and in THE GLORY OF GOD.

“I will come again.”

IN My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also” (John xiv. 2, 3).

This is a truly precious promise. It was given to comfort the hearts of the sorrowing disciples; and many a weary heart it has comforted since then.

You will observe that in these verses “I” and “you” occur very frequently. The heart of Jesus and the hearts of His disciples are in close quarters. Love unites them. In heart they are one. The tender love of Jesus is sweetly manifested. The disciples were filled with sorrow because He was going to leave them. “Whither I go,” He says, “ye cannot come.”

This was a trying word to their hearts. In answer to Peter's question, “Whither goest thou?” the Lord first refers to His own death on the cross for them, and then meets the trouble of their hearts with this blessed promise, “I will come again, and receive you unto Myself.”

He does not say, “I will send for you.” Oh, no! but “*I will come.*” Such was His love that He would come for them HIMSELF.

“ I WILL COME AGAIN.”

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Love values its object. To have spoken of sending others for His disciples would not have expressed how much He loved and valued them.

But where was He going? To His Father's house on high, to His immediate presence. *He was going home.* And will He receive us to Himself there? He is there now, and He will come for us, and receive us to where He is Himself. “ That *where* I am,” as He says, “ *there* ye may be also.” Our place will be WITH HIM, through the rich merits of His blood. And that, we know, is the highest, best, most blessed place in heaven.

And though all will be in the same glory with Himself, yet each one will have his own distinct and special place there. Paul will not have Peter's, and Peter will not have Paul's. Each one will have his own place, not only in the heart of Christ, but in the house of many mansions, and in the glory of the Lord.

“ I go to prepare a place for *you*.” It will be HOME, our own eternal, happy home. Such is the love of Jesus! It is the love of the divine Bridegroom for His “ransomed bride”; and such His faithful promise, “ I will come again.”

In the seventeenth chapter we have the same precious truth presented; not in the form of a *promise*, but expressed as a *prayer*. “ Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given

Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me." He bears us on His heart continually. His great desire is that we may see His glory, and be with Him in it. Here it is His "given" glory that He speaks of. He glorified God on the earth, and God has glorified Him at His own right hand in heaven. (Compare John xii. 28; xiii. 31, 32; xvii. 4, 5.) So He prays the Father that we may all be with Him in the glory. "A little while," and we shall be with Him, and like Him in His "given" glory. And, oh! surely, our deepest, highest joy will be to see crowned with glory and honour Him who passed through such shame and suffering for us. Our joy will not consist so much in being there ourselves as in seeing Him there. Every eye will be fixed on Him, every heart will be ravished with His glory and beauty. And the thought that we are there through His suffering, shame, and dishonour will tune every voice to sing His praise in loudest, sweetest strains.

Having the promise, and knowing the desire of His heart, our true position is to be watching and longing for His coming. He has not named the day or the hour, that we may be always waiting for Him. We are not to be looking for troubles or trials, or death, but for the Lord Himself. These may come before

Him, but this precious promise, “ I will come again, and receive you unto Myself,” places nothing between the heart of the disciple and his Lord’s return. His coming again is the proper object of His people’s hope; as the Thessalonian believers were “ turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, *and to wait for His Son from heaven.*” Affection should lead us to pray, “ COME, LORD JESUS,” like the loving wife who counts the hours of her husband’s absence, and longs for his return.

In Rev. iv. we find, in vision, the promise fulfilled, and the prayer answered. Affection, as well as faith, lays hold on this. The redeemed of the Lord are seen in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne. They are seated on thrones, wearing crowns, and worshipping. And although “ out of the throne proceed lightnings, and thunderings, and voices,” they are not disturbed. They are perfectly at home. They are *with Christ*, and that makes heaven home to them. His promise is fulfilled, and the desire of His heart of love is answered. Before a single seal is broken, a single trumpet sounded, a single vial poured out, the Church is called away. He comes for her, and receives her unto Himself, unto His own home, in His Father’s house on high. She is secure within the veil.

This is a deeply precious truth. Judgments

are now coming on the earth, with overwhelming rapidity, as the lightnings, thunderings, and voices indicate. But she has been removed from the scene on which the judgments fall, and has entered with Christ on the scene of her eternal rest and glory. The Lord's promise is fulfilled; His prayer is answered, and all the redeemed are housed for eternity in heavenly glory with Himself.

Christ has been manifested to put away sin out of God's sight, out of man's heart, and out of the world. The great work which does it is accomplished; the results are not all accomplished in power. He who has not judged original sin has not that estimate of the new nature animated by the Spirit of God which is on God's side against sin. I judge the individual in no way. He may hate what he sees in himself of actual sin. I speak of abstract moral truth. He who does not see the principle, and nature, and guilt of sin, as it stands in man's self-will, has not the estimate which the knowledge of a holy nature in reconciliation with God gives.

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XXII.—CONCLUDED.

I WILL add a few remarks as to Luke xxi. There is a difference, for Luke does not occupy himself in the same manner with Jewish details. It is not the gospel of the Jewish kingdom. The only question of the disciples is, "When shall these things be?" It is not about "the end of the age." It applies only to that which should happen *at the destruction of Jerusalem*. When Titus took it, more or less of those fearful events took place, similar to what will happen at the end; but it is not the same thing as the time "such as never was." There will be great earthquakes, etc. Read down to v. 10.

In Luke's Gospel, there is more reference to evangelizing in a direct manner; although the result as to testimony is the same: "Ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake." "In your patience possess ye your souls." But there is not a word about the abomination of desolation. "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." And this was accomplished in the siege of Jerusalem which has already taken place, as history testifies. Possibly, there may be similar features when the nations shall surround Jerusalem; but no mention is made in Luke of a time of distress

such as never was; and the interval between the fall of Jerusalem and the fulfilling the times of the Gentiles is distinctly predicted. What is said is, "There shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people," and they "shall be led away captives into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled." This is altogether another matter. There is no account of any deliverance of the Jews. It is not said, "Blessed is he . . . that cometh to the 1335 days"; but, on the contrary, Jerusalem is trodden down until "the times of the Gentiles" are fulfilled; things are left in this state by the recital; the events following it being applicable down to the end, but accomplished in the desolation of Jerusalem by Titus.

Then, "There shall be signs in the sun and in the moon." Generally speaking, Luke does not answer to the exact accomplishment of the prophecies of Daniel, but principally to those whose fulfilment is now passed, and which Jesus set forth to His disciples, to influence their conduct, according to their particular question (*v.* 7), and the signs which He gives (*vv.* 24, 25) are applicable rather to the Gentiles than to Jerusalem and the Jews.

But to conclude: "It shall be for a time, times, and a half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy

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people, all these things shall be finished" (v. 7). This is another proof that this date relates to the end; for it is evident that he has not accomplished to scatter "the power of the holy people." They are still scattered. "And I heard, but I understood not" (v. 8).

We are not to conceive of the "end of the indignation" (viii. 19) as if it was the complete and entire re-establishment of the Jews in all their privileges. When the indignation is over, then the Christ (God, and the Christ in the name of God,) takes Israel as His people, to begin to establish them fully. The Jews having again become the people of God, He begins to put them into the enjoyment of all their privileges; and Christ begins to appropriate to Himself His rights as Messiah.

"None of the wicked shall understand" (v. 10). It will be the same in the Christian apostasy. "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (2 Thess. ii. 11). "But the wise shall understand." "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away . . . there shall be 1290 days" (v. 11). I have no knowledge why there should be the addition of these 30 days to 1260, unless it be an indication that after the end of the half-week, during which the Anti-christ prospers, there will yet be needed 30 days before the final blessing to the Jews comes in.

“Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the 1335 days”; for then the people will evidently be in a state of blessing. But, as I before said, Daniel gives no explanation or detail of this happiness, because the aim of the book is to show the care which God takes of the remnant during the time of its sojourn (and this was Daniel’s case) among the Gentiles. Other prophecies speak of their happy position after their re-settlement; but Daniel limits himself to the expression that they shall be blessed.

“But go thou thy way . . . and thou shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days” (v. 13). Thou shalt enjoy all this blessedness: be not troubled; God will take care of this, thou shalt have thy part in it all. We know that it is at the first resurrection (the resurrection of the saints) that Daniel will partake of this, in company with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all those who have been faithful in every epoch.

We have now arrived at the conclusion of this remarkable book. I have not pretended to anything more than to give you its great features, such as God has, as yet, shown them to me. By their help you may be enabled to proceed further for yourselves. May God bless His Word!