

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

"The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words:
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of truth" (Eccles. xii. 10).

"Moses, the Servant of the Lord."

(Read Deut. xxxiv. 5; Acts vii. 20-36).

ONE great principle in all true service is the consciousness of being upheld therein by God.

It was thus with the perfect Servant, the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom God spoke thus: "Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth" (Isa. xlii. 1). The grand feature in His service was that He never acted of Himself. "I can of mine own self do nothing," He said; "as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am He, and

that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And He that hath sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him" (John v. 30; viii. 28, 29).

The moment a servant acts independently, he acts from himself, and out of character. There is great danger of mistaking the busy religious activity around us at the present day for true service to God. I believe that God intends to mark very distinctly what man's natural understanding and power can effect, and what the power and wisdom of the Holy Ghost can effect (Rom. xv. 19).

Whenever we are living before men, instead of before God, there will be restlessness and disquiet. There may be the desire to do many things that are written in the word, but they will not be done in quiet and peaceful joy. We are never really preserved from hypocrisy unless we are living before God. It is the very best possible cure for the over-weening conceit we have, all of us, naturally of ourselves.

But let us seek to gather a little instruction from the history of "Moses, the servant of the Lord."

Moses was an eminent type of the Lord Jesus. And I would just notice in passing, that they are the only two persons mentioned in Scripture whose course we are able to trace from their birth on to the glory.

Moses' parents could not but recognise the remarkableness of their child (Heb. ix. 23).

It is worthy of notice that the life of Moses is divided into three distinct periods of forty years.

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The first forty he spent in Egypt as the “ son of Pharaoh’s daughter.”

The next forty in the wilderness tending the flock of his father-in-law. There, at “ the mountain of God,” he had a vision of glory, such as would never have been revealed to him in Egypt (Exod. iii. 1, 2).

In the third forty we have the account of the sorrowful and trying course he had run, as the servant of the Lord and of His people Israel, in bearing the burden of that people.

The first portion of his life was spent in Egypt. And Stephen, in the seventh chapter of Acts, speaks of him as being learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and mighty in words and in deeds (Acts vii. 22). But this wisdom of Egypt was not anything that God could own. Doubtless, Moses knew that God was about to use him as the “ deliverer ” of His people; but that which had been acquired *in* Egypt could not deliver the Lord’s people *from* Egypt.

And Moses himself, “ by *faith*, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward ” (Heb. xi. 24-26).

“ When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel ” (v. 23). Whatever ease and comfort Moses might have enjoyed in Pharaoh’s house (its luxury and its refinements, “ the treasures in Egypt,” were all his) his heart yearned over his brethren. He went out unto his brethren, and

looked on their burdens " (Exod. ii. 11). " And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian " (Acts vii. 24).

" Mighty in deeds," on behalf, too, of the people of God, but acting in the energy of the flesh, not as sent of God (hence what followed), Moses was thinking how *Moses* was to deliver the people. " He *supposed* his brethren would have understood how that God by *his* hand would deliver them " (v. 25).

But no, " they understood not," and Moses had another lesson to learn. God had to teach him that He would only be served by the power and strength that come from *Himself*, not by the strength or wisdom of Egypt. There cannot be two things more different than a person acting in the energy of the flesh, and one acting in the power of the Spirit. In the first case, there is always disappointment and surprise at the failure of our efforts.

When Moses had spent forty years in the wilderness, doing, as it were, nothing, we find him answering God's message, " Come now, therefore, and I will send thee," etc., thus: " Who am I, that *I* should go unto Pharaoh, and that *I* should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? " (Exod. iii. 11).

When he comes to be *sent of God*, there is the deep sense of the responsibility of it laid upon him, and he shrinks from it. Before, when going forth in the energy of the flesh, he was bitterly disappointed at the failure he met with; now, he has learned his own insignificance, and he says, " Who am I? " .

And it is ever thus. When a saint feels that

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he is sent of God on any mission, there is always the deepest prostration of spirit. This may be brought about by painful discipline of soul, but the end of God's training is to break down self-confidence, so that when at last the person goes forth in service it is with the feeling, “ Who am I? ”

One great characteristic of the flesh we have acquired by being so long in “ Egypt ” is the dislike to say, “ Who am I? ” But God must produce this frame of mind before He uses us. The most cultivated understanding, human wisdom and research, will not stand in any stead in the service of God.

“ And the next day he showed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one another? But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday? ” (Acts vii. 26-28).

He only gets misunderstood by those whom he seeks to serve. When he would be the man of peace, his reward is the taunt, “ Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? ”

Mark this, beloved. I am speaking of Moses as one knowing, in a sense, what communion with God was, but who had not learned as yet to throw off Egypt's strength and wisdom. We must fail when we go a warfare at our own charges. Many a saint runs on for a while (just after his conversion, perhaps) in the eagerness and zeal of the flesh, doing right things, but not in the spirit of dependence on God. By and by his energy flags, and he feels

as though he were entirely useless, as though God could never again employ him in His service.

Now this is a profitable lesson, though a deeply humbling one. The Lord often trains an individual thus, for much after usefulness in the Church. Just so was it with Moses.

“ Then Moses fled at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian ” (v. 29).

These forty years of Moses' life are passed over very slightly by God. No doubt, had man written the history of them, we should have had given to us a wonderful account of all that Moses did and said in the land of wisdom. The Spirit of God is silent as to it all. And why, beloved? Because the wisdom of “ Egypt ” is foolishness with God, and the strength of “ Egypt ” weakness with God.

During the next forty years Moses is lost to Egypt and to Israel. But then he is alone with God. In solitude the Lord meets him at Horeb, “ the mountain of God ” (Exod. iii. 1). And I doubt not that Horeb (solitude) is thus named because it was a place where Moses had enjoyed communion with God, and where he had learned a lesson which he never could have learned when in Egypt; that it, dependence on God. In secret he was being prepared for all those mighty achievements he was soon to be called on to perform before Pharaoh, and Egypt, and Israel.

It is in solitude that God chiefly teaches His people. The blessed Jesus sought for refreshment on this earth in being alone with God. And this is the place where the saint learns his own weakness and God's strength. He enters into the depths of his own evil, and also into the depths

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of God's grace. He learns to deny self, to subdue imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God (2 Cor. x. 5 6). He proves the necessity of the cross.

“And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died : and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them ” (Exod. ii. 23-25). “ The time of the promise ” had at length come, and now we find Moses about to be prepared and sent forth as the “ ruler and deliverer ” of Israel (Acts ii. 17, 35).

One preparation had been forty years passed in solitude, in secret training with God, in the wilderness, but there was another thing needful; namely, the manifestation of God's glory. “ And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him, in the wilderness of mount Sinai, an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush ” (v. 30).

There had never been aught like this seen in Egypt. Egypt was not the place for God to show His “ great sight.” The wonders of nature were exhibited there, in the periodical inundation of the river and the like. The wonders of art were also there. But here was something that Moses' Egyptian wisdom failed in unravelling. “ When Moses saw it he wondered at the sight ” (v. 31). “ The bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed ” (Exod. iii. 2).

But unless we have wisdom to understand why the bush was not consumed, we have not the real

wisdom of God. It is impossible in Egypt to see the glory of the living God. It is above all human thought or conception. It is something which man has no power of explaining. We may tell people of the sight, but they will not credit us; man's wisdom is at fault. Where did Moses afterwards see the same glory? In the "pillar of fire" which accompanied Israel through their wanderings in the wilderness (Exod. xiii. 21, 22). When shall it be seen again? When the Lord shall be revealed in flaming fire which will burn up His adversaries (Isa. lxvi. 15, 16; 2 Thes. i. 7, 8).

"And as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, saying, I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold" (Acts vii. 31, 32).

This "great sight" cannot be spoken of by Egyptian lips, it cannot be understood by Egyptian ears, and *we* must have the anointing of the eye-salve to see it. In the poor, feeble, worthless bush, in the midst of which the fire burned without consuming it, we have a blessed emblem of that which, though weak and uncomely in itself, is encircled with the glory of God; namely, the Church.

What Moses learned was this: that it was God's purpose to encircle Israel with His own glory. And how could this be (either with regard to Israel or the Church) without its being consumed by that glory?

It was to be encircled with God's salvation.

Until a person knows the security of the Church, how precious it is to God, and that nothing shall prevail against it, he is not qualified to be the

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servant of God to it. Salvation has GOD appointed for walls and bulwarks. One feels increasingly the importance of a deep sense of our own insignificance. All that is merely natural must wither before the glory of God.

What a marvellous thing that there should be a little, weak bush, as it were on this earth, with everything against it, and yet nothing able to prevail! Has not God associated the Church with His own holiness? And this a deeply important truth. “Our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. xii. 29).

Well, we would not have it otherwise, for the bush in the fire is not consumed. He will not allow any sin connected with that Church to come before Him. He has judged it in the cross of Christ; sentence has not only been passed upon it, but executed. When once the cross of Christ is really understood, the very holiness of God is seen to be the guarantee of the security of the Church.

“Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground” (v. 33). We are brought by grace into the place of holiness, and to rejoice in God’s holiness. There the soul learns its deepest lessons of what sin is. It sees not only its own nothingness, but its oppositeness to God. There it learns that salvation must be of grace from first to last. These things are only fully learnt in the sanctuary. The moment we are rescued from the world we are brought to stand in the place of holiness, and God deals with us accordingly. The reason for His chastening and admonition is that we may be thereby partakers of “His holiness” (Heb. xii. 10). He desires.

that we should be as near Him in spirit as we are in our head.

What must Moses' thoughts have been respecting all the glory of Egypt when he turned aside to see "this great sight?" (Exod. iii. 3). And what would ours be, beloved, with regard to the world, were the eye always and steadily fixed on the glory? When Moses was engaged in solitarily feeding the flock in the wilderness there might have been some longings after the glory of Egypt; but these must have ceased when he had this manifestation made to him of the glory of God, "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

So with ourselves. When we think of the true glory of the Church, we are able to look at the glory of "Egypt," and feel ourselves weaned from *it*, as well as weaned from the wisdom and power of "Egypt." But if our souls are only looking at their own weakness, we shall very likely be tempted to long after "Egypt" and the things of "Egypt." Paul was qualified to serve the Church by his apprehension of its being one with Jesus in the glory (Acts ix. 5).

In Moses needing a spokesman we are taught that neither the wisdom nor the eloquence of "Egypt" will be of any avail in God's service (Exod. iv. 10-16).

Very often there may be busy activity in service, but not the quiet sitting at the feet of Jesus, drinking in from His lips our knowledge of truth and grace. We need much to realize that we have to do with God, even when we are serving others.

Mark what follows. "I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt,

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and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt. This Moses whom they refused saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God *send* to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush ” (vv. 34, 35).

But God must bring Moses out of Egypt first. He could not make such a communication to him there. It was the bane of Abraham to get into Egypt. Abram had no altar there. And so is it with us. When we get into the world it is the same thing. We cannot have our altar. Communion with God is interrupted.

In the first place God reveals His name : “ I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham,” etc. (v. 32). Secondly, His grace : “ I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people,” etc. (v. 34). How blessed to be assured that there is not one sorrow of His people, not one groan, but He knows it altogether.

Then God gives the formal commission : “ And now come, I WILL SEND THEE into Egypt.

“ And Moses said unto God, *Who am I?* ” (Exod. iii. 11). After he had worshipped God as an unshod worshipper, there was a shrinking from that which God laid on him to do, though, forty years before, he had been most eager to enter upon the same sort of service. It is a most solemn thing to have to do with serving the people of God. The responsibility involved is that under which we must sink, if left to ourselves.

Moses now knew that he that would serve Israel must have a great deal of shame and reproach to encounter. Hence the need of the training through which he had been put. So

with regard to service in the Church. If Paul is "a chosen vessel" to bear Christ's name "before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel," the Lord, in making this known to Ananias, says, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts ix. 15, 16). And what was Paul's after-experience? "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches," etc. Again, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love, the less I be loved" (2 Cor. xii. 10; 15).

Paul had the flesh crushed at the outset; crushed again after he had been taken up into the third heavens; crushed all the way through. In service he never went on in the energy of the flesh, but as one who knew that it must be endurance to the very end (2 Tim. ii. 10).

How often does a young Christian think, "I will tell others of the Lord's love, and they must believe me"; or, "I will tell Christians of the security of the Church, of the coming of the Lord, of the heavenly calling of the saints, and the like; and they *must* receive it."

But no! we need to learn that we cannot carry every thing before us. Where there is the most ascertained mission from God, there is always the deepest humility. Paul, in speaking of his arduous service, says, "I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet *not I*, but the *grace of God which was with me*" (1 Cor. xv. 10).

The preparation for active service is in secret with God, in learning ourselves in communion with Him. There the battle is really fought. Power for active service is acquired, not *in* active service, but in intercourse with God in secret.

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“ MOSES, THE SERVANT OF THE LORD ” 13

Whatever we do in service we ought to do as worshippers. Our service would then be carried on in felt responsibility to God, and it would bring blessing to others and to our own souls.

I believe the saints often think that it is an *easy* thing to serve God. But no! it is a *hard* thing to serve Him in spirit and in truth. To serve God in the sense of our being nothing, and His being every thing, is a hard thing. The place of the servant of God is to hide himself, and let God appear. Thus it was with the perfect Servant, our Lord Jesus. The most splendid achievement, without this, is not true service to God.

There would be much more profitable, happy, useful service if we only saw more of God's order. One delights to see activity in service; but then it should be connected with the being in secret with God, and the seeing of His purpose with regard to the Church. Thus we should serve happily and holily, not as though God *needed* our service, but as desiring to glorify Him in our bodies, which are *His*.

God was in Christ down here, revealing Himself in Him. He was showing man in Him that the heart that had a need might trust Him with that need. All His words and miracles were to lead the heart to this; that it might trust God in love. This was *in* the world. When once my eyes have been opened to know He is there, as the poor woman at the well of Sychar, I get to *know* God, and I can *trust* Him.

The Shunammite Again.

(Read 2 Kings viii. 1-6.)

FROM this short notice of another path in the ways of our prophet, we see again how intimate he was with the mind of God. For here we are reminded again of that scripture, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets." (Amos iii. 7.) The famine must be told to Elisha now, as to Joseph, and Agabus, and others, in older or more recent times. (Gen. xli. 16; Acts xi. 28.) "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" was the language of the same gracious Lord, who thus treats His people as friends. (Gen. xviii. 17.) It was the mind and the hand, the counsels and the strength, of the Lord, which this prophet so gloriously carried with him.

And we find all His riches still used in grace to others. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." (1 Cor. xii. 7.) Abraham used it to the profit of others and, knowing the proposed judgment, interceded for the righteous remnant in Sodom. So Elisha here. He heard of the coming famine, and he warned the godly woman of Shunem to provide for her household against it.

Her circumstances are changed from what they once were. This loved and honoured woman has apparently become a widow; her little child, the gift of God to this daughter of Sarah, has grown up. But the famine has separated them from their home and their fields in the land of Issachar (chap. iv.) And she had once loved her mercies there. She "dwelt among her own people." She valued not the court or its patronage then; nor

does she now seek it, save to be restored to the same simplicity of her home and her own people. And surely we may judge that "the little chamber on the wall" helped to draw back her recollections and desires to that loved place where she had known the quickening and resurrection strength of her Lord and Saviour, by the hand of His chosen servant, Elisha.

Gehazi is in other circumstances also. It may be that the root of the matter was in him; but he is a leper. He is separated from the prophet of God now. It was not famine, however, but covetousness, that did this. He has now only to recollect, but no longer to witness, "the great things" of Elisha. Happy, if in repentance he can tell of them with holy delight to the king; happier, had constancy in faith and in spirit kept him still in company with his master.

But he had wronged his own soul, and we all do it in our way and measure, beloved. "Blessed is the man that heareth me," says Wisdom, "watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord; but he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul." (Prov. viii. 34, 35.) And gracious it is in the Lord to give us this parting look at him. We may hope that as he had once pierced himself through with many sorrows because he would be rich (1 Tim. iv.), so now, that money is no longer the thing on his heart or his lips, but recollections of Elisha. For the Lord here graciously seems to use him again, and make him helpful to this dear and godly friend of the prophet in the day of her necessity. Happy is it to receive from the hand of the Lord such a pledge of His restoring grace,

though His Spirit be so grieved with the backslidings of His people! Oh that we may praise Him for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! * (Ps. cvii. 15.)

“A word spoken in due season, how good is it,” we may almost say of the incident in this little passage (Prov. xv. 23.)

Gehazi and the king were talking of the Shunammite, as the Shunammite came up to the place where they were. And how often have we occasion to notice like happy coincidences! There are scarcely any who have not to recount such things at times in their history. “We were just speaking of you,” has been again and again said to one suddenly making his appearance in the midst of a little knot of friends. And faith will own the mercy of such harbingers casting up the highway, and making straight the crooked paths, which lead to some desired blessing, as in this case before us. And faith will not complain that it is not always so. For faith says, “It is well,” when providences either help or cross us.

'Tis well when on the mount,
They feast and joy in love;
And 'tis as well, in God's account,
When they the furnace prove.

It is an equal hand of Love that takes the thorn out of the flesh, or leaves it there. If left, it is only made to work further good.

* I am aware that this introduction of Gehazi may not be favourable to him in the judgment of some. They may think that it is a symptom of his being still a man of the world, and covetous, because he is found here attached to the court, and apparently in some confidence with the king. It may be so. But still, I rather gather the above impression from the scene in which we here find him taking part.

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of truth" (Eccles. xii. 10).

The Prophecy upon Hazael.

(Read 2 Kings viii. 7-15).

WE have here, as in the preceding case, an instance of the intimacy of the prophet with the counsels of the Lord. What daily communications there must have been between them! Indeed, in the history of the people of God glorious revelations have been vouchsafed to those faithful ones who stood obedient, witnessing, and suffering remnants in evil times. Thus to Ezekiel and Daniel among the captives, what extended vision of divine purposes was opened to them! So when Zechariah, Haggai, and their companions began in honesty of heart, and in spite of enemies, to work at the house of the Lord as His faithful remnant returned out of captivity what thoughts and scenes of coming glory are made to pass before them! As still more mar-

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vellously afterwards, in like manner, before John in Patmos, where he was a companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus. And Elijah and Elisha were of the same. They were, each of them in his season, the godly remnant of their day, and had very precious the eye, the ear, and the lips of the Lord opened to them.

But from this passage in his history we find that Elisha had honour beyond the limits of Israel. We see him in Damascus, and his arrival is soon reported to the king, and honoured by him. The case of Naaman may have given him this introduction to the honour and confidence of the Syrian court, and is some evidence of the testimony which that healed leper, that converted sinner of the Gentiles, had borne to the name of the God of Israel, so that at least the Syrian king does not now again look to the *king* but to the *prophet* of Israel (chap. v. 5).

But there is another point of moral value to our souls that shows itself here. I mean in the character of Hazael. And I must notice it.

Hazael had come to Elisha with an inquiry from the Syrian king, his master, about the disease under which the king was then suffering. Elisha tells him to say to his master, "Thou mayest certainly recover." But having given him this answer to the king's inquiry, he adds another word, addressed merely to Hazael himself: "Howbeit the Lord hath showed me that he shall surely die."

On hearing this, we read that Hazael "settled his countenance steadfastly until he was ashamed." *This was hypocrisy.* Under the eye of our prophet, before the truthful mind of the man of God, this show of his countenance wit-

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nessed against him. He feigned sorrow at the prophet's prophecy of Benhadad's death.

The prophet himself, during this little moment of Hazael's practising grief, appears to have been following the course of divine inspirations through his own soul, and weeps at the prospect of all the evil which this Hazael would do to Israel when he got into power; for into such scenes the inspiration he was now under was leading him. But this sorrow was genuine, as Hazael's was hypocritical. It was the unforced fruit of a heart made sorry at the divine vision which his eye was then resting on.

But after a little more intercourse between them, which I will not notice, Hazael returns to Benhadad, and mis-states to him the prophet's answer to his inquiry. The prophet had said, "Thou mayest certainly recover"; thereby intimating that there was nothing in the disease itself that was fatal; and then he added, "Howbeit, the Lord hath showed me that he shall surely die," thereby intimating that Benhadad was to perish by other means than the disease. Hazael, however, now tells the king that the prophet had said he should "surely recover."

Here was the mis-statement or the lie of this hypocrite. But the end strikingly shows the full unmixed truth of the prophet's words; for the disease does not kill the king, but other means, the hand of this murderous Hazael. And thus he *might* have recovered, but he *surely* dies, as the prophet had spoken.

This enigmatic style of the answers or oracles of the Spirit are worthy of our admiration. There was something like it in our prophet's word upon the unbelieving nobleman: "Behold, thou shalt

see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof." (ch. vii. 2). For, however strange this might sound in the ear, to the letter it was made good. "So it fell out to him, for the people trod upon him in the gate, and he died"; that is, in the very act of bringing out their barley and their flour *under his own eye*, the crowd crushed him to death. So here the words "mayest recover" and "surely die," are made true by the event, though they sounded strange to the ear.

The case, however, of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, is still more remarkable. Jeremiah had said of him that his eyes should behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and that he should go to Babylon (Jer. xxxiv. 3). Ezekiel had said that he should go to Babylon, but should not see it, though he should die there (Ezek. xii. 12, 13). Almost on the verge of impossibility all this seemed to be. But to the utmost jot and tittle all this was accomplished. They were the words of the *lips* of Him whose *hand* is wonderful and mighty, and sovereign in all its operations (Jer. xxxiv. 5-7).

This, however, only as we pass. In the history of this scripture on which we have now been meditating we have indeed an awful picture of human selfishness and hypocrisy. And it is admonitory to us all. A look may be deep hypocrisy, as a word may be. And our watching and prayer should be that the searching Spirit may find truth in the inward parts, and truth about us everywhere, in every look and motion.

God's Purpose and the Believer's Portion.

IT gives great rest to the Christian's heart to know, on the authority of the word of God, that our place, our portion, and our prospect, all flow from the eternal purpose of God; all is according to the love of His heart, and all to the glory of His great Name.

These three facts, we may say with all possible confidence, form the solid foundation of the believer's peace and rest. They are presented with uncommon force and fulness in the opening sentences of the Epistle to the Ephesians: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in the heavenlies, in Christ" (v. 3).

What a place! What a portion!

"In the heavenlies."

"In Christ."

"All spiritual blessings."

What perfect security is here! It is not like Israel of old, placed in the land of Canaan, in the enjoyment of an earthly inheritance, surrounded by enemies, liable to be dislodged from their position and robbed of their portion; holding both the one and the other on the slender and slippery condition of their obedience.

How different in the Christian's case! Instead of certain temporal blessings, we have "*all* spiritual blessings." There is nothing wanting, not a single blessing omitted. And then it is in the heavenlies, beyond the reach of every enemy and every hostile influence. We can truly say, "There is neither adversary nor evil occurrent" in the sphere of our blessings (1 Kings v. 4).

Certainly we have to wrestle with spiritual wickedness in seeking to make good our position, and to realize our portion. But we are blessed according to all the fulness of that expression used by the Holy Ghost, "All spiritual blessings" and these blessings are not temporal or earthly, but spiritual and in heaven, yea, in Christ.

These blessings are heavenly, eternal, divine. Nothing can spoil them; no power on earth or hell, men or devils, can wrest a single one of our blessings out of the hand of Him in whom we possess them. Our Lord Christ has won them for us; won them by His death on the tree; won them in pursuance of God's eternal counsels, and according to all the love of His heart. "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (v. 4).

Here we are conducted to the very source of our blessings. And oh! what a marvellous source! God's choice, God's purpose, placed in Christ before the foundation of the world. Can anything mar this? Can anything occurring in time; anything in us or about us? Can aught hinder the accomplishment of God's purpose? Impossible! That purpose was formed in eternity, and founded in Christ, the eternal Son of the Father.

Assuredly God will make good His own purpose, spite of every opposing influence. The devil thought to hinder, by leading the first man to commit sin; he thought he had gained his end by getting him put out of paradise. But God was above him. His purpose, blessed be His name, was not based on the first man in paradise, but on the Eternal Son; and hence the first

GOD'S PURPOSE AND THE BELIEVER'S PORTION. 23

man's sin, and his expulsion from the garden, only furnished the occasion for God to bring forth from the treasury of His eternal counsels His purpose of love towards us.

It was not possible that any creature, man, devil or other, should hinder the accomplishment of the blessed purpose of God. Eden itself might be overrun with thorns and briers; the man who had been set there in innocence, to dress it and to keep it, might be turned out a complete, a hopeless moral ruin. But Eden was not to be the sphere, nor the first man the instrument, of our blessing. God's counsels could not find a solid foundation amid the dust of the old creation, or in the doings of the first man. No; this could never be; and hence, when sin entered, our ever-gracious God took occasion thereby to display the riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us by Christ Jesus.

Now, we hear nothing of *grace* amid the bowers of paradise, or throughout the fields of the old creation. We see power, wisdom, goodness, but not grace. There was no need.

But when sin entered; when the first man had fallen irretrievably; then the divine purpose in *grace* was unfolded; a purpose, not to restore the ruin of the first man and of the old creation, but to introduce the Second Man, and in Him the new creation, in which all things are of God, and in which (all praise to sovereign grace and redeeming love!) we who are believers have our place for ever.

What a mistake the devil made in meddling with man in the garden of Eden! How completely he missed his mark! If, indeed, the purpose of God had been founded on Adam; if the

sphere of its display was to be the first creation, then verily the enemy would have triumphed. But thank God! it was not so. Adam was not the man, nor was Eden the sphere, but "the Man Christ Jesus," and "the new creation" (1 Pet. ii. 5; 2 Cor. v. 17).

This, we repeat, gives perfect rest, settled and everlasting repose, to the heart. The matter is taken completely out of our hands, and off the ground of mere nature, whether innocent or guilty, fallen or unfallen. The whole fabric of the divine counsels and of our blessings rests only and altogether on the imperishable ground of accomplished redemption. The ruin has been met, and met in such a way as to bring everlasting glory to God, and to put us on a better, higher, firmer ground than Adam in innocence could ever have occupied. With what joyful emphasis, therefore, can we repeat the apostle's doxology: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (not merely the God and Creator of Adam) "who hath blessed us with *all* spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, in Christ" (not temporal blessings in Eden): "according as He hath chosen us *in Him* before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy" (not merely innocent) "and without blame before Him in love."

How magnificent it all is! How it exceeds all human thought! It brings us back to the unfathomable depths of God's eternal mind, and unfolds before our eyes His marvellous counsels respecting us. Here we learn, to our unspeakable joy and deep consolation, that it was God's purpose to have us in His presence, "holy and blameless," even as His own beloved Son;

GOD'S PURPOSE AND THE BELIEVER'S PORTION. 25

"Having predestinated us into the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (vv. 5, 6).

Can aught exceed the moral grandeur and glory of all this? What can the devil do here? What can sin or death, or aught else do? Who or what can prevent the Almighty God from accomplishing His eternal purpose? Can anything in the whole wide range of creation interfere in the smallest degree with the divine determination to have us in His presence, according to His own choice, and according to the love of His heart?

If God was pleased to counsel, before the foundation of the world, that from the midst of a world of wretched sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, He would elect some to be in His presence, holy and blameless, in the blessed relationship of sons, who or what can hinder? Who shall disannul the eternal purpose of God? Where is the power that shall frustrate His plans?

The Christian reader will do well to get a very firm grasp of the truth on which we have been dwelling. It is the eternal purpose of God to have us in His presence "holy and without blame." And not only so, but it is the joy of His heart to have us there before Him "in love." We hear Him saying, "It is meet we should make merry, and be glad." (Luke xv. 32).

The sense of this must assure the believer's heart, and set it at perfect liberty. "Perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John iv. 8). God would not have us in His presence with a single trace of fear or misgiving in our hearts. He must have us perfectly at home, perfectly at ease;

and therefore He makes us fit to be there (Col. i. 12).

But we must remember that it cost God something to carry out His purpose, and gratify His heart with respect to us. For we were sinners, guilty, ruined, hell-deserving sinners, "dead in trespasses and sins," walking "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and where by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. ii. 1-3).

Now the question is, How can a holy, sin-hating God, who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity (Hab. i. 13), how can such a One have to do with us? If He cannot allow a single taint of sin in His holy presence, how can we be there? The enemy of our souls would raise the question. He would use the truth of divine holiness and human guilt and vileness as an insuperable barrier to the carrying out of God's eternal purpose, to have us in His presence, "holy and without blame." But blessed for ever be the God of all grace! He has, triumphantly and gloriously, answered this question. He has removed every barrier, and silenced for ever the enemy and the avenger: "God so loved the world that He *gave* His only begotten Son" (John iii. 16). And then we have the other side of this great subject: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so *must* the Son of man be lifted up" (John iii. 14).

Here the full, glorious truth shines before us.

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The Son of God was given, given in love, perfect love. But the Son of Man was lifted up, in righteousness, perfect righteousness. This is the solid foundation of the whole matter. God "loved the world"; but sin must be judged, must be utterly and eternally condemned. It will not do to take up merely one side of this stupendous question; we must have both sides. If God were to bring us to heaven in our sins, where were the righteousness? If He were to send us to hell, because of our sins, where were the love?

Mark the answer, the glorious answer to the question, the triumphant solution to the difficulty! God gave His Son in love, and bruised Him in righteousness. He loved the world, but He hated sin; and when we behold the Son of God and Son of man hanging on the tree, we read, in characters divinely deep and broad, God's love to sinners, *and His eternal hatred and condemnation of sin.* Thus it is that "*grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

Magnificent utterance! The very gist and marrow of the gospel! "Grace reigns," not at expense of but "through righteousness"; and this, "unto eternal life"; and all "by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. v. 21).

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

The Spirit and the Word are all in all for spiritual life. Furnished with this power faith goes forward, strengthened by the encouraging word of our God. This is the path where Jesus walked.

The Path of Peace and Power.

(Read 1 John ii.)

WHY is it that the people of God are not in full enjoyment of the gospel?

Many whom one recognises as fully the Lord's have but little joy in the Holy Ghost, because they have either never had a clear view of the gospel, or because, having been clearly seen, it has not been sustained in power for their own comfort and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this scripture different classes of saints are brought before us. We read of both "little children" and "children." The former is a particular class; the latter the whole family.

As to particular classes we find "babes," or "little children," "young men," and "fathers"; and in the details given in connection with "babes" and "young men" an answer is presented to this question as to the want of peace in many cases (1 Pet. ii. 2; 1 John ii. 12-14).

We find a certain thing is known to the "babes." They have a certain power and a certain place, and in that place they are as able to walk and to please God, as are the fathers in their place.

The "babes" have a certain knowledge as to two things. The CHRIST is come. They know the gospel: that God anointed His holy Servant Jesus, sent Him into the world as the head of a people. "And ye," says the apostle, "have heard," of "antichrist" too, the man indwelt of Satan instead of by God (v. 18). The "babes" know these two heads.

Satan is working the whole family of man, as far as he can, up to a certain point, and that is

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the setting up of one to be worshipped instead of God. That is Satan's aim.

But God has stepped in, and set His Son, virgin-born, at His right hand, and that which belongs to that Christ in the world has a master-spirit in it above the master-spirit of the world. There are but the two powers. Each soul is either subject to Christ, and led of the Spirit, or under the dominion of the spirit of darkness.

He says, "Ye know the truth, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is anti-christ that denieth the Father and the Son" (*vv. 21, 22*).

Here I get what gives my soul firmness. If I fail as much as Peter, or more than any other, the truth is that Christ is still sitting at the right hand of God for me. All my inconsistencies cannot change that eternal truth of God.

And you cannot set aside Christ without setting aside the Father too. This Son of the Father who is connected with all the plans and affections of the Father.

What had they "heard from the beginning"? "That Jesus is the Christ." Here I have perfection as God sees it and gave it to me.

If people talk of development, I say they are going beyond God, for He has given me Jesus as the expression of His mind, and I cannot get beyond that: "Him that is from the beginning" (*v. 14*).

This is the marrow of peace when the soul is tried; God's certificate to my soul that the value of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ belongs to it individually.

People often say, "It is mine because I have had such deep experiences."

God has not said that. He has said that there is the testimony of His Christ, and if that dwells in me I shall continue in the Father and the Son (v. 24).

You have lost peace. Why? Because, doubtless, you have forged a link of your own, and not one of God's making; so that directly happy joy or sense of experience is gone you are miserable.

Keep fast hold of the testimony of God about His Christ. There is not a single bit of rest apart from the person of the Lord Jesus and God's testimony about Him; and nothing could be more gracious than God not allowing peace apart from the way He has given it, for nothing else has sanctifying power.

Though only fit for antichrist, God has taken me up and connected me with His Christ. But if I turn away from Him, how can I know it all mine?

Every step of the way you walk with God you find He has a path of His own. The "babes" were, as it were, closeted in the nursery where they were to "desire the sincere milk of the word, that they might grow thereby" (1 Pet. ii. 2). They had to learn how everything was shut up for them in Christ, and when they had got this they had to leave the place of being "babes."

Suppose one happy in the gospel goes forth without any idea of what is in his own heart and in the world, that system opposed to the sphere apart from nature in which grace has set him, human tastes and the like, will act upon him, and he will fall into association with what is in direct opposition to God. He cannot then have peace, for he has failed in carrying out God's

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thoughts about him in connection with His plans in Christ.

God's plan is to have a people on earth connected with Himself in heaven, His house on high their dwelling-place, and they acting here according to the position in which God has placed them; though having the flesh within with its lusts and desires.

Can the "babes" come out of the nursery, and go and connect themselves with that which crucified the Son, of which the "friendship is enmity with God," without losing as an immediate result peace of heart and conscience (James iv. 4).

Why does my peace all ooze out?

Often does the answer come, "Because I am walking carelessly through the world, forgetting it is the place where Christ was crucified."

A child of God may go as far as Lot did, but joy cannot be then sustained. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos iii. 3). My cup of joy can never be full if the world, where God is not the centre, is the place where I am found, and in the spirit of which I am walking.

What is the world?

There are definitions of it past all calculation, but God's answer is, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (vv. 15, 16).

"All that is in the world!" What! all the

pomp of the great city, its chariots, its horses, its revels? No! *Lust!* And what is lust? Desire after a thing, it is answered. But that is no definition.

In one sense no heart ever desired glory, honour, and pomp as Christ did, for God has promised them to Him.

Lust is the stretching forth the hand to take something for *self*. If God says, "Take," it is no lust to take. But if the very crown prepared by God for you were there, and you were to take it yourself unbidden by Him, it would be lust.

God has sheltered us in Christ. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal. v. 16). The Spirit seeks the things of God; the things that are best for us, and that are for the glory of God. Lust is taking for myself, and the better the thing the worse it is. Lust is the very essence of the world; and "Lo, I come to do Thy will" God's way.

Wherever there is "Thus saith the Lord," though it be going to the stake, you will find a joy and a calmness never found in stolen waters taken for self (Prov. ix. 17).

A path utterly unblameable may be pursued, and yet God may say, I did not put you there.

And this comes in to interfere with the sustenance of quiet peace in the heart. Am I walking as Thou wouldst have me, Lord? is the question for each heart. "Lo, I come to do *Thy* will," simple obedience to God, is the one great thing for the soul (Heb. x. 9).

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WORDS OF TRUTH

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

## The Anointing of Jehu.

(Read 2 Kings ix.-x.)

**O**UR prophet is not the principal object here. But he is seen. And the whole history being one of very deep moral value I would not pass it by.

It is another solemn lesson. It affords us an awful illustration of the doctrine of Scripture, that the Lord may use, instrumentally or ministerially, those in whom personally He takes no delight. This is a solemn fact. Balaam could never have stood in the mind or sympathies of God. But Balaam the prophet is used, as are also Saul the king and Judas the apostle.

Our souls may well pause over truth like this, and be admonished. "Have we not PROPHESED in Thy Name? . . . I never KNEW you" (Matt. vii. 22, 23). No communion in spirit, though the

hand or the tongue may have been used by the Lord.

And this clearly shows itself in Jehu. The hand of this captain is used, but there is no communion between him and the Lord. He goes through his service. He executes his commission to the full. But there is no expression whatever of a soul exercised toward God. He takes up and lays down most solemn and important transactions, and all of them, too, in the name and at the command of the Lord; but there is no exercise of heart as in the sanctuary or presence of God.

And this is just what marks the man whom God can use ministerially, but in whom He can have no joy personally. ALL may be used in this DEAD way: KNOWLEDGE as well as SERVICES may be taken up, taken up by a dead intellect as in a dead hand. For what is knowledge, if used as a mere material? Jehu had both. He had knowledge and strength; he had an understanding that could apprehend the divine decrees touching the house of Ahab, and a hand ready to execute them. But it was a dead intellect and a dead hand. No divine life or grace filled or moved either. And with us, knowledge will be but the same, if it be not the occasion of awakening divine affections. Jesus' knowledge ever made Him enter into and reflect the divine counsels. But there is nothing of this in Jehu. He can talk of God's purposes, and execute them; but there is no communion with God through all his actions.

And here I would turn to look at something which is in full moral contrast with all this, and which shines beautifully in the spirit of Elisha.

He told his messenger that as soon as he had poured the oil on Jehu's head, he was to open

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the door, and flee, as though he were to have no communion with Jehu; like the man of God who was not to have sympathy with the place he was sent to curse (1 Kings xiii. 9). He had a business to do with Jehu, weighty business; but that was all. And in this Elisha blessedly stands in kindred feeling with God Himself. We have already seen how gloriously he carried in him both the MIND and POWER of God, revealing the one and exercising the other; but in this case he shows that he carried the TASTES, the SENSES, of the blessed God also.

This is truly to be desired by our souls. We are much to covet this holy attainment. God has no PERSONAL joy in Jehu, though He may use him, as I have already noticed. So Elisha had no PERSONAL joy in him, though by divine command he anoints him.

And in this Elisha stands distinguished from Jehonadab. It is not that Jehonadab was not faithful. It is not that he was not a separated one, a saint of God. But he is not in Elisha's elevation, as Lot was not in Abraham's, nor Obadiah in Elijah's. Jehonadab has not this divine sense of what Jehu was. He gets up into his chariot. He strikes hearts with him, if I may speak so. He rejoices in his work. But Elisha and the Lord have no delight in him. "Open the door, and flee, and tarry not," was the prophet's word to his messenger.

But this may turn to holy admonition, and lead us earnestly to desire of our God this precious sympathy with Himself; this companionship with the divine enjoyments, tastes and loathings. This was a deep work of the Spirit in the prophet's soul. He had much beside; the mind and the

power of God, as I have said, were with him. But, oh! this introduction of his soul into the divine sense of things and persons! This was a beauteous fruit of the Spirit's path and husbandry within him. This was divine. He could, like God Himself, travel the whole course of Jehu's action, and yet take no PERSONAL delight in him. But so it was not with Jehonadab. The senses of the spiritual mind were not so lively in him. And these differences we see continually.

This character, however, in Jehu is very solemn. There is no fragment of a broken heart; no outgoings of desire; no sense of the divine honour about him. He can even remind Bidkar of the day in which they both rode after Ahab in the days of his blood and covetousness (when the Lord laid the righteous burden upon him) with an unmoved soul. His soul takes no part in the recollection. He has no sense of share in all the evil. So unlike Daniel or Nehemiah, who rehearsing the sin of their people, their kings, their priests, and their prophets, still take their own place and share in all the mischief. So unlike David also, who, though the judgment of another was making way for him to reach the throne (as the judgment of Ahab's house was here preparing the like for Jehu), could see only the dishonour of the Lord's anointed; had no eye of joy for that throne which sparkled before it, but an eye of tears over that shame and fall of others which lay before it.

Thus is Jehu contrasted with those who are "of God" in similar scenes. And such contrast is that which lies between the flesh and the spirit, between a soul moved only by the corrupt prin-



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ciples of the world, and a soul ordered by the power and grace of God.

Still, it is a divine commission which he executes. But how awful in its character! On what a fearful journey does it send this sword of the Lord! From Ramoth to the vineyard of Naboth; thence to the going up to Gur; thence to Jezreel; thence to the shearing-house; and thence to Samaria; and all the road marked by blood; blood, too, appointed in righteousness to be shed! For though the sword that shed it cared not for righteousness, yet in its action the Lord was pleading with the flesh of Ahab and his house; as by and by He will have a greater pleading, even with ALL flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many (Isa. lvi. 16). And what shall be the rapidity and the stretch of the divine judgment then! What will be the journey of the sword of the Lord, or "the grounded staff" in that day! when "as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matt. xxiv. 27).

We may look at a moment of righteous judgment in this journey of Jehu. It is like the day of the Flood, or of Sodom, or of the Red Sea. Our souls, beloved, may afresh prize the precious blood that shelters us, and own also, with reverence, the way of Him to whom vengeance belongs.

Jehu executes the divine commission, it is true; but it served himself. The decree of God concerning Ahab was just that on which Jehu could get forward in the world. Like a true Pharisee, he would trade on religion, or use godliness as gain. Beyond that, it had no beauty for him.

nor power over him; and thus what religious zeal brought him, religious declension shall preserve to him. If he could give up Baal to get the throne, he can now give up Jehovah with as much ease to secure the throne. He can return to the calves of Jeroboam, after he has abolished the prophets of Ahab, that, as Jeroboam said, "the kingdom might not return to others."

Oh! the deep and serious lesson! May our souls ponder it, and seek an exercised heart and conscience in all service and all knowledge, lest all be dead in our minds and hands.

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### **"Abide in Me."**

**A**LL the blessings spoken of in John xv. are connected with the responsibility of those attached to Christ. It is not saving grace, that seeks and brings in the sinner, but the path in which the believer is to walk, and how he can keep in this path in the joy Christ gives. The vine, as a figure, has nothing to do with the Church. Individuals are here spoken of as branches; but the vine is not a figure of the Church.

In chapter xiii. the Lord is spoken of as going away to heaven, and He washes the disciples' feet.

In chapter xiv. He unfolds the joy He is going to prepare for them in the Father's house. He tells them what had been manifested to them in Himself: the Father, revealed in the Son, and the coming of the Holy Ghost the Comforter, when they would know their union with Him. He in

them, and they in Him, is what He puts before them in this chapter.

Two things are distinct: first, the place they had whilst He was on earth; He, the vine, they the branches; and, second, in chapter xvi., the heavenly part is brought out.

The vine is not the Head in heaven. You could not plant a vine there. In heaven there is no pruning or looking for fruit. It is what the Church is on earth, and if there is a false branch, it is cut off; it is the earthly condition of the Church, and the responsibility of the disciple as to his walk, and keeping and holding fast the joy that belongs to him in Christ.

“ These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full,” says the Lord (v. 11). If it were only the question of simple grace to the sinner here, it would cut it dreadfully short, for it is only FRIENDS that He speaks of laying down His life for, not ENEMIES. It is not here that He is the Friend of sinners, but it is if they are obedient they are His friends. “ Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you” (v. 14). It was the intimacy they were in with Him.

They are looked at as disciples, and told how they may have Christ’s joy abiding in their hearts. They are called to walk so as to abide practically in Him: “ That my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”

“ I am the true vine,” Christ says (v. 1). Israel was not the TRUE vine. Israel was spoken of by the prophets under the figure of a vine, and it brought forth wild grapes. Israel thought that when Messiah came, He would be the topmost branch. If we look at Isaiah xlii., after the

rejection of Israel as God's servant, Messiah is brought in as the true Servant; and then, in chapter lxxv., the Jewish remnant are treated as servants. Therefore, instead of Israel being the vine, and Christ the best branch, Christ Himself is the vine, and His disciples the branches.

The vine was planted on earth, and failed as to Israel; but the True Vine can never fail. He brought forth the best fruit, when tested and tried in every way; and He sets His disciples to bear fruit, saying, You are clean now; you are responsible to bear fruit. In ch. xiii., they were not all clean, but, Judas having gone out, He says, "Now ye are clean" (xv. 3).

A branch when broken off and cast forth, marks a mere professor. If the union of the Church as "the body" is understood, such a thought as a member being taken away could not be conceived: the body would not be perfect if this could be. If I am a member of the body, I belong to Christ Himself; I am taken into all the privileges He has brought His people into (1 Cor. xii, 12-14).

But as professing His name on earth, as branches of this vine, we need pruning to bear more fruit; and that is what the Father, as the Husbandman, is occupied with here. How wonderful for the people of God to be able to say He is ~~th~~ occupied with them! The Lord is watching for fruit; the Father pruning the branches to make them bear it.

"Now ye are clean," made white as snow. Where the word has been received, sinners are washed clean; but that is not the question here; it is "Abide in me, and I in you." It is entire confidence, entire dependence, and constancy of heart in looking to Christ, and getting all from

## “ ABIDE IN ME. ”

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Him. I repeat, it must be ENTIRE dependence. I may say I am dependent on Him, and something else start up, and off I go. We trust to self, and so we have not present dependence on Christ. How often, in any difficult circumstance, our minds start up, as if we could do something! When we have not the consciousness of having Christ with us, we get discouraged by difficulties; but if one gets the mind of God, and one starts with Him, the difficulty is gone. Without that one doubts whether one is in the right path, and, being confused, the difficulty becomes greater.

“ He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit ” (v. 5). What wonderful blessing, if made clean! Have we no desire for the glory of God; no affection toward Him? He has put us where He can look for fruit, though where everything around may hinder fruit-bearing; but if God has saved us and given us a portion with His Son in glory, what we have to do is to serve Him, and bear fruit where He has set us. It may be a very little branch, but it is to bear fruit, that the world may see Christ in those who are His down here while He is away. We have laid up our happiness in heaven; all is settled as to future joy, but He leaves us down here to show Him forth amongst those who know Him not

He turns next to professors, and it is, “ If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered ” (v. 6).

His own never can be cast forth.

“ If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you ” (v. 7).

It is not enough simply to abide in Christ; His words must abide in us also. I get the path of wisdom from His words, and I am called to walk in a path which is the wisdom, goodness and power of God, in a world of sin; not to set the world right by law, but to manifest Christ's goodness in a world that knows Him not. That is the path "which the vulture's eye hath not seen;" the divine Life has created for Himself a path through this world (Job xxviii. 8). I am not speaking of church discipline, but of God showing the path of divine wisdom and the path of divine life in this world.

At present God is not exercising His POWER: it is SUBJECTION, what Christ was here. He was the subject, obedient man. We are to follow Him, walking even as He walked. The word of God is the expression of that divine path; it is the one single thing that has come from God. The Lord says, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth" (John xvii).

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Luke iv. 4). He was the obedient man. I am to live by every word that comes out of God's mouth; and it is as perfect as Himself.

As the man under human authority receives the commander's word, and carries it out intelligently, so it is with the believer; he must carry it out, and live by every word, and abide in Christ with perfect, entire confidence.

It is just here that the heart is tested. Very often I think I should be happier in carrying out my own will; and that is where I get apart from Christ. Directly a believer's heart is in fellowship with Christ, not seeking his own will,

but the Lord's, it may be but a lowly little place, but it is Christ's divine path of glory, and there he gets the daily exercise of life.

Wanting to do our own will is the beginning of all evil. Do you think that you can make yourself happier by doing your own will? by doing something that you like, something that is of the world? Then you get away from Christ.

We find here the way we are being modelled : “ If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you ” (v. 7).

Can I say I have His word abiding in me? Then I have His own divine direction; I am filled with the knowledge of His will, and entirely dependent on Him.

But suppose awful difficulties arise in the way: giants and fenced cities. Well, ask what you will; the walls tumble down (Num. xiii. 28, 33). The difficulties in the way keep the believer in a lowly place leaning only the more on Christ. In difficulties we have to believe that what we ask will be done for us a great deal more. If we ask for our lusts, we shall get quails, and judgment with it, eating of the fruit of our own ways (James iv., 3; Num. xi. 32, 33).

But here it is the most entire, blessed confidence in Him. Having His word, I ask Him, and I get the things I ask. If I have His mind, I command His power. We cannot ask for what we will, but for what He wills. We know when we have simple and humble dependence on Him, and when we have His word abiding in us so that we know His mind and will, and if so, we may ask what we will; we command His heart (1 John v. 14, 15).

What a wonderful place of privilege to be in! We cannot have it in heaven as we have it down here. Having Christ, and bringing forth fruit; it is entire indentification of heart with the Lord Jesus. The Lord grant us more of it; a greater closeness to Himself; carried on and exercised by His word; to know His mind, and, having His power to carry out what we ask, what might we not have!

I am not looking for miracles, but in answer to prayer I do expect the exercise of His power. I feel how saints in this respect come short. If we have faith to expect an answer, we shall see difficulties, we do not know how, melted and gone. I cannot but think how short we come of abiding in Him, and having what we will done for us, getting an answer, if we see a brother sinning, or dying a natural death (1 John v. 16).

“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit” (v. 8).

It is our glory and blessedness that He is thinking of, laid up with God. Meanwhile, He says, You go and serve me; I want you to bear much fruit.

“As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you” (v. 9).

Here love takes a divine character. Here Christ gives, on the one hand, an expression of His own entire dependence on the other, and, on the other, the Father’s eternal delight in Him when down here, coming forth in those words, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. iii. 17). As we also read elsewhere: He “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.” There was in Him the unfolding of all that was perfect, and of



the most blessed obedience and love, that which was the Father's delight; and He says, “ As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you ” (v. 9). I have been with you in this world as my Father has been with me.

Beside this, there is His delight in them. Do you not think Christ's actual life when down here was the delight of the Father? So, as we abide in Christ's words, and follow Him, His delight is in us. His heart has been watching over us with earnest delight, as His Father's did over Him.

He says, I want you to be keeping close to me, that the outgoing of my delight may be unchecked: “ If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love ” (v.10).

What was His path down here? Doing the will of God, and keeping His commandments. If you want to give Him delight, you must keep His commandments, even as He kept His Father's.

When the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle of the testimony, the camp of Israel broke up, and departed from Sinai; when they started, the ark went before them, to seek out a resting-place. The Lord led them (Exod. xiii. 21, 22). When the cloud stayed, they stayed; when the cloud was taken up, they went on; a figure of our dependence on Him who is leading and guiding His people.

In walking with Christ, we can never walk in darkness; if I walk in darkness, it is because my body is not full of light: “ He that is spiritual, discerneth all things ” (1 Cor. ii. 15). If I am

only humble enough to set about what Christ puts before me, I shall always get direction. I am sure, as far as I am doing His will, and waiting on Him, to get direction from Him. Israel ALWAYS had the cloud; but our discernment of His will depends on our spiritual state. It is no uncertainty here, no question of His unchanging love, but of our way being His delight. He says, I want you to walk as I walked, to delight me as I delighted God (Eph. v. 1, 2).

We find two things here. The blessedness of Christian life, bearing fruit, and doing what Christ did, and the blessedness of enjoying His love: "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." (v. 11).

Alas! if we look at ourselves, we see how far we come short of the enjoyment of walking in the present path of Christ. If we fail, there is sovereign grace to meet us. But it is the joy of Christ Himself that is put before us in this scripture. If you think of your failure instead of thinking of Christ, do you not find that your joy is not full? If you look up, is there not often the consciousness of something allowed of the old nature, something that does not belong to the new? Joy can only be full ~~if~~ as the heart is going on simply in communion with God. The outflowing of this ought to be simply what we get in intercourse with Him; it is joy in God; the heart entering into the relationship of love, where Christ has put us, and not law (Rom. v. 2, 11).

Next: "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" (v. 12). This increases the blessedness. We do look for love and interest to be shown, but we have to

look more to this, that we show activity of love and interest to others: “ As I have loved you,” our pattern. He was above our infirmities, and so able to help.

If a brother's infirmities meet mine, we clash, and it often requires a good deal of grace to see a little grace in another. You may see what is harsh in another, but if you had grace enough, you would see a little bit of Christ there. Christ was, in His unselfish love, entirely above others' failures; He could adapt Himself to meet each one's needs. That is what we have to do; not to pass over evil. Christ never did that. It is a blessed, divine, principle, and a relationship that gives such a perfect interest, that if one suffers, all the other members suffer with it. The moment I see a fellow-believer, I see Christ in a sense. “ No man ever yet hated his own flesh ” (Eph. v. 27). “ These things I command you, that ye love one another ” (v. 17).

But if walking so as Christ would have you, “ even as He walked ” (1 John ii. 6), you must expect the world to hate you as it hated Him: “ If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” What a wonderful thing! Christ putting His disciples into His own place, to get the same hatred as Himself, whilst He is away.

But, by abiding in Him, and His word abiding in them, they can draw from His power, and get what they will, and have His joy fulfilled in themselves. He had a deep and constant source of joy that nothing could dry up: constant communion and favour with His Father. And that

is what we are to have with Himself, called to walk with Him, His present favour resting on us, that our joy may be full. The hand of God carries us on that we may bear fruit in the path where no vulture's eye can look, a path where the light of life in Christ shines, and where is never any darkness to those who walk with Him (Job xxviii. 7; John viii. 12).

We shall find it a hard test to the heart while walking with Him in such a world, but where does the path of rejection end? In the same glory that He is in. "Where I am, there shall also my servant be" (John xii. 26). It only requires confidence in His love to carry us on.

If we are hated by the world, we cannot wonder at it: "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (v. 20). Poor feeble things we may be; and the world gladly seizes on things in us which would be passed over in others; but we may be quite sure it is good for us.

Lastly, He speaks of sending the Comforter: He would come when He sent Him from the Father (v. 26). Christ sent Him to be the Revealer of the heavenly glory, to be a witness to His people of the glory He Himself has entered into; and "we all beholding the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor. iii. 18).

Are your hearts content to abide in Christ? to know nothing in this world but Christ? If not, you will find some ~~ev~~thing allowed that is hindering.

The Lord give us purpose of heart to walk with Him, and to abide in Him!

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# 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)

## Joash, King of Judah.

(Read 2 Kings 11-12).

**E**LISHA is not seen in these chapters, for the affairs of the kingdom of Judah are introduced; incidental to the affairs of Israel in this respect, that they give us an account of a great apostasy in that kingdom, and its judgment; just as the chapters which precede them gave us, as we saw, the judgment of apostasy in the kingdom of Israel. But besides, being very important in opening the counsels of God to us, I will consider them, though the prophet, our principal object, be not before us.

These chapters give us an account of that interruption to the enjoyment of the throne of Judah which the house of David suffered. And I doubt not it is expressive of the time now present, when the same thing may be said: that the seed and

house of David are not in the occupation of the throne and power of David.

Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and of Jezebel, and, as I may call her, the Jezebel of Judah, was the instrument of accomplishing this iniquity. A murderer, idolater, and usurper, she completes the sin here, as Ahab and Jezebel did in Israel, till the wrath of God visits and removes her, as it had visited and removed them.

The seed-royal was the object of her murderous designs, in order that she might seize the crown as her own (and as she judged, perhaps, with infidel boldness), overthrow the divine promise to the house of David (1 Kings ii. 4). Her act was like Ahab's in Samaria towards the vineyard of the righteous; or like that of the whole nation afterwards towards the Lord of the vineyard, or the Heir of the kingdom (1 Kings xxi.; Matt. xxi.)

But there is a secret purpose and power of God that frustrates all this. He has the resurrection of Jesus in order to bring to nought all the devices of the enemy; and so here, Joash, a child of resurrection, is used as His instrument for the like end. The sentence of death had gone out against him. He was as much involved in it as any of them who perished by it. But the Lord had deliverance prepared for him, as He had great purposes to accomplish by and in him; and he is therefore drawn out from the place of death, like Moses in such a case, by the daughter of a king, Jehoshabeath, who had married the high priest, Jehoiada.

It is, however, much to be observed that, being drawn out of the place of death, he is hid by the priest of God in "the house of the Lord," and

that, too, "till the seventh year." This is a striking picture of the distant purposes of God concerning the true Heir of the throne of Judah. For JESUS, being drawn from the place of death by resurrection, is hid during a whole age in the house of God, the heavens having now received Him as the High Priest of the present house of God; the concealment of this former heir of David for a time thus standing a fair and full expression of the present hiding of JESUS in the heavens (Acts iii. 20, 21; Col. iii. 3). Surely, I may say, this is "a sign and a wonder," something to be "wondered at," or treated as a type or a mystery (Zech. iii. 8).

But Joash is not always to be where the hand of Jehoiada had now secured him. In due season Jehoiada prepares a remnant in Judah to favour him, with whom he makes a covenant in the house of the Lord, and to whom he shows "the king's son." And after preparing them he uses them: he fits them out with weapons of war and harness for the day of battle, from the armoury of David, and sets them all in order, to hurl the bold and infidel usurper from the throne. And this is done with the same perfect and holy intelligence of God's mind as the concealment in the sanctuary had been. No blood is to stain the temple; the wicked are to be cut off in this day of righteous judgment without mercy, and "the king's son" is to be brought forth from the house of the Lord.

These three things are to be carefully observed on this great occasion. The king is to be enthroned; the wicked to be slain; but the temple to be kept undefiled. All must be done according to God. And then, accompanied in all due solemnity by the power of his kingdom, the righteous

in whom he could trust, and on the Sabbath-day, the day prepared for his showing to Judah, the king comes forth from his hiding-place.

Jehoiada, who (as the priest, and the guardian of the young king during the time of the usurpation) now orders the whole matter of his coronation and manifestation, in the first place shows the heir of the throne to a chosen remnant. This he does in the secret place of the temple. Then he marshals a line of body-guard from the house of the Lord to the house of the king, from the *sanctuary* of the realm to the *palace*. Their business was, to watch the king from his exit to his entrance, and along the whole passage from the one house to the other.

He is then brought forth from the temple, and just outside it, at the pillar, he is proclaimed amid the acclamations of the people; the testimony as well as the crown being given to him; the one signifying to him his subjection to Jehovah, the other his sovereignty over Israel.

Athaliah the usurper is then slain, but beyond the ranges of the temple. For even to the restoration of the king, and the peace of the kingdom, the priest will not sacrifice the sanctity of the temple. Beautiful witness of the Lord maintaining all His glories in all His ways, never clouding one during the shining of another!

The covenant of all the people is then made; they accepting the king, and the king adopting them. All things that offend and do iniquity are then taken out of the way; the house, the altars, the images, and the priests of Baal. And at last the king passes through the line of body-guards, all joyful in their service and attendance upon him; and, like another Solomon, in peace and



dignity, full of honour and of the gladness of his people, he sits on the throne of the kingdom, the throne of the house of David.

Can anything more beautifully express the return of JESUS from His heavenly sanctuary? For is He not to appear then in the midst of the strength and righteousness of His kingdom? And is not that to be a time when a Sabbath is again preparing for His Israel, and for the whole creation? Will it not, likewise, be the day of visitation on them that have shed the blood of the righteous, and corrupted the earth? Heaven will be opened, and that will be the day of JESUS' crowning and His people's gladness; as here the priest anoints Joash, puts the crown on his head and the testimony in his hand, according to the ancient ordinance of God (Deut. xvii.), while the people cry, "God save the king." The king shows himself in his beauty, and as alive from the dead; and the wicked one, the usurper, and the murderer perish in his presence (Isa. xxxiii. 17; Acts ii. 32-36; 2 Thess. ii. 8).

Nothing could more exquisitely give us the distant glimpses of our true David than all this. We see, as it were, His descent from heaven, the house of the Lord, in power and glory. And it was the suited moment for such a type. For this usurpation of Athaliah was the full apostasy of Judah, the time for the Lord to come out again, as at Babel's and Gomorrah's iniquity of old, to punish the earth for its iniquity and as the full result of that, to take to Him His own holy power and kingdom.

And the land is now again full of *David*. Not only had the guard of the king been armed with the spears and the shields of David, which had

been kept apart, and allowed, as it were, to rust for want of use while the heir was hid in the sanctuary; but now the ordinances of David, and the music of David, are observed and heard (2 Chron. xxiii. 18). The priest is careful to fill the scene with recollections of David. And Baal and his servants are put away, and the God of Israel is in His place again. It is Jehovah the Lord, and David the servant, as it will be in the glorious Antitype, every tongue confessing Jesus Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. ii. 10, 11).

And a larger covenant is now struck, as we have already observed. It is not merely the priest taking an oath of some in favour of the concealed Joash, and showing him simply to them. It is the priest bringing all the people, the king, and Jehovah, into holy, gracious covenant again, that they should be the Lord's people, and then showing the rightful heir of all the glory, not to some, but to all the congregation of Israel. And thus is the city quiet, the people of the land rejoice, the king sits on the throne, and he and the priest restore the service and the worship of the God of Israel.

This was the *great restitution of all things*. In this way things are totally changed. It is no longer the king hid in the house of the Lord, and a strange woman on the throne, as it were, riding the Beast, with Baal brought in, and the temple of the only true God in defilement and ruin; but the king has been brought forth and owned by his willing people, the usurper is judged, and the sanctuary and worship of the Lord are in honour and observance again.

But as with Solomon, so with Joash; this is only for a season. Adam lost Eden, after we get

## JOASH, KING OF JUDAH.

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the fair type of Christ and the church, and the kingdom in Him. So did Solomon lose the throne of David after he had served (in the hand of our blessed God, who ever teaches us to profit), the glorious purpose of exhibiting in type the earthly honours and kingdom of the true Son of David. And Joash now, as soon as Jehoiada is gone, tarnishes all this brightness. But this we see, that as long as Jehoiada the priest lived, the kingdom was maintained by king Joash in all its holiness and beauty.

And what does this show us? Does it not tell us that in the coming kingdom, when we shall see the King and the Priest together, all shall be well? As it is written, "He shall bear the glory and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a Priest upon His throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zech. vi. 12, 13). And because the Priest of that kingdom cannot die, being made "after the power of an endless life"; and because the King of that kingdom cannot fail or do wrong, because His sceptre is one of righteousness, and it is said of Him, "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity," therefore this peace and honour will abide through His times, till He have delivered up the kingdom (Heb. vii. 16; i. 9). "In His days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth" (Ps. lxxii. 7). "The government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with

judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever" (Isa. ix. 6, 7).

This is indeed a strong expression of the then distant things of Christ's glory, His return from the heavens, which is the sanctuary of God, and His taking to Him judgment first, and then His priestly, kingly honours, and dominion in the land of His ancient choice.

Happy for our souls to dwell on any thoughts of Him; and therefore, though our prophet was not here, a greater than he being here, we have not passed it, nor judged these chapters as intruders on our path.

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## Papers on Worship. No. 1.

(Hebrews x. 2).

THE grace in which we stand is that we are sons of God, and priests to God. The true worshippers, as we are taught by the Lord Jesus in the fourth chapter of John, are those who, in the spirit of sonship, worship the Father.

But there is another relation, besides that of sons, in which we stand to God, an official relation as being His constituted worshippers; taking the place which Israel once occupied as the *only worshipping people in the whole world*, but after an entirely different order. We could not indeed be *priests* unto God unless we were *sons*. To be sons of God is our real, proper dignity, because we have thereby relationship with God in the highest sense; but this does not hinder our having an *official* standing before Him; and it

is this which we would now consider. The common standing of all saints is to be "once purged" worshippers before God (Heb. x. 2).

The peculiar privilege of Israel was *nearness unto God*: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself" (Exodus xix. 4). This placed Israel, comparatively with all the nations around them, in a priestly standing before God. Hence it is said, "And came and preached peace to you which were afar off [the Gentiles] and to them that were nigh" (Eph. ii. 17).

In the time of Israel's declension, when they had become as the nations around them, both in their government and their worship, instead of standing in their original separateness, the Lord has to say to them, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be *no priest* to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hosea iv. 6).

The *grace* of God has brought Israel unto Himself, having led them all the way from Egypt to Sinai. But there they undertook to stand on their own obedience; and, on condition of doing so, were to be unto God "*a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation*" (Exod. xix. 5, 6). However, they failed immediately in obedience; and although relatively, as a nation, they still had nearness unto God; yet immediately on their failure under the law, a certain number are taken from among the nation to stand in peculiar nearness to God, and the people themselves were consequently placed at a distance.

Thus the Lord directed Moses: "Take thou

unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, *from among the children of Israel*, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons" (Exod. xxviii. 1). They were to "*come near unto the altar* to minister in the holy place" (v. 43). It was the privilege of only one to come nearer still, to go within the veil, and that was the high priest.

But after the sin of Nadab and Abihu, this privilege was curtailed so far as the frequency of entering was concerned. "And the Lord spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the Lord and died; and the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come *not at all times* into the holy place within the veil before the mercy-seat, which is upon the ark" (Lev. xvi. 1, 2).

To Israel indeed pertained the service of God (worship), but it was a worship of *relative* nearness to God. The high priest the nearest, the priests next. These were *inside* worshippers. The Levites next to them. They were attendants on the priests, and employed about the tabernacle. And then the people, who were *outside* worshippers, as it is said, "The whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense" (Luke i. 10). But even there, in the outer court, no Gentile could approach (Acts xxi. 28).

Sacrifice and priesthood are essential prerequisites to worship. How fully was this taught to the Jews under the law! They were habitually reminded that there was no acceptable worship but on the ground of the accepted sacrifice; and

that they needed the intervention of the priest authoritatively to pronounce them cleansed for worship. Hence a Jew under the law rightly connected justification with worship. He could not worship, because guilt attached to him, which needed the expiation; or uncleanness, which needed the intervention of the priest.

The great act, however, which put Israel in the place of a worshipping people, was the sacrifice of the great day of atonement. This was an annual solemnity. "On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. . . . This shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins *once a year*" (Lev. xvi. 30, 34). On that day Israel then stood as the worshipping people of the Lord. *But they stood not with a purged conscience* (Heb. x. 2). That was what their sacrifices never could give; for it is impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. It required other blood to do that, the blood of Him who is presented to us in the Epistle to the Hebrews as the SON.

But here comes in the great contrast between worship then and now. We Christians need sacrifice and priesthood in order to worship, as much as Israel of old; but though worshipping thus on the same ground as they, our worship is of an entirely different order. I say different in its "order," as well as essentially different in the dignity both of the sacrifice and the priest.

Of this most important contrast between the worship of Israel under the law, and that of the Church now, we are not left to conjecture or inference. Blessed for us, we have the comment

of the Holy Ghost in the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the remarkable solemnity of the great day of atonement, given for the express purpose of showing that the standing of the true worshipper now is the very REVERSE of that of Israel under the law.

First, the sacrifices offered under the law never could put those who came to them in the place of *constant* worshippers (for so "perfect" clearly means in this passage); and this not only because of their intrinsic inefficiency, but also because of their repetition; for had they effected this, they need not be yearly offered, "because the worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins." Now, mark, to be perfected as a worshipper is to have "no more conscience of sins." This is, according to the aspect in which we are now considering worship, to be a true worshipper.

Surely this exalts worship very highly. Because thus it is not in any wise the means of our justification, but that for which we are already justified. And how blessedly does the apostle show here, by way of contrast, that the comers unto Christ are made *perfect*: "By one offering He hath *perfected for ever* them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 1). Israel was perfected for a moment on the day of atonement; but even then not "as pertaining to the conscience"; the blood of their sacrifice could not touch that (Heb. ix. 9). Their worship, therefore, must have been in the spirit of bondage unto fear (Rom. viii. 15). There could have been no boldness (liberty), as we have by the blood of Jesus (Heb. x. 19). The unceasing repetition of the sacrifice had only the effect of as unceasingly bringing sin to remembrance.



But Christ, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God; not as one expecting to offer sacrifice again, but waiting for His enemies to be made His footstool (Heb. x. 13). And to this we have to add the blessed testimony of the Holy Ghost, in the special promise of the New Covenant: "Their sins and iniquities will I *remember no more*" (Heb. x. 17). And therefore there needs no more sacrifice for sin.

The one finished and accepted sacrifice of Christ is therefore of permanent efficacy. There is in it remission of sins to every one that believes; and he that believes has not to look for any further sacrifice for sin (v. 17); for if he had, it would bring sin to remembrance, and charge the conscience with guilt. And this is always the case where there is not simple repose of soul on the one finished sacrifice of Christ. Faith sees that the one thing has been done in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Consequently, the moment a Jew believed in "the precious blood of Christ," he was in a condition to assert that these were his privileges; as it is written, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who *hath called you* out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter ii. 9). Thus praise, the highest part of worship, can now be entered on: "I will extol Thee, my God, O king, and I will bless Thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless Thee, and I will praise Thy name for ever and ever" (Ps. cxlv. 1, 2).

While praise is *silent* for God in Zion, the mouth of the sinner, redeemed to God through the

precious blood of the Lamb, is opened to show forth His praises. God Himself has created the fruit of the lips, speaking peace to him that is far off, and to him that is nigh (Eph. ii. 17.)

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## Salvation Certain and Assured.

**I**N general, people do not confess their sins, but cover them, and so are condemned by the scripture which says, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. xxviii. 13).

Too many go on carelessly sinning every day, and then perhaps, as a sort of salve to an exercised conscience, say at night the prayer, "Forgive us our sins" (Luke xi. 4). Thus they go on from day to day *covering* their sins. Such shall "not prosper," the scripture says.

Some one may say, "Oh! I have never committed any great sin"; not considering that a single *little sin* is sufficient to prevent him from entering the presence of God, who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity," and in whose "sight shall no man living be justified" (that is to say, if judged according to his own conduct) (Heb. i. 13; Ps. cxliii. 2; Gal. ii. 16).

In every way God is righteous, as He is holy in all His works (Ps. cxlv. 17); but we learn from the New Testament that He is also "love"; and so great is His love that He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, to bear our sins in His body upon the tree (1 John iv. 16; Rom. viii. 32; 1 Pet. ii. 24). Accordingly when

appealed to by the thief on the cross, in the words, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom," Jesus unhesitatingly replied, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise"; the sinner and the Saviour, the Saviour and the saved, in the brightest spot of the glory of God (Luke xxiii. 42, 43). That believing thief had already confessed his sins, saying of himself, and his companion criminal, 'We receive the due reward of our deeds'; but of Jesus: "This Man hath done nothing amiss" (v. 41).

One might have thought that such a criminal would wish to be forgotten, not remembered, in the day of the reign of righteousness; but recognition by faith of the glory of the rejected Christ crucified by his side taught him that there is goodness and grace, yea, love, in the heart of the blessed God, who had thus "delivered up" His own Son to be the Saviour of even the vilest of sinners.

The work of Christ on that cross (a suffering, atoning work for sinners) put away the sins of the crucified thief; as the work of the Spirit of God in him led him to judge himself, and not only to confess his sins, but to confess Christ as Lord (Rom. x. 9). That was indeed redemption, which fitted a dying robber to be the immediate companion of the Lord of glory in the heavenly Paradise (Col. i. 12, 13.) In Christ alone can any have redemption, and this only through His blood-shedding on Calvary's cross (Eph. i. 7).

Then it was the Saviour's word to him that made him *sure* of his salvation. Do you think he knew he was going to heaven? A woman once replied to me, when I said the thief knew he was saved, "But he was told so."

Well, thank God we are also told so. Jesus, Himself, said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation [or judgment]; but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24).

Anyone, therefore, who has heard the Lord's word, and believed on God who sent Him, "hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment."

Could anything be surer? Christ who (as the previous verses tell us) will be Judge by-and-by, can speak with authority. We have, then, His word to make us *sure* that believers possess eternal life, and that they will not come into judgment, but are passed from death into life.

The Spirit works in us to lead us to Jesus. Christ has done the work for us, by which we are saved. He has spoken the word *to us*, that makes us *sure*.

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TO us our God His love commends,  
When by our sins undone;  
That He might spare His enemies,  
He would not spare His Son,—

His only Son, on whom was placed  
His whole delight and love,  
Before He formed the earth below,  
Or spread the heavens above.

Our sorrows and our guilt to bear,  
Our judgment to sustain;  
He came, upon the tree to die,  
That we might life obtain.

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# 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).

## The King and the Arrows.

(Read 2 Kings xiii. 1-19).

**W**E now return out of Judah into the land  
of the Ten Tribes, and after an interval  
(the reign of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu)  
we get a sight of our prophet Elisha again.

Joash has succeeded his father Jehoahaz on  
the throne of Israel, and still did evil in the sight  
of the Lord, as Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and  
the rest of the kings before him. But in his  
days Elisha had fallen sick of his sickness where-  
of he afterwards died.

The longest day has its evening, it has been  
said, and said, too, of the ministry of our Elisha.  
He had gone through the reigns of Jehoram, son  
of Ahab, of Jehu, of Jehoahaz, and Joash, having  
seen also the earlier times of Ahab and Ahaziah.  
Perhaps he had been a prophet of God for nearly

sixty years. But the evening of his day was now come; his sun sets in brightest tints, and with a glow which was worthy of its meridian hour.

Joash, we read, came down to him, and wept over his face, and said, "O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof."

This may surprise us. But it is clear there was no pretence, or mockery, or insincerity in all this. It was nature. Perhaps Elisha had been hitherto much neglected by this king of the house of Jehu; and in the prospect of his being taken away there was, as was very natural, a quickening of conscience in him, and he accordingly seeks the dying prophet. Even Herod, a worse man than Joash, could do many things, and tremble at the thought of John being alive, as Joash here could at the thought of Elisha dying (Mark vi. 20).

This was nature. Joash valued Elisha's presence in his kingdom. But besides that, he would honour Elisha ere it was too late; for the remembrance that he had done so might, when Elisha was gone, hinder some disquiet in his conscience. The prophet's sanctity, the power that had so often been owned in him, and the name and place he filled, enforced all this on his soul at such a moment as the present; and thus, not in mockery or pretence, but under this strong current of natural feelings, the king visits the dying prophet with the very same salutation with which this prophet himself had hailed the ascending Elijah.

But nature is not up to the elevation of the Spirit of God. "Stand fast *in the Lord*," is the word; and, "I can do all things through *Christ which strengtheneth me*," is the apostle's only

## THE KING AND THE ARROWS.

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boast. We are not to glory, save in that which Christ works in us. And so, however promising things may be at the beginning of this scene, nature in Joash is not up to the occasion. He could not go through it, as Elisha had before done, in the power of the Spirit. The motions of nature carry us for a season apparently in that track where the energy of the Holy Ghost would have us; but they will not bear us to the end with those who are in the same track in the Spirit. And so, though Elisha and Joash begin with the same language on their lips, there is distance between them.

But let me say, in connection with this admonition, that we must not question the goodness of God, though we may know the weakness and deceit of our own hearts. And there is this tendency in us. We are prone to suspect the sources of light or joy or strength that may be in us at times. Our reasoning will tell us that simple nature and not the Spirit of God is in these things. We do what we can to take the praise of our blessings from God, and to reason that good gifts come down from sources short of the Father of lights (James i. 17). But this should not be. The heart is deceitful indeed. But God is good. And in simplicity of faith we should accustom ourselves to trace our light, or joy, or strength of soul, to His Spirit, without the darkening and troubling reasonings of our own hearts.

All this may teach us. All this has warning against nature, but consolation for us in God.

But there is something besides.

At the bidding of the prophet, the king takes the bow and the arrows, and does with them according to the word of the prophet, the prophet

interpreting the action to him. Then the king, having taken the arrows, is ordered to smite the ground with them.

But on his doing so only three times, the prophet rebukes him. The man of God is wroth and rebukes him, for he was grieved and disappointed.

But why was this? Why this heat in the soul of Elisha?

The reason is beautiful. He had just told the king that "the arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrows of deliverance from Syria" were in his hand. Had his soul been in unison with the prophet, had it glowed with thoughts of that glory which was thus brought so nigh to him; had his heart sparkled at the sight of the Lord's own quiver then in his hand, how lustily would he have smitten the ground at the bidding of the prophet! Had Joash but valued the Lord's arrow as Elisha had valued his master's mantle, all would have been harmony of soul between them.

But the king had not in spirit fallen into that current which was then bearing the prophet along. The Spirit in him was not in the same fine flow that it was pursuing through Elisha, and therefore, with slack hand he smote the ground but thrice.

And oh! how much of this we know! Where is the fine, rich fervency of heart which we find of old; the glow of soul, and power of utterance, which were known among our tried and suffering brethren in other days? What smiting on the ground again and again was there then, in company as it were, with soul of Elisha! But our hand is slack. The unction and the zeal, and the earnestness of the Spirit, express themselves in



far feebler lines now, than they were wont to do in other days.

Elisha had cried out as Elijah was leaving him, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof"; but he also took up the mantle of the prophet, and smote the waters as the prophet had smitten them, to divide them hither and thither. The king can now come to Elisha as he is leaving him, and utter the same words; but there is no kindred smiting now. The king's heart is cold, and his hand is slack, where Elisha's had been fervent and bold. "O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known" (Heb. iii. 2).

We stand but little now-a-days in the rich and fervent power of the Spirit of God. Indeed one feels and sees this too plainly and sensibly. There may be extension in the field of vision, or multiplied truths dwelling in the thoughts of the saints, but the deep unctuous virtue of the truth itself is less felt. So that we may still say, "O Lord, revive Thy work!" As another has sung:—

"The ancient days were days of might,  
In forms of greatness moulded,  
When flowers of heaven grew on earth  
Within the Church unfolded.  
For grace fell fast as summer dew,  
And saints to giant stature grew.

"A blight has passed upon the Church,  
Her summer hath departed;  
The chill of age is on her sons—  
The cold and feeble-hearted:  
And sad, amid neglect and scorn,  
Our mother sits and weeps forlorn.

“Narrower and narrower still each year  
 The holy circle groweth;  
 And what the end of all shall be  
 Nor man nor angel knoweth:  
 And so we wait and watch in fear,  
 It may be that the Lord is near.”

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## Papers on Worship. No. 2.

**L**IBERTY of conscience is of the very essence of true worship; not what *men call* “liberty of conscience,” but the ability to approach God without any sense of guilt upon the conscience.

This, be it observed, is not presuming on innocence; neither is it the profession of unconsciousness of sin; but it is the fullest consciousness of and acknowledgment of sin, with the profession that it has been for ever put away by the one sacrifice of Christ offered once for all (Heb. ix. 26; x. 10-13).

All the gifts and sacrifices offered by a worshipper under the law “could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience” (Heb. ix. 9). He might have approached God strictly according to the ritual prescribed; but it must have been with a burdened conscience. No conscience can be at ease before God where anything depends on what the person himself is doing or has to do. Yea, I would say, not if it had now to depend on what Christ has to do, instead of resting on that which He has already done. The worshipper must be once and for ever purged, or he must have conscience of sins. But only let him by faith follow Christ through the greater and more perfect

tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building, by which He has entered into the holy place: only let him see that it is "not by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, that He hath entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption"; and where can be the conscience of sins?

Christ has not to enter in again; He has no more sacrifice for sins to offer, no other blood to carry in; for where could any be found of like preciousness? All is done "once," and "once for all"; hence the worshipper once purged, and purged by such blood, has no more conscience of sins (Heb. ix. 14). He can serve the living God. Nothing now depends on what the *worshipper* has to do. All hangs on the accomplished sacrifice, the precious blood, and permanent priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But again. When God had to do with Israel, even before He could speak to them to bring them under the covenant, the injunction to Moses was, "Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes." "And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people. . . And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God" (Exod. xix. 10, 17). The people must be *sanctified* in order to meet God, and sanctified in His own way; as God said when those came near to offer strange fire before Him, "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me" (Lev. x. 3). Who, after that dread example, would dare to approach God, if he was not sanctified in the way of God's appointment, so that God might be sanctified in him?

And what do we learn concerning the true

worshipper's sanctification now? What do we read concerning God's appointment now for the once purged worshipper's approach to Him? "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared me: in burnt-offerings and offerings for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, *I come* (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to *do Thy will, O God*. . . . *By the which will we are sanctified* through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. x. 4-10).

Thus it is by God's own ordinance that we are sanctified. God's own will in this matter has been done; and therefore we are able to meet Him as "once purged" and "sanctified" worshippers, put in the place of the *holy nation*. Those alone who by faith rest in the one accepted, and never to be repeated, offering of the body of Jesus Christ, are constituted God's worshipping people. This unchangeable place of blessing is given them by the express will of God.

Once more to look at the priest; how busy was Aaron! He had not only the yearly sacrifices on the great day of atonement, but he had likewise much to do even daily, that the constituted worshippers might engage in worship. He had the morning and evening sacrifices, besides those which were occasional (Exod. xxix. 39; Num. xxviii. 4). He might be called on at any time to offer a trespass-offering, so that he never could have sat down as one who had finished his work, and could look on it with satisfaction (Lev. v. vii).

But what a blessed contrast is here : “ Every priest *standeth daily* ministering and offering oftentimes *the same sacrifices*, which can *never* take away sins ; but this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever *sat down on the right hand of God*” (Heb. x. 11, 12). This is the position of One who had *finished* His work, and could look on it with satisfaction, and could present it before God continually ; not like Aaron expecting to be called on to offer another sacrifice ; but, that having been done “once for all,” “ expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified ” (Heb. x. 13, 14).

Lastly. The new covenant not only promises the same high privileges as the old, but it secures the attainment of them by the grace of God, when it had been proved they could not be attained by the obedience of the people. “ If ye will *obey my voice indeed*, and *keep my covenant*, then ye shall be a *peculiar treasure unto me above all people* ; for all the earth is mine : and ye shall be unto me a *kingdom of priests and an holy nation* ” (Exod. xix. 5, 6).

This was the tenor of the old covenant, its promises being conditional on their obedience. But “ the better covenant,” based upon “ better promises,” speaks thus : “ This is the covenant that *I will make with them* after those days, saith the Lord ; *I will put* my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will *I write them* ” (Heb. x. 16). Here all is done by God Himself, and therefore the promises necessarily follow ; they become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. And there is added to that above, “ Their sins and

iniquities will I remember no more" (v.17). Therefore, we have the testimony of the Holy Ghost to the truth, that "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them-that are sanctified"; because, where remission of these sins and iniquities is, there is *no more offering for sin* (vv. 14, 18).

What amazing knowledge immediately results from the recognition of the one completed sacrifice of Christ, the dignity of His Person giving to it its priceless value! Our blessed standing is as a spiritual house, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; privileged in this, to the exclusion of all others, to be the worshipping people of God on the earth (1 Pet. ii. 9). The place in which God by His own will, Christ by His own work, and the Holy Ghost by His distinct testimony have set us, is that of *worshippers once and for ever purged* (Heb. x. 9, 10, 15). Without any conscience of sins; and able to approach the very God who can read our hearts, without any suspicious fear lest anything of guilt should yet be found on us, any charge of sin not thoroughly purged away. "Blessed indeed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile" (Ps. xxxii. 1, 2; Rom. iv. 6-8).

Could an Israelite, coming to God according to the law, be without guile before Him? I judge not. Lurking suspicion that God saw in him deeper sin than *his* offering could atone for, or that he himself might have neglected some prescribed duty, would make him anything but guileless. One, indeed, who came to God BY FAITH, not in the ordered place, but under a fig tree,

might be found in holy confidence with God, an Israelite indeed in whom was no guile. Such was Nathanael, under divine teaching, immediately recognising Jesus as Son of God and King of Israel. Surely he is a sample of Israel by and by, under the new covenant, taking the place of nearness to God as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, by their recognition of Jesus as the Son, the Sacrifice and the Priest.

The worshipper "once purged" is a guileless worshipper. Be it known as our portion *now*, as, it will be in glory for ever.

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## Notes on the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

### Chapter i. 1-17.

**T**HIS Epistle might be termed "The Constitution of the Church," in contrast with the constitutions which have been worked out by the various denominations of Christendom, and which now regulate them.

As a matter of fact, this Epistle contains divine directions for the walk and order of the Church of God in all countries, and for the whole interval between Pentecost and the return of the Lord to take His own to Himself.

(v. 1). Paul, who farther on will have to vindicate his apostolic authority, denied by the false teachers at Corinth, presents himself as an apostle by the calling of God: "An apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God." He had been called by Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus; and the mission of Ananias, who was sent

to him by the Lord, explained and confirmed his calling (Acts ix. 5, 6; 15-17; xxii. 14-16; xxvi. 16-18).

The will of God (Christ always acts in accordance with God's will) might have been expressed when at Antioch the Holy Spirit said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (Acts xiii. 2). "By the will of God," is also in contrast with the will of man. Paul was not called by man (Gal. i. 1).

Sosthenes, the brother, is perhaps the one mentioned in Acts xviii. 17. Paul links him with himself as a witness of the appropriateness of the Epistle. This he does also at other times.

(v. 2). Bad as was the spiritual state of the saints at Corinth, Paul owns them as "the Assembly of God" there. The Assembly is thus viewed in its position "in Christ"; as belonging to Christ; and thus as a holy company. It is the character of the Assembly as such, independently of the character of the individuals composing it.

Considered thus the Assembly is without leaven (chap. v. 7). One cannot understand what an Assembly of God is unless one views it as such; and as such it is an abiding institution. Those who pass away leave it still existing; and those who enter do not constitute it; they simply find it such as it is. It exists permanently, and not only when those who compose it are together at appointed times.

Side by side with heathens and degenerate Jews, God had an Assembly at Corinth; and all who in that city belonged to the Lord were found in the Assembly. In those days to be Christ's and to be in the Assembly was one and the same



thing, and there was only one Assembly. In the thoughts of God the Assembly of God in a place includes every child of His in that place. To-day, in the midst of the ruin of the Church, no gathering of Christians in a locality can style itself "the Assembly of God" of that place. Rightly to claim that title all the believers in the locality should be openly united. But if in any locality there are some believers who are gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, on the principle of the unity of the body of Christ, they represent the whole Assembly of God, and they enjoy the privileges and have also the responsibility of the Assembly of God in that place.

The apostle adds, "To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints." Seen as a whole the believers at Corinth were the Assembly of God; seen as individuals they were "sanctified," set apart in Christ Jesus, and "saints," separated for God by His call. Such were the divine foundations of their position.

Finally the Apostle includes in his thoughts, "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." The instructions given in this Epistle have therefore a universal application. All the saints on earth are under obligation to conform to them. Moreover, this Epistle, now forming part of the living and abiding word of God, applies during the whole time of the Church's pilgrimage on earth. In these days, when the profession of calling on the name of the Lord has spread so much, all those who take that name upon themselves are responsible to the Lord. He is both their Lord and ours. There is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. iv. 5). So that to-day

the entire Christian profession is responsible with regard to the instructions in this Epistle, as to the walk of the Assembly of God.

(v. 3). Grace and peace in a practical sense are desired for those sanctified in Christ Jesus, from our God and Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ. It is from the Father and His Son, perfectly united in thought, that those blessings flow into the hearts and lives of believers.

(vv. 4-9). The apostle owns with thankfulness all that the Assembly at Corinth had received from God in Christ. They were enriched by the gifts conferred on them; no gifts were lacking; and thus the testimony of the Christ was confirmed among them. Farther on in the Epistle the apostle will have to rebuke them as to the improper exercise of these great gifts which they possessed, and which they used for display rather than for edification. But here, all that is recognised is of God; all rests on divine foundations. While they were passing onward to the time when Christ would be revealed (in contrast with His absence), there was for them no lack of any gift of grace. Moreover, whatever the unhappy state of the Corinthians, from either the doctrinal or the moral point of view, Paul expresses the confidence he has in the Lord that He will confirm them to the end, that they may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, that day when all things will be manifested. The God who had called them unto the fellowship of His Son, so that they might partake of all the future blessings, was faithful. The apostle knew that he could count upon Him to accomplish His own purposes of grace and glory.

The first nine verses form an introduction to

the Epistle. All therein is based on a divine foundation. After that, and because of it, the apostle can enter into all the necessary details, to point out and set right all that was inconsistent with the divine position they held, of being the Assembly of God, sanctified only in Christ Jesus, and saints by the call of God.

(v. 10). The apostle here begins his exhortations, appealing to them in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is this name that had gathered them in unity around Himself, and it is this unity and its carrying out that are first of all insisted upon. "Is Christ divided?" he asks them in verse 13. To continue in real unity believers must speak the same things in accordance with the truth, so as to avoid internal divisions, and, on the contrary, to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment as forming a complete, undivided whole, wherein each individual member fulfils his proper function according to the truth that is common to all.

(v. 11). Paul tells them that he has heard from some of them whom he does not hesitate to name, that there are contentions among them.

(v. 12). The Corinthian Christians carried into the Assembly of God that party spirit to which they had been accustomed by the various opinions of the schools of philosophy. Among the heathens some attached themselves to one famous teacher and his doctrine; others to another with a different doctrine. Thus in Acts xvii. the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers who disputed against Paul at Athens, are both mentioned. The believers at Corinth, following out their former ideas, made for themselves heads of parties from among the

Lord's servants; certainly without their consent. Some claimed Paul, others Apollos, others again Cephas. There were actually some who thought to get greater honour to themselves by using the name of Christ, thus making the Lord of all the mere head of a party. All this was the exact opposite of the unity of thought and feeling to which the name of Christ brought them (*v.* 10). This is why the apostle explains, "Is Christ divided?"

(*vv.* 13-16). It is to one undivided Christ, to one undivided Saviour, that the believer is joined. This is the reason why Paul, pained that some used his name as a rallying point, and claimed to be of him, says, "Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?" And this explains, too, why Paul thanks God that he had not baptised many at Corinth. All doubtless had been baptized, but he himself had baptized but a few. There was therefore no opening for saying that he had baptized in his own name, so as to link any one of them up with himself.

(*v.* 17). The apostle desires to point out here that he had not received the same mission as the Twelve, as described in Matt. xxviii. 19; his being that which we find in Acts xxvi. 16-18. This was carried out according to the direction of the Holy Spirit in Acts xiii. 2. It is not that Paul did not give to baptism all the importance which belongs to it. He himself was baptized at Damascus (Acts ix.) Lydia and her house, as also the jailor and his family, had been baptized in his presence, perhaps even by his own hands. But in this verse he refers to preaching the gospel of Christ.

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# 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).

**"To Me to Live is Christ."**  
(Philippians i.)

**T**O me to live is Christ." These words throw immense light on what was the spring of everything in the mind of the apostle Paul. He wanted people to see not himself but Christ, "that Christ might be magnified" (made more apparent).

To him to live was Christ. The living water flowed through and out of him. All his life was the flowing out of the living water fresh from Christ, the Rock of Ages. And was not Christ magnified in such a one?

He took all his trials from Christ. He not only desired to believe, but to suffer for His name's sake. It was not a new doctrine, but it was a new light, a certain glory, and the doctrine coming out through it with double effect.

Paul had learned the truth of a risen Christ by a direct interview with the Lord Himself. He had said, "Saul, Saul" (Acts ix. 4). It was not only the gospel. It was a certain living Person in glory whom Paul knew as occupied with him in heaven.

And Christ must be known to me before "to me to live is Christ" can be taken up. If you and I know Christ as our accepted sacrifice, who has perfected us for ever by His work, is it with us a question of our sins? No, it is a question of His glory. It is not only a doctrine, but a reality, that He Himself is the life of the believer (Heb. x. 14; Col. iii. 4).

And what was that life? What were His thoughts?

One can say with reverence that He was a Man of one idea: "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. x. 9). He was always setting forth the Father down here: and, now that He was here no longer, He thought to have Paul to be the displayer of Himself, to "live Christ." As Christ had shown out the Father so Paul was to show out Christ, and nothing but Christ, as "one spirit with the Lord" (1 Cor. vi. 17). Christ, the Man in glory, is revealing Himself to believers, giving them to know Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for them, and then saying, Now I look for you to let the light shine out.

There are some who seem as if they had a watchword into the presence of Christ. Those who do not know the watchword, of course cannot use it. Have you Christ dwelling in your heart "by faith" (not by the Spirit), that you may be filled? If He dwell in your heart "by faith," have you not got a fulness that passes

knowledge? He up there, in a blaze of glory, calling on you to know His love, love that passes all understanding (Eph. iii. 19).

That was the Christ of whom Paul spoke with such ecstasy. It was his one object in life or death to glorify Him. And could he miss his object? His one object being to please Christ, his life could be the manifestation of vital union with Him.

Can you say that one thing: “I am for Christ”? Do not, I pray you, shirk the question. Let it go right into your soul. Paul was entirely and completely for Christ here. Ah! he was a blessed man. He had put down all selfishness. He would only live to Christ in the life He had given him. And if you could say, “To me to live is Christ,” would you not be more than conqueror in all things? Let the trials or difficulties be what they may, having Christ in them, would they be loss? Nay, no loss, but all gain.

It was the thought of God to present to us in Paul a man of like passions with ourselves, to show how such a man could walk with Christ so as to say, “To me to live is Christ.” He was a man of the strongest passions and character of any man on earth, but he mastered all that, and brought everything into subjection to Christ; in everything he dropped into “the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. ii. 16).

We see the vivid perception he had of that for which Christ had apprehended him. The Lord in glory was before him, and he could never rest until he reached Him: “Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark

for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus " (Phil. iii. 13, 14).

It is immense strength to get before the soul the reality of a certain Person, a living Man up there in glory, as the prize I am to attain. I may have to go through a dark passage here; but never mind; there is that One in glory, and I am pressing on to win Him, to reach Him. It was not a doctrine with Paul; it was the working of his heart's affections about a *Person* he was going to be like, and to be with.

How little are the saints exhibitors of Christ! We are to be moulded into the same image (Phil. iii. 21). Do you think of Christ up there, and what His thoughts are whilst looking at you? Not the working of your mind going up to Him, but His working towards you, as a Shepherd on the top rock, looking down on a certain people for all of whom He laid down His life. Do you ever think of seeing Christ with those eyes of yours; of hearing His voice with those ears? Yes! of soon seeing Him at the goal, and of being made like Him? (1 John iii. 2). No more for you to do then; only to enter into all the seen and felt reality of fellowship with Him which faith even now enjoys.

Ah! we want exceedingly to have our hearts occupied with that Lord Jesus up there! Nought can give such brightness of face and heart as being able to say, "To me to live is Christ."

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Service to Christ, to be of the right character, should be rendered in the recollection that it is to One whom the world has refused and cast out.



## Papers on Worship. No. 3.

**I**N a preceding paper we have seen that all believers in Jesus are, by the will of God, constituted perpetual worshippers, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

We have now to consider the sphere of their worship.

In Israel, under the law, the sphere of worship was the tabernacle on the earth, the high priests being nearer to God than the priests, the priests nearer than the Levites, and the Levites nearer than the people. But now, not only is all this relative nearness to God done away with, but the once-purged worshippers are introduced into "the sanctuary and true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man," because it is there that Jesus now ministers (Heb. viii. 2).

Consequently the pattern of Christian worship, and of the sphere of it, is not found in the people's worship under the law, but in the *priest's* service (Heb. viii. 4, 5). We have really now no *people's* worship. All is *priestly*. Even in the holy city (Rev. xi. 2) we have prophetically presented to us the outer court, where the people worshipped as left or cast out; those alone being owned by God who worshipped as priests in the holy or heavenly places. As believers in Jesus we are, indeed, a *peculiar* people; God's own special treasure; and our privilege as such is that we worship, not in the distance of the people, but in the nearness of the priests; not in the outer court, but in the holiest place itself.

We know, indeed, that there are in the Church of God those who teach, and those who are

taught; those who minister, and those ministered to; those who rule, and those who are ruled; those who feed, and those who are fed. All this is true, but it does not in the least degree interfere with the fact, common to one as well as the other, that they are priests unto God . . . made "kings *and* priests unto God and His Father"; "a royal priesthood" (Rev. i. 6; 1 Peter ii. 9).

The apostle Paul was a priest to God, but not more than any of the persons whom he salutes in his epistles, or than the most uninstructed believer in the whole Church of God. The diversities among the members, formed by the diverse gifts of the Spirit, must be carefully distinguished from their priestly equality. Christian worship, then, is priestly worship, and consequently the heavenly courts are its sphere.

The fearful warning given by the apostle, which at one time or another has made many an awakened soul tremble (Heb. x. 28, 29), is a warning against the fatal consequences of turning back to the old order of worship, as if it were to be a pattern of our worship, instead of the contrast thereto. To return, therefore, to the order of worship under the law, is to reject the heavenly order for a copy of the earthly. It marks the apostasy of worship.

And is not this the peculiar mark of the professing Church? It has followed the old pattern of the law, instead of the heavenly pattern. It has made again the difference in its priests and people; a distinction unknown to the New Testament. Thus has the professing Church put its priests in a place of comparative nearness to God, and the people at a distance.

And what is this but to trample under foot the

Son of God? As if, after all He has suffered and done, we were at as great a distance as before; and as if, with His priestly ministration, we still needed the intervention of others in our approaches to God? God has cast out the outer court, and will not regard worship offered therein; but men have profanely sought to sanctify it, and in so doing have trodden under foot the Son of God.

We have already noticed the command given to Moses, to sanctify the people to meet God, and also that we, by the will of God, are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Heb. x. 10); but this return to the old form is characterized by the apostle as accounting the blood of the covenant wherewith we have been sanctified as *an unholy thing*; as that which would still keep us without, instead of that which *entitles us to enter into the holiest of all*. (Heb. x. 19). And what an insult to the Spirit of grace, who witnesses to the soul of the wondrous grace of God and Christ, and who is Himself in the once purged worshipper the power of nearness of worship: for God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit (John iv. 23; Phil. iii. 3). What an insult to that blessed Spirit to put ourselves back to the distance in which the flesh must ever stand before God! We have, therefore, this solemn warning: Take heed lest, after having received the knowledge of the truth with respect to your priestly standing and nearness to God, you wilfully sin. For to worship God as we think fit is the very essence of wilfulness.

God leaves nothing to our choice in the matter of worship; it is not allowed us to choose whether we will go back to the old pattern. God has

set it aside, and to return to it is to choose the place of judgment. For nothing can await the outside worshippers but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins to bring you nearer, or to make you accepted. Jesus is not waiting to offer that; for He has done it once for all, and is waiting till His enemies be made His footstool (*v.* 13).

But even the priest's service in the holy place, near as it was, is but partially the pattern of the service of the saints now. For now all relative nearness is done away with, and we must take the sphere of the ministry of the high priest himself to complete the pattern of our standing now.

While the first tabernacle was standing, the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest; that is, laid open (*Heb.* ix. 8). The priests, though able always to enter into the holy place, could proceed no further. The veil concealed from their eye the most holy place. The veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, with its cunning work of cherubims, all open to their view, might indeed tell them of the glories concealed behind it; but the golden altar, the ark of the covenant overlaid with gold, with the golden pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant, were all concealed from their sight. The immediate presence of Him who dwelt between the cherubims on the mercy-seat was inapproachable by them. That was accessible to the high priest alone, and to him but once a year, and then not without blood, which he offered for himself and the errors of the people. Mark: the high priest could not enter into the holiest of all at all times,

as the priests could into the holy place; he could not enter there as a *once purged worshipper*, for he went there on the very ground of sin *not* being put away for ever.

But now all is laid open. By the blood of Christ the way is opened into the holiest of all. How significantly was this marked by the veil of the temple being rent in twain when Jesus died upon the cross! Yea, Jesus Himself is the way, the living way. If there be a veil, He is that veil; not to conceal anything of God behind it, but to bring out all that may be known of God to view (v. 20). And here the worshippers once purged have constant liberty to enter.

“*Having, therefore, brethren*” (v. 19). The apostle does not take the stand of one in pre-eminent nearness himself to God, inviting others to draw nigh, as though he had been the priest, and they the people; he on the inside, and they without; but he classes himself with those whom he addresses, calling them “brethren,” and three times repeating, “Let us.” How different this to the order of old! Moses alone was to come near, and others were to worship afar off; but now it is for Christians equal nearness, equal liberty of access into “the holiest of all.”

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The *love of God* is the source from which redemption flows. The perfect *sacrifice of Christ* is the channel through which it flows. *Faith* wrought in the soul by the Holy Ghost is the power of enjoyment; and everlasting *life* known and experienced now is the result (John iii. 16).

## **Notes on the First Epistle to the Corinthians**

### **Chapter i. 18-26.**

**T**HE apostle's preaching was not a philosophical presentation of certain doctrines which he held; neither did it borrow from philosophy forms of expressions and fine language that only flatter man. To do that would have rendered of none effect that cross of Christ which he actually preached, and which brings to nought man and his pride.

(v. 18). But the plain setting forth of what the cross of Christ really is, namely, the end of all that man in the flesh is, can only be folly in the eyes of those that perish; for us who have the joy of being saved by this means the word of the cross is the power of God.

These words of Paul seem to show that he had in his mind an aspect of the cross which the Corinthians had not apprehended. They understood the death of Christ for the pardon of their sins, but not the fact that they were dead with Christ, and that the cross of Christ was the end of man as such, and, for the believer, the end of all that the world is. To still cling to those things which were according to man, proved that they did not yet understand that these very things had found their end in the cross of Christ.

(vv. 19, 20). The wise men of this world belong to those who perish. Not one of their systems can give to man salvation and happiness. God puts an end to their wisdom; He destroys it by the cross of Christ, and shows that all this wisdom is only folly, since it cannot give to man

what he really needs. Whether we take the wise man, the Greek philosopher or the scribe; the learned Jewish rabbis or the disputer of the present age; the sophist who raises objections for the sake of argument, all these devotees of this world's wisdom, who consider themselves wise, have become fools. "Where are they?" the apostle boldly asks. God has shown that their wisdom is only foolishness.

(v. 21). It was fully known beforehand to God that man by his own wisdom could never arrive at the knowledge of God. After the Flood man ought to have kept this knowledge of God's existence; he could and should have known this by considering the works of creation (Rom. i. 20). *But the real knowledge of God*, of what He is in Himself, and the knowledge of His counsels, His purposes and His ways, is to be had only by faith in the revelation that He has given us. And we cannot have this true and full knowledge of God except through Christ. Such being the case, it has pleased God to save those who believe by that very preaching of the cross which is called foolishness by the wise ones of this world.

(vv. 22-25). That which was then recognised in the world was either Judaism or pagan philosophy. The Jews desired miracles, great and palpable signs (John vi. 30). The Greeks sought after that which human wisdom could explain; they revelled in the speculations of philosophy. In contrast with this Paul presented the cross. "But we preach Christ crucified," he says. Now Christ crucified was just that which absolutely set aside man, his religion and his wisdom. To the proud Jew, Christ was a *stumbling-block*: a cruci-

fied Messiah instead of a glorious King; who could accept such a thing? To the Gentiles what folly to trust as a Saviour a man hanged on a tree! But among unbelieving Jews and Greeks there were some called ones for whom, in contrast with the scandalized Jews this crucified Christ was the power of God; and in contrast with the sceptical and mocking Greeks, He was the wisdom of God. For that which man thinks the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and that which man thinks the weakness of God is stronger than men.

(v. 26). In appearance perhaps, the calling of the Corinthians seemed to justify at least what men thought of the weakness of God. Among those whom grace had converted and gathered, there were "not many" wise men after the flesh, not many powerful, not many high born, although they might have exalted Christianity in the eyes of the world. There may have been some, but there were few, for God delights to glorify Himself in that which is lowly, even while His grace is accessible to all.

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A risen Christ at God's right hand is the glorious and unanswerable proof that the believer's sins are all gone; for He could not be where He now is if a single one of those sins remained. God raised from the dead the self-same Man on whom He Himself had laid the full weight of our sins. It is as impossible that a single sin can be found on the very weakest believer in Jesus as on Jesus Himself.



## **The Dead     a     Quickened.**

(Read 2 Kings xiii. 20, 21).

**T**HIS is the closing expression of the power of God in our prophet. But the way of JESUS, the Christ, the Son of God, is reflected here still; for by His death we live. To touch the dead body of Jesus, or, to have faith in His blood, is to be justified, and live.

But it is not so much in that general way, as belonging to all sinners, that we get Jesus here. It is as in connection with Israel, whose prophet Elisha was, and the earthly man also, who takes his course in power through Israel and on the earth, after Elijah, the heavenly man, had been translated to his place on high. For so with Jesus. He will be for the succour and life and kingdom of Israel in the latter day, after He had accomplished His mercy and His purpose with the Church, His heavenly witness.

And as the man of grace and power for Israel, we here see our prophet doing his last service. Israel was now in confusion before the face of their enemies. They were put to the worse by the Moabites. The most they can do is to bury their dead, and we know that is the service of the dead: "Let the dead bury their dead" (Luke x. 60). This is shortly but strikingly marked as their condition here. But one that was dead already carries life, unlooked-for life, for them. This is shortly but strikingly marked here also. The power of reviving lay in the sepulchre of this mystic prophet.

And so with Jesus, the Messiah and Lord of Israel. Things will be seen in Him according to this pattern, when it shall be said, "The Lord

shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants, when He seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left. And He shall say, See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me, ; I kill, and I make alive ; I wound, and I heal " (Deut. xxxii. 39). Then, according to Ezekiel, the dry bones shall live, then the Lord will open the graves of His people, and bring them out of their graves (Ezek. xxxii. 5, 12).

" At evening time it shall be light," we read (Zech. xiv. 7). And again, " He turneth the shadow of death into the morning " (Amos v. 8). Of these holy and august powers we have faint touches in our prophet's history. For in the evening of his days, when he was a-dying, we saw a light shining, as in the case of Joash and the arrows, that was worthy of his life's meridian hour. And now, after his sun is gone down, even in the night of the tomb, the full power of the returning morning appears. And all has still a mystery in it. It is mystic ground as well as holy ground that we tread through these histories of our prophet, and in the spirit of our minds we must tread softly, as ever with unshod feet, but still be in company with happy thoughts of Jesus and His ways.

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## **A Short Appendix.**

(Read 2 Kings xiii. 22-25).

Thus have we closed the history of " the great things that Elisha " the prophet did. Great things they surely were. We have, however, if I may so call it, a short appendix to it, which I read as very characteristic and significant. I mean the notice

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taken in the last four verses of this chapter of the times of Jehoahaz and Joash.

We are told that Hazael of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz; but the Lord was gracious, and had respect to His people, remembering in their behalf His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And He gave Joash three victories over the son of Hazael, according to the sign of the arrows which, by command of Elisha, he had struck on the ground; and he took out of his hand the cities of Israel which his father had lost to Hazael in war.

Here we get the God of the fathers of Israel and His covenant of blessing, in company, too, with the mystic arrows of our prophet strikingly owned. And this is, as I observed, very significant, and characteristic. For Elisha's ways had been ways of grace and power towards Israel, shadowy or typical of the ways of Messiah in the behalf of His people (Ps. lxxii.) And now that those ways of our prophet had all been run, as we have seen, and even in death he had given life, and sent the prisoner from the pit, and made the buried ones to go up from their graves, in a little postscript we get this mention of Abraham's God and His covenant, by which Israel was to be secured and blest, in spite of all that was against them.

Is not this like the moral of the whole story? Is not this, as it were, the key to the mystery, or the sense of the parable? Do we not thus learn that the Lord has pledged, in all this history of Elisha, succour and strength and grace and revival to Israel in the latter day? It is Israel delivered and blest as of old, that we get here; and nothing less. It is the ancient days of

Israel's mercy in Egypt that are again before us. For there, when they groaned under the rod of Pharaoh, and sighed by reason of the bondage, God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, as He does here, and also, as He does here, had respect unto them (Exod. ii. 23-25). Hazael may be as Pharaoh; but the God of Abraham is the God of Abraham still, and He can pledge deliverance and blessing by Elisha, as once He brought it by Moses.

It was long before we heard of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in connection with the ten revolted tribes. Yea, did we ever before hear of Him as with them, save on the lips of our prophet's kinsman, as I may call him, Elijah? (1 Kings xviii. 36). But Elisha has been the witness of His grace and power in the midst of them; and the God of grace, the God of the fathers, can now be owned over them and for them.

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Beyond doubt, the *work* of Christ is infinitely precious; no human thought can even scan its worth. Moreover, it is *His work* that really meets the sinner's needs. The *work* of Christ introduces the soul into a position in which it can contemplate the *person* of Christ. The *work* of the Saviour is for the *sinner*, the *person* of the Saviour is for the *saint*; what He *has done*, is for the *sinner*; what He *is*, is for the *saint*.

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# 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)

## "The Great Things."

(2 Kings viii. 5).

**W**E have now gone through the actions of Elisha, whose name signifies "salvation of God." It has given us many an expression of the marvellous power and abounding grace of JESUS; some faint, but true, traces of the Son of God, in that divine majesty of strength and divine tenderness of goodness, which manifested Him in the days of His flesh.

All of Jesus, it is true, is not seen in him. Where should we find that? As a suffering witness against the world, Elijah, as I have before said, the rather reflects Him. But in His ways of *power* and *grace* we see Him in Elisha.

There was no suffering for Elisha, I may say, after his master left him. It was not with him, as it had been with his master, the wrath of the

throne prevailing to exile and harass him. But chief captains wait at his gates, and kings send presents to him. He discloses the secrets of one of them, disappoints the purposes of another, gives pledges of victory to a third, and grants supplies to the combined armies of them. Every path he treads wears after him some traces of the greatness of him who had been travelling there. Chariots of salvation fill the mountain, attending on the prophet. Famine, disease and death own him. Nature again and again changes its course at his bidding. He goes onward in the Lord from strength to strength, and even his dead body puts forth strange and surprising virtue.

All this is seen in the ways of Elisha. *And yet all the while he was personally nothing in the world.* The more like JESUS! Elisha received bounty and care in the ordinary need of life from those in whose behalf he was opening resources which were altogether beyond the reach or range of man's ability. How like was he to Him who, though He Himself was "an hungered," again and again fed thousands with a few loaves and fishes. And though He sends the springs into the valleys, that run among the hills, and measures the waters in the hollow of His hand, yet asked for a cup of cold water from a woman at a well, and took the loan of an ass's colt from its owner, though the cattle on a thousand hills are His.

Remarkable it is that, in the dark realms of the kingdom of Israel, the place of the revolted tribes, the Lord should have raised up such prophets as Elisha and his master. Lights they truly were in dark places. Judah, which had still the sanctuary and the priesthood, was never so

visited. A rich unction of the prophetic spirit was known in the waning hours of that kingdom, or after its sun was set, as in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and others. And the same spirit had been there in earlier days, as in the person of Isaiah. But none of these were in the scene of action, working miracles, executing judgments as well as pronouncing them, ministering mercies as well as publishing them, as Elijah and Elisha were.

“ A prophet mighty in deed and in word,” is said of the Lord Jesus by one of His disciples. Elijah and Elisha were prophets mighty in *deed*. We have no book of either the prophet Elijah, or of the prophet Elisha, as of Isaiah. But there was no greatness about Isaiah as there was about them; he was in no way important in the history of his day, as they were. In no sense was he a type of the Lord, though His prophet. But JESUS stands foreshadowed in them, in the most distinguishing features of His history. They tell of Him as the suffering witness who ends His course in heaven; and as the gracious, powerful, but self-emptying Friend of Israel who went about dispensing the virtues of life and salvation through their cities and villages, and giving a pledge, through His death, of their quickening in the last days.

These are “ the great things ” which cast a strong and bright light over the whole path of our prophet, every little spot in which bears the trace, as we have seen, of grace to Israel. And may our souls rejoice in the prospect of their final joy, that when the heavenly people have been removed to their heavenly places, the earth shall be the scene of the power and grace of the God of Elisha, the God of Israel, the God of

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Then, "Praise ye the Lord from the heavens"; "Praise the Lord from the earth," shall be the burden and chorus of universal gladness (Ps. cxlviii. 1, 7). For in the dispensation of the fulness of times, God will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him (Eph. i. 10). And "at the name of JESUS every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 10, 11).

Blessed anticipation! Can we lay out ourselves and our talents upon it, beloved? Jeremiah, in faith of God's truth, spent his money on an expectation, though for the present it seemed to have been thrown away, for the Chaldeans were at the gates, and the fields of Anathoth were part of their plunder (*Jer. xxxii.*)

Precious faith, as well as brilliant prospect! And hope can celebrate it now, till "the nobler, sweeter song" be heard in the presence of it.

"Joy to His ancient people!  
 Your bonds He comes to sever,  
     And now 'tis done,  
     The Lord has won,  
 And ye are free for ever!  
 Joy to the ransomed nations!  
 The foe, the ravening lion  
     Is bound in chains,  
     While JESUS reigns  
 King of the earth in Zion.  
 Joy to the church triumphant!  
 The Saviour's throne surrounding;



## “ THE GREAT THINGS. ”

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They see His face;  
 Adore His grace;  
 O'er all their sin abounding.  
 Crowned with the mighty Victor,  
 His royal glory sharing;  
 Each fills a throne;  
 His name alone;  
 To heaven and earth declaring.”

Our meditations began with Elijah, whose translation to heaven, after a life of suffering testimony on earth, tells us of that elect body who, having continued with JESUS in His temptations, are to share His throne in the days of the kingdom; and as their representative, in company with Moses, we see Him glorified on the distant heavenly hill (Matt. xvii. 3). And now they have ended with Elisha, after a ministry of grace and power, quickening the dead estate of Israel, and bringing back the covenanted mercies of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to their seed in the land of their inheritance.

As in a mystery, this tale of the heavens and the earth is told, and their divers glories are pledged. And the coming millennial days will verify this wondrous tale, and redeem the precious pledges (Rom. xi. 33, 36).

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“ The truth as it is in Jesus ” is the “ putting off ” and the “ putting on. ” It is not a question whether I have done it; it is not speaking of people; not of Christians, but of Christianity (Eph. iv. 21-24).

## Papers on Worship. No. 4.

**W**HAT has the blood of Jesus left unaccomplished?

In the *shedding* of it we have remission of sins.

By the *sprinkling* of it we are pronounced clean, and sanctified as worshippers.

It is ever on the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat; for by it Christ has entered in, having obtained eternal redemption (Heb. ix. 12).

His thus entering in is not an annual solemnity, nor one ever to be repeated. The blood of the sin-offering was carried within the veil by Aaron on the great day of atonement, that he might "make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins" (Lev. xvi. 16). This has now been done once and for ever. The atonement for the holy place is *to continuance*; it is as much once and for ever purged as is the worshipper himself. Yea, no worshipper in entering need fear lest he should bring defilement there, because that blood that cleanseth all sin away is there for ever before God.

Why are we so distant in our hearts from God? Is it not because we have so little sense of the real power of the blood *within the veil*, as the gracious provision of God Himself for our holy and unhindered communion with Him? "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus . . . let us draw near" (Heb. x. 19, 22).

But mark the way of access. At Mount Sinai all was distance. "Thou shalt set *bounds* unto

the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourself, that ye go not up into the mount, nor touch the border of it: whosoever *toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death*'' (Exod. xix). This distance always characterized the worship under the law; there were constant bounds set, to pass which would have been death. Even Aaron himself could not pass the bounds of the veil at all times, "that he die not" (Lev. xvi. 2). The outside worshipping Israelites could not pass the bounds of the curtains which hung at the door of the tabernacle, lest they die (Num. xviii. 22). To see God and live was impossible under the law. But now Jesus is the way, the living way, into God's presence. To see Him is to see God and live. He is not the *barrier* between us and God, but the Way to God (Heb. x. 20). All the distance and every bound are done away by Jesus. Did an Israelite on the outside gaze on the beautiful curtain, and long to pass it? Death would have been his portion had he attempted it. But now let any sinner look to Jesus, who says, "I am the door: by me, if any man enter in, he *shall be saved*" (John x. 9). Yes, the death of Jesus is become to us the the living way into the holiest of all.

But if, having proceeded within the curtains of the door, the veil seemed to forbid further entrance, let him again look to Jesus. "The veil," says the apostle, is "His flesh." The very God with whom we have to do is thus brought before us, as full of grace and truth. And if he perceived it rent, again let him look to Jesus, and Him crucified, and the holiness of God invites instead of forbids an entrance. What words of blessing to the once-purged worshipper: "By a

new and living way which He hath consécrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh."

But further. Not only the work of Jesus and His character inspire confidence, but He Himself is the High Priest over the House of God. His ministry is never for a moment interrupted. He is in the holiest of all, on the very ground of atonement having been made both for the people and the place, and therefore the present is to us one continued season of worship. How needful is this promise to give us confidence in entering into the holiest! The High Priest has not to go into the house; He is there constantly, and has taken a place which Aaron never could take in the tabernacle; He is *over* the house as His own; He is master of it; He opens, and no man shuts (Heb. ii. 6; Rev. iii. 7).

It is literally a great Priest over the House of God, or "great High Priest," as we have it in the fourth chapter. The worshippers themselves now enter into the privileged place of the High Priest, themselves taking the standing of high priests *in this respect*, not simply of priests entering into the holy place. Hence they need a "great" Priest, one who is *over* the house, even *over* them (Heb. iii. 6; iv. 14). This must not be forgotten. We are not priests in our own right, neither are we free of the house in our own right; all hangs on the great Priest; and our entrance into the holiest of all, now by faith, and in due time actually, is that which declares to us how much we are debtors to His grace.

May we indeed, by these meditations, find fresh virtue in the blood of Jesus, and learn what its preciousness must be before God, when it can give us liberty to enter into the holiest of all.

And now consider for a moment what has been done for us; what has been done for every one whose eye has been turned away from the things that are visible, and with which he himself is conversant, to see Jesus, now hidden in the heavens from the sight of the world, but revealed to faith as at the right hand of the throne of the majesty of heaven.

1. The worshippers have been once and for ever purged by His sacrifice once offered.

2. By the will of God they have been sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

3. A living way has been opened for them through the blood of Jesus into the holiest of all.

4. By the blood the place of worship is as much prepared for them to worship in, as they by the same blood are prepared to worship in it.

5. The great Priest is abidingly in that place of worship; no ministration is wanting; He is the minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

6. He, too, is *over* the house; and its gates are always open; entrance is always to be had; all things are ready, without our having done anything.

What then remains but for us to use our high privileges, and to listen to the word, "Let us draw near." But this, the Lord permitting, shall be the subject of the next paper.

Is there not reason for deep humiliation on the part of Christians, who own assuredly the preciousness of the blood of Jesus for remission of sins, but who do not regard its preciousness as having purged the place of worship for those whose sins are forgiven? An Israelite was

taught two things by the blood of the sacrifice. "Almost *all things* are by the law purged with blood; and without *shedding of blood* is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). Many a soul that has been taught the value of the blood in the latter sense has never regarded it in the former. Many a Christian who would be alarmed at anything which would imply that something was yet to be done by Jesus for justification, is quite unconscious of nullifying a most important part of the work of Jesus, the part affecting worship, by the ritual to which he is subjected. The truth *preached* cheers his soul, and leads into happy liberty; the ritual is submitted to as a point of decency, and in many instances tolerated only for the sake of the sermon. But what a fearful degradation of worship is this! What an undervaluing of the blood of Jesus! What a forgetfulness of our priestly place as worshippers "once purged" for the heavenly courts themselves!

The Lord pardon His saints for having so insulted His grace in the mode and character of their worship; and may He lead them by His Spirit into the holy place of acceptable worship, the holiest of all.

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If Paul got into a kind of ecstasy, it was not excitement; he was beside himself to *God*. If he comes down to sober reflection in himself, it is to think of the saints for their good. A blessed way to spend his life between the two! (2 Cor. v. 13).

## **The Authority of the Scriptures.**

**W**E desire to offer a few earnest words on a subject which we deem to be of commanding interest and importance. It is this: The divine sufficiency and supreme authority of Holy Scripture; and the urgent need of submitting ourselves absolutely to its guidance in all things.

In thus stating our thesis, we would not have any to suppose for a moment that we undervalue human writings in their proper place. Nothing is further from our thoughts. Indeed it would ill become the conductors of a monthly magazine, to speak disparagingly of a branch of Christian ministry so largely used of God in all ages of His Church's history, and specially in this our own day.

No, we prize human [Scriptural] writings more than we can attempt to say. We receive them as streams from the fountain head. And we would add that we have rarely met anyone who affected to despise Christian writings on the plea of reading nothing but the Bible, who was not crude, shallow and contracted. We might just as well say that we would not listen to a brother speaking to us in the assembly, as refuse to read what God had given him to write, provided we had time to do so.

How often has a book or tract been made a rich blessing to the soul, either in bringing one to Christ, or building up or helping on in Him! How often may we have read some passage of Scripture and seen nothing in it, until the Lord had used some paragraph in a human writing to unlock its treasures to our hearts! We are

none of us self-sufficient. We are dependent one on another. We grow by that which every joint supplieth. We need all the "helps" which God has set in the body for our common profit and blessing.

But having said thus much to guard against misunderstanding, and to put human writings in their right place, we return to our special object in this brief address. There is but one supreme and paramount authority, and that is the word of God. All human writings are interesting as references, valuable as aids, but they are worthless yea, mischievous, as authority.

Scripture is all-sufficient. We want absolutely nothing in the way of guidance and authority beyond what we possess in the sacred canon of Scripture. No doubt, it is only by the Holy Ghost we can understand, appreciate, or be guided by Scripture; and moreover, God may use a human voice or a human pen to help us; but Scripture is divinely sufficient. It can make *a child* wise unto salvation; and it can make *a man* perfect unto all good works (2 Timothy iii. 15-17).

Now, having such a guide, such an authority, what becomes us as Christians, as servants of God, and servants of Christ? Why, clearly, to submit ourselves absolutely and unreservedly to its teaching, in all things. We are bound, by every argument and every motive which can possibly sway the heart, to test everything in which we are engaged, or with which we stand associated, by the holy standard of the word of God; and, if we find aught, no matter what, which will not stand that test, to abandon it at once and for ever.

And it is precisely here that we feel there is.



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such serious failure in the professing church. As a rule, we do not find the conscience under the immediate action and government of the word. Instead of this, human opinions bear sway; human creeds and confessions of faith govern the heart, and form the religious character; human traditions and habits of thought are allowed a formative influence over the soul.

If it be merely a question of personal salvation, profit, or blessing, Scripture will be listened to. People are glad and thankful to hear how they can be saved and blessed. Everything that bears upon the individual condition and destiny will meet a welcome. But the moment it becomes a question of Christ's authority over us, in spirit, and soul, and body; when the word of God is brought to bear upon our entire practical career; upon our personal habits; our domestic arrangements; our commercial pursuits; our religious associations; our ecclesiastical position; then, alas! it becomes apparent how completely the authority of Holy Scripture is virtually thrown overboard. In point of fact, the enemy of souls seems to succeed as completely in robbing professing Christians of the real value, power, and authority of the word of God, as when, during that long and dreary period of the middle ages, it was wrapped in the shroud of a dead language, and buried in the dark cloisters of Rome.

It is perfectly appalling, when one comes in contact with the actual condition of things amongst professing Christians, to observe the ignorance of Scripture, and the carelessness about it. Nor can any thoughtful person doubt that the latter is the producing cause of the former. "If any man *will* do His will, he shall know of

the doctrine " (John vii. 17). But if the word of God be neglected, and practically ignored as an authority, need we marvel when we find people ignorant of its precious contents?

We have been much struck of late, in our intercourse with Christian professors, in noticing the little moral weight which Scripture seems to possess with them. You will rarely meet with any one who is prepared to start with this one grand point, that the voice of the Holy Ghost in Scripture is absolutely conclusive; that it admits of no appeal; that it closes all discussion. We speak not now of man's interpretation of Scripture, of anything in which it can be said, "That is your opinion." We speak only of the written word of God which we possess, and to which we are individually responsible to submit ourselves *in all things*. God has put His word into our hands, and He has put His Spirit into our hearts, and by that Spirit we can understand the word; and we are solemnly bound to be guided and governed by that word in all the details of our practical career.

It is this that we feel imperatively called upon to press home upon the hearts and consciences of our readers according to our poor ability; and now we leave it with them to consider as before the Lord, their personal responsibility in this weighty matter. We would entreat them, as they love the Lord Jesus Christ, to examine, in the light of Scripture, their entire position and path; and by the grace of God, and for His glory, to abandon at once and for ever all that is not in perfect accordance with that holy standard. Thus shall their path be as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day

## THREE CHIEF CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS. 111

(Prov. iv. 18). Oh! may the true language of all our hearts be, "Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth" (1 Sam. iii. 9). "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts ix. 6). God grant it for Christ's sake.

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## Three Chief Christian Relationships.

1. EVERY CHRISTIAN IS A CHILD IN THE FAMILY OF GOD. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" (Rom. viii. 16). And God looks for us to be imitators of Him, as dear children, and to walk in love (Eph. v. 1, 2).

2. EVERY CHRISTIAN IS A MEMBER OF THE BODY OF CHRIST. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." And this, too, in resurrection, where no change can ever take place: "For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (Eph. v.) And being thus livingly united to the Head in heaven, we are members one of another. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (1 Cor. xii.; Eph. v.; Rom. xii.) While nothing can exceed the reality and blessedness of this vital union, it also involves the most weighty responsibility. We cease to be simply individual in our actions; the whole body is affected by our spirit and ways. This consideration ought to make every Christian most careful to act con-

sistently with his relation to the Head and members of the body of Christ: "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. xii. 26).

3. EVERY CHRISTIAN IS A SERVANT IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD. It is through much tribulation that we enter into God's kingdom; not so into the family of God, or into the body of Christ. Christian service is connected with a purified conscience: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." In Thessalonians we find service connected with conversion, and the hope of the Lord's return: "Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven." In the parable of the Pounds, the blessed Lord places this truth most fully and distinctly before us, with its own rewards. We read too, "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shown toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." The fruit of our service will be fully known in the bright millennial day, when the time spoken of shall come; "That Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear Thy name, small and great" (Acts xiv. 22; Heb. ix. 14; 1 Thess. i. 9; Luke xix.; Heb. vi. 10; Rev. xi. 18).

Let every Christian, then, seek grace to act consistently as a child in the family of God, a member in the body of Christ, and a servant in the kingdom of God.

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# 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).

## Journeys to Jerusalem.

### 1.—THE WISE MEN OF THE EAST.

THE journey of the Wise Men of the East, as we read it in Matt. ii., and the journey of the Queen of the South, as we have it in 2 Chron. ix., shine with something of kindred beauty and significance before us.

They, all of them, go to Jerusalem; but the Wise Men of the East began their journey under the sign or preaching of the Star; the Queen of the South began hers simply on the ground of a report which had reached her in the distant land. For at times the Lord has visited and guided His elect by signs, visible tokens, dreams, voices, angelic visits, and the like; at times He has simply caused them to hear a report, as in the case of this illustrious lady. But let Him address us as He may, faith is cognisant of His voice,

as in these cases. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John x. 27).

The Wise Men went to worship, and took offerings with them; the Queen of the South went to inquire at wisdom's gate, and to learn lessons of God; and trafficking for that which was more precious than gold or rubies, she took with her of the choicest treasures of her kingdom (Prov. iii. 13-15; viii. 10, 11, 12).

The journey of the Wise Men is rich in illustrations of the life of faith. But Jerusalem did not satisfy them. They had to go to Bethlehem to reach the object of their faith. In the earlier journey of the Queen of the South, Jerusalem answered all expectations. In it we may find some striking moral characteristics, which carry several healthful and significant admonitions to our own souls.

## 2.—THE QUEEN OF THE SOUTH.

In the first place, I observe that the report which had reached her touching the King in Jerusalem at once makes her dissatisfied with her present condition, wealthy though it was, and honourable in no common measure. For she sets out immediately, leaving behind her her own royal estate, with all its advantages in the flesh and in the world. The fact of her journey bespeaks the uneasiness and dissatisfaction which tidings about Solomon and Jerusalem had awakened.

This speaks in our ears. It tells us of the operation upon our hearts which the report that has gone abroad about "a greater than Solomon" should produce (Matt. xii. 42). In like spirit, to this day, the quickened soul, under the report it has received about JESUS, is convicted, and made restless in that condition in which

nature has left us, and in which this report has found us. We have been upset by it, turned out of all ease and satisfaction which we before may have taken in ourselves and our circumstances or our character.

But again. As soon as this elect lady reached Jerusalem, she set herself to survey all the estate of the king there. She came on that business, and she does it. She is not idle. She acquaints herself with everything. She put her hard questions to the king, listened to his wisdom, and surveyed his glories. The very sitting and apparel of his servants did not escape her notice, and surely not the ascent by which he went up to the house of God.

This again speaks in our ears. When we reach JESUS, our souls make Him their object. We learn Him; we talk of Him; we search the secrets of His grace and glory. We carry the sense of this one thing, that our business is with Him. He is our object.

But thirdly. After this stranger-queen had acquainted herself with all that belonged to the King in Zion, she was satisfied. Her soul was satiated as with marrow and fatness (Ps. lxxiii. 5). She knew not what to make of herself. She did not understand her new condition. The joy was overwhelming. The half had not been told her, she says; and Solomon exceeded the fame that reached her about him. There was no more spirit in her. She returns to her land and to her people, filled. She left him, as the woman of Sychar left JESUS; emptied of all beside, but filled and satisfied with her new-found treasure.

Such had been her wondrous path. Her journey had begun in the restless, uneasy sense of need;

all her former fair surface of flattering circumstances being broken up. She had acquainted herself with the vast, mysterious treasures of the place where her journey had led her; she had done this carefully, with a heart only the more engaged and interested as she went onward in her search. She ended her journey, or returned to her own land, as one filled to the very brim of all her expectations and desires.

### 3.—THE EUNUCH OF ETHIOPIA.

The journey from the south to Jerusalem, recorded in the New Testament, has much the same characteristics. I mean that of the Eunuch of Ethiopia in Acts viii.

He begins his journey as with an unsettled conscience. He had gone to Jerusalem to worship, but he left that city of solemnities, that city of the temple and service of God, with its priesthood and ordinances, still unsettled, and we see him an anxious inquirer on his way from Jerusalem to the southern Gaza. Nothing in that centre of religious provisions and observances had given rest to his soul. He was dissatisfied with the worship he had been rendering there. His conscience was not purged. He had as yet no answer for God. There was no rest in his spirit. Jerusalem, I may say, had disappointed him, as it had the wise men.

But if, like the Queen of Sheba, he were at first, on starting on his way, uneasy and dissatisfied, like her he was deeply engaged with what God was providing for him, through His witnesses and representatives. The Word of God was addressing his soul. The prophet Isaiah was taking him out of himself. He started not at the surprise of the stranger's voice in that desert place.



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All he cared for, all he thought of, was the secret of the Book. He was inspecting that witness of God's grace, as the queen had once inspected Solomon's estate, the witness of glory. And Philip let him into the secret for which he was searching.

And then he is satisfied. His heart, like hers, is filled with what had now been discovered to him. He pursues the second stage of his journey, from Gaza to Ethiopia, "rejoicing." Philip may leave him, but he can do without him. The woman of Sychar may again leave her water-pot, and find JESUS everything to her. With a soul satisfied as with marrow and fatness, she can go on her way. Another returns to the south, to Sheba or Ethiopia, with a heart rich in the discoveries he had made on this his visit to Jerusalem.

These kindred characteristics are easily traced in these narratives. But it was rather *conscience* that set the eunuch on his journey; it was *desire* that moved the queen. And she came in contact with *glory* in the court and estate of Solomon; he with *grace*, in the words of the prophet Isaiah.

But whether God address us with a revelation of His grace or of His glory; whether He address the conscience or the heart, it is His high and divine prerogative to satisfy us, as He does these two distinguished persons. He satiates the soul with a manifestation of Himself, let that manifestation take what form it may, or adapt itself to whatever exigency or demand of the soul it please. And such satisfaction we get differently, but very blessedly, exemplified in these two cases.

And let me add one other feature that is common to both. Their spirit was free of all grudging.

The queen surveyed the glories of Solomon, and she could look on his higher, more eminent, and excellent estate, without the stir of one single jealous, envious movement. She was too happy for that. She could congratulate the king in Zion, and his servants that waited on him, and his people who heard his wisdom, and return home as one that was privileged only to visit him; but she begrudged them not the richer portion they were enjoying. Her own share of blessing filled her, though her vessel was comparatively small.

And so the eunuch, I am full sure. He was willing to be a debtor to Philip; to know that it is the less that is blessed of the better. Be it so, his spirit would say. He was happy, he was filled; and if there was no void in his spirit, so we may assure ourselves there was no grudging there.

What joy there ought to be, as we look at such samples of divine workmanship! The soul, *disturbed by reason of its own condition*; fixed in earnest searching after Christ; satisfied by the discovery of Him; and then too happy to dwell amid the tumults and jarrings of that nature that lusteth to envy! And how noiselessly the process is conducted! It goes on in the spirit of a man by the power that works after the pattern of the wind, which blows where it lists, but whence it comes and whither it goes we know not.

#### 4.—THE NATIONS.

I have, however, another thought upon this subject of the journeys to Jerusalem.

At times we find, as in the case of the Queen of Sheba, that that great city answered all the expectations that had been formed by the heart respecting it. What was there deeply and fully

satisfied her, as we have seen. But Jerusalem has at times grievously disappointed the heart. It did, as I may say again, the wise men of the East, who went there looking for the King of the Jews. They had to pass it, and put themselves on another journey, down to Bethlehem in the south. It disappointed the eunuch also, as I have also observed. He had gone there to worship; but he left it unsatisfied in spirit, and searching for that rest which, as we saw, all the religious provisions of that city of the Temple and the priesthood did not, could not, give him. And I may add, it disappointed the Lord Jesus likewise. Instead of finding His welcome and His place there, He had to weep over it, and to pronounce its doom, and meet there in His own person what we may here rather remember than mention.

It will, however, in the last days, as it were, revive, and take again the character that it fulfilled in the first days. It will answer all the richest expectations of those multitudes who will then, like the Queen of the South, go up there to see the King in His beauty (Isa. xxxiv. 17). The highways will then be thronged with joyous visitors, and the hearts of the thousands of the nations will repeat again what they have found in the holy city. "All nations shall flow into it," as we read. "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob: and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. ii. 2, 3).

And again we read: "It shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which

came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year, to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles " (Zech. xiv. 16).

And again: " I was glad when they said to me, Let us go into the house of the Lord: our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together, whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord " (Ps. cxxii. 1-4).

These are among the divine, inspired witnesses of the satisfying virtue of these journeys to the city of the great King in the day of the kingdom, when the pledge which the journey of the Queen of Sheba has given us shall be blessedly redeemed in the joy of the hearts of the thousands of the nations who, in the coming day of Zion's restoration, shall wait there to do willing service to " the Lord of all the earth " (Josh. iii, 11, 13).

The sequel, then, is simply weighed. Journeys to Jerusalem either satisfy or disappoint; and it is the Lord Himself that has to determine which. His glory was at that time displayed or reflected there, and therefore her visit satisfied the Queen of Sheba; His grace was not then ministered or testified there, and therefore his visit disappointed the eunuch of Ethiopia. And thus the value of that city of solemnities was to be measured by the presence of Christ there.

And let me say so of all ordinances and services. Jerusalem is but " a city of the Jebusites," if Jesus be not the life and glory of it; it is " the joy of the whole earth," if He be. Like Mount Sinai or Horeb, it is only " Mount Sinai in Arabia," or it takes the dignity of " the mount

of God," according as the Lord adopts it or not. The ordinances of the law were " shadows of good things to come," the furniture of God's " beautiful house," or mere " beggarly elements," as Christ either used them or disowned them.

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### **Papers on Worship—No. 5.**

**I**T is indeed very blessed to be enabled to tell a poor awakened sinner that all things which he needs for remission of sins, righteousness, and life, are already provided in JESUS. And it is not less blessed to be enabled to tell those who have come to Jesus that all things are ready for their worship in the holiest of all; that everything is there ordered by the Lord Jesus Himself for their entrance therein, and that He Himself has consecrated the way for their approach (Heb. x. 19).

It is true that the time is coming when " many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem " (Isa. ii. 3). But now is the time for believers to encourage one another to enter into the holiest of all, even into heaven itself, because JESUS is there. Come ye, say they, and let us draw near with a true heart (Heb. x. 22).

Under the law, much of the priestly ministry was outside the tabernacle, and, therefore, open to the view of the worshipper. If he brought a burnt sacrifice, he was to bring it to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, where he

was to kill it, and then the priests sprinkled the blood in his sight upon the altar that was by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. This part of the priest's work was visible to the outside worshippers. But he who could approach thus far was never satisfied as to his conscience. He came indeed to these sacrifices; he saw them offered; but they were utterly inefficacious as to the purging of the conscience. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. x. 4). But now all on the outside has been once and for all accomplished; the priestly ministry is all within and invisible, and therefore only known to faith by the revelation of God.

Let us picture to ourselves a Hebrew worshipper, by God's grace taught to know JESUS as the one sacrifice for sin, and as the ever-abiding High Priest in the holiest of all. What a struggle must there often have been in his mind when approaching God, because he had no sacrifice to offer; nothing visible on which to lean; no victim to lay his hand upon. It must indeed have required true-heartedness to Jesus to enable Him to draw near, and to look at everything with which he had been formerly conversant as taken up in Jesus, so that all that he had *seen* before was now to be discerned by faith as fulfilled in Christ.

And are we not often false to Jesus in this matter? Do we not often harbour the thought that something yet remains to be done, either by ourselves or by Him, in order to our drawing near? Do we not often thus become occupied with the circumstantialia of worship rather than with Jesus, the substance? Are we not often false to Him

in questioning our title to draw near, because we find distance in our own hearts, as if it were the warmth of our affections, instead of the blood of Jesus, which brings us near?

But, oh ! beloved, how false to Jesus has the Church been ! The worshippers are often pressed down by a *burdensome ritual*, and allowed neither to know that they are once and for ever purged, nor that all is prepared for their entrance into the holiest. They are turned back again to that which is visible, and go through the daily routine of service, never getting farther than the door of the tabernacle ! They are set in the place of distant Jews, instead of that of priests sanctified for heavenly ministrations and worship !

And how continually do we see souls led to put the act of worship in the place of Jesus ! Surely this is *not* to draw near with a true heart. A doubt harboured as to the all-sufficiency of His sacrifice, or the perfect efficiency of His priesthood, or His tender sympathy and compassion, is not to draw near with a *true heart*. If we shrink back into a distant place after all He has done, are we true-hearted to Jesus ? But what positive treachery to Jesus is it to set up an order of men as in greater nearness to God than others, virtually putting them *within*, and virtually putting others *without* ! To lean on priests, or ministers, in worship, as if they were needed to that end, is absolutely denying the virtue and the person and work of Christ.

Such things are the necessary offspring of departure from the truth of a sinner's justification before God by the one sacrifice of Christ. Distant worship necessarily follows imperfect justification. And if a sinner's justification before God by the

- blood of Jesus be not seen, much less will entrance into the holiest of all by the same blood for worship be allowed as the common portion of the saints.

But even where the truth as to justification has been recovered and is preached, we still see a form and a ritual of worship altogether subversive of the truth. The access proclaimed in the gospel preached is not permitted to those who have believed that preaching. Thus the saints are practically kept in a place of distance, and thus taught to be false-hearted to Jesus. Surely we might say, If every church and chapel in the kingdom were closed, and all the ministers of the gospel shut up in prison, that true-heartedness to Jesus would lead His saints to assemble themselves together to worship, by faith, in the holiest of all, knowing that there the ministry of the Great High Priest can never for a moment be suspended. "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith."

As to the expression, "full assurance of faith," it by no means conveys the idea of a certain standard measure of faith as a matter of attainment. The reference is not to the measure of faith, but to its bearing on the right object. The faith may be the weakest possible; but let that, weak as it is, be in full bearing on its own proper object.

We have another form of the same word in the New Testament. It is said of Abraham, "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform."



(Rom. iv. 20, 21). The moment the soul has believed on Jesus it is delivered from itself, and ought to be "fully persuaded" that all it needs is presented to it in the object before it, even Jesus.

It is this single eye to Jesus which we need in worship. The very things which man in his wisdom has thought to be helps to devotion are really its hindrances.

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## **The Self-sacrifice of Service.**

**T**HE way in which the New Testament presents ministry, or service, is truly wonderful.

GOD is the great Minister, supplying His creatures, in their various orders and degrees of relationship to Himself, with corresponding blessings. Thus, He serves out to all the rain and sunshine, giving fruitful seasons; and to the Church higher and richer blessings, as we know, for they stand in another degree of relationship to Him.

THE LORD JESUS was the great personal, manifested Minister; in every passage of His life being the Servant, knowing the while how entirely all this was answering the mind and the way of God, and that it could therefore only issue in His own final joy and glory, as we read in Phil. ii. 9-11, and Heb. xii. 2.

THE HOLY GHOST is now the great hidden and efficient Minister, constantly tending the Church, and serving forth to each saint the things of the Father and of Christ, sustaining him by His presence, and in all conflicts and sorrows, even by His own groanings (Rom. viii. 26).

Thus we get a marvellous display of ministry in God : whether in the FATHER, as surrendering the Beloved ; the LORD, in personal suffering and trial ; or the HOLY GHOST, in the constancy of His presence in a place that draws forth the inexpressible groan and effectual intercession.

But we get ministry in the Church, too, ministry that results at *once* from communion and peace with the blessed God ; and which, therefore, shows this communion with Him, or is the necessary outflowing of it.

It may have various forms ; but it is divine ministry, of that quality which we have seen in God, in the Father, the Lord, and the Spirit, ministry which serves others at a cost or sacrifice. Thus, the apostle Paul speaks of the teacher, the exhorter, the giver, the ruler, and so on ; but shows them each, in the exercise of his ministry, acting *with respect to them* as debtors to others, and not in honour of themselves. Each is to profit all, the whole growing together by virtue of each (Rom. xii. 1 ; 1 Cor. xii. ; Eph. iv.).

The apostle Peter also shows that the ministry is to have two distinct qualities ; first, according to the grace received from God, and *not beyond* that measure ; secondly, according to the need of others, and, therefore, as a steward *not below* that measure (1 Peter iv. 10, 11).

But Second Corinthians is the chief place where ministry is discussed. The apostle presents his own there, and shows it indeed to be one unbroken course of self-sacrifice and labour for others. For the nearer we get to Christ, the brighter this ministry shines ; and an apostle like Paul stood the nearest to Him.

There we see him in sympathy with every in-

firmity of the saints. Who was offended without his burning? The care of the churches came upon him daily; if he were afflicted or comforted, it was still for them: "All things were for your sakes." He says death worked in him that life might work in them. Whether he were beside himself or sober, he could still account for it on self-sacrificing principles. He followed his Lord so closely that while he says of Him, "He became poor that ye might become rich"; he says of himself, "As poor, yet making many rich" (2 Cor. vi. 10; viii. 9). He was ready to spend and be spent for them, and that, too, in the spirit of entire self-surrender; "though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." He wanted them to do no evil, though he should be himself *as* a reprobate; and he was glad when he was weak and they were strong. A blessed display this of divine grace and ministry.

The epistle shows us ministry in the person of an apostle, as the Gospel of Mark shows it to us in the person of the Son Himself, the one being behind, but still in the *track* of the other.

But let us get more distant than an apostle; yea, as distant as we can among the ranks of the redeemed. We are bound to look for ministry of the same quality, if not of the same quantity or strength.

Every believer has some office to fill in the great ministry of reconciliation; and thus, in a sense, is an ambassador for Christ, or representative of God in grace, in some measure as Christ was in fulness. This is taught, as I judge, in 2 Cor. v. 17-21. If I wash but a saint's feet, it is still a part of the great ministry of reconciliation, for it is so far a reflection of the grace of God, a taking

my place in the great embassy of the Ambassador's suite, which has come down from God to this world of sinners.

Every man in Christ is thus to know all things in a new way, to see himself in reconciliation, and go forth *from that* ministering *according to it* to others.

And thus we have ministry down from God in the highest, to the weakest and most distant companion in the blessed ranks of the redeemed.

But I would not omit that we have it in the intermediate hosts also. For His angels are "all ministering spirits," and those of them who stand nearest to God, like the apostles to Christ, are perhaps the most abounding in ministries, as Gabriel. And it may be that Satan would not take his place in this great system of ministry or divine benevolence; he stood in *pride* rather than in *service*, and thus fell into condemnation (1 Tim. iii. 6) he abode not in the truth, refused to take part in the economy of grace and truth, which, as we have seen, occupies the service or ministry of God Himself, with the Lord and the Spirit, the hosts of angels above, and all orders and estates of men in the Church or on earth.

And when the glory is revealed, and the heavens and the earth are filled according to God, ministering will still go on, and the less will still be blessed of the better; for the heavens shall hear the earth, and the river shall flow from the Throne through the City, and the leaves of the tree in the heavenly Jerusalem be for the healing of the earthly nations (Hos. ii. 21; Rev. xxii. 12). For ministry, while it calls for self-sacrifice, expresses also intrinsic glory and strength, and thus the less is always blessed of the better. ,

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# 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).

## The Conquerors of the Last Days.

**W**HEN we look a little at the different agents of evil and of delusions exhibited in the Book of Revelation, we wonder how any soul will escape.

And then, when we remember that, though these agents have not yet been manifested, yet the energies which are to animate and use them are already abroad and in action, and all working now (in mystery, if not in revealed forms), we stand amazed at the sight we thus get of the conflict in which we are engaged.

There will be "the dragon" and his "great wrath"; the "beast" and his "false prophet"; the "frogs"; "Babylon"; "the kings of the earth"; and "the whole world" wondering after the beast.

What tremendous agents in the work of delusion,

darkness, and blood ! What strong temptations and what appalling difficulties will then beset the path of the wayfaring saints ! Who will stand ? Who will find safe conduct through this array of hindrances ? Who will discover the path of life and light amid all this thickening and overwhelming darkness ?

And yet with each feature of this terrible scene, with each member of this great system<sup>\*</sup> of subtlety and strength, in the mystery or spirit of it, we have now to do ; though of course some part of it may be more in real activity than others. But it is our duty, still and always, to recognise the dragon and his wrath, the beast and the frogs, Babylon, the kings of the earth, and the world deluded into infidel or idolatrous wonder and worship, to recognise each and all of these in the mystery, or in the hidden energy, of their working.\*

The field of conflict thus spread out is serious indeed. But, as this same Book of Revelation unfolds to us, we have at the same time to recognise the better region, that is, the heavenly, where we get other objects altogether ; and all, I may say, for us.

The prophet of God in Patmos passes, in vision, with great ease and rapidity from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth. The two regions are alternately before him, and he sees the action in each. But the passage is made with ease and with speed.†

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\* The " lawless one " is to be revealed ; but it is " the mystery of lawlessness " that is now working (2 Thess. ii., Greek).

† He was " in the Spirit " (i. 10). And we know that the Spirit was as a chariot to convey the prophet of old, either really or in vision, hither and thither (1 Kings xviii. 12 ; Ezek. iii. 12 ; Acts viii. 39).

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In chapters iv., v., he is in sight of heaven. So, at the opening of the seals in chapter vi., passing, however, at once to see the results on earth of those opened scenes. So again in chapter viii., we find him in vision of both the regions. And, in like manner, I may say, throughout. He hears the music and the conferences in heaven, the rapture and the hopes there; and then again he is amid the infidel pride, the confusion, and all the workings of apostate principles, which are giving character to the scene on earth. He passes from the exulting marriage-feast in heaven to the terrible judgment by the Rider on the white horse on all the confederated iniquity of the earth.

We see something of this in the opening of the Book of Job. There we are, in vision, both in heaven and on earth, as in the twinkling of an eye.†

Is it not the business of the soul thus to act still? There are two regions, namely, that of faith and that of sight; and the soul should pass rapidly and frequently into the region of faith. Had Job thus visited heaven, and heard and seen the action there, he would have been ready for the trials and sorrows which awaited him on earth.

Little one knows of it indeed, but the soul covets the power to follow John in the Book of Revelation, passing, as we see, easily and speedily from earth to heaven and back again; and always prepared, I may say, without amazement, for the shifting scenery.

But beside this, for the encouragement of our

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† So at the time of Stephen's martyrdom. How near to each other are the two regions (that of sight and that of faith, or of earth and of heaven), though so different, presented to us! (Acts vii.).

hearts, I observe two victories achieved in the progress of this book; one over the accuser (xii. 11), and another over the beast (xv. 2).

The accuser was defeated by a certain army of martyrs, and the weapons of their victorious struggle are hung up before us; for we are told that they conquered by "the blood of the Lamb," by "the word of their testimony," and by "their not loving their lives to the death." These had been their armour in conflict with the accuser.

If he went up, as in Job's case, to the presence of God with charges against them, they met him there with "the blood of the Lamb." They pleaded the sacrifice of God's own Lamb, according to God's own testimony respecting it. And to the charge that "skin for skin, yea, all that a man has will he give for his life" (Job ii. 4), they rendered up their lives to death in answer.\*

Here was their victory, and such and such the weapons which accomplished it. Heaven could employ itself in celebrating this victory. Was Jesus standing when Stephen was martyred? Easy then for heaven to be engaged in rehearsing with joy these conquests of this martyr-band.

But again, we have another victory celebrated in chapter xv. It had been obtained over the beast, as the other had been gained over the accuser.

The conquerors here are like Israel on the Red Sea in Exodus xv. And just as in that song of

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\* They surpassed Job's measure. He pleaded "the blood of the Lamb" (Job xix. 25), but he failed in the devotedness of a martyr, and was not prepared for the place of death. [I doubt that "Redeemer" in Job means what the author infers; though the power in which He will act in favour of the saints, cannot be separated from His atonement, as we know.—ED.]



## THE CONQUERORS OF THE LAST DAYS. 133

Israel, so here in this song of triumph, we learn the character of the previous truth, and how it was the conquerors conquered.

Moses and the congregation rehearse the fact that a victory had been won. But more than that, they rehearse how it had been won. They sing of the horse and his rider being thrown into the sea, of the Lord, as a man of war, casting His enemies into the mighty waters, of the depths covering the foe. And they let it be known that Israel themselves had not fought, but that the Lord had made the battle all His own.

Thus the style of the victory, its instrument and strength, is published in this song, as well as the fact of victory. And I judge in like manner so does the song in Revelation xv.

All the world had wondered after the beast, and their wonder led to worship, or it was itself worship (xiii.). His power appeared to be so great, his history so marvellous, that all the world wondered and worshipped, except (as I may say) this conquering band who paid their lives as the price of their faith in God and fidelity to Jesus.

But the song, as I have said, shows as I judge, the weapons they had used in that day of battle. And they were these. These martyrs were admiring and worshipping "the Lord God Almighty," while the world around them was admiring and worshipping the beast. The world was wondering at the greatness of the beast and the marvellousness of his history; but they were standing in the holy, adoring admiration of the Lord and the marvellousness of His works (Rev. xv. 3). And while all beside were fearing the beast who could and would kill their bodies, they lived in the fear of God only, giving heed to the angel's voice which:

had spoken of His coming judgment (xiv. 7 ; xv. 4 ; Matt. x. 28).

Thus this fine though short song tells of the manner of the victory, or the weapons which had accomplished it, as that song of Israel at the Red Sea had done before.\*

But further. I might extend this thought as to victories in the Book of Revelation, and say, generally, that from beginning to end it is a book of victories.

It contemplates corruption or apostasy, evil in the Church and in the larger scene outside ; or first among the candlesticks, and then in the earth or world.

But corruption or apostasy occasions struggle or conflict on the part of saints ; and accordingly, the saints in this book are addressed or contemplated as conquerors ; such as have been in conflict because of corruption, and have come off in victory.

They are formally regarded in this character in this book. Thus it is as conquerors they are addressed by the Spirit in each of the letters to the churches " He that overcometh " is the language in each of them. Because in each church there is contemplated a struggle or conflict by reason either of corruption within, or danger and enmity without (ii., iii.).

And I suggest that the crowns of chapter xv. are more formally the crowns of victors than of kings (iii. 11), as though we saw the " over-

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\* I might notice a difference in the battles, though the songs are the same. That on the Red Sea was fought alone by the Lord for Israel, this with the beast was fought by the Lord in His saints.

## THE CONQUERORS OF THE LAST DAYS. 135

comers'' of the previous chapter enthroned in chapter iv.†

So in the very next scene (v.) the Lord Jesus is recognised as a Conqueror. In that character He takes the book. The word "prevailed" is the common word for "overcome." (See v. 5, Greek, and foot note.)

Then, in the progress of the book, we see two victories celebrated in heaven, one obtained over the accuser (xii.), and another over the beast (xv.), as I have before noticed.

Then, on the earth, we see victory achieved, victory over the closing, concentrated enmity and apostate strength and pride of the whole world. (xvii. 14, or xix. 11-21.)

And further still; for I ask, Is not the first resurrection contemplated as a resurrection of conquerors? Is it not a reign of conquerors which we see in chapter xx. 4?

And so for ever for the inheritance of all things, after this is in the hands of conquerors (xxi. 7).

Can I ask my own soul what measure or character of victory marks my course? Can I inquire of myself, Do I know what conflict is because of corruption, and what is the victory of separation from it?

The more we are conquerors, the more are we morally fit to be readers of the Book of Revela-

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† We may say that, in divine reckoning, there is scarcely a difference, for the kingdom is taken by those who have been in the conflict before (Luke xxii. 28, 29; Matt. xix. 28; 1 Cor. ix. 25; 2 Tim. ii. 12). The Lord had gained a succession of victories over Satan in the days of His flesh (Matt. iv.), over the world (John xvi. 33), over sin and its judgment (Matt. xxvii. 51-53), over death and the grave (Matt. xxiv. 1-9). This earth has been the scene of these victories; the gospel publishes them; faith accepts them.

tion. John, I may say, was a conqueror in the first chapter, for he was a martyr or confessor in the Isle of Patmos; "a brother and a companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ," and in that character he gets the Revelation communicated to him. And I suggest again that it comes to him from a Conqueror, because it comes to him from "Jesus Christ" in the character (among others) of "the faithful Witness," the character in which He overcame the world (1 Tim. vi. 13; John xvi. 33; Rev. iii. 21).

Indeed the four leading ideas in the book seem to be corruption, conflict, victory, and kingdom; the judgment of God being in exercise throughout.

The book assumes, so to speak, that those who have tasted the grace of the Saviour should stand in the rejection of the Saviour. This may give a character to the book which will be somewhat strong for our timid hearts; but it is fitting that the Volume of God should close with such a chapter, if I may so call it. Because the blessing of the creature was not the only business in creation, neither is it in redemption. HIS OWN GLORY was proposed, as well as His creatures' good. And it is His glory to judge a reprobate, unrepentant world; and His people glorify Him by taking part with Him in that judgment; and they judge it now in weakness by gainsaying the course of it even at the hazard of goods, liberties, and lives, as they will by and by judge it in power, when seated on their thrones in the regeneration (Matt. xix. 28).

The volume then closes as it began, for His own glory, of course, in a different way (that is, in the judgment of all the apostate principles of the world in their ripened condition). And the saints are rightly expected to be on His side in that

## THE CONQUERORS OF THE LAST DAYS. 137

action. This is their place and character in this book. The present is an age of easy profession, and the martyr strength and devotedness which are found in this book is not the common element. Oh for faith and love to reach it, to be on the side of a rejected Jesus against the world !

But more than this : the book contemplates the saints as heirs as well as conquerors. The expectation and the desire of getting the earth into possession and under dominion occupy the mind of Christ and of the saints throughout.\*

In the opening of the prophetic part in chapter iv. we see the rainbow, the sign of the earth's serenity, round the throne in heaven. And the One who sits on the throne is clothed in His glory as Creator, for whose pleasure all things were created. We are, thus, in spirit, in Genesis i.

In chapter v. the book of the inheritance of the earth passes into the hand of the Lamb, and all rejoice. We are thus, in spirit, in Genesis ii., where the Lord God Himself," and all the creatures, owned the dominion of Adam; the Lord God by conferring it, the creatures by submitting to it.

Judgments under the seals and under the trumpets, the necessary precursors of the kingdom, then take their course; and in chapter x. the Lord Jesus, as the Mighty Angel, triumphs in the now approaching moment of inheritance and dominion

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\* Properly or necessarily so, because the sealed book is the book of the inheritance, and that book rules the action from thence onward to the end; and I ask, Is not the attitude of the saints quite different now from what it is in the Book of Revelation? They are now "waiting for the Son from heaven" (1 Thess. i.): in the Book of Revelation they are waiting to reign on the earth (that is, now they are on earth; but then they are in heaven).

over earth and sea ; and, in chapter xi. the saints in heaven do the same.

The voice heard in heaven in chapter xii., and the song of the victor-harpers in chapter xv., alike utter joy over the prospect of the kingdom : "Now is come the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ," says the voice in heaven. "All nations shall come and worship before Thee," the harpers sing.

Then in chapter xix. the joy in heaven is this, that she that corrupted the earth has been judged ; and the voice there (as of many waters and mighty thunderings) utters, "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." And the action which makes the earth the Lord's property takes place.

In chapter xx., the first resurrection is spoken of as being for the very purpose of bringing in or manifesting the kingdom. Speaking of the risen ones, the prophet says, "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

And how does the book close? Not with a description of the Church in the hidden places of heaven, as the Father's house, but with a sight of the Church in the manifested heavens, the place of power or government, up to the light of which the kings will bring their glory and honour, and forth from which will go the waters of the river and the leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations. And this is such a view of the heavenly places as suits the earth in the days of the kingdom ; and of the servants of God and of the Lamb, who are there, it is said at the close, "And they shall reign for ever and ever"\* (xxii. 5).

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\* It is the book of the kingdom rather than of the Church. The Church's heavenly destiny is assured, as in chapter iv. ; but the kingdom at the close is reached through judgments.

## **Papers on Worship—No. 6.**

**W**HICH of the senses do not men seek to gratify in the circumstantial of worship? Now, the very object of the apostle here is to turn away the worshipper from the things of sight and sense, to which he had been accustomed, in order to concentrate his soul on one single object, in which he was to find everything that he needed (Heb.).

We can never look at our title to worship God, but we also see our salvation. How blessedly has God linked these things together! And how perversely does man rend them asunder, either by calling on all to worship, believers and unbelievers, or by binding believers to a form which negatives the sense of complete justification!

What we need in order to happier and holier worship is more simple faith in Jesus. Are we fully persuaded that Jesus has done all that is needed to make an acceptable meeting-place between ourselves and God? Then let us draw near.

And what holy freedom and liberty attends this: "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience"! The leper to be cleansed, in order to restore him to the privilege of worship, needed to be sprinkled with blood (Lev. xiv. 7). The Israelite, who had touched anything which made him unclean, needed to have the water of purification sprinkled on him, but it only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh (Heb. ix. 13). The priests at their consecration had the blood applied to them, that they might so draw near and minister before God. But what is all this compared with a heart sprinkled from an evil conscience by the blood of Jesus? It is no longer a purifying

of the flesh, but a purifying of the heart by faith. The flesh purified for worship might co-exist with an evil conscience, but a sprinkled heart never could. How entirely is a good conscience alone maintained by that which is not of sight, even by the purging power of the blood of Jesus !

Before Aaron could put on the holy linen coat he must wash his flesh in water (Lev. xiv. 4). And so it is now : " Our bodies washed with pure water." We cannot put on our white robe unless we know what communion with the death of Jesus really is. How needful for us in our approach to our place of worship, even the holiest of all, habitually to remember that we have died, and that we are alive in Christ Jesus (Rom. vi. 11). **We have to do with the living God ; and He is a consuming fire (Heb. xii. 29).** All that is contrary to life has been set aside by the death of Jesus. " Ye are dead," says the Scripture, " and your life is hid with Christ in God " (Col. ii. 3). And it is only as alive from the dead that we can have access into " the holiest of all."

" Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering " (v. 23). It is literally " of our *hope*," not faith, and has reference to the sixth chapter : " That we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us ; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil " (v. 19). Our hope is that we shall be there actually, " the holiest of all " being our own proper place as priests unto God. Even now by faith we worship there in spirit.

But it is hard indeed to maintain a profession contradicted, so far as sight goes, by everything



in us and around us. Jesus witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that He was a king, though without any mark of royalty about Him. His confession seemed contradicted by His appearance.

Timothy had confessed a good confession before many witnesses (1 Tim. vi. 12). He needed to be reminded of it. And so do we. For how constantly do we forget that we are what we are in hope! We could not give satisfactory proof to another that we are what we confess to be. We can indeed give the soundest reason of the hope that is in us, because the forerunner is *for us* already entered within the veil; but we cannot satisfy the restlessness of our minds, or the minds of others, by evidence. No; blessed be God! He has provided for our hope on surer ground than any evidence we could produce, even on the ground of His own immutability and faithfulness; "for He is faithful that hath promised" (v. 23).

The word is of great force, "Let us hold fast." Let us tenaciously grasp. And why? Because our hope is that which Satan would try by all means to wrest from us. And has he not effectually done this in the Church at large by making that to be their hope, which is in fact the ground of their hope; that is, their justification?

Present righteousness is the ground of Christian hope. "The holiest of all" is open only to those who have been once and for ever purged. If our hope springs not from that "within the veil," where is our steadfastness? Everything short of that may be shaken, and will be shaken. If therefore we know not accomplished righteousness, fitting us now for "the holiest of all," the peace of our souls must be unsteady.

An Israelite might approach the door of the tabernacle with a sacrifice to be offered, which, however, *had yet* to be pronounced acceptable and to be accepted. But it was on the ground of an already offered and accepted sacrifice that "the holiest of all" was entered by the high priest on the Day of Atonement (Lev. xvi.). Thus it is with our title to enter within the veil; the one offering of Jesus has for ever given us liberty to enter there.

How amazing is the craft of Satan in his devices against the truth! When he could no longer keep out of sight the doctrine of justification by faith, he contrived to rob it of its real power, even where received, by practically putting it as the object of hope, instead of the present possession of all who have come to Jesus. The peace of the gospel is thus practically unknown, although the gospel itself is truly stated. And this hope of justification by faith always opens the door for distant worship. In how many real believers is the peace of the gospel hindered by their very acts of worship!

Let us therefore, beloved brethren, grasp and maintain this confession as our best treasure: having present righteousness by faith, our hope is nothing short of "the holiest of all"; and there we worship in Spirit now. Our hope is independent of ourselves; it hangs on the immutable faithfulness of God; it is secured by the blood of Jesus; and it is already made fast within the veil; for Jesus is there, and there *for us*.

Beware of mock humility, which is only the cover of unbelief and self-dependence. Look at yourselves, and you are hopeless; yea, nothing is before you but a fearful looking for of judgment.

Look at Jesus, and know your hope. For where is He? In "the holiest of all" as the *forerunner*! Let this check all wavering, and answer every doubt and every difficulty. In spite of all appearances, hold fast the profession of the hope without wavering.

"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works" (v. 24). Here we are reminded that *we* have also to perform our priestly work. The priest had to *consider*, in cases of leprosy; and so, as priests, we have to consider one another, not whether we are cleansed or not, for it has been authoritatively pronounced of us by the Great High Priest Himself, "Now ye are clean" (John xv. 3); but we are to consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.

The expression is remarkable: "Consider *one another*." There is but one, even the Lord Himself, who stands in the authoritative place of the Priest to the Church; therefore we are to *consider one another*. How entirely is this exercise of our common priestly function nullified by again setting up an order of priesthood to prescribe to us. What is the Confessional? what the Absolution? but the priest again pronouncing the leper clean! And how effectually does such a thought hinder our considering one another. We can only do this as standing in grace ourselves, and recognising others as standing in the same grace and the same nearness to God.

It is as together standing in "the holiest of all" that we are to consider one another. There we are thus to help each other to detect what is inconsistent with that, our high and blessed standing. There is no room for rivalry now; all are priests; but abundant room for love; and our love for each

other is to be measured by the love that has brought us where we stand.

And as to good works, they also are to be judged by the same standard. No lower standard than the sanctuary itself must now be taken to determine what are good works. Only that which becomes the holiest itself becomes those sanctified to worship therein. It is not what *men* call good works, but what *God* estimates as such, to which we have to provoke one another. The costly ointment poured on the feet of Jesus, wasteful and extravagant in the eyes of an ancient or modern utilitarian, was a "good work" in the eyes of Jesus. The two mites of the widow were more precious than the splendid offering of the rich. How little of what men think good is really so before God ! And how entirely what God esteems as precious is despised among men ! So Christ was despised and rejected of men ; and so really Christian works are now despised by them. How needful, then, is it for us to be in spirit in " the holiest of all," to prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Rom. xii.).

---

The veil is rent ; our souls draw near  
 Unto a throne of grace ;  
 The merits of the Lord appear,  
 They fill the holy place.  
 Within the holiest of all,  
 Cleansed by His precious blood,  
 Before the throne we prostrate fall,  
 And worship Thee, O God.  
 Boldly the heart and voice we raise ;  
 His blood, His name, our plea,  
 Assured our prayers and songs of praise  
 Ascend, by Christ, to Thee.

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# 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).

## Some Revelations of Coming Glories.

**W**ERE we, if I may so speak, to go in upon  
the field of the New Testament Scriptures,  
and gather up fragments of the glories of coming  
days, we should find them, I do not say lying  
there profusely, but still we should find them there,  
and we should find at least a handful to feed upon.

There is no one writing that digests this sub-  
ject, but coming glories shine out here and there  
in the midst of other thoughts, when different  
subjects of present interest to the saints are under  
consideration.

We know that in the coming days of the king-  
dom there will be both the earthly and heavenly  
departments, and also connection and intercourse  
between them. We see notices of each of these in  
different parts of the four Gospels. Thus, the

Lord entered the city of the daughter of Zion as her King. All that was needed to set Him forth in that glory for a moment waited on Him. The ass and its owner, the palm branches and hosannas, the whole material and mind of the scene aided in giving us a sample of the days of the King of Israel. The Greeks are presented as coming up to see the King in His beauty, and in this we get another sight of His further glories as owned of the Gentiles.

All this, however, was simply and entirely *earthly*. No glimpse of heaven appears. It is Messiah in His place on earth; King of Zion, accepting the homage of the nations.

"On the holy mount" glory shines again. But it is another glory; not earthly but heavenly. It is the light of bodies of glory that shines there; samples of the transfigured, translated saints of God in company with their Lord in heavenly places.

But, as I may say, on either side of them, another place is seen; the *earth* in the persons of Peter, James, and John; the *higher heavens*, or, as it is called, "the excellent glory," in the voice that breaks forth upon the scene.

This is something very fine, and very comprehensive. We have coming millennial days finely and largely anticipated here. We have notices of the *heavens* and of the *earth* in their separate places, and then of the connections and medium and intercourse which is to be established between them. That, while there will be a higher heaven, an excellent glory, a Father's house, unrevealed to sight, there will be also a people in flesh and blood on the earth; a display of heavenly glory in the sight of the earthly people, and intercourse main-

## SOME REVELATIONS OF COMING GLORIES. 147

tained between the translated saints and them. The throne and the foostool shall be but different parts of one great system.

This is a fine anticipation of coming days. The Lord again intimates "the excellent glory," under the title of the "Father's house," in John xiv., letting us know that it is a wealthy place, a many-mansioned house, the dwelling of the family, the homestead in the realms of the highest glory.

Thus we are gathering fragments.

But further. These are distant scenes. There are nearer scenes also thrown open to our sight in these same Scriptures of the New Testament.

We have the spirit of the Lord Himself before resurrection taken to and by the Father, in Luke xxiii. ; and then we have the glorified body of the Lord after resurrection, translated to heaven, in Luke xxiv.

We have instructions as to ourselves in each of these things. We are taught to know that should we die, as Jesus died, before the day of resurrection *our spirits* will be received by Him in Paradise or heaven. Luke xxiii. 43 ; Acts vii. 59 ; 2 Cor. v. 8 ; Phil. i. 23, teach us this.

And should we live till the day of resurrection, we are taught to know that we should then be glorified and translated in company with those saints who have already died and gone in spirit to Jesus. 1 Cor. xv. 42-54 witness this ; as also 1 Thess. iv. 14-17.

But further still. After this translation, certain and divine scenes are disclosed to us. The heaven that is set for the *execution of judgment on this present evil, revolted world*, is opened to our sight in Rev. iv., and actions which take their course while that heaven continues, are presented to us in

the progress of the same book. But in turn judgment is all executed, and then succeeds the heaven set for the ministration of government of "the world to come," or the millennial earth. This is apparent to our sight in Rev. xx., xxi., xxii.

But even further still. The world that is to be the scene of righteousness under the heavenly sceptre of the glorified Lord and His saints will have its end. The heaven set for the ministration of government will have fulfilled its course, as well as the heaven set for the judgment; and then we get another scene of glory opened to our view. There is the Great White Throne trying everything; and then the new heavens and the new earth introduced by the judgment of this Great White Throne; as the millennial heavens and earth had been introduced by the judgment executed under the heaven from the throne of Rev. iv.

Here the series of glories ends. Various scenes and regions have thus unfolded themselves to us in their different characters; but we are to see them, and learn what they severally are, by taking up notions of them here and there throughout the New Testament Scriptures, from beginning to end to glean in that fruitful field, to gather up fragments which lie there, left there by the hand of Him who is preparing for the feast-day of eternity.

And had we but a heart for the feast itself we should occupy ourselves more diligently and joyfully in this gathering up a kind of gleaning that goes before the harvest. But we fail in affection. We are wanting in desire. Present interests divert the heart, and do not allow the eye, and the thought, and the hope to tarry where notices of coming glories shine!



## Typical Exercises of Priesthood.

### I.

**O**F all the functions which, according to the Mosaic ritual, the priest had to discharge, none demanded more patient attention, or more strict adherence to the divine guide-book than the discernment and proper treatment of leprosy. This fact must be obvious to everyone who studies, with any measure of care, the very extensive and important section of Scripture devoted to this subject.

There were two things which claimed the priest's vigilant care; namely, the purity of the assembly, and the grace which could not permit the exclusion of any member, except on the most clearly established grounds. Holiness could not allow anyone to remain in who ought to be out, and, on the other hand, grace would not have anyone out who ought to be in.

There was accordingly the most urgent need, on the part of the priest, of watchfulness, calmness, wisdom, patience, tenderness, and enlarged experience. Things which in reality were serious, might seem trifling, and things might look like leprosy which were not it at all. The greatest care and coolness were therefore needed. A judgment rashly formed, a conclusion hastily arrived at, might involve the most serious consequences as regarded either the assembly or some individual member thereof.

This will account for the frequent occurrence of such expressions as the following: "The priest shall look"; "the priest shall shut up him that hath the plague seven days"; "the priest shall look on him the seventh day"; "the priest shall shut him up seven days more"; "the priest shall

look on him again the seventh day ” ; “ the priest shall see him ” ; “ the priest shall consider. ”

No case was to be hastily judged or rashly decided. No opinion was to be formed from mere hearsay. Personal observation, priestly discernment, calm reflection, strict adherence to the written word of God, that holy, infallible guide-book ; all these things were imperatively demanded of the priest, if he would form a sound judgment of each individual case. He was not, in anything, to be guided by his own thoughts, his own feelings, his own wisdom. He had ample guidance in God's Word, if only he were subject thereto. Every point, every feature, every movement, every variation, every shade and character, every peculiar symptom and affection ; all was provided for with divine fulness and forethought ; so that in all things the priest needed only to be acquainted with, and subject to, the Word of God in order to be preserved from mistakes.

Thus much as to the priest and his holy responsibilities. We shall now proceed to consider the disease of leprosy, as developed in a person, in a garment, or in a house.

Looking at the disease of leprosy from a physical point of view, nothing could possibly be more loathsome ; and being, so far as man is concerned, totally incurable, it furnishes a most vivid and appalling picture of sin ; sin in one's nature, sin in one's circumstance, sin in an assembly.

What a solemn lesson for the soul it is that such a vile and humiliating disease should be used as a type of moral evil, whether in a member of God's assembly, in the circumstances of any such member, or in an assembly itself !

First, then, as to leprosy in a person ; or, in

other words, the working of moral evil, or of that which might seem to be evil, in any member of the assembly of God. This is a matter of grave and solemn import, a matter demanding the utmost vigilance and care on the part of all who are concerned in the good of souls and in the glory of God, as involved in the well-being and purity of His assembly as a whole, or of any individual member thereof. It is important to see that, while the broad principles of leprosy and its cleansing apply, in a secondary sense, to any sinner, yet, in the Scripture now before us, the matter is presented in connection with those who were God's recognized people. The person who is here seen as the subject of priestly examination is a member of the assembly of God. It is important to apprehend this. God's assembly must be kept pure, because it is His dwelling-place. No leper can be allowed to remain within the hallowed precincts of Jehovah's habitation.

But mark the care, the vigilance, the perfect patience, inculcated upon the priest, lest aught that was not leprosy might be treated as if it were such; or lest aught that really was leprosy might be suffered to escape detection. Many things might appear "in the skin" (the place of manifestation) "like the plague of leprosy," which, upon patient, priestly investigation, would be found to be merely superficial.

This was to be carefully attended to. There might make its appearance upon the surface some blemish which, though demanding the jealous care of the one who had to act for God, was not really defiling. Or there might be that which seemed but a superficial blemish and yet would prove to be something deeper than the skin; something be-

low the surface; something affecting the hidden springs of the constitution.

All this claimed the most intense care on the part of the priest. Some slight neglect, some trifling oversight, might lead to disastrous consequences. It might lead either to the defilement of the assembly, by the presence of a confirmed leper, or to the expulsion, for some superficial blemish, of a genuine member of the Israel of God.

Here is a rich fund of instruction for the people of God. A difference exists between personal infirmity and the positive energy of evil; between mere defects and blemishes in the outward character, and the activity of sin in the members. No doubt it is important to watch against our infirmities; for, if not watched, judged, and guarded against, they may become the source of positive evil (vv. 14-28). Everything of nature must be judged and kept down. We must not make any allowance for personal infirmity in ourselves, though we should make ample allowance for it in others.

Take, for example, the matter of an irritable temper. I should judge it in myself; I should make allowance for it in another. It may, like "the burning boil" in the case of an Israelite, prove the source of real defilement, and a ground of exclusion from the assembly.

Every form of weakness must be watched, lest it become an occasion of sin. "A bald forehead" was not leprosy; but it was that in which leprosy might appear, and therefore it had to be watched. There may be a hundred things which are not in themselves sinful, but which may become the occasion of sin if not diligently looked after.

Nor is it merely a question of what in our estimation may be termed blots, blemishes, and personal infirmities. It is a question, too, of what our hearts might feel disposed to boast of, as wit, humour, vivacity of spirit and temper. Any or all these may become the source and centre of defilement. Each one has something to guard against, something requiring him ever to be watchful.

How happy it is that we have a Father's heart to come to and count on with respect to all such things ! We have the precious privilege of coming at all times into the presence of unrebuking, unupbraiding love, there to tell out all, and obtain grace to help in all, and full victory over all. We need not be discouraged, so long as we see such a motto inscribed on the door of our Father's treasury, " He giveth more grace." Precious motto ! Grace that has no limit, but is bottomless and boundless.

We shall now proceed to inquire what was done in every case in which the plague of leprosy was unquestionably and unmistakably defined. The God of Israel could bear with infirmity, blemish, and failure ; but the moment it became a case of defilement, whether in the head, the beard, the forehead, or any other part, it could not be tolerated in the holy assembly.

" The leper, in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled ; he is unclean : he shall dwell alone ; without the camp shall his habitation be " (vv. 45, 46).

Here was the leper's condition ; the leper's occupation ; the leper's place. With rent garments,

bare head, and covered lip; crying, Unclean, unclean, and dwelling outside in dreary solitudes, in dismal desert wastes. What could be more humiliating, what more depressing than this? "He shall dwell alone." He was unfit for the communion or companionship of God's people. He was excluded from the only spot in all the world in which Jehovah's presence was known or enjoyed.

Behold, in the poor, solitary leper a vivid type of one in whom sin is working. This is really what it means. It is not, as we shall presently see, a helpless, ruined, guilty, convicted sinner, whose guilt and misery have come thoroughly out, and who is, therefore, a fit subject for the love of God, and for the blood of Christ. No; we see in the excluded leper one in whom sin is actually working; one in whom there is the positive energy of evil. This is what defiles, and shuts out from the enjoyment of the Divine Presence and the communion of saints. So long as sin is working there can be no fellowship with God or with His people. "He shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be." How long? "All the days wherein the plague shall be in him."

This is a great practical truth. The energy of evil is the death-blow to communion with God. There may be the outward appearance, the mere form, the hollow profession; but communion with God there can be none so long as the energy of evil is there. It matters not what the character or amount of the evil may be. If it were but the weight of a feather; if it were but some foolish thought; so long as it continues to work, it must hinder communion with God; it must cause a suspension of true fellowship with His people.

## **Papers on Worship. No. 7.**

**B**UT not only is there to be this constant pro-  
 vocation to love and to good works, it is  
 also added, "Not forsaking the assembling of our-  
 selves together, as the manner of some is." When  
 Israel came into the land, they were not to offer  
 their sacrifices, or to worship, at any place they  
 might select, but at the place where the Lord  
 should put His name only. Jerusalem was the  
 place whither the tribes went up. Put yourself in  
 the position of a believing Hebrew on a solemn  
 feast day in Jerusalem; one of the three thousand  
 converted by the first sermon of Peter. Multitudes  
 from all quarters might be assembled around him,  
 Jerusalem filled with worshippers, while he would  
 be apart from all that which attracted them. But  
 would not his soul have many a struggle in keep-  
 ing away from the festive and religious throng?  
 Would he not have almost appeared an enemy to  
 his country and to the temple? But was it really  
 so?

Think farther of the contrast he must in his own  
 soul have seen between the upper chamber, or any  
 other unpretending locality, and the splendid  
 temple. Must it not have needed much simple  
 faith in Jesus to meet together to break bread and  
 worship with a number as unaccredited as him-  
 self, without any visible priest to order their wor-  
 ship, any sacrifice, any incense, any altar, any  
 laver? Would not the multitude keeping holy-  
 day give as it were the lie to the worship he had  
 been engaged in, as if it had been no worship at  
 all? Surely there is great force in the words,  
 "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves to-  
 gether, as the manner of some is" (v. 25).

Yes ; some drew back from acknowledging that as worship which was without the outward form, some even who believed in Jesus. It cost too much to own Jesus as everything by disowning all the shadows. The assembling of themselves together thus was the great testimony against the religion of the world, and that Jesus was all. It was the profession that He was the substance of worship, and that worship must now be according to the place and power of His priesthood. The despised company in the upper chamber were feeding on the substance, while the religious world in their gorgeous temple were bowing before the shadows. That despised company had by faith access into " the holiest of all " they knew that Jesus as the Forerunner had entered there for them ; and in this knowledge of Him they could meet at any time and at any place, for the name of the Lord was recorded in the place of their meeting. They were worshippers in the sanctuary, let the place of their assembling on earth be where it might.

Hence we find that " on the first day of the week the disciples *came together* to break bread " (Acts xx. 7). They might or might not have some one to minister the word to them ; that was accidental ; their coming together was for a positive and specific object. Paul came in among them, and preached, but that was by the way. They came together as disciples.

If man puts a hindrance in the way of disciples coming together, is it not treading under foot the Son of God, who has not only given them the liberty, but who has made their doing so the point of collective confession of His name ? There is need of our exhorting one another as to this, for



the danger is imminent of turning back to the old order.

The Spirit of God clearly saw the tendency of things that way, and that this would increase; that as the day approached when the Lord Jesus would be revealed, worship would become more and more worldly, more and more after the ancient, distant Jewish pattern. Hence the exhortation would, in the progress of things, be increasingly needed, to stand fast as disciples in the simplicity of grace.

Nothing can be more gracious than the provision which the Lord has made against the increasing evil. Just in proportion as the thought in the minds of Christians has prevailed of a progression to blessing in the world has worship adapted itself to the world. But when it has pleased God to open the eyes of any of His saints to see the steady progress in evil, and the great assumptions of the flesh, He has thrown them back more on Christian simplicity. And our exhortation the one to the other, as we see the day approaching, is to test everything by the light of that day, and to see that nothing will then really stand which is not of Christ.

Surely the Lord intends to make His saints sensible of all that they have lost; but 'n doing so to make them as sensible of the value of what remains. If He had to say to His people of old, "Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?" this was not said to enfeeble, but to strengthen them. All the outward glory was gone, but still the Lord was there. Therefore it is said, "Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel . . . and work; for *I am*

*with you*, saith the Lord of hosts : according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you : fear ye not " (Hag. ii. 3-5).

God remains unchangeably the same, and His original power in deliverance was real strength in the midst of weakness ; so that out of weakness they became strong. And this is God's provision for the comfort and strength of the saints, as they see the day approaching, and everything unprepared to meet it, to exhort one another to the use of what remains to them ; and whilst Jesus abides in the holiest of all, and now appears in the presence of God for them, they can always draw near.

Yes, it is our privilege to do so, now that the dispensation has well nigh run its course, **equally as much as in the apostles' days.** Men indeed have, by their perverseness, put many things between themselves and God, but that which gives nearness still remains, even the blood of Jesus. Let us then draw near.

Beloved, how much is this exhortation needed at this day ! Simple worship, although our high privilege, is despised ! Believers need something more than the presence of the Lord to induce them to come together. Jesus is not really to them the great substantial ordinance of God. They are not glád when they assemble *themselves together*. Let us not forsake this, for if we do we are in danger of forgetting that we are once and for ever purged worshippers, and that our place of worship is the golden sanctuary itself, also once and for ever purged (Heb. x. 2, 14). There *we have* such an High Priest, one who can bring us in at once to the throne of the majesty on high, to us a throne

of grace, ~~although He who sits thereon is~~ "Holy, holy, holy" (Isa. vi.).

Beloved, it is your place of confession to contradict all assumptions of priesthood, all repetition of sacrifice, and all repeated absolutions, by drawing near. Your worship is to be characterized no less by confident nearness to God than by reverence to His name. The day is approaching. Its approach is marked by a return to ordinances. Hold fast your profession, and let it be Jesus against every pretension. Be assured that whatever is not of Him is nothing better than a carnal ordinance, to be utterly disowned by the Lord when He appears.

If we look forward as to worship, what do we see there? All the shadows passed away, and only the substance presented. "I saw no *temple* therein : for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the *temple* of it." So again, "The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him [worship Him] : and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; . . . for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. xxi. 22, xxii. 5).

They shall *serve* and they shall *reign* at the same time. They shall then be manifestly priests and kings. But now, in the acknowledgment that grace has already made them so, it is their privilege to approach by faith that glorious place in which they will in due time actually stand.

Our best instruction is gathered by looking forward. It is the reality which is to be our pattern now. Not things on earth the patterns of the heavenly, but the substance known by faith stamping its impress on that which is present.

## **Praying and Working.**

“ We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” (Acts vi. 4.)

The veil is rent ; thou now mayest enter in.  
No flaming sword of cherub bars thy way ;  
He who without the camp once bore thy sin,  
Appears within the holiest “ to-day,”  
And intercedes for all who come by Him to pray.

His blood is sprinkled on the mercy-seat,  
His blood is sprinkled, too, before the throne,  
Where e’er ascend the clouds of incense sweet.  
The work of reconciliation all is done :  
He lives our great High Priest, who did for sins atone.

Head of the Church, behold His glorious face,  
His members all accepted in their Head ;  
In Him all fulness dwells of truth and grace  
To meet His people’s ever-varying need ;  
Draw nigh by Him to God, without one pang of dread.

Prayer is the breath of faith in God’s own ears ;  
Prayer is the open mouth He waits to fill ;  
Prayer is the voice our God and Father hears,  
That brings down blessings from His holy hill ;  
Wisdom to learn, and strength to do, His gracious will.

First pray ; then work. No work can e’er succeed  
That prayerless wit and will to do combine ;  
All prayerless strength is but a broken reed,  
A withered branch that’s severed from the Vine ;  
No fruits, or works of such, shall heaven-recorded shine.

Faith always prays, and praying, works by love ;  
God’s chronicles record the power of prayer ;  
His heroes, servants, martyrs, from above  
Drew all the sap that made their lives so fair ;  
There is your full supply, if you like fruit would bear.

“ Praying and working ” : life-words, full of light,  
Prayer without ceasing leads to ceaseless toil ;  
Not toil that wearies ; for His yoke is light,  
Who feeds the lamp He trims with golden oil ;  
And His own workman’s strength renews with heavenly spoil.

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# 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).

## Papers on Worship. No. 8.

**A**MONG the various aspects in which the Lord Jesus is presented to us, it is well to distinguish between that which He is properly in His own Person, and that which He is as constituted of God. It is most legitimate to trace Him from the manger of Bethlehem to His coming in the clouds of heaven in fully manifested glory.

The Holy Spirit delights in this theme, delights in tracing the lonely Rod out of the stem of Jesse, growing up before the Lord as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground, to the stately BRANCH in manifested beauty. (Isa. xi. 1, liii. 2; Jer. xxxiii. 15; Zech. iii. 8, vi. 12; Luke i. 78.)

So, again, it is now the special office of the Holy Ghost to glorify Jesus by testifying to us what He is and is owned to be in heaven, whilst

He is rejected on earth. In the reception of this testimony is found the great strength of the Church in its militant state here in the world.

But there is something before all this. There is tracing Him down from heaven to earth, as well as tracing Him up from earth to heaven, thence to return in manifested glory. It is this character of testimony to Jesus which the Holy Ghost presents to us in the commencement of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

It is true that the prominent subject is the official dignity of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Apostle, Captain, and High Priest of our profession; elevated far beyond Moses, or Aaron, or Joshua. But this elevation, whilst true of Him officially, is far more true by reason of the essential dignity of His own Person. "God . . . hath in these last days spoken to us by His SON. This is not an official title; it is His own real, proper, native standing; belonging to Him in a sense in which it belongs to no other.

And herein is the grand characteristic difference between the Lord Jesus and all others. Many indeed are those of old upon whom the Lord has put honour, who would have been nothing but for the honour thus put upon them. They are constituted and appointed to various offices; and not to own them in those offices would be to reject God.

So also God has *made* Jesus both Lord and Christ. (Acts ii. 36.) But who is He who is thus constituted, or made, of God? He is the SON. These constituted dignities cannot excel His own real glory, that which He had with the Father before the world was. (John xvii. 5.) His offices, dignified though they be, cannot in this sense

exalt Him. But He can give, and does give, the power and character of His own divine Person to every office which He sustains, to every work which He has done. If He could be stripped of all His official glories, His own personal excellency and glory must remain untouched and undiminished. It is this which makes HIM ALONE the fit one "to bear the glory" which God may put upon Him. (Zech. vi. 13.)

When God put various glories on others, as on Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, failure to sustain the glory was marked in them all. And why? They were but men, having no power at all in themselves to stand. But Jesus is the SON, and "in Him was LIFE." (John i. 4.) And let it be remembered that the only security for the saints bearing the glory which grace has made theirs, is that they are in union with Him who is in His own Person above all glory. Both "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." (Heb. ii. 11.)

To have office conferred by God is indeed a solemn responsibility, both as it respects him who is so honoured, and as it respects others to acknowledge the honour conferred of God. It is thus our responsibility to acknowledge office in magistrates, and not to speak evil of dignities. (Jude 8.) To resist the power is to resist God. Those who bear the dignity may be nothing, the vilest of men, but the honour is put on them of God, and is to be acknowledged by us. (Rom. xiii. 1, 2; 1 Pet. ii. 13-17.)

If this be so, how fearful in the sight of God must it be to refuse to acknowledge any of the offices, styles, dignities, which God has conferred on His own Son! How fearful in any wise to

trench on them by arrogating them to ourselves ! This is the last form of manifested evil under the present dispensation, and that which will bring down the terrible judgment of God. It is the denial of " the only Lord God, and *our* Lord Jesus Christ " ; that is, the denial of Him both in His own essential glory, and His conferred mediatorial glory. (Jude 4.) Let us then beware of anything which derogates from the honour due to Jesus, the Son of God. For how infinitely elevated is He above all others on whom official dignity has been conferred by God ! God will strip men of all the glories He has conferred on them, and then what are they ? Nothing. " Man being in honour abideth not ; he is like the beasts that perish." (Ps. xlix. 12.) But when man is thus abased, in that day the Lord Jesus Christ alone shall be exalted. (Isa. ii. 11, 17.)

I desire, because of the importance of the subject, to refer to the eighty-second Psalm for illustration of the truth, that any honour conferred by God on men brings them out of obscurity ; but taken away it sinks them into their own proper nothingness. On the other hand, honour conferred on the Son of God adds nothing really to Him : if it be taken from Him or disowned by man, it only leads to His exaltation by God to every office in which man has failed, " that in all things He might have the pre-eminence." (Col. i. 18.)

Turning to Psalm lxxxii. we read, " God standeth in the congregation of the mighty : He judgeth among *the gods*. How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked ? Defend the poor and fatherless ; do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the



poor and needy; rid them out of the hand of the wicked. They know ~~not~~, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are out of course. I have said, Ye are *gods*; and all of you children of the Most High: but ye shall die *like men*, and fall like one of the princes. Arise, O God, judge the earth; for Thou shalt inherit all nations." (*vv.* 1-8.)

The reference of the Lord Jesus to this Psalm, in the tenth chapter of John, is very remarkable. He had asserted, in the most unequivocal manner, His own proper Deity: "I and ~~my~~ Father are one" (*v.* 30). This, they said, was making Himself God (*v.* 33). Afterwards, in verse 38, Jesus again asserts this, and again they sought to take Him. But He had previously referred to this Psalm to prove that they ought at least to ~~have owned Him~~ in His official authority and power (*vv.* 34, 35). His works testified of Him that He was the Sent One of the Father. Not one "unto whom the word of God came," merely, but Him whom the Father had sanctified, and sent into the world, who could say, "I am the SON OF GOD." They should have believed Him for His works' sake, for He did the works of *His Father*, and He and the Father were one.

To others the word of God has only come: "I have said, Ye are gods." They had no dignity at all in themselves. They were of the earth, earthy, though raised in official dignity by God. But He was the SON; He had been "sanctified, and sent into the world"; He was "the Lord from heaven." (John x. 36; 1 Cor. xv. 47.) How infinitely contrasted is Jesus the SON OF GOD to all those of whom God has said, "Ye are gods"!

The moment their conferred dignity was taken from them, they would die like the common herd of men. They had no essential, inherent power or dignity. But He was one with the Father. He was in the beginning with God. Nothing therefore could really touch His dignity, for it was intrinsically divine. It was not the word coming to Him which made Him what He was, though He had indeed been "sanctified, and sent into the world"; it was what He ever was in Himself which fitted Him to be so sent, and to sustain and give efficiency to all that was laid upon Him.

Hence, though in His humiliation His judgment was taken away, yet God would divide Him a portion with the great, and He should divide the spoil with the strong. This shall be manifestly true when all official and delegated power shall be taken out of the hands to which God has entrusted it, and actually assumed by JESUS. Then shall that word be proved true of Him: "Arise, *O God*, judge the earth; for *Thou* shalt inherit all nations." (Psalm lxxxii. 8.)

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### **"That Ye Sin Not."**

**T**HIS expression, "That ye sin not," occurs in the twentieth chapter of Exodus and in the second chapter of the First Epistle of John; but the circumstances under which it is used are very different.

In Exodus it is used when the law is given, accompanied by thunderings and lightnings and all the display of God's majesty. In the First Epistle of John it occurs in connection with the fullest display of God's grace.

In Exodus God is in the thick darkness; but in

First John He is in the light. More than that : He is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

In both cases we see holiness; but God is revealed in a different way. In Exodus it is : “ I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” In First John, God is revealed as the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ is declared to be “ the Word of life ” and “ that Eternal Life ” which was with the Father, and was manifested to the apostle. This “ Word of life ” was a Person whom they had seen and heard, and they wrote to declare Him, to make Him known, so that believers might have fellowship with them, their fellowship being with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

There was nothing like this in the days of Exodus when the law was given; and in fact could not be. In Exodus Moses says to the people, “ Fear not; for God is come to prove you, and that His fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.” In First John, after the declaration in chapter i. of the Father and the Son, we read in chapter ii., “ My little children [rather, my children], these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.”

God’s holiness requires this, whether under law or under grace; but under grace, where God is fully made known, the exhortation has a double and a treble force.

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“ Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto *Jesus*.” (Heb. xii. 1-2.)

## **“God was in Christ.”**

**T**HE Word of God presents to us this very precious fact : that we do not only find there certain truths and doctrines, but also every relation between God and man fully developed on earth, and each day we can clearly see all these things in the person of Jesus.

It is a great mercy of God to have brought Him so near to us, so as to make known to us those relationships in the circumstances in which we are ourselves found.

At bottom, the life of Jesus was like ours. He “was in all points tempted” in like manner as ourselves, “without sin.” It was indeed “God manifest in the flesh”; but it was also life, and the expression of a life perfectly acceptable to God. (Heb. ii. 18, iv. 15; 1 Tim. iii. 16; 1 John i. 2.)

In order to make progress in spiritual life we must study the Lord Jesus; whether in the grace of His person or in the circumstances of His life; or, lastly, in the glorious position He has near the Father, and which we shall by and by share with Him. (2 Pet. iii. 18; Col. iii. 1, 2; Phil. iii. 10.)

We see in Christ, from the beginning, the accomplishment of the life of faith, which was tested in Him, and all the perfection of which He manifested. Jesus is to us a tender and mighty Friend; and, while we are travelling through the wilderness, we know that at the end of the way will be found the glory in which He now is. (1 John iii. 1, 2.)

That is what is said in Hebrews xii. 1-3 : “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily

beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith." [Rather, "the Leader and Completer of faith."]

As Captain, He has gone before us. As Shepherd, "He putteth forth His own sheep," and also "goeth before them." (John x. 4.) He "endured the cross; despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

Divine life is seen in that Man who walked in the midst of all difficulties and temptations, who surmounted them all, and who, alone amongst all, was not touched by the evil one. Now He has entered the glory at the right hand of God; and we shall share with Him that glory when He shall appear, since we shall be made like to Him.

We shall now consider a little how the Spirit of God presents Jesus to us, at the beginning of His life, when He enters the painful race of faith.

An important thing to remark is, that the light manifests all that is in man. It is true that God saw what was in the heart of Abel and of Cain before anything of it was manifested; just as He saw a remnant in the midst of the Jews, in whom grace was working; but things were never brought to light under the law. (Isa. viii. 16-18; Matt. iii. 5, 6, 13.) God was, as it were, hidden behind a veil, and He allowed many things because of the hardness of their hearts, as Jesus told His disciples; for the full light was not yet manifested. (Lev. xvi. 1, 2; Heb. ix. 6, 7.)

But in Christ the light shone in the world. In the Christian, who possesses the life of Christ,

that which is true in Christ is true in him, as it is said in 1 John ii. 8 : " Again a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in Him and in you ; because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. "

It is always well to bear in mind that in the former dispensation God hid Himself, but that He sent certain messengers who were to reveal what was entrusted to them, though without making God known. The law did not manifest Him fully. It is true it says, " Thou shalt love " ; but not, I love thee. It does not reveal a " God of love. " It does not show us what God is, except that He is a just God, and executes vengeance. It tells us nothing at all of what God is for man, nor of what He is in Himself.

The law did indeed make known to men what they ought to be toward God ; but it was silent as to what God is for them. A man is always under law as long as he is occupied with what God demands *from* him, instead of understanding what God is *for* him ; for this would produce much more excellent effects.

God, being thus hidden, required obedience in order to grant life. It was no question of being able to place one's-self in the presence of God. The high priest alone presented himself once every year in the holiest of all ; for the way into it was not yet made manifest, and there were many things that God bore with, without approving them.

There were ceremonies and ordinances which were intended to remind man of his dependence, and to bring him into relationship with God according to certain things which acted upon the flesh, and which were adapted to the flesh, be-

cause man was in it, and God placed Himself in a relationship with him. The holiness of God, who was hidden, was not seen; but there were ceremonies which maintained the relationships between that God, who remained hidden, and man.

But when God manifests *Himself*, it can no longer be so; for God is holy, and He is love. He is perfect in holiness, and man must necessarily enter into relationship with what God is. God can forgive sinners, can wash them; but He cannot bear with anything that does not answer to His holiness. If there is grace, there is also holiness; but God cannot, because of His holiness, bear with man, a sinner, just as he is; for God is “of purer eyes than to behold evil.” (Habakkuk i. 13.)

If we meditate upon the example of Jesus, the Light upon earth, we see One entirely separated from sinners, which constituted the perfect beauty of His life.

On one hand, we see that He is alone, perfectly alone. He is the most isolated man that one can imagine. The disciples themselves know not how to sympathise with Him. The woman of Samaria, to whom He addressed such touching words about the water “springing up into everlasting life,” can understand nothing else but that “the well is deep.” She says, “From whence then hast Thou that living water?” If Jesus says, “Look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest”; if He speaks of “a meat to eat” that His disciples “know not of,” it is ever the same. He meets with no real sympathy in the midst of men. We feel that this was painful to Him, because He had a man’s heart, and would have desired to find

some one who could understand Him; but He found none anywhere.

On the other hand, we see that He had a perfect sympathy toward all. Jesus was the most accessible man, most within the reach of the simple, of the ignorant, and even of the most degraded of sinners. He manifested in His life something that had not its equal. There ever was all that holiness and love, which is above all our thoughts.

There is so much selfishness in the heart of man that the love of God is to him an enigma still more incomprehensible than His holiness. No one understood Jesus, because He manifested God. I do not now speak of His work, but of what He was, when He was manifested in the midst of the world. He had to show that all ceremonies cannot make God known; for the thing is impossible. Jesus alone manifested God as He is, and man also as He is.

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## Typical Exercises of Priesthood.

### II.

It is when the leprosy rises to a head; when it comes to the surface; when it is thoroughly brought out, that it can be perfectly met and put away by the grace of God and by the blood of the Lamb (1 John i. 6—ii. 1, 2).

This leads us to a deeply interesting point in connection with the leper, a point which must prove a complete paradox to all save those who understand God's mode of dealing with sinners:

“And if a leprosy break out abroad in the



skin, and the leprosy cover all the skin of him that hath the plague, from his head even to his foot, wheresoever the priest looketh; then the priest shall consider; and, behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague: it is all turned white: he is clean" (Lev. xiii. 12, 13).

The moment a sinner is in his true place before God, the whole question is settled. Directly his real character is fully brought out, there is no further difficulty. He may have to pass through much painful exercise before he reaches this point, exercise consequent upon his refusal to take his true place, to bring out "all the truth" with respect to what he is, but the moment he is brought to say, from his heart, "Just as I am," the free grace of God flows down to him. "When I kept silence," said the psalmist, "my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me. my moisture is turned into the drought of summer" (Ps. xxxii. 3, 4).

How long did this painful exercise continue? Until the whole truth was brought out; until all that which was working inwardly came fully to the surface. So he added: "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (v. 5).

It is deeply interesting to mark the progress of the Lord's dealings with the leprous man, from the moment that the suspicion is raised, by certain features in the place of manifestation, until the disease covers the whole man, "from the crown of the head unto the sole of the foot." There was

no haste, and no indifference. God ever enters the place of judgment with a slow and measured pace; but when He does enter, He must act according to the claims of His own nature. He can patiently investigate. He can wait for "seven days"; and should there be the slightest variation in the symptoms, He can wait for "seven days more"; but the moment it is found to be the positive working of leprosy there can be no toleration. "Without the camp shall his habitation be."

How long? Until the disease comes fully to the surface. "If the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean." This is a most precious and interesting point. The very smallest speck of leprosy was intolerable to God; and yet, when the whole man was covered, from head to foot, he was pronounced clean; that is to say, he was a proper subject for the grace of God and the blood of atonement.

Thus is it with the sinner in every case. God is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity" (Hab. i. 13); and yet the moment a sinner takes his true place as one thoroughly lost, guilty, and undone, as one in whom there is not so much as a single point on which the eye of Infinite Holiness can rest with complacency, as one who is so bad that he cannot possibly be worse, there is an immediate, a perfect, a divine settlement of the entire matter.

The grace of God deals with sinners; and when I know myself to be a sinner, I know myself to be one whom Christ came to save. The more clearly anyone can prove me to be a sinner, the more dearly He establishes my title to the love of God, and the work of Christ. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He

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might bring us to God " (1 Peter iii. 18). If I am " unjust " I am one of those very people for whom Christ died, and I am entitled to all the benefits of His death. " There is not a just man upon earth," and inasmuch as I am " upon earth," it is plain that I am " unjust," and it is equally plain that Christ died for me, that He suffered for my sins. Since, therefore, Christ died for me, it is my happy privilege to enter into the immediate enjoyment of the fruits of His sacrifice.

This is as plain as plainness itself. It demands no effort whatsoever. I am not called to be anything but just what I am. I am not called to feel, to experience, to realize anything. The Word of God assures me that Christ died for me just as I am; and if He died for me I am as safe as He is Himself. There is nothing against me. Christ met all. He not only suffered for my " sins," but He " put away sin " (Heb. ix. 26). He abolished the entire system in which, as a child of the first Adam, I stood, and He introduced me into a new position in association with Himself, and there I stand before God free from all charge of sin, and all fear of judgment.

How do I know that His blood was shed for me? By the Scriptures. Blessed, solid, eternal ground of knowledge! Christ suffered for sins. I have sins. Christ died " the just for the unjust." I am unjust. And therefore the death of Christ applies to me as fully, as immediately, and as divinely as though I were the only sinner upon earth.

It is not a question of my appropriation, realization, or experience. Many souls harass themselves about this. How often has one heard such language as the following: " Oh! I believe that

Christ died for sinners, but I cannot realize that my sins are forgiven. I cannot apply, I cannot appropriate, I do not experience the benefit of Christ's death."

All this is self, and not Christ. It is feeling, and not Scripture. If we search from cover to cover of the blessed volume, we shall not find a syllable about being saved by realization, experience, or appropriation. The gospel applies itself to all who are on the ground of being lost. Christ died for sinners. That is just what I am. Therefore He died for me. How do I know this? Is it because I feel it? By no means. How then? By the Word of God: "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; He was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4). Thus it is all "according to the Scriptures." If it were according to our feelings we should be in a deplorable way, for our feelings are hardly the same for the length of a day. But the Scriptures are ever the same. "For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven." "Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy name" (Ps. cxix. 89; cxxxviii. 2).

No doubt it is a very happy thing to realize, to feel, and to experience; but if we put these things in the place of Christ we shall have neither them nor the Christ that yields them. If I am occupied with Christ I shall realize; but if I put my realization in place of Christ I shall have neither the one nor the other.

This is the sad condition of thousands. Instead of resting on the stable authority of "the Scriptures" they are ever looking into their own hearts, and hence they are always uncertain, and as a consequence always unhappy.

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# 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).

## Papers on Worship. No. 9.

**T**HE connection between the personal and the official glories of the Lord Jesus Christ is indeed the prominent subject of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

In the first chapter the Son is presented to us as both in person and office far above angels.

In the second chapter He is presented to us as our "High Priest"; and then, in the third chapter, we are exhorted to "*consider* the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."

Moses indeed was great. God had magnified him before Pharaoh. Yet he was but a servant, one to whom the word of God had come, although God humbled Miriam and Aaron before him.

Jesus was not only officially greater than Moses, but it was His personal greatness which gave Him the infinite superiority. He was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as

he that has builded the house has more honour than the house; and every house is builded by some man, "but he that built all things is God." Moses was faithful as a servant in another's house, but Christ as a "Son over His own house."

So, again, as concerning the high priesthood. Aaron was the high priest, but Jesus was the "*Great High Priest*"; higher than Aaron even officially.

But that is not all; it is "Jesus the Son of God," infinitely higher personally than He is officially: "Seeing then that we have a *Great High Priest*, that is passed into the heavens, *Jesus the Son of God.*" (iv. 14.)

Yet further. It pleased God to constitute one individual a perfect type of the Lord Jesus Christ; that individual was Melchizedek. He stands before us typical of Jesus, both in person and office. The mystery with which God has so remarkably surrounded Melchizedek makes him a fit type of the Person of the Son; for "no man knoweth the Son, but the Father"; and so no man knows Melchizedek, but God. And his being thus presented to us without genealogy, "having neither beginning of days, nor end of life," shows us also how truly he is "*made like unto the Son of God.*"

Melchizedek is so brought before us in the word of God as to be made a most wonderful type of the divine and eternal Son of God, of whom he is thus the personal type: "Abideth a priest continually"; for we know not when Melchizedek's priesthood began or ended. He had not, as Aaron, an official life, "beginning of days and end of life." In this he is the official type. Melchizedek is indeed the

only individual mentioned in the Scriptures as one whose own person qualifies him for office. And in this respect how apt a type he is of Jesus!

With this general opening, let us meditate on the contrasts presented to us in the seventh chapter of the Epistle of the Hebrews, that we may be able to draw the character of the worship from the order of the priesthood.

Most prominently do we here find the Person of the Priest set before us, "the Son of God," in contrast with every office-bearing person. (vii. 3.) This might have been enough; but there are contrasts immediately resulting from the Person of the Priest, which must also be noticed.

After the order of Aaron, they were men that died; but after the order of Melchizedek it is He that lives; lives because He is the Son; because He has the life in Himself. True, He has laid down His life and taken it again, that He might enter on His priesthood, having first by Himself purged our sins (i. 3.)

The order of Aaron was continued by succession. It was necessarily so. Aaron was a man in the flesh, and provision was made in case of his death for his son that should minister in his stead; as it is written, "And the priest, whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, even the holy garments." (Lev. xvi. 32.)

This was the "carnal commandment," by which the priesthood of the Aaronic order was to be perpetuated. Succession is the only mode which man knows of perpetuating anything. This is necessary human order. "The king cannot die," we are told. Why? Because his last

breath is the placing of his successor on the throne, so that the functions of royalty may never for a moment be suspended. Succession is necessarily "after the law of a carnal commandment." (v. 16.) We need not wonder, therefore, that men should have turned back to this order, as being that which is most natural and human.

But God has made other provision for His Church; *His Church knows no successional priesthood.* The Son is made Priest, "not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." (v. 16.) It is still what He is Himself that gives the character to His priesthood. And that which is characteristic of this priesthood is equally so of *the whole order* of priesthood in the Church; it is *unsuccessional*.

The Church's position in this dispensation is in life and in power. There is no room for a "carnal commandment" in the matter of priesthood or worship either, because Christ's priesthood in heaven is perpetuated in Himself. No one succeeds to Him there. He is "a High Priest for ever"; and none is needed to succeed the Holy Ghost in the Church on earth: He shall "abide with you for ever." (John xiv. 16.) If man were to succeed man as the head of authority in the Church, a carnal commandment is necessitated; the order cannot be maintained without it. And this is what man has introduced into the Church; thus putting the Church under human headship and carnally appointed authority. But how awful is this, when God's order for His Church is the presence of the Holy Ghost dispensing gifts according to His will! Where, under this divine order, is there room for a "carnal commandment?"



I no longer marvel at the strength of the language in the preceding chapter, relative to the certain consequences of turning back from the proper order and hope of the Church. It must be subversive of the whole order of the dispensation. It must be virtually putting Jesus out of His priesthood, crucifying Him afresh, and putting Him to an open shame (vi. 6.) Once admit succession, and, as a necessary consequence, union with Jesus in "the power of an endless life" is denied; for such union must be utterly incompatible with the law of a "carnal commandment."

And let the contrast be distinctly marked. It is not after *the law* of an endless life, but after *the power* of an endless life. The kingdom of God is *in power*; the Spirit we have received is the Spirit *of power*; the peril against which we are warned is the *form* of godliness, but the denial of its *power* (1 Cor. i. 40; 2 Tim. i. 7, iii. 5). It is not now *form* against *form*, *carnal order* against *carnal order*, *place* against *place*; but it is *power* (that *life*) *against everything*. "We are the circumcision, who worship God in *the Spirit*, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. iii. 3.)

Such are the Israel of God, who have power with God and man, and prevail. (Gen xxxii. 28.)

But to pursue the contrast. The priests after the order of Aaron were called indeed of God; but Jesus was constituted by an oath: "The Lord *swore*, and will *not repent*, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." The priesthood in Israel under the law, like all with which it was connected, stood on the ground of the competence of the priests to maintain their place in faithfulness to God. It was based upon a carnal

commandment; it was conditional. The word of the Lord to Eli was, "I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, shall walk before me for ever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. ii. 30.) And the oath to Eli was an oath of irreversible judgment on his house (1 Sam. iii. 14.) And this setting aside of the house of Eli was in connection with God's purpose to raise up a *faithful* Priest to do according to all that was in the heart and mind of God, even the Priest who is made with an oath (1 Sam. ii. 35, Heb. ii. 17, vii. 21.)

And how blessedly in keeping is the New Covenant with this new order of priesthood! It is a covenant of promise, of promise made sure by God's having engaged His own power to render it effectual; and therefore to show the immutability of His counsel, He has confirmed it with *an oath*. (Heb. vi. 17.) The New Covenant, therefore, belongs to the Melchizedek priesthood, and both are with an oath. And it is here written, "And inasmuch as not without an oath He was made Priest . . . by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better covenant" (Heb. vii. 21.)

Once more; although it has been somewhat anticipated. Under the order of Aaron there were "many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death" (v. 23.)

The high priesthood passed from one to another. *There was succession.* God in judgment had indeed set aside one family of Aaron, and brought in another; still there was a succession of men through whom the high priesthood descended. This alone was enough to destroy all

dependence on that priesthood; for though there might be a merciful and faithful priest, still he would die, and he might be succeeded by one who would make the offering of the Lord to be abhorred, as did Eli's sons, using their office for exaction of their dues, and more than dues, but not aiding the worshipper. This must always attend the connection of office with a succession of men appointed after a carnal commandment. But Jesus, because He *continueth ever*, hath a priesthood that *passeth not from one to another*. Wherefore He is able also to save to the uttermost (that is, from the beginning of their career to the end) those who come unto God by Him, "seeing He *ever liveth to make intercession for them*" (vv. 24, 25.)

This necessarily and most simply perpetuates the perfectness of High Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek. One divinely perfect is thereunto for evermore consecrated (v. 28.)

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## Typical Exercises of Priesthood.

### III.

A CONDITION of doubt is a condition of torture. But how can I get rid of my doubt? Simply by relying on the divine authority of "the Scriptures." Of what do the Scriptures testify? Of Christ (John v.). They declare that Christ died for our sins, and that He was raised again for our justification (Rom. iv.). This settles everything. The self-same authority that tells me I am

unjust, tells me also that Christ died for me. Nothing can be plainer than this. If I were aught else than unjust the death of Christ would not be for me at all, but being unjust, it is divinely fitted, divinely intended, and divinely applied to me.

If I am occupied with anything in, of, or about myself, it is plain I have not entered into the full spiritual application of Leviticus xiii. 12, 13. I have not come to the Lamb of God "just as I am." It is when the leper is covered from head to foot that he is on the true ground. It is there, and there alone, that grace can meet him. "Then the priest shall consider; and, behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague; it is all turned white: he is clean."

Precious truth! "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. v. 20). So long as I think there is a single spot which is not covered with the direful disease, I have not come to the end of myself. It is when my true condition is fully disclosed to my view, that I really understand the meaning of salvation by grace.

The force of all this will be more fully apprehended when we come to consider the ordinances connected with the cleansing of the leper in Leviticus xiv. We shall now briefly enter upon the question of leprosy in a garment, as presented in chapter xiii. 47-59.

II.—The garment or skin suggests to the mind the idea of a man's circumstances or habits. This is a deeply practical point. We are to watch against the working of evil in our ways just as carefully as against evil in ourselves. The same patient investigation is observable with respect to

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a garment as in the case of a person. There is no haste; neither is there any indifference: "The priest shall look upon the plague, and shut up it that hath the plague seven days."

There must be no indifference, no indolence, no carelessness. Evil may creep into our habits and circumstances in numberless ways; and hence the moment we perceive aught of a suspicious nature it must be submitted to a calm, patient process of priestly investigation. It must be "shut up seven days," in order that it may have full time to develop itself perfectly.

"And he shall look on the plague on the seventh day: if the plague be spread in the garment, either in the warp, in the woof, or in a skin, or in any work that is made of skin, the plague is a fretting leprosy; it is unclean. He shall therefore burn the garment."

The wrong habit must be given up the moment I discover it. If I find myself in a thoroughly wrong position I must abandon it. The burning of the garment expresses the act of judgment upon evil, whether in a man's habit or in his circumstances. There must be no trifling with evil. In certain cases the garment was to be "washed," which expresses the action of the Word of God upon a man's habits: "Then the priest shall command that they wash the thing wherein the plague is, and he shall shut it up seven days more."

There is to be patient waiting in order to ascertain the effect of the Word.

"And the priest shall look on the plague, after that it is washed; and, behold, if the plague have not changed . . . thou shalt burn it in the fire."

When there is anything radically and irremedi-

ably bad in one's position or habits, the whole thing is to be given up.

“ And if the priest look, and, behold, the plague be somewhat dark after the washing of it; then he shall rend it out of the garment.”

The Word may produce such an effect as that the wrong features in a man's character, or the wrong points in his position, shall be given up, and the evil be got rid of; but if the evil continue after all, the whole thing must be condemned and set aside.

There is a rich mine of practical instruction in all this. We must look well to the position which we occupy, the circumstances in which we stand, the habits we adopt, the character we wear. There is special need of watchfulness. Every suspicious symptom and trait must be sedulously guarded, lest it should prove, in the sequel, to be “ a fretting ” or “ spreading leprosy,” whereby we ourselves and many others may be defiled. We may be placed in a position attached to which there are certain wrong things which can be given up, without entirely abandoning the position; and, on the other hand, we may find ourselves in a situation in which it is impossible to “ abide with God.” Where the eye is single the path will be plain. Where the one desire of the heart is to enjoy the divine presence, we shall easily discover these things which tend to deprive us of the unspeakable blessing. May our hearts be tender and sensitive. May we cultivate a deeper, closer walk with God; and may we carefully guard against every form of defilement, whether in person, in habit, or in association!

We shall now proceed to consider the beautiful and significant ordinances connected with the

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cleansing of the leper, in which we shall find some of the most precious truths of the gospel presented to us.

“ And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing : he shall be brought unto the priest : and the priest shall go forth out of the camp” (Lev. xiv. 1-3.)

We have already seen the place which the leper occupied. He was outside the camp, in the place of moral distance from God, from His sanctuary and His assembly. Moreover, he dwelt in dreary solitude, in a condition of uncleanness. He was beyond the reach of human aid ; and, as for himself, he could only communicate defilement to every one and everything he touched. It was therefore obviously impossible that he could do ought to cleanse himself. If, by his touch, he could only defile, how could he possibly cleanse himself? How could he contribute towards, or co-operate in, his cleansing? Impossible.

As an unclean leper, he could not do as much as a single thing for himself ; all had to be done for him. He could not make his way to God ; but God could make His way to him. He was shut up to God. There was no help for him, either in himself or in his fellow-man. It is clear that one leper could not cleanse another ; and it is equally clear that if a leper touched a clean person he rendered him unclean. His only resource was in God. He was to be a debtor to grace for everything.

Hence we read, “ The priest shall go forth out of the camp.” It is not said, “ The leper shall go.” This was wholly out of the question. It was of no use talking to the leper about going

or doing. He was consigned to dreary solitude; whither could he go? He was involved in helpless defilement; what could he do? He might long for fellowship, and long to be clean; but his longings were those of a lonely, helpless leper. He might make efforts after cleansing; but his efforts could but prove him unclean, and tend to spread defilement. Before ever he could be pronounced "clean" a work had to be wrought for him, a work which had to be wholly accomplished by another. The leper was called to "stand still," and behold the priest doing a work in virtue of which the leprosy could be perfectly cleansed. The priest accomplished all. The leper did nothing.

"Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds, alive and clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet and hyssop. And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water" (Lev. xiv. 4, 5).

In the priest's going forth from the camp, forth from God's dwelling-place, we behold the blessed Lord Jesus coming down from His eternal dwelling-place into this polluted world of ours, where He saw us sunk in the polluting leprosy of sin. Like the Samaritan in the parable in Luke x., He came where we were. He did not come half-way merely. He did not come nine-tenths of the way. He came all the way. This was indispensable. He could not, consistently with the holy claims of the throne of God, have bidden our leprosy depart and He remained on that throne.