

A  
V O I C E  
TO  
THE FAITHFUL.

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“He that striveth for the mastery is temperate in  
all things.”—1 Cor. ix. 25.

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VOL. III.

LONDON GOSPEL TRACT DEPOT,  
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# A Voice to the Faithful.

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## THE NEW TESTAMENT.

### THOUGHTS ON ITS CONTENTS.

It will be remarked at once, that the character of the first three Gospels, commonly called *synoptical*, is different from that of the fourth. The principle of it is this:—The first three Gospels present, though in different characters, Christ to man to be received; and shew us His rejection by man. John begins with this, as the starting-point of his gospel. “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” Hence we have sovereign grace—election: man must be born again wholly anew, and the Jews are all through treated as reprobate, and the divine and incarnate person of the Lord, as the foundation of

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all blessing, and the work of atonement, which is the basis of the sinless condition of the new heavens and earth, together with the gift of the Comforter, form the subject of the Gospel, instead of tracing Him to the Abrahams and Davids—the roots of promise; or to Adam, to bring in blessing as Son of man, to man; or giving the account of His service in ministry, as the Great Prophet that was to come. What I have said stamps their character on the four Gospels. Matthew is the fulfilment of promise and of prophecy. Emmanuel among the Jews, rejected by their stumbling on the stone of stumbling, and shewn to be really a sower. Fruit-seeking was in vain; and then the Church and the kingdom are substituted for Israel, blessed by promises which they refused in His person; but after judgment, when they own Him, to be owned under mercy. The ascension is not found in Matthew, I believe for this very reason. Galilee, and not Jerusalem, is the scene of His intercourse with His disciples, after His

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resurrection. He is with the poor of the flock, who owned the word of the Lord, where the light had sprung up to the people who had been sitting in darkness. Note, the commission to baptize goes forth hence, and applies to Gentiles only.

Mark gives the Servant, Prophet, Son of God. Luke, the Son of man; the first two chapters affording a lovely picture of the remnant in heart; and after that, connects with Adam, not with Abraham and Moses. Hence, we have the blessed Lord far more often seen praying in this gospel; that is, as the dependent Man, as when receiving the Holy Ghost, when transfigured; and His agony is more fully portrayed in the garden, where an angel is seen strengthening Him; while on the cross all is grace to others; and His sorrows in drinking the cup, told us here, are not told in Matthew and Mark. Hence, too, we have such chapters as xv., xvi., the ways of grace, not found elsewhere.

In John we have the divine Person, the Bread of Life, and giving His flesh

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and blood. It is His own act in grace. Hence, no supplication in Gethsemane, but His adversaries go backward and fall to the ground, and His disciples are untouched. He gives Himself up freely. So in the cross He gives up; when the due time is come, His own spirit to His Father, for that is the form of expression. It is very striking to see how He who is declared to be God, who says He is one with the Father, who speaks as none but a divine Person could to the Father, yet never leaves (having become man) His place of subjection. He will say, as no creature could dare to speak, "I have glorified thee; now glorify me with thine own self, with the glory I had with thee before the world was;" but He will not say, I will now glorify myself. Yet to the Jews He could say, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." "Before Abram was I am." And they knew what it meant. He was God; He did not hide it; but, become a man, He received now all from His Father and was subject to Him, yet could ever say, "The only be-

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gotten Son who *is* (not *was*, as generally quoted) in the bosom of the Father," yea, "the Son of man who is in heaven." This is the character of John, and, as I have stated, He is then the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost (chap. i. 33) the other Comforter who was in a certain sense to replace Him, and who was to be sent by Him from the Father, and by the Father in His name.

I only attempt to give what, in the most general way, characterizes these books, and may help the reader in his study of them, in which he surely can only rightly learn as himself taught of God. This, no system of truth however put, can give. The Acts give this baptizing with the Holy Ghost which founded the assembly of God on the earth. Then, the labours of the twelve, and essentially of Peter; then, the free work of the Spirit in many, I may say in all, but which left the twelve in Jerusalem, and then the call of Saul, and therefrom his labours, starting afresh from Antioch, only that God graciously took care by the call of Cor-



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nelius after Saul's being called, and not allowing Paul and Barnabas to settle the question of circumcision and the law at Antioch, that there should be unity and not division between Jews and Gentiles. The Jewish Church, with apostolic authority renouncing all pretention to impose the law on Gentiles. Paul, however, alone teaches the unity of the body, and the *doctrine* of the Church. His service thus goes on till he is a prisoner through the enmity of the Jews at Rome, where is the final filling up of Isaiah vi. in judgment, after God's long patience. It is striking to see that Rome, so far from being a church, founded in a special sense by apostolic labour and authority, never had an apostle, as far as scripture teaches us, till Christians were already numerous there, and then he was there as a prisoner, not in the freedom of apostolic service.

A few words on the Epistles also.

The Romans in the main answers the troubled question of Job: "How can a man be just with God?" presents the

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person of the Lord, as the accomplishment of promise, proved Son of God with power by resurrection, and declares the righteousness of God to be revealed in the gospel, because the wrath of God (as in His indignation against all sin, not in mere government of a people on earth), was revealed, and no single righteous man to be found among Jew or Gentile amongst men in the flesh. They were all lawless or lawbreakers. God's righteousness is revealed through propitiation, through faith in Christ's blood, shewing God's righteousness in His patience with the sins of Old Testament saints, and laying it as a foundation for us to rest upon. Christ's death and (chap. iv.) His resurrection give us this, justification through faith in the blessed witness of God's love. But from chapter v. we have sin in the flesh; our nature, and state, as alienated from God, dealt with by the truth, that we have died with Christ. This is deliverance, and a new state before God, not the mere putting away of the sins of the old. Chapters ix.—xi. explain the con-

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nection of the state of the Jews, and God's dealings with them hereafter, with this general doctrine of a common grace to all. From chapter xii. we have exhortation, only remark in chapter xvi. 26 the New Testament scriptures, to which it entirely applies, are prophetic scriptures.

1 Corinthians gives us the details of the care of an assembly of God, the apostle being directly occupied with their conduct and with discipline, to which we must add the doctrine of the resurrection, properly the distinct resurrection of the saints. There are no elders, so that we have the word of God on the subject, and an exhortation to be subject to those who addicted themselves to the service of the saints. The particular assembly is connected with and viewed as belonging to and representing the whole body of saints. These are first viewed in their ostensible profession. (Chap. i. 2.) From the middle of chapter x. the body is introduced.

2 Corinthians. The apostle, relieved

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in spirit, accounts for his not going to Corinth, and we have a blessed development of the power of life in Christ, making the Christian hold himself as dead, and exhortations to minister to the need of saints, and the proofs of Paul's apostleship and its character called in question by Judaizers. The personal, earnest, affectionate care of the apostle shines through both epistles. We get the assembly of God and its care viewed on earth; without official elders, but the presence of the Spirit of God.

Galatians gives us promise in grace and justification by faith, making us sons in contrast with law. The apostle is singularly curt and severe in this epistle; no affectionate preface, no salutations at the end, no seeking out all the good he can, but he trusts in the Lord.

Ephesians gives to us the blessed relationships of the saints according to the full counsels of God. First, individually, as children with the Father; then, the assembly as the body of Christ, for they are risen with Him, and sitting

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in Him in heavenly places; finally, as the Bride of Christ. With that, gifts from the ascended Head for its gathering, individual perfecting, and edifying as a body as to practice. The saints are imitators of God in love, and as light (Christ being the pattern in both), through a new man created after God, and the presence of the Holy Ghost. It is further to be noted that the assembly is viewed in two aspects: the body of Christ (chap. i.); the dwelling-place of God in the Spirit, as a present thing, and as growing to a holy temple in the Lord. (Chap. ii.) Finally, the saints are in conflict with the wiles of the devil, and the whole armour of God is needed and described.

Philippians presents the experience of the Christian, as such, as a spiritual man. The flesh and sin are not mentioned in it. First, the full confidence of the saint. (Chap. i.) Then, his gracious character, connected with Christ's coming down from the place of Godhead glory to death, and so exalted as man to be Lord, the pattern of lowliness, in con-

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trast with the first Adam seeking to exalt himself. (Chap. ii.) Then the energy of the Christian pressing on, Christ being viewed on high as to be won, while we wait for our transformation into the likeness of His glory, when He shall come (chap. iii.); and, lastly, the saint's superiority to all circumstances. (Chap. iv.)

In Colossians, the saints are viewed as dead and risen with Christ, and the fulness of the Head is unfolded; as in Ephesians, the privileges of the body. But the saints are viewed as walking on earth; yet, as having put off the old, and put on the new man. But it is not, as in the Ephesians, the presence of the Holy Ghost which is brought forward, but life. The mystery is contemplated as Christ in us the hope of glory, not developed in its fulness, as union of the body with the Head over all things, though that unity is mentioned.

The Epistles to the Thessalonians are specially occupied with the coming of the Lord. The first epistle, His coming in its various bearings on the

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saints, touching, in chapter v. on its bearing on the world, but only to shew that the saints are not reached by it. The second epistle treats the subject in its connection with the world and the man of sin in judgment.

In 1 Timothy we have the order of the Church set forth, as the house of God, with a prophetic warning that some would depart from the faith. In the second epistle, the warning of its utter ruin, and directions for the conduct of faithful Christians when it became a great house, and the scriptures given as the sure rule, when there was the form of godliness and its power denied. In the first epistle to Timothy we find him left to maintain sound doctrine.

Titus was left to complete the order of the churches of Crete, as to which we have details. The true doctrine of Christ and practice of Christians are briefly stated.

The sum of Christianity, and the way of our entrance into it formally and really, are stated.

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Philemon is the lovely expression of grace in details, and the rescuing effect of Christianity in the midst of the evil of this world in the return of a runaway slave to his master.

The Epistle to the Hebrews gives us the heavenly system, typified by, as a shadow, but in contrast with Judaism; we have there the heavenly calling, but not the Church as a new thing hidden from all ages, and now revealed; the Church is never mentioned, except in chapter xii.; but Christ is seen as Priest on high, apart as an individual, and the saints on earth in the path of faith—Hebrews who had not a visible Messiah, or the possession of anything, like Abraham and others. God, who had often spoken by prophets, had now spoken in the person of the Son, the Apostle of their profession, and their Priest on high, a Son over God's house, not like Moses a servant in it. His new character as Priest, the setting aside of the first covenant, the efficacy of His sacrifice, are developed. It is to be noted that while He is Priest after



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the order of Melchizedec, the exercise of His priesthood is after the image of the Aaronic, only the veil is rent, their consciences purged once for all, and boldness to enter into the holiest their portion. Note too, that the people are looked at as redeemed, only those safe who hold fast by Christ.

The believing Hebrews, however, are called to come out of the camp of those who rejected Jesus as Messiah, going forth to Him the crucified one without the camp, for judgment was at hand. Christianity being the full final revelation, the Holy Ghost given, and one complete sacrifice made, once for all; apostasy left no hope; chapter vi., as to the Spirit; chapter x., as to the sacrifice.

James, though distinct as to the effectual grace, is occupied with insisting on practice, as the proof the reality of faith, not what the world calls good works, but that obedience which shews that faith is real, and not an opinion taken up. The works he refers to are in themselves a father slaying a son, and a woman betraying her country; but the

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greatest possible proofs of the reality of faith, giving up all human affections, and even the promises as in the flesh, through absolute trust in God, and identifying oneself with God's people when all the power of the world unbroken was against them. James is the girdle of truth about our loins. His rule is the perfect law of liberty; that is, a will in us by grace, a nature begotten by the word of truth and will of God, which has its own delight in obedience to Him.

Peter, after a short but beautiful statement of the first great truths of Christianity—redemption, birth by the incorruptible seed of the word, sanctification to the obedience and blood of sprinkling of Christ—takes up the government of God, as applied to the walk of the saint, exercised in trial here, in his first epistle; and as to the world in judgment in the second epistle. We have not the Church in Peter, save as the building which God Himself is progressively building, but not as at present set up in corporate responsibility, as taught by Paul. In the

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second epistle, we have the evidence of the decay of christian life, another terrible judgment that awaited the unfaithful; the time was come for judgment to begin at the house of God.

John presents to us divine life come down in the person of the Son, and now displayed in the true believer. All forgiven; all knowing they were forgiven, knowing they would be like Christ in glory, but in different stages of growth. Apostasy was already set in, and he writes to secure the young Christian by the plain evidence of what the true Christian is. The two great traits of life are, obedience, and love to the brethren: one connected with our relationship to God; the other as partakers of His nature. But that this, especially the last, may not make uncertainty as to salvation, he unfolds God's love to us, from our sinful state right on to the judgment day, and thus will have no fear in love. John is wholly individual in his teaching. He brings forward God manifested in Christ to us, and in life in us, as Paul, our presenting to God in

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acceptance in the Beloved. I speak of the character of their teaching.

The two short epistles refer to the reception of those who went out freely to preach the word. Diotrophes hindered this liberty; the apostle approved it. As apostasy, seductive error, and antichristian persons were already manifested, the apostle insists on our holding fast to that which was at the beginning, that only, and that we have only in the scriptures. Indeed, what came after the apostle he cannot refer to as such.

Jude is the terrible instruction and warning as to the departure of Christendom from its first standing. 2 Peter gave wickedness as the ground of judgment; this, the not keeping the first estate. What had begun already then, would result in final judgment, a judgment foretold already by Enoch.\*

\* Some have sought to prove this a quotation from the apocryphal book of Enoch. This is not so; the doctrine is quite different. That book borrows and perverts what is recorded for us here in truth. My own conviction is, that the book of Enoch refers to Christians as per-

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The book of Revelation gives us first the person of Christ, seen, not as Head and Source of blessing, but as a divine person, though Son of man in judgment. Then, the history of the professing Church, "the things that are," as I believe, first in its ecclesiastical character (from its first failure, on to the coming of Christ, and the substitution of the kingdom; this the first four (chap. ii.), and then, in its protestant character, in the last three (chap. iii.); and then, after it has disappeared from the scene, the progressive judgments of the world, till Christ comes out to its final judgment and His kingdom, and the judgment of the dead and the end of all things; with episodes giving the full character of the Beast and Babylon, and its judgment. Babylon is judged by God; the Beast destroyed by the Lamb.

The contents and edification from the

verse men, and was written after the destruction of Jerusalem, beyond which the composer could not see. That is, it was written after Jude's Epistle. The prophecy was possibly current among the Jews, or found here.

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scriptures through grace must be sought in the books themselves, with that help which alone can enable us really to profit by them; and, as one has said, bring back a sense from them, not bring one to them. They are inspired of God, and able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. They are that which was from the beginning, and which we are commanded to hold fast and to abide in.

The Lord grant my reader to do so !

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God has a spot for us which satisfies His love, *reserved*, even as the fatted calf was something reserved—kept for the one saved by grace, which no one had before tasted of. This spot He secured for us by the cross; but if we would enjoy it, we must refuse and deny everything judged in the cross; for if it was only by the cross that God could secure that spot for us, surely we can only enjoy it in proportion as we are apart from that which made the cross needful.

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Nature has circumstances between itself and God. Faith has God between the heart and circumstances.

## THE RAPTURE—OUR PROSPECT.

(1 Thess. i., iv.)

How grace turns everything to the praise of God when His children are walking in obedience. These Thessalonians could not solve the difficulty of those who were gone to the Lord, and he takes occasion of this, which would work round, stirring up painful feelings, to open out fresh and glorious truths. The great thought in chapter i. is waiting for God's Son from heaven. Here are hearts individually set upon a person out of sight, and who feel that nothing can satisfy them but Himself. There is an answer in the heart of the believer to the person of the Lord Jesus. The very thought of belonging to Him—of His being now on the throne of the Lord God Almighty, bearing our names individually there—is not that surely enough to make us respond to His love—to make us wait for Him from heaven?

Chapter iv. 13—18. The real value of the passage turns on individual love

## THE RAPTURE—OUR PROSPECT. 21

to Christ. It is the uncovering of what was hidden; it is about God's next step when He puts forth His Son, bright with all His crowns of glory. But what is that to me, if I do not love Him? If I do, shall I not care for His glory, and for the detailed accounts of that which I wait for? Thus I am told it is "*the Lord Himself* who shall descend, &c. It is not an action wrought upon Him, but His own action, and all His actions are an expression of the mind and will of God. *Himself the Lord!* aye, Come, Lord. Even if there be things practically inconsistent about me. Through the connecting link between me and the Father's house, I say, "Come." And who is to speak the word? He too!—the Lord, who has been guiding my steps all through the wilderness. What will be the sign of His appearing? His voice! How shall I know it; I never heard it yet? Ah, but faith knows Him, and when He speaks, faith will respond, and it will not then be these soft whispers in which He so often speaks to us now,



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but it will be "with a shout." This word is the one always used to denote a regulating word. Christ the regulator of everything will give the regulating word, and what will be the effect of that voice? Oh! what a thrill will pervade all minds that are in harmony with God! Can any be attuned with God's mind, and not have a thrill through the soul, when His beloved Son rises up from the throne to fetch His children home? Impossible. Angels who excel in strength and do His commandments, would they grudge Him any place? No. They have the mind of God according to their capacity, and so the archangel takes up the note, and God Himself comes in at the end as giving His full sanction to what His Son has done. "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." It would take a whole volume to express the thought that wakes up with that little clause. Oh! what a sight will that be when you and I individually shall see the Lord descend

## THE RAPTURE—OUR PROSPECT. 23

to shew the character of His Father's love, and give confidence to the hearts of His people who are to be ushered into His Father's house. No one could I follow happily in there but Himself! We ought to meditate on what it will be to see Him—to be with Him—to behold Him rise up and come forth.

“The dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up,” &c. The double glory of the resurrection and of the life stands out here, and the state of His saints gives occasion for the display of both; and, as usual according to His grace, it is the weakest first thought of. For them He puts forth resurrection power. What a field of glory is that! Martyrs and saints, their bodies burnt, and ashes scattered to the winds, or some just fallen asleep, unlike those whose dust is findable nowhere. But the Lord knows where it all is, and lets a virtue in Himself attract every particle and raises it up a glorious body. I may say I cannot get rid of this body of sin and death. Cannot? Nay, I rather

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say *would* not ! Better have it to watch against here and to have Him, if I am alive when He comes, to fill me so full of life, as to thrust that out. " So shall we ever be with the Lord." That is the climax. With Him in the Father's house in glory, each one of us in a glorified body. Is this my prospect ? Then what manner of person am I ?

Let us challenge our hearts as to whether we know the love that the Lord Jesus Christ has towards us, and that He is coming to take us to the Father's house.

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The Spirit of God always points *up* now, because of the rejection of Christ. All is failure and judgment here ; but it is not merely as a servant I look up (see Psalm cxxiii.), but as a member—as one united to Him who is there.

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It is one thing to be occupied with the glory, and another with the person of Christ. He Himself is the One that fills the heart, and the One that fills heaven : He is the centre of all.

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## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

### THE REMNANT CHARACTER.

To one with any spiritual discernment, it must be evident that the number of the true and zealous, in comparison with that of professing Christians, is small indeed. It is not want of charity to arrive at this conclusion; nay rather, the more love there is, the more one sees how much is lacking in oneself and in others, and it is as we seek to be true, that we see how much that which is *not* true is tolerated on all sides. As soon as I am faithful to my light, I see that I have to turn aside from many things which hitherto have been tolerated or excused. When Jacob goes up to Bethel (Gen. xxxv.), the idols must be put away. According as I feel it incumbent on myself to wash my hands in innocency, so must I feel it good and necessary for my fellow Christians; and as I proceed in the work of emancipation from the superstitions in which we have been involved, the more do I seek the release of my brethren still entangled;

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and the more faithful I am, the more will they be led to enquire and be encouraged to walk in the path of faith. The one that surmounts the fence which separates the flock from the better pasture, not only secures the good feeding for himself, but encourages and stimulates the whole flock to follow him. Now if we admit that the true and faithful are but a little flock in the midst of a multitude of professors, among whom they are greatly mixed up, with hardly any distinction, we cannot fail to acknowledge the declension of the Church; and if we do, we cannot but seek to emerge from the unhallowed state of things, which we deprecate and disallow. No spiritual one will deny that the Church has fallen from the high and blessed estate in which it was set up, and those who mourn at this declension, and seek to walk apart from every corruption in the house of God, are this remnant. In a word, if there be any faithfulness in the time of apostasy, there must be a remnant. (Rev. ii. 24.)

The character of this remnant we will

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now consider. The original body took its place in all the freshness and beauty of its appointment. It had no antecedent, it was newly inducted into high estate. The past clogged it not; the present only claimed it; nay, it ruled. All was brightness and hope. With the remnant, it is far different. The past has entailed heavy encumbrances on them; and as they labour to be free of them, they feel their weight, and cannot rejoice in any measure of deliverance without being increasingly conscious of the sin and folly which entailed the encumbrances with which they are now chargeable, though they had not personally incurred them. Like the frugal heir of an encumbered estate who labours by self-abnegation to retrieve his condition, and yet no embarrassment can be surmounted but with the sad and painful sense that it could have been prevented; and hence, a deeper sorrow for the present condition. Joseph suffered in Egypt for his people and for their gain; but every progress he made only presented their evil in a stronger and sadder light.

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The remnant is only a handful escaping from the perplexities and degradation in which they with their fellows were involved; and as they rejoice in the mercy to themselves, so must they feel the state to which an original, once so fair and beautiful, has been reduced, and their separation from so many of their fellows still undelivered. The character of a remnant must necessarily be a sorrowing one, as connected with the scene where the failure has occurred, though there be increased joy and rest in God, as there is increased light and power to extricate oneself from everything dishonouring to Him. The character must be that of a widow as to what was, because the brightest thing here is gone; but this with a heart so true to the Lord that there is an uncompromising purpose to devote all one's energies to strengthen the things that remain. (Rev. iii. 2.)

The widow of Luke xxi. teaches us the true character of the remnant. For herself personally there was no interest here, yet all her energies, all her living

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was devoted to the maintenance of the testimony of God on earth. In a word, she had no interest of her own; the interests of Christ commanded all her attention and all her energies. She describes the Jewish remnant of that day, and characteristically the remnant who purge themselves from the corruptions of the "great house" in the present day. If saints in every dispensation had continued true and faithful to the calling of God, there would have been no remnant. If there had been no declension or apostasy, there would have been no need for any to stand forth and declare their purpose through grace, to separate themselves from all the disorder around, cleaving to that which is of God, and energetically devoting themselves to the maintenance of it. The remnant never regain the original, but they refuse everything unworthy of it and of the calling of God. And hence, at every time their character is one of great solemnity and great fervency. They are aware of the terrible blight that is upon everything dear to



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them, but they are increasingly devoted to God and confident in Him. As they see how everything here has failed in man's hand, their heart finds full resource in Him, even as the remnant of Psalm lxxiv. exclaims, "The day is thine, the night also is thine; thou hast prepared the light and the sun."

There are two classes of sufferings which I may just note in passing; one which the earnest one endures, in reaching the path of faith on earth, as Jacob in Genesis xxxv.; the other what the faithful one endures as Christ's witness in the path. The one (the suffering in *reaching* the path), Jacob sets before us; the other (the suffering *in* the path), Joseph, or the widow, presents to us. Joseph in Egypt is the first remnant faithful to God, whether as a slave or as a prince, in the prison or in the palace. His brethren had departed from God, and had cast him out; but he remained true, and God was honoured; and though he never regained the original standing, his faith was such that in dying he gave commandment

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that his bones should be carried back to the land. He never surrendered his calling, though he never recovered it fully. And this is the great work of the remnant, though I speak not of that here, but of the *character* that becomes them. The remnant occupy no light place; and as they realize it, there must be a sense of it about them. They bear upon them the mark of God (Ezek. ix. 4), and they sigh and cry for the abominations committed in the holy places. The remnant are a grave company—fasting with Ezra beside the river Ahava. (Ezra viii. 21.) They necessarily are self-denying; they must not eat of the kings' meat, or drink of the king's wine (Daniel i. 8); and the furnace of fire or the lion's den may await them for their faithfulness. They are like Anna the prophetess (Luke ii. 36, 37), a widow of fourscore and four years, who departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayer night and day. If any one has any true sense of the declension of the Church, as it was first set up on the

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earth, and if there be a heart for the Lord, must there not be a deepening sense of the wretchedness of everything connected with man; but through grace a deeper and fuller confidence and joy of heart in looking up and resting in God? And this will impart the true remnant-character, namely, a complete widowhood as touching everything of earth and man, but a more devoted zeal for everything of God; desolate indeed here, but confiding and joying in God, of no expectation from man, but of great expectations from God, passing through this scene with the deep solemn step of sentinels who, amid the ruins of fallen greatness, with sleepless eye watch for their Lord, that they may open to Him immediately, and who meanwhile guard His name and honour through the long and dreary night.

The Lord lead His saints to wait on Him, that they may not miss the path in which He would have them walk for Him in this evil day.

## THE CHURCH, AS SEEN FROM HEAVEN.

“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.”—Eph. iii. 10.

It is a very solemn thing to see, that human wickedness, in refusing what God introduces, has had a large share (under Satan's power) in making the great mystery of God “manifest in the flesh,” more mysterious still. It is not that God can be in anything taken by surprise, but that the ways of God in external government, and in the guidance of His people, take other forms for their development, and a longer time in their accomplishment, because He waits upon mankind in long-suffering goodness and mercy, and allows the evil to grow up. If it were not so, who could have supposed that the mystery of the incarnation (as celebrated in the opening chapters of Luke's gospel) would have given place to the greater “mystery of godliness” as presented in later

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times in Paul's Epistle to Timothy? "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." What new links in the chain of divine operations are opened out to us *here*; and not only to those on earth, but to those in heaven, "seen of angels." Indeed the especial object of this paper is to bring before the Church of God, the place which "this great mystery of godliness" has, in the present range of God's *act-ings* in the midst of *all* His creatures, whether terrestrial or celestial. Let each one, for instance, ask himself what is the diameter of the circle which this Christ of God occupies in reference to *all* created intelligences. This inquiry would bring to light whether the soul which knows Christ on the cross is satisfied to hold Him merely as the all-sufficient answer to a sinner in his sins, and to God in His holiness, or, passing on by resurrection to where Christ *is*, whether the soul also embraces Him as the Great High Priest "who lives in

## THE CHURCH.

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the presence of God for us." If measured by time, how much beyond the mere present period does Christ fill? or, if estimated by "the manifold wisdom of God," how much beyond the fact, that "he is made unto *us* wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," does He demand? If measured by what is immeasurable, and yet intelligible to *us*, "the travail of his soul," what does not this include, when God Himself is the rewarder, according to His infinite delight in what Christ wrought out by His sufferings and death upon the cross? Will the earth, or its ten thousand times ten thousand blood-bought sinners, the fruit of that "corn of wheat" which fell into the ground and died, satisfy the soul of Christ? What answers do our souls give to these enquiries, as we think of what Christ is to God—what He is to *us*—and what He is and ever was, whether in Godhead or manhood, "to principalities and powers in the heavenly places?" When the foundations of the earth were laid, and corner-stones thereof

## 36 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

fastened, "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." The book of this unfallen creation was closed by Adam's sin; and now these heavenly hosts are called to know their God in new ways:—salvation by grace—redemption by blood—resurrection by power—and ascension into the heavens by righteous title, in the glorified Son of man, by a Name far above them all, "angels and authorities being made subject unto him." Do these enquire, on what principles the government of mankind can proceed, now that sin and Satan are in the ascendant—a government so entirely opposed to the rule and reign of God, where *they* dwell? The cross, and Christ on it, below; and the throne, with the glorified Son of man sitting on "the right hand of the Majesty" above, are the triumphant and conclusive answers to principalities and powers! What must that scene in the wilderness have been to them, when Jesus was led of the Spirit to be tempted of the devil, and when the temptation was ended,

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and Satan departed from Him, "angels came and ministered to him?" Again, that scene at Gethsemane, when Jesus prayed, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me, nevertheless not my will, but thine be done; and there appeared an angel unto him, from heaven, strengthening him;" and his sweat was as it were, great drops of blood, falling to the ground! What a spectacle to angels! Jesus tempted by the glory of the world when offered to Him by Satan in the wilderness; Jesus tempted in the last hour of His life below, when the power of darkness was presented to Him, and death and the grave, the necessary path of obedience, if He would not fail, nor be discouraged! Contrast these scenes with the object of their worship in heaven, as ten thousands veil their faces, while they cry, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts," yet waited on as the Son of man, and ministered to and strengthened on earth. Well may angels acknowledge the fact, "Great is the mystery of godliness," &c. Nor, when the time was come for His



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being received up into glory, are angels absent, either at the sepulchre or in His ascension to the heavens. We read of "the angel of the Lord, who came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it, and his countenance like lightning, and his raiment white as snow," putting the sentence of death upon the trembling keepers! Again, at His ascension, *they* point the men of Galilee on to the future, saying, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, who is taken up from you, shall *so come* in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven." If we pass on to consider the work of Christ, as preached by the apostles, "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," we find that Peter, when describing our "salvation" and what accompanies it, adds, "which things the angels desire to look into." One is almost ashamed that Christians who know this salvation, and the Saviour who wrought it out for them, should have a doubt, where an angel has none; or a misgiving, where angels are reverently desirous to look

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into our things, as the cherubim turned their faces *inward*, in typical days, on the ark of the covenant and the mercy-seat, in adoration.

We have thus before us the person of Christ as "seen of angels," and the salvation of which He is the author, as a thing which "they desire to look into." In truth, the "mystery of godliness" occupies them *now*, and is their grand study since the fall of man and the ruin of creation have taken place, and redemption has become the new ground through Christ of God's present actings with His creatures. How could it be otherwise? The heavens where *they* dwell cannot supply them with such lessons, as they are taught by being made "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." How can an angel reconcile the fact, that God charges them with folly, and yet can say, "I have not seen iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel?" How can they understand that God can continue His patient grace to the betrayers and murderers of His

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Son, when "he spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment?" What an enigma all the ways of God must be "to principalities and powers," except as Christ on the cross, as a substitute for sinners, and Christ at the right hand of God above, who ever liveth to make intercession for saints, are the grand exponents of all mysteries, and the bright witnesses of the subsequent revelations of the riches of God's grace. None in heaven can be any longer at a loss to understand *how* God can "blot out iniquities like a cloud, and transgressions like a thick cloud," who waited on Christ in the garden, or heard His cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" at Calvary; or traced Him from the open sepulchre to the opened heavens.

Can there be a question of the holiness of God as they see our great High Priest in the holiest of all, and "the blood sprinkled upon and before the mercy-seat," upon *any* matters between

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God and Christ, or between God and us? Is there room for a doubt, as they bow before the Majesty in the heavens, and see the "throne of God" vindicated by Him, who when He had purged away our sins, "sat down" there? No; the new wonder to them is, that any upon earth to whom the blessed results are preached by "the Holy Ghost" sent down, should ever dishonour the Lord by a doubt or a fear! What must they think of a class of Christians like Thomas, now that grace is so soon about to crown itself with the eternal glory, unto which God has called *us* who believe in Christ?

In brief, the four evangelists portray the scenes to us, in which the Lord Jesus Christ when on earth was "seen of angels." Peter describes our salvation as that "which the angels desire to look into."

Further, Paul presents the Church as the new vessel of testimony to angels, and therefore we read in Ephesians iii. of "the fellowship of *the mystery*, which from the beginning of the world hath

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been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that *now* unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." Peter, likewise, affirms the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and that "he is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made *subject to him*." This was *their* relation to the glorified Son of man: while Paul presents Christ as "the first-born from the dead, and head of the body the church," by the exceeding greatness of that power which raised Him from the dead, and set Him at the right hand of God, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come." This is *His* relation of supremacy over them. The Church, moreover, which is His body, "the fulness of him that filleth all in all," and which groweth unto an "holy temple in the Lord," and is also an "habitation of God through the Spirit"—is where

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they learn "the manifold wisdom of God." How little do we who compose the Church bear in mind that we are presenting to angels, principalities, and powers, *what it is*; or else, by the corruptions of Christendom, and the false ecclesiastical systems of our day, what it is not. What must they think, as they look in vain throughout the world for any corporate witness, that stands as "the chaste virgin espoused unto Christ," or when they discover *instead* "the woman arrayed in purple and scarlet colour," upon whose forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth? Again, how must they feel in the presence of an apostasy, when nominal Christianity prevails on every hand, and sacerdotalism and sacramentalism are accepted and leaned upon in the national establishments of Christendom, *instead* of the true Christ, and the Church which is His body and bride? In vain do they look for the *manifestation* of the one body, into which all the members of Christ have

## 44      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

been "baptized by one Spirit," standing out as "the epistle of Christ, known and read of all men."

What a question for each and all of us, Am I so standing individually as to represent Christ? and am I, in the relations I sustain to the Lord, as Head of the body (and to the Holy Ghost in the Church), carrying out the truth of the great mystery of God, so as not to confuse an angel, or a power, by what is presented? It is true we do not gather our motives for obedience, either from what was seen of angels, or from what they desire to look into—no, nor from what might be known by the Church to them, because our motives spring from our *own* relationships with the Father, and the Son, through the Holy Ghost. But, in a secondary sense, we may well consider what *we* owe to principalities and powers, who expect to learn *from us* their new lessons of the great mystery "of Christ and the church;" for where else can they turn? Even a woman in the Church was to cover her head "because of the angels."

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It is truly grievous, how out of sight, and therefore out of mind, *this* range of Christ's death and resurrection, and His exaltation to "the right hand of the throne of the majesty of God," has been kept, to the almost entire exclusion of those in heaven, who have such an interest in learning what God is now doing for the glory of His own name, and for the glory of His Son, in calling out the bride of Christ, the Lamb's wife, for the marriage day.

In conclusion, we may remark as to the coming judgment, how merited will it appear to them, when it falls upon the mingled "kingdom of heaven" at last, because of its corruption—a judgment in which they will, as executive powers, take so large a part. "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth:" or when the angel in the Apocalypse "thrusts in his sickle into the earth, and



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gathers the vine of the earth, and casts it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God."

What strange acts do those force upon angels who fail in responsible obedience to Christ, in what He has committed to them! Every member of the body of Christ may therefore well ask himself, What is it I am owning on the earth in this present day? and what is it that I am avowedly connected with as the Church of God? Is it "the body of Christ," the true thing which will be caught up to meet Him in the air, and be for ever with Him? or is it the nominal and false thing, neither cold nor hot, and which He spues out of His mouth? Is my membership that of a fruitful branch in the true vine, or is it with the vine of the earth, which is to meet the wrath of God?

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A saint is like a diamond. A diamond reflects the light, and the greater the light, the more it shines. Thus the more fully you are in the light, the more you know yourself to be a divine being.

## THE EXCHANGE.

### THE PEACE OF GOD FOR MY CARES.

It is a great thing to rejoice in the Lord alway. When the apostle said that, look at his circumstances. He was in prison at Rome, he had been cut short in his ministry, and as he looked around he had to say, "All they of Asia have forsaken me; all seek their own;" and yet he could rejoice—not in these circumstances and not that he was insensible to them, but—because he had a superior power, something which lifted his heart above it all. He was looking to Christ. The Lord's own path was the same; distresses and disappointments on every side; and yet He prays that His disciples may have His joy fulfilled in themselves. If I am not living in a power superior to evil, I shall be depressed and cast down by the stream of evil within and around me, instead of rejoicing alway. To do this the heart must be with Him who has already overcome and sat down.

Nothing disturbed the peace of the

## 48      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

apostle's soul; he was so full of it that he was free to think of others. He was passing through the valley of Baca and making it a well. He could say, "I would that ye were altogether such as I am." Are you so happy in your soul that you can say that? The young Christian rejoices more in what he has got—his salvation, joy, peace, and so on; the old Christian rejoices more in Christ. The young Christian says, "I have got this; I have got that;" the old Christian says, "Christ is this; Christ is that."

The first mark of power is patience. "Let your moderation be known unto all men." Naturally, I like to assert my rights, to resent injustice; but moderation is putting a check upon my own will—content to yield for the present. The Lord is at hand. If I believe this, the character of my whole life will be governed by it. "Be careful for nothing." What do you want? Go and ask Him; carry it to God instead of harassing your own mind about it. He may not give you just what you ask

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for, as that might not be for your good; but He gives you His own peace. Put your cares into His heart, and He will put His peace into yours. "With thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to him." When I put my affairs into a person's hand, and ask them to see to it for me, they undertake it, and I say, "Thank you," although as yet they have done nothing in it. It is a more blessed thing to make trials causes for thanksgiving than mercies.

If we walk in this path (ver. 9), the God of peace shall be with us. Joy is an up and down thing; but peace is something constant and undisturbed. God is never called the God of joy; but He is called the God of peace. When Christ was with His disciples, before His death, He never said to them, "Peace be unto you;" He said, "Fear not." But when He rose from the dead He could say, "Peace be unto you." Christ has made peace by the blood of His cross in such a way, that if God rises up in every attribute He possesses, He sees nothing to disturb His peace.

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I am in the light as He is in the light, and if I have peace with God, I am kept calm, although I have conflict with the world, the flesh, and Satan. Peace flows like a river to me. I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content. The test of the true condition of a person's soul is seen in his everyday habits of life. To abound is a much greater snare than to be abased; but Christ is enough for both. I not only get peace in circumstances, but moral power over them. "*My God shall supply all your need.*" That is as much as to say, 'I know Him well, and I will answer for it, that He will supply all according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.'

What a reality that is in the life of faith!

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Looking with confidence to the Lord, is really entering into His character, and becoming conformable to it. I estimate, delight in, and honour it—count it impossible to be otherwise. In short, I appreciate the Lord, by confiding in Him; and he who appreciates anything morally excellent, is in a dependent way like it.

## THE SUN RULES THE DAY.

How little Christ occupies our hearts, and how little we know the things that are really hindering the joys of Christ in us!

Ishmael had been born thirteen years, but it was not until Isaac was weaned that he was sent away. (Gen. xxi.) Ishmael was the fruit of Egypt, though brought up in Abraham's house; but in the day of festival for Isaac, the incongruity of the presence of the bond-woman's son appears; and he must be sent away. The thing was grievous in Abraham's sight, but God said, "Let it not be grievous . . . . for in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

The people of God suffer, and always have suffered, by being mixed up with the world and nature; but how complete the deliverance, when the soul is happily occupied with Him, who is God's delight; when it can rejoice in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh! We have no idea what a wonderful clearance would be made of things that naturally belong to us, if Christ were

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really before us, filling our hearts with delight; with the festivity known only to the heart, which has Him for its sole object. It is then, and then only, that we are prepared to send away Ishmael. There can be no deliverance from the world, or nature, till the soul knows what it is to make its boast in Christ all the day long. He must be my chief joy; not only my solace when all else is failing, but my joy above all other joys; not only my Saviour from the worst things here; but better than the best: brighter than the brightest thing here; not only the light in the dark night, but the Sun that rules the day; my treasure; and where He is, there am I.

There is a great and important difference between knowing Christ as the One who delivers me out of every variety of strait, and resting in Him as my treasure, superior to the best thing here. In circumstances of sorrow it is necessary and most acceptable that I should find Him my relief and my refuge, and He is a very present help in time of trouble; but it is only as such

## THE SUN RULES THE DAY.

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I know Him. The strait has been used as an opportunity to disclose who and what He is for me, in all His suited care and strength. But when I know Him as my treasure, I can leave all and follow Him. I can send Ishmael away. In the one case, I seek and know His favour and help in relieving me from the worst things here; in the other, I know Him as eclipsing the brightest and the best thing here; the brightest object to me, in the brightest day; and as I give up what I might seek in the first case, so is my heart deepened and assured of the value and greatness of my treasure. I have "manifold more;" and while I enjoy the treasure, it is not only for the time, like the best of natural joys; but it is perpetual blessedness, eternal life.

But if I have this treasure, I must give up the enjoyment of this life; therefore the Lord says to the young ruler, "Go, sell all, and you shall have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me." If Christ be my treasure, I surrender all that hinders, or that inter-



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venes between Him and me; for He eclipses it all: and as I follow Him, His value is enhanced to me; I have manifold more. Orpah was as nearly related to Naomi as Ruth was; but Naomi was not a treasure to her as she was to Ruth, who in following, cleaving to her, found "manifold more."

If the Lord be not our chief joy, we shall be satisfied to put up with Ishmael; but if He be our chief joy in the bright day, we shall not only readily find Him our relief in the dark day, but the power to dissociate us from all that would occupy us in nature. It is when Jacob goes up to Bethel that he says, "Put away the strange gods from among you." How do I get rid of them? By finding that Christ is my chief joy; making my boast in Him; having no confidence in the flesh.

The Lord lead our souls so to know our portion in Himself—so to feast in His presence, that He may indeed rule the day; and *that* is the day in which the things that have taken His place in our hearts are sent away.

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## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

### THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS.

EVERY believer desires, and according as he has conscience seeks, to be godly. We see desire and effort after it on every side, but little practical result; and the failure in reaching what is desired must arise from the incorrect way in which the end is sought.

Godliness is called a mystery, because no one can understand it but one initiated into it, one introduced into it by revelation. A mystery needs a disclosure; it is not common nor open to every one. If you are made acquainted with it you know it, otherwise it is a mystery to you. Now the mystery of godliness is Jesus Christ, in His course, as God manifest in the flesh. As you understand Him, as your soul apprehends Him as He was in it, so do you understand the mystery, and so are you endued with the sense of what God is, in His grace and nearness to us; and this sense is in itself godliness. Godliness is the pious sense awakened by the

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manifestation of God in a man. As I am initiated into what Jesus Christ is, so am I endowed with godliness—true reverence of God. It is as He is known in Spirit, as God manifest in the flesh, having come down into my circumstances, and acting and maintaining God in all the weakness of them, that I am bowed into true reverence before God. I have the sense how peculiarly, how near, God has been brought, and this in grace too; not merely to sympathize with me, but to maintain God in the very condition in which man failed; so that I am filled with reverence, even while consciously partaking of the grace. Nay, in a sense, it is more than receiving of His grace, because it is an initiation into the greatness of the One who has come in the likeness of man to effect such great blessing for me. There is a Man doing everything suited to God; the man of God among men—among those who in every imagination of the heart are only evil continually. The more this Man is known, the more I have a sense of His existence, the

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more am I impressed with reverence for One so singular and unique. No other Person could produce anything like it: the effect is marked by personal devotion to Him. I am endued with a reverence of God, a sanctity of soul which otherwise must be unknown to me. One cannot get the sense of reverence, but from being in the presence of One to be revered. It cannot be produced apart from the Person whose particular claim on me produces it. A child has reverence or piety for his parent; but it is a sense unknown apart from the parent. It is the presence and known relation of the parent which produces it. My parent cannot produce in another's child what he can in me. In another way the presence of a sovereign produces reverence, but only in so far as he is known as such. If his relation as sovereign were unknown, he would not produce it.

Hence godliness is only produced in the soul in so far as Christ is known. It is the solving of the mystery—the introduction to Him personally—which

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produces this peculiar sense of reverence, and effects in me that manner and way which He is entitled to; for as I am in the sense, I yield myself piously to Him, and I necessarily drop the old man, which has been set aside in the judgment of the cross. Seeing Christ as God manifest in the flesh throws me at once into a certain shape. His presence demands it, not as exaction or claim, but it acts like a charm, because the new nature which I have got answers to it. God's man—the only Mediator between God and man—Christ Jesus, so rivets and fixes my heart, that I distinctly retire from everything unapproved of, in the presence of Him who so peculiarly affects and controls me. My nature has dishonoured God and sinned against Him; but now I am in the presence of God manifest in flesh; One who has fulfilled all His will, who has walked perfectly in every stage of this life in which I am, and I find that this blessed One, who is before me, to whom I have been introduced, has done all the will of God; has been justified in the Spirit, seen of

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angels, preached far and wide to the nations, believed on in the world, received up into glory. God has not only come into my very state, but He has been glorified in it, where I have sinned and failed so grievously. Hence, as I am consciously before Him, as I know Him, I must abandon, nay hate, the life for which He suffered here. As my soul is filled with this blessed One, my whole being becomes piously expressive of His influence and claims, and there is about me a holy subjection, a yielding of self altogether to Him. Everything is done in keeping with this pious feeling, which is produced by His presence and the knowledge of who He is, which is the solution of the mystery. It is not that I am using any effort to shape myself, but the pious sense produced in my soul by the knowledge of who Christ is, shapes me; for I covet correspondence to Him, and I have it; not only the form of godliness, but the power of it. A godly man is one truly influenced and controlled by the presence of Christ, as known by the Spirit;

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and this of course produces a manner and character as to everything, which is the fruit of godliness, for "godliness is profitable to all things," &c.

Now, as I have said, every saint desires to be pious, and as it is the first desire of the new nature, so is there none which the enemy so imitates, or has so effectually corrupted in the Church, and this in two ways, as I will endeavour to shew: the one is the deliberate device of Satan; the other, the lust of nature.

The first is foretold in 1 Timothy iv.; "The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and the doctrine of devils: speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." Now the object of this terrible scheme of Satan is to substitute, as all hypocrisy does, a counterfeit for the real. He proposes, therefore, a standard of sanctity, subversive of all God's order and will; but yet, because its exactions are preternatural (beyond nature), men are de-

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 61

ceived by it; and before long, as we see in Thyatira (Rev. ii.), the Church was leavened with it; and though it was never regarded as attainable by the Church corporately, yet its false pretensions were not discovered or unmasked. Its exactions were of such a nature that only the clergy and a few monks and nuns could subscribe to it, or attempt to submit to it; hence it was really not the standard for the Church, and the Church surrendered the truth that it is a body where every member is necessary, and the less honourable receiving the more abundant honour. Satan's device succeeded, in substituting before the eyes of men the fictitious thing, for the real; the religion of popery at first, in place of the mystery of godliness. Man was made the object instead of Christ. When Christ is the object before the soul, man is shaped by the power of His presence, in true subjection to Him; but when man is the object, there is necessarily a maintenance of man's nature, whatever restraints may be imposed. Nay, the more a man can



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submit to such imposition, the more is his nature established in its own power, and of course in increased opposition to God; for the natural mind is enmity against God.

Now, in the Reformation there was, through grace, a great deliverance. The ground-work of Christianity was recovered; viz., justification by faith. Salvation, not by works, but by Christ outside of oneself, was avowed and insisted on, and the maintenance of this is Christianity: but though this was recovered at the Reformation, it was not maintained that the old man was crucified in the cross, and hence they only refused the exactions of popery, but recognized the flesh as still before God.

Refusing the exaction was right; but the retention of that on which the exaction could be made, the old man, was the weakness of the Reformation; and hence, there was that left in the system which gave opportunity for forms and rituals. If the flesh be recognized of God, it must be subject to impositions. But it is not recognized. They that are

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 63

in the flesh cannot please God. And in Christ's presence, the flesh, the old man, is set aside, and there is such a manifestation of His power, that the very manner and way suited to Him is produced, which is piety, or godliness—the *power* of it, not only the form.

The Reformers failed, because they did not see that as faith only could save, and placed man outside of himself in Christ, he must not return to that which through grace had been set aside. In not seeing this, the Reformers left the door open for the system, and ritualism which has grown up since in the Church; and hence, the simple and only effectual way of dealing with either is, at the start, to refuse any place to the old man, except crucifixion. If I am dead, there is no room for any kind of exaction or form; but the presence of Christ produces in me that which far exceeds all that any exaction could produce. Then it is "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

As to the other attempt to set aside

## 64 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

godliness, I now only allude to it. It is noticed in 1 Timothy vi. : Supposing that gain is the end of godliness; that is, that everything of advantage or elevation to man, is supposed to be godliness. To any thoughtful person, this leaven is but too painfully visible, and could never have obtained an entrance if the end of the first man in the cross were truly accepted and insisted on. The result of both is presented to us in its fearful array in 2 Timothy iii. 6, where Christendom is shewn to be worse than heathendom (Rom. i.), though still retaining the form of godliness. Religious restraint and human elevation together produce a fearful state of things. The Lord keep us near Himself!

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Conscience is the inward persuasion a man has about himself. Are your consciences free to be in God's presence? How far has that which cannot enter the glory been judged?

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Obedience goes a great deal further than following written directions. Christ kept the word indeed; but He kept the mind also, and I am responsible to keep both.

## COMPLETENESS OF DELIVERANCE.

ALLOW me to send you some thoughts on Romans, Colossians, and Ephesians, the perception of which seems to me to give a completeness to the instruction of scripture on the subject of our deliverance from our sinful Adam state, not otherwise seen.

There are two capital points in the application of the death of our blessed Lord to us, which must be apprehended to be really free. First, full and blessed propitiation for all guilt lying on us as children of the first Adam, and in the flesh; and secondly, deliverance out of that condition. As to the first, Are we guilty? we are justified; are we defiled by sin? we are cleansed; have we offended? we are forgiven. All is cleared away, blessedly and perfectly, from between us and God. But we are also redeemed out of the condition, in which we were, as in the flesh. We have died with Christ to it. We are now in Him, the Second Adam. Redemption

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## 66      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

has delivered us too. We are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if the Spirit of God dwell in us. As a general principle Romans iii. 20—v. 11 gives us the former of these truths, Christ's charging Himself with our sins and God's perfect love known in it. Deliverance is known by our having died with Christ. Sin in the flesh was condemned, when He, in the likeness of sin, in the flesh, was a sacrifice for sin; and we are delivered out of it, as a state before God, in which we were through Adam. The subject has been touched on in a volume of the *Present Testimony*, in a paper on the new birth; but I desire to bring it out a little more clearly and completely.

The former part of the epistle takes up the acts of Jews and Gentiles, by which they were guilty before God, and stops every mouth. All were lawless or law breakers. The horrors of Gentile conduct, and the hypocrisy of their moralizing, while doing the same thing, left them without excuse. The Jew claimed scripture as his own; and the scripture declared

## COMPLETENESS OF DELIVERANCE. 67

that there was none righteous, no, not one. But Christ was set forth a propitiation, through faith in His blood, a proof of the righteousness of God in His forbearance with the sins of the Old Testament saints; a righteousness now declared, and established, as the foundation on which faith stood; and knew God to be just, and the Justifier of him that believed in Jesus.

The cases of Abraham and David, the great heads of the Jewish people, and of their hopes, testified of the same great truth, that not by our works, but by faith, justification was to be obtained. It was thus we were accounted righteous; a righteousness therefore for the Gentile as well as for the Jew; for it was for faith, and Abraham had obtained it, yet uncircumcised. Circumcision was only a seal of what he had. Two great principles besides come out in this chapter. First, thus far righteousness and forgiveness are equivalent. It is the putting away of the sins of the believer, so that God has nothing to charge upon him. The second great truth brought

## 68      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

out is that Abraham's faith really contemplated resurrection, but as in God's power, one as accomplished by that power, so that we believe on Him who *has* raised up Christ, when He had died for our sins, thereby assuring us that they were wholly put away. But in all this part of the epistle, sins actually committed, which form the ground of judgment to come, are the subject of the apostle's teaching. That judgment is met by the death of Christ delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.

But when the soul is fully opened to the truth, another question arises, the difference of which has not, I think, been adequately apprehended, though the truth itself has, in its essential facts, been owned by Christians. Not acts which bring on judgment as a future thing (for we are judged according to our works) but our present state of alienation from God, a thought which goes back, behind all actual fruits, and finds us in our natural condition—the fruit of Adam's sin. Not a question of

## COMPLETENESS OF DELIVERANCE. 69

works for future judgment, but our present state in respect of God. The Christian is not only justified from his guilt, as a living child of Adam; but as already dead in sin, has passed from death unto life. By one man's disobedience many were made 'sinners, driven out by, and alienated from, God, with a perverse will and evil lusts. This is met by one man's obedience, as contrasted with the law, the measure of the obedience of Adam's children, but which came in by the by (*παρεισθηλθε*) that the offence might abound. But it was as to this, by the by. The first Adam and the Last: alienation by sin from God, and a state of spiritual death by the first; and, the righteousness of God being now revealed, our passing into a wholly new state before God, through and in the Second. But this is not found in the Epistle to the Romans. Man is there seen as a living sinner before God. By the obedience of One the believer was righteous — grace reigning through righteousness. But where was the deliverance from the evil



## 70. A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

nature? Here comes in the second truth of the Epistle to the Romans—we have died. Our profession in having part in righteousness by Christ is by having part in His death. If we have died to sin, we cannot live in it. It is not here, His dying for our sins, but our dying in Him. We are planted together in the likeness of His death; our old man has been crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed. The Christian reckons himself dead to sin, and alive to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. By the same reason he is dead to the law, which has power over a man only so long as he lives. I do not insist further on that point now. It is the teaching of Romans vii., the latter part of which is the retrospect which the Christian makes of his state when, being renewed, he is still under the law—the first husband. Romans viii. 2, 3 gives the summary of this deliverance: *when we were* in the flesh, shews that *that* was a past state. Thus the Romans teach us, that Christ in dying has put away all our (believer's) offences,

## COMPLETENESS OF DELIVERANCE. 71

the fruit of the flesh or old man; but also that we, who were living in sin once, have died with Him. We are now alive to God through Him. But the Epistle to the Romans does not speak of our being risen with Him: we have died to sin, and we live through Him. It takes for granted in chapter viii., that we are in Him; but the teaching is perfect propitiation for our sins; and having died with Him *to* sin, and being alive to God through Him; justified from our sins by His blood, and forgiven through Him, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification; and righteous before God, according to the value of His obedience, as alive with a new life in which we live to God, reckoning ourselves dead to sin. There is not association with Him in His new state; but a free life, justified, and our sins put away. Thus far the Romans: justified in a new standing individually before God; alive through Christ; we having been found living in sins and guilty.

But Colossians and Ephesians take us further. And first, Colossians, because

## 72      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

it takes a transition position. This is clear from its statements. It looks at us as having been found dead in sins and now risen with Christ, who came down into death; but as on the earth, with our hope in heaven. He speaks of the hope laid up for us in heaven. If we are risen with Christ, we are to seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at God's right hand. Our life is hid there with Christ. We are to have our affections there. But it still contemplates, in a measure, our having been alive in sin—"in which things ye walked when ye lived in them;" so consequently it views us as having died with Christ (chap. ii. 20); though it speaks of us also as dead in sins, and quickened together with Christ, and risen; Christ being our life, we actually here, but our life hid with Him in God. A child of Adam, living in sins, is one for whom Christ has to die, that he may be forgiven. But the Epistle to the Romans never views man as dead in sins, nor raised with Christ. Seeing we are dead, estimates as a present thing the whole

## COMPLETENESS OF DELIVERANCE. 73

condition of our nature and state, not merely what is the ground of judgment. And when God acts in quickening, we are, as risen, in a wholly new position; our place is the fruit of the power of God. It is not merely alive and cleared from sins; but our whole condition a new creation of God. Alive in sin, we die with Christ; dead in sins, He comes down into our place: we are quickened and raised with Him. Not only He has quickened us; but, totally away from God in death, we have been brought up out of that, into the place divine power has placed Him in, as thus risen. This implies, or rather leads on into, union; but this is not developed in Colossians, for indeed it only implies it. He must be exalted and must send the Holy Ghost to effect union with the Head and to form the body. In Romans, then, we have died with Christ and live through Him. In Colossians, we have died with Christ; but we are also dead in sins and risen together with Him.

In the Ephesians, we are dead in sins. Christ Himself is first seen as raised from the dead by divine power;

## 74      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

there is no death with Him here. It is a wholly new creation, and only that. Hence its full result is brought out. He is sitting in heavenly places, and we are sitting in heavenly places in Him. We are thus, not only in a new standing, but united to Christ on high, in one body; and the Holy Ghost characterizes our state: while it is life, not the Spirit, in Colossians. The exhortations in Ephesians correspond with this. The Christian is called to go out as from heaven, and manifest God on the earth, as Christ did. It is not one running the race towards it, and called accordingly; but one sitting in heavenly places in the Head, and called to display God's character here below. There is thus, Christ's death for our sins; death to sin and life through Him; then, death in sins, and being raised together with Jesus; and also sitting in Him in heavenly places, developed consecutively in Romans, Colossians, and Ephesians. The practice of the last, as seen in Ephesians, being "imitators of God" down here, as light and love.

## COMPLETENESS OF DELIVERANCE. 75

2 Corinthians affords us another point of instruction; dealing with the old man practically, so as to realize our having died with Christ. But this does not go further than the Epistle to the Romans: the reckoning ourselves dead made good, and the means of doing so. It is deeply instructive as to the practical walk of the Christian. "I had the sentence of death in myself (says the apostle), that I should not trust in myself, but in God that raiseth the dead." Here it was superiority to circumstances, and to Satan's power in death; but the principle remains the same. He held his natural life as dead, so that they who sought to kill him could have no hold on his mind. He trusted in God that raised the dead; he was no further off that, if killed. But he shews how he was always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus. He applied the cross, the dying of Jesus, practically to himself, so that nature never could rise or stir; that the life of Jesus, only that, might be manifested in his mortal body. And the Lord helped him, and made him pass through trying

## 76      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

circumstances, which kept nature dead. He was delivered to death continually, that Christ's life, free from all mixture, might be shewn in his body. In Paul death worked, so that of what was in him, in the flesh, nothing might stir in any way. Thus life, Christ's life, wrought by him in those with whom he had to do. This is saying much; it is what we have to seek, that the cross may be so applied to all that is of the old man, that nought may appear but the new, that *it* only may live and act. This is the fruit of constant diligence, which does not allow the flesh, in any movement or stirring whatever. For this, Christ must be our purpose. But it is great gain, an immense blessing, which makes what is eternal, what is Christ's, our present life—the whole of our present life.

But though the testimony in Ephesians be in its character higher, as the full fruit of grace in the new creation, yet power is more manifested in the Corinthians, though it is power manifested in dealing with the old man, and

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purpose of heart, which is closely connected with power. In Ephesians, it is a wholly new creation, of and after God, and the Holy Spirit of God is there; and in the blessed relationship of dear children. They are called on to manifest their Father's character; Christ, the Son, as in this world, being their pattern. Nothing can be more lovely. It is a walk answering to the abundant grace manifested and the nearness of relationship into which they were brought. But in Corinthians the apostle is in conflict with the power of evil, and called, in his work, to have the unmixed and unhindered power of the life of Christ to act on those with whom he had to do. The enemy was powerless morally as to his defensive position personally, for in seeking to kill him, the evil effort found one in whom the sentence of death was internally completely realized. And holding his flesh thus dead continually, when occasion for dealing with others came, only the life of Christ was practically there to act towards them. Death wrought in him and life in them. Note,



## 78      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

he was *always* bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus. If we thought of such a principle, how far could we say we always held the power of the cross to every movement of the natural man? Yet with it are connected the deepest and most blessed affections; as Peter says, "Forasmuch then as Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind." That is, the heart is turned to Christ, suffering for us, in holy devotedness, that we may be delivered from sin, and live by the divine life, in the soul. The death we carry about with us is the blessed dying of the Lord Jesus, by which we die to sin and to ourselves, and it is the gain of that life in which we shall live for ever in eternal life with Him, having served Him here. It is present deliverance, and life in divine liberty and light, though here requiring the habitual bridle of death on self, and the life of will in the flesh. Oh! that we had eyes to see where our true gain is, and hearts to reckon on His strength to carry it out! Thus only we live in what is eternal.

## COMPLETENESS OF DELIVERANCE. 79

The difference of Romans and Ephesians may be seen in comparing Romans xii. 1, 2 and Ephesians v. 2. In Romans we have the purpose of heart which presents the victim to God, as in chapter vi. 19, for it is the same word as "yield yourselves." We give ourselves wholly up to be a living sacrifice. In Ephesians it is love, and fulness of grace giving up self for others : divine giving up self freely in goodness. "He loved us and gave himself for us," not yielding up as owing oneself (though freely) to another, but the free gift of self in grace to be a sacrifice to God.

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If you are dwelling in the greatest love and in the greatest thoughts, you may rest assured that in minor things, that love—that thought will preserve its own greatness.

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I have got Christ as my portion altogether. Set in Him, I am waiting for Him. One side of the medal is Christ on earth ; the other side, Christ in glory.

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## THE CROSS PRACTICALLY.

It is a solemn question for each of us, how far one has really taken home the cross of Christ, to one's own heart. We get in the cross the perfect revelation of God's love, coming in power to meet man, just where the creature failed to meet God. And we also get there the manifestation of the creature's wickedness in having murdered Christ. In the Epistle to the Galatians we see how impossible it is for man to mingle human ordinances with the cross. Many pressed circumcision in order that the flesh should have wherewith to glory; but the apostle would have nothing but the cross. That was what he gloried in; and it entirely marred to him everything connected with the world. What were all the ordinances of man?—"touch not, taste not"—nothing but worldly religion. All that man was, found its expression in the cross of Christ. There I get the perfect estimate of all that is in man, and all that is in the world. I see in the world the place where Christ was

## THE CROSS PRACTICALLY.

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murdered. I see the generation of them that murdered Him, in power in the world. By that cross of Christ the world is crucified to me, and I to the world. All the feelings, tastes, and habits natural to us, found their end at the cross. We rob ourselves, if we stop short of the full assurance of affection we have with God, *through the cross* not getting its proper place in the soul. I am convinced it is here where failure in worship comes in, i.e., the want of having the cross right between our hearts and the world; not being on *God's side* of the cross. If I am on *God's side* of the cross, I am spoilt for the world. When brought by the gospel of grace to God, the gospel of the cross of Christ is to be taken up, and we are to be spoilt by it for the world, not only saved; but the cross is to be so carried out as to mar the world. Do we carry out the cross of Christ in the world, so as to bring Christ's death right home to the heart as the expression of God's thought about the world? If it is not so, we must break down when we come together

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for worship. The cross of Christ is the *one thing*, as to man, especially in the mind of God. The jealousy of His love is not satisfied, unless the cross of His Son is between me and the world, between me and myself.

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THE REMNANT EXPERIENCE.

A DOVE once weary and forlorn,  
 By wind unfledged, by winter worn,  
 By man unknown, her rights unclaimed,  
 Her beauty marred, her body maimed;  
 Despised, rejected, loved by none,  
 In grief, a thorough lonely one.  
 To friends and home she bade farewell,  
 And fainting lay by Sychar's well;\*  
 And there refreshed, with life renewed,  
 Her ruffled feathers rightly smoothed,  
 With strength of flight she winged her way,  
 To heaven† she soared, and fain would stay—  
 But no! the earth she still must brave  
 With David in Adullam's cave.‡

\* The knowledge of the indwelling Spirit.

† The knowledge of the heavenly places in Christ.

‡ The present position on earth.

1834.

## SEEING CHRIST.

PAUL saw Christ in glory and that eclipsed everything to him. He says, I will have Christ instead of everything, not merely instead of his sins, but instead of everything that would accredit him. The world was an empty show for Paul. He says, "I do count it dung and dross." That was the constant condition of his life, because Christ was before his soul. God has given us in Christ a perfect object, and it is this that gives the true character to the Christian, and which marks everything in this world. He, the object, is out of the world, in the glory, and the man that sees Him becomes single-hearted. To give up the world is no sacrifice to him. It is all "dung and dross." But self, wretched self, must be broken down. Paul was smashed on the way to Damascus. Can you say Christ is your only object, and that in the secret of your soul you have no other? The thing is, that we do not see Christ, and then there is some secret chamber, of

## 84      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

which we keep the key, even from our own heart and conscience, which is not for Christ, and which mars the whole. When the soul is knit to Christ, other things are gone. It has an object that governs it completely. He is the object and self is gone. Do you know Christ thus? There are babes, young men, and fathers; but all that can be said of the fathers is, "Ye have known him that is from the beginning." Are you running after that? Are you sufficiently dead that your one object is to know Him; not merely to be found in Him, but to *know* Him? It is with Him you are going to be for ever. Is He not perfect? It is no human knowledge to know Him, but divine teaching. The human mind produces heresies—the humble heart feeds on Him, and that is what will make you happy in heaven. It is what is hidden in the heart that tests. Christ must be at the *bottom*, or you are not a Christian at all; and at the *top* may be a blameless walk; but a great deal may come in between the two—the news of the day, the

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tittle-tattle of life, shewing that Christ has not His due place;—the heart is the highway of the things of the world. What a difference between that, and my knowing Him and the power of His resurrection ! That is what takes me clean out of the world. The prize of the high calling is the calling above. My object is out of the world, and my life is characterized by the object I am following after. Every life is characterized by some object, and Christ should characterize our lives down here. We are called to glory and virtue. These two can never be separated. Glory is the thing to be attained; virtue the courage to attain it. I am predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son. I am going to be like Christ in glory, therefore the heart runs after Him. How far in spirit have I seen the Second Adam, the Lord from heaven ? Just in so far as I have, is the first Adam condemned. The Second Adam is set up before God. I am before Him, like Him, to own Him here. This gives earnest energy to the heart. I have seen Christ, and my



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heart cannot part with Him. I mind not earthly things, but "this one thing I do." When we see Christ, we shall know that all else is vanity, but we ought to know it now. Are your hearts with Christ? Are you identified with His interests? Do you work from Christ, and for Him? Is He your starting point? Is He the one who possesses you? Are you looking for Him as men who wait for their Lord? The Lord give us to know what it is to have a Christ in glory and so to have our hearts in the glory!

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Real lowliness accepts God's thoughts. True humility thinks not only what we are for God—*perfectly* bad; but what God is for us—*perfectly* good.

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Faith lays hold of a living God, and finds in Him a living source of comfort.

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Christ expects in this day every man to do his duty.

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## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

### MINISTERS OF GOD.

(2 Cor. vi.)

At every time, as there was favour from God, so was there a minister, empowered of God, to set forth and maintain His will; and whenever God vouchsafed mercy and succour to His people, it was through the intervention of His servants; and the blessing of the people was indicated by the power and faithfulness of the servant, so that at any time the moral state of the people was represented by that of the servant. All through scripture there is favour and help for the people whilst the servant remains faithful; but when the servant fails, all are involved in the downfall. If the one to whom God entrusts His mind continues faithful, even though the people be rebellious and perverse, he is still enabled to rally and restore them, or at least to save a remnant.

It is a high but grave position to be called of God to minister His mind and counsel to His people; none more

highly favoured, and none so opposed and thwarted by every device of Satan. It is plain that when God would help and succour His people, by unfolding His will and way to any one, Satan's great effort would be to hinder such an one, and, if possible, to pervert him. The favour of God is shewn to His people when He raises up a faithful servant; and His rebuking is shewn when "the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered." (Isaiah xxix. 10.) And hence, the enemy labours to counteract the effect which would flow from the faithfulness of God's ministers. While Noah was faithful he was signally used; but when he failed, he opened the door for evil in his own family.

Moses is a faithful servant, and the people of God, in their rebellion and unbelief, obtain succour and help through him. The whole history of the Book of Judges sets forth this truth—that the faithfulness of the servant ensures bless-

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

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ing to the people, markedly in keeping with the order of the faithfulness. 'The more truly any one was God's minister, observing and maintaining His mind and counsel, the more surely was there blessing to the saints through him; so that, as we see in the case of Samuel, where there was simple and true dependence on God in prayer, there was the most marked blessing; but when he failed, in the matter of his sons, then the door was opened for the disclosure of the people's evil. The principle is the same all through—like priest like people. When the servants went down to eat and drink with the drunken, then the kingdom of heaven was likened unto ten virgins, who all slumbered and slept. We see this same principle still more strikingly and authoritatively established in the kings of Israel. As there was faithfulness in the king, the people were blessed; and as there was unfaithfulness in him, the people suffered. It is simple and necessary, that if the minister of God fails, there must be an opportunity for the exposure of the evil of the people.

## 90 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

If the minister of God be the organ or instrument to instruct the people of God according to His will; surely, any dereliction in the minister must seriously affect the people. When truth is qualified by word or deed, its effect on the hearers must be seriously weakened. And what more effectual way to accomplish this, than by corrupting the channel, called and gifted of God for imparting it? as Paul says, "Of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things." And Peter is still stronger—"As there were false prophets among the people, there shall be false teachers among you." Satan's great aim has been to supplant the minister of God. And this in a twofold way: one, by seducing the true one from his fidelity, as it is written, "The servant saith in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;" and, secondly, by introducing false teachers, "angels of light" (2 Cor. xi. 14); and as the "woman Jezebel, to teach and seduce my servants," &c. (Rev. ii.)

Let us but see the responsibility of

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 91

the minister of God, and we cannot fail to see, that any remissness in him must entail, or give occasion for, greater evil in the people to whom he is called to minister. A minister of God is one appointed by God to impart His mind, by a gift specially conferred on him by the Holy Ghost. It is distinctly given and knowingly possessed; but capable of being cultivated and increased by study of the word and prayer. It is not the line of the gift we are considering here, but the simple fact that one is endowed with Christ's gift by the Holy Ghost, and hence takes his place among God's people as His minister. To a true conscience, no appointment could be more solemn or responsible; but when we see the effect one's faithfulness, or the reverse, has on the people of God, one may well tremble, if not supported by the cheering assurance that our competence is of God. The gifts have been given for the perfecting of the saints; and hence, if the gifted one, the one called to be God's minister, in anywise misrepresents God, in teaching or preach-

## 92      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

ing, he necessarily damages and hinders saints. They are straitened and checked by him, and he has not approved himself as the minister of God. His conduct and course should be of such a character, that he could say, that they were without excuse, as far as he ministerially was concerned. Is it not plain, that if God's minister does anything in word or deed to contravene the mind of God, of which he is the minister, he must therein hinder the saints? Does he not indicate in himself the real measure of the power of the truth of which he is the minister? If the minister can allow this or that of the world in his surroundings, it is vain for him to expect that the saints will accept the truth he ministers as able to effect more, or that really there is more in it; for it is remarkable how defective walk in a minister will lead to qualification of the truth in its very enunciation; and hence there is not a rightly dividing the word of truth.

Nothing has tended to lower the standard of Christianity so much as the little practical effect that the truth has

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had on the ministers of it. Nothing does the awakened conscience more eagerly look for, or more intently examine, than the effect of the truth on the one who ministers it. It is remarkable how everything a minister of God does will be criticized, and how consciences will be either convicted by his conduct or emboldened to do what it might otherwise fear to do. Who could read the credentials of a minister of God in 2 Corinthians iv. and not fear, while he accepted and assumed the duty of such a highly privileged, and at the same time self-denying, calling? or who, while humbly bowing to Christ's favour in putting him into the ministry, does not feel the obligation which rests on him, and the importance of the word to Timothy? "Meditate on these things; give thyself wholly to them; [though working at a trade, as he did—see 2 Thess. iii.] that thy profiting may appear to all, for hereby shalt thou save thyself and them that hear thee."

The gifts are given by Christ for the perfecting of the saints, and pasture is



## 94 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

always provided by Him, as there is appreciation of it. A Simeon, a Nathanael, or a Cornelius will not be neglected; no, nor the Ethiopian eunuch. The Lord will provide a servant suited for His saints, who wait on Him. There is no lack of gifts now as ever; but they are not in vigour or usefulness in their proper spheres, because they are not exercised in simple subjection to the Lord. The fact is, when grace is working in any few, the word of God is heard, and some one or another is gifted of the Lord with His mind; for He seeks for the ear of the saints. (See Rev. ii., iii.) The gift cannot be refused, nor can it be treated with indifference: it is given of Christ, and it should be cultivated. We see in many, a gift, and an evident desire to exercise it; but they are not making full proof of their ministry. They are not good soldiers of Jesus Christ. The minister's place is accepted too lightly. It is not enough to possess a gift, or to have readiness to exercise it. The latter may be an evidence of its existence; but notwithstanding, there

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will be feebleness if there be not a deep sense of responsibility to the Lord in the using of it, with the obligation that there rests on the minister, to forego everything selfish—to deny himself *altogether*, in order that the gift may be unhindered by anything of his nature, and that it may shine forth in the grace of Christ. Where there is this charity and self-abnegation (see 1 Cor. xiii.), there will be a marked consideration and care for others. The true minister, not only in every way proves himself as of God, by his devotedness to the work, but he, like a nurse, considers for them to whom he ministers. He knows that he cannot wash another's feet, but as his own have been washed. He is able to help and comfort others, as he has passed through like trials with God. The minister watches the souls he tends. He is a nurse, feeding with milk and not with meat, when there is not preparedness of heart for meat. In a word, it is not what he has to impart that is so before his mind, as the state and capacity of those to whom he ministers. The nurse does not over-feed, does not weary; he

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does not preach too long, or pray too long. He considers carefully and skillfully the state of his hearers. Jonah was zealous and devoted before he had the sympathies requisite for an efficient servant. To be fully God's minister, devotedness and fidelity to the trust is first required; but the gift is hindered, and the saints are not edified, if there be not charity, and real self-abnegation in every point.

May the Lord in His mercy awaken in the many whom He has given a desire to serve Him (an evidence that He has called them thereto), simple purpose of heart to abandon everything that stands in the way of effectually carrying out the ministry that they have received of the Lord, that they may fulfil it. While rejoicing in being put by Him into the ministry, may they have a true sense of the obligation imposed on them in everything to approve themselves as ministers of God, and to fill up the measure of it, that they may challenge the saints for a recompense! And may the saints so value pasture that God may raise up many to feed them faithfully!

## CONFESSION.

CONFESSION is the natural provision for the unburdening of the sin-convicted conscience. It is in fact the way in which the soul *transfers* its burden of sin, when no longer able to bear it.

In principle, the confession of a sinner or of a saint is the same. It is caused by the detection and judgment of sin, and it is evidence of the truth of the judgment of the sin which has been detected. Man asks for forgiveness when either his sin has been detected by another, and can no longer be concealed, or when he fears its detection, and desires to escape its punishment. But the praying for the forgiveness of either an offended God, or an offended fellow-creature, is in itself no real or sufficient evidence of true contrition and self-judgment, though it is possible that these may be present.

Confession, however, where it is true and spontaneous, is the effect of sin being seen and judged, and hated for its *own* sake; and where this is the case, the

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soul longs to be unburdened by confession, *quite apart from any merited consequences to itself*. In true confession there is no desire or thought of escaping the deserved punishment; rather, on the contrary, is there the fullest acknowledgment that judgment is merited, and the readiness to accept it, if it is inflicted. Thus the dying thief owned his guilt, and the justice of his punishment, in the words, "And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds."

The confession of a sinner is, however, practically different from that of a saint. The awakened sinner confesses his guilt to a God unknown and unloved; but when he feels and knows his sin, and the curse of it in his own heart, so bitter is the sense of it, that anything is better than having it there concealed, and confession is his resource. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long." (Psalm xxxii. 3.) He owns what he is, he hates what he is, his sins rise up before him, and he sees death and judgment in the background. In this condition human re-

## CONFESSION.

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sources fail, and human comfort and sympathy cannot heal. God is the alone refuge of a sin-convicted conscience. In confession he, as it were, delivers himself to God, that God may deal with him as He sees fit. He hands his burden over to the Lord, as being heavier and more intolerable than he can bear. "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid; I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord." The poor soul, unable to carry his burden, brings it to the presence of this God hitherto unknown, and now finds out what God is, and what are His resources of love, and yet of righteousness, in the cross of Christ. "And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

The confession of a saint differs in this, that it is made to a God known in grace, and as Father in relationship, and in the consciousness of the one offering, and of the precious blood of Christ which cleanseth from all sin. In principle, as we said before, it is the same, the result of sin detected and judged. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful

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and just to forgive us our sins." (1 John i. 9.) In practice it is however to a Father known and trusted, though, it may be, dishonoured; and to a faithful and just God, in whose presence is the righteous One, our Advocate, whose blood has laid up an infinite and endless store, and a solid ground, upon which God can forgive all iniquity.

In the case of the saint, confession is at once the most gracious provision, and most blessed exercise to meet his need down here. Looked at in the world (with which, as to the old nature, the link is not yet finally broken, except to faith), how could a believer, a son of God, a saint by calling, maintain his position, and walk in communion with his Father, and his Lord, were it not for confession of sin? Who that knows anything of his own heart, and of the defiling influences around, does not also know the relief and rest in which a *true* spirit of confession maintains his soul. But the confession of a saint *must* be true. There is much that is called confession by us that

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is not confession. The light acknowledgment of evil which cannot be covered, the enforced assent of the lip or of the heart, does not restore a soul, nor bring it back to the place of light, of love, and of holiness in the presence of God. Self-judgment and confession must be something more than skin-deep if we are to dwell in fellowship with Him in whom is no darkness at all, for He knows just where we are in our souls, and what He looks for is truth in our inward parts. The man, who cannot search his brother's heart, is to forgive him "seven times in the day," if he turn again, "saying, I repent." But God, who is greater than our hearts, knows the exact value of our confession, and estimates it, and acts towards us according to its true worth. And here once again I would just say, that where the confession of sin is true, there will be no thought of escaping, or mitigating any just consequence. It is, we know, our privilege not to suffer for evil doing, "for Christ hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, to bring us



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to God, and he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." But when a saint slips or falls, and the "chastening of the Lord" comes upon him, how good it is to take the rod from the Father's hand; how blessed, in communion with Him who would have us "partakers of his holiness," to reap (if it be His will) the results of that which we have sown. So Eli—"It is the Lord, let him do that which seemeth good." So David—"Let him curse." So too every saint of God, who knows in any measure the perfect, yet inseparable love and holiness of our God and Father in Christ Jesus. There is a wide difference between confession in order to forgiveness, and the evasion of punishment, which is really Popery; and confession in view to the restoration of communion with the Father in whose love our hearts have learnt to find their only rest.

We have hitherto spoken only of confession towards God, but it has also its bearing towards man. We may, however, truly say, that the greater involves the lesser.

## CONFESSION.

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All sin, when divinely seen and judged, is *first* judged Godwards. David, concerning that which most deeply violated every human duty, exclaimed, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." (Psalm li. 4.) But this does not lessen the obligations of human relationship, any more than "thou shalt love the Lord thy God" supersedes the next commandment "which is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour." When, therefore, there is divine exercise about sin, it will be seen and viewed in *all* its bearings. Wherein it has touched our standing and relationship towards God, it will be first judged; but wherein it has also touched our relations to men, it will not be neglected; and this latter point demands the deepest exercise and self-examination, and self-emptiness also on our part, for the tendency of our hearts is to evade, if possible, that which may lower us in the eyes of our fellows, whether men as men, or our fellow-christians. How commonly do we hear one who has failed, and, in a way, has owned it too, saying,

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“I have confessed to God, and there is no need to confess to man.” Well, perhaps there *may* be no need, only the very question raises a suspicion that there may be some point in which our relations to our fellows are concerned, and which would call for acknowledgment to them as well as to God.

“Confess your faults one to another,” is the pith and marrow of much that is detailed at length under the law. The necessity for restitution, and for the acknowledgment of wrong done, both natural conscience and law most plainly teach; and does the gospel teach a lesson of less self-denial? Surely not, but rather a deeper one, as in it we learn how self is judged and mortified, and Christ alone to live and act in us. But we are sure of this, that to a divinely taught soul, the opinion of our fellows is as naught when compared with the approval of the Holy God; and moreover God and my own heart know secrets about myself which none other on earth or in heaven knows. God and I know of sin and corruption so deep,

## CONFESSION.

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that when the sense of it is before the soul, one admits that the worst that men can say about me is ten thousand times better than one deserves. Now we are not called to make known the secret things which we know, and have judged and confessed, and which God knows and has judged and forgiven, but when or if the time comes, that by my failure I have grieved or injured another or others, either in flesh or spirit, the sense and remembrance of this my own evil should overcome every thought of covering or justifying self, and should make me as ready to uncover before man, to whom I owe confession, as before the Lord Himself.

May the Lord teach us self-emptiness, and so enable us always to maintain a good conscience before God and before man. We ought to walk before men as before God, always able to look each one in the face with the confidence that we are keeping back nothing which is their due, that we are hiding nothing even in our hearts which in confession we ought to make known.

E 2

## THE CHAIN OF TRUTH IN JOHN'S GOSPEL.

(Chap. v.)

THE subject of this chapter is, that Christ is the power of life to the body, on which the judgment of death rests, and is, consequently, subject to the greatest infirmity. It is not that there had not been mercy from God. The pool of Bethesda was a display of His mercy, and hence called Bethesda—house of mercy; but it was proffered to man, in his own, that is to say, his natural state, and hence, available to each needy one, according to his strength or ability to appropriate it. It did not propose to invest man, or the needy one, with any superior power; but it proposed to relieve, and did relieve, every one availing himself of its healing waters. There was favour and help conferred on the one getting in first; and hence, as there was no gift of power, or means to subsidize the weakness of the sufferer, the most vigorous—the one whose strength was least impaired—

## THE CHAIN OF TRUTH, ETC. 107

necessarily got in first, and reaped the benefit of the mercy.

To man, as he stood, the offer could not be made otherwise. God offered the mercy to him, as he was, and afforded him means of relief, if he had power to avail himself of it. There was a premium on natural strength; and the one needing it most (consequently, the most infirm) was necessarily excluded. If a new power be introduced, it is evident that it must come from outside of man; but the mercy was offered to man as he was, and hence the one who needed it most never reached it.

Here we find an impotent man which had an infirmity thirty-eight years. His account of himself is very touching. In answer to the Lord's question, "Wilt thou be made whole?" he says, "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me." He felt his need of a power of life outside himself; the arm of one which could bear him up, and conduct him to the relief that

## 108 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

mercy proposed. The Lord Jesus Christ displays here that He is that power of life. He says to him, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk."

Thus in verse 17 He says, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." He is here now working; and He adds (ver. 20), "the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will: for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who hath sent him." Two things are manifested now, through the Son who is here; one, that He is the quickening One; and the other, that all judgment is given unto Him. The first Adam was only a living soul; the last Adam is a quickening Spirit. The Son is here on earth, to be known either as the quicken-

## THE CHAIN OF TRUTH, ETC. 109

ing one, or as the Judge. Hence, He adds, "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 judgment, but is passed from death unto life." The hearing of His word, and faith in Him who had sent Him, would secure eternal life, and preserve from judgment, which is the portion of the first Adam. He is here with this twofold power. If His word be heard, and there be faith in Him who sent Him, then life would be conferred; but if not, judgment. And not only this, but His voice should be heard by those who had no power in themselves to receive it. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." The dead ones, unable of themselves, like the impotent man, to avail themselves of any offered mercy, shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and live. There should be a creative energy from the Son, reaching unto the dead,—a



## 110 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

power effectual to set them superior to all the infirmities of their condition, as in and of the first Adam, and all through the voice of the Son of God. The Son has life in Himself; and because He is the Son of man, the Father hath given Him authority to execute judgment. And hence follows the summing up. "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of judgment." "They that have done good." It is not said how much good, but what is of God is good. The Son will then manifest His power in this twofold way. Now He is manifested here; empowered to meet the need of men, and to attract their hearts to Himself. Hence He says, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." (Ver. 40.) It is narrowed into the issue now; life, or judgment, by and through the same blessed One. If He be heard, He gives life; otherwise judgment. We must

THE CHAIN OF TRUTH, ETC. 111

know Him one way or the other. In either way He is mighty in power, either a life-giver for eternal blessedness, or a judge for eternal misery.

Surely our souls would exclaim, "Oh magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together."

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Are not you and I, in our measure, to be like Paul and John? It was the same life that flowed forth from Christ in them that we have. But have we mixed anything with it which they did not? If in a crystal pure river, a little stream of chalky soil remain, the little fillet of white mixed water will shew a long way down. The water which flows from Christ, while washing up all the soil in us, gives power to set it aside. Look over the house for Christ. Look over everything with His eye; and if you find a mixture anywhere, put it away. Try the things round about you, which you do from habit. Can you do them to Christ? If not, set your mark against that, there is a mixture there.

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There is a Man in the glory of God, and He has perfectly glorified God down here about sin. He was made sin. In the measure in which He knew what it was to be holy, He knew what sin was; and in the measure in which He knew what love was, He knew what wrath was.

## ALL SCRIPTURE IS PROFITABLE.

I SEE that the loss of Paul's teaching, union with an ascended Christ, putting us in a wholly new position by the Church, is the secret of their whole state; and it is mainly that which God has brought out in these last days, but it is just that which makes it so important, that the truth should not be discredited by denying, or in any way discrediting, any other part of scripture.

It is curious that this was just the ruin of the Paulicians. They had nothing else but Paul's epistles and the gospels, and their adversary took up this very point against them, a certain Peter, if I remember, and Moneta.

But it is a mistake to think Paul only speaks of this new plan. John does too. But that is not all. The other parts of scripture are the word of God, and if any have not attained to Paul's doctrine we are to walk by the same rule. Besides, the other aspects of the truth are as important in their place as that. Where that truth is held alone, there is

## ALL SCRIPTURE PROFITABLE. 113

a hardness and want of daily dependence which leaves the best christian affections dormant.

Besides, the whole system is false. Other parts of the New Testament were certainly available for Christians then, and if so, for Christians now. "Holy brethren, partakers of the holy calling," is clearly christian ground; and wilderness life is a part of christian life, as Canaan and conflict are.

Further, the person who makes light of John's writings makes light of the *manifestations* of God and of the Father, and makes his own acceptance before God the only thing of importance. Now this is a very bad state of soul, and such are clearly on low ground.

We have to maintain redemption against the Puseyite heresy of making incarnation the saving work; but if we hold redemption tenaciously fast, the Head come down from heaven to give life must not be lost. And as to Peter, if I lose his writings I lose the government of God, and the connection of this in christian times with Old Testament times.

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Now the glory of God is concerned in these things, and it is a poor boast of knowledge to leave that aside, and think only of what exalts us.

So of Jude, where it directly concerns the professing church. In no place is Christ's personal glory, as Christ, brought out more fully than in Hebrews. Is that nothing for the Christian, because the unity of the body is not brought out?

Even Paul's epistles give different aspects of truth. The epistle to the Romans does not hint at our resurrection *with* Christ, nor allude to Christ's ascension, save once in chapter viii., to lay the ground for intercession, which is really dropped out of their scheme. Ephesians never goes on Roman ground at all: Colossians takes up in substance both.

Their vaunted clearness is not sound knowledge, but rejection of many important parts of truth, and uniformly produces self-sufficiency and hardness, not personal dependence on grace and on Christ.

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

### *"SOWN AMONG THORNS."*

It is a trial to every earnest soul, the little effect an accepted truth has on him; the little fruit produced by it. And not this only, but every servant of God, really careful about souls, is often disappointed at the little progress of those who have received the word. The Lord in the parable of the sower presents to us the various things which hinder the full effects of the truth; and the one nearest to the right condition discloses and describes how a truth, though received, may become unfruitful. "And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things, entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful." Here plainly the word has been heard; it was neither on the way side, nor on a rock; but other influences were allowed to act, and they choked the word, and it became unfruitful. The simple ques-

## 116 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

tion raised is this: Is the word to exert control and influence over us? or are other things, which are connected with our nature, to have the mastery? If these latter are allowed to rule, the word is choked; there is no fruit; that is, there is no effect produced by the word. The point must be settled, whether the word is to rule me, or whether I am to be ruled by the circumstances, which affect and interest me as a man.

The moment I receive a word from the Lord, I am bound to let it govern me; because it is His word; but if, instead of this, I am carried away by cares, riches, or pleasures, it is evident the word has no hold on me, and there can be no fruit. How often does one, either in reading or hearing, accept the word of the Lord, and yet find afterwards that it has not produced any effect! And why? Because other things were allowed to rule, or monopolize the place of the word, and hence there could not be fruit. Fruit is the effect produced by the distinct action and control of the word. The word has

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 117

been accepted, but it has not been understood. It has not been received as the word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe. There is too ready an acceptance of it, not that in one sense the acceptance can be too ready; but it is not received sufficiently, with the sense that it is God's word to one's own soul. The mere receiving of the word, as a statement of truth, is never effectual, it must be mixed with faith; my soul must be under the conviction that it is addressed to me by the Lord Himself, as His will and counsel; authoritatively declared to me, claiming to order and direct me, and to which I am required to yield unqualified submission. It is not informing me what I might do, but what God requires me to do, and which I am able to do, the moment I accept the word as His. It is, alas! quite possible, without any intended opposition to the Lord, to accept truth as information—something to enlarge one's mind, and not something which didactically claims implicit obedience, because coming from God.



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The word must lead, or the thorns will choke it: that is, it must hold the first place. To God's claim and direction all must bow. If other things are allowed to take the lead, then faith has waned; the sense of God's paramount claim has been supplanted, and there is no true effect from the word. The information may remain, but there is not the accuracy, even in the information, which practice alone ensures. Practice in a wonderful way leads one into accuracy of idea and power of expression about the truth. If the truth be understood in its bearing and claim, it holds the first place. The heart is honest and true, and the fruit is brought to perfection. But when other things are allowed to take the lead, like thorns in a corn field, the corn is spoiled. So long as the corn keeps ahead of the thorns, there is, at least, some fruit (grace) brought to perfection. We are called to be "doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving our own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man be-

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 119

holding his natural face in a glass. For he beholdeth himself and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he, being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." (James i. 22—25.) The point is, that there must be action in keeping with the instruction conveyed by the word. If you abide in the word, there will be action, and therefore blessing; but if you go your way, after hearing, you have only seen your face in a glass; you have not altered anything in keeping with the word; the word has not exerted any influence over you. You go your way, and other things lead and govern you, and not the word of God. Alas! we have in ourselves, and around, evidence of this every day. For example, one accepts the coming of the Lord, as revealed in scripture, but the same man goes on as usual, toiling for the future, occupied with hopes and fears. Surely that truth, accepted though it be, does not

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govern him—it does not influence or control his conduct; it is distinctly unfruitful. If, on the other hand, the truth were received in faith, it would alter every natural taste and pursuit, and would support one in the power of itself as of God; but when it is not so, the very blessedness of itself is lost and unknown, because it is in the doing that the blessing is secured. It is not the extent in knowledge of the truth, but if the truth does not lead, something of nature comes in to set it aside; and in some way or other the truth is limited or qualified. If one is not transformed by the renewing of the mind (Rom. xii. 2), there will be no power “to prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

It is sad and fearful how small a thing, when allowed to take the lead in one's mind, will choke the accepted truth, and it is the cares of this life which chiefly are the thorns; indeed they head the list, for it is that for which every one makes a ready and plausible excuse that we most need to

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 121

be on our guard against. Abraham's father delays his entrance into Canaan, but it is the famine—the cares of this life—which, taking the lead in his mind, causes him to leave Canaan for Egypt. How easily might he plead his duty, and the needs of his family for this step! The simple fact was that the cares—the thorns—ruled him, and choked for a season the word of the Lord in his soul. Lot might have pleaded the same excuse for his more aggravated course, when he chose the well-watered plain. His desire to do well for himself and his family choked the word, O how grievously! and it brought forth no fruit to perfection. After the same manner, Jacob settles at Shalem. (Gen. xxxiii.) He does not deliberately intend to decline from the word of the Lord; but care for the present, care for his family, rules for the moment, and the power of the word is lost to him—he misses the blessing of the “doer.” Saints are ready enough to allow that riches and pleasures choke the word, but they too often forget that

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the cares, which they so readily excuse, are the worst and most prejudicial of thorns; and that occupation with them is one of the great evidences that we are not walking here with a single eye. (See Luke xi. 34.) There we see that the effect of a single eye is, that the whole body is full of light, and there is no fear (chap. xii.) of "those who kill the body"—no "thought for what we shall eat or what we shall drink;" neither is there a "doubtful mind."

When I begin to think of myself, as Mark did at Perga (Acts xiii. 13), then the word has lost its power, and I am disqualified and out of course, because another thing sways me, and not the word of the Lord. (See Acts xv. 38.) Satan's object is to distract, and this he can do more effectually through things right in their place, such as care and provision for one's family, than through things in any degree exceptionable. Hence, the scripture says, "Be content with such things as ye have, for I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Many a true servant of the Lord, like

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 123

the seven, in John xxi., have gone a fishing because they have lost the Lord's presence; whereas, if He had been present, they would have been in subjection to His word, into which He subsequently leads them, having first made two things clear to them; one, that with all their toiling they had not bettered their circumstances; and the other, that He had made provision for them. The fire was on the shore, and the bread and fish laid thereon. I do not for a moment adduce this to give sanction for idleness, or the abandonment of one's natural calling or business. I believe working with one's hands is often the most blessed help to the servant in many ways; but I adduce it to shew, that even apostles may, through earthly considerations, lose the rule and guidance of God's word, and forego the higher claims of Christ's service, while cares pre-occupy them. I believe that if one, truly and from the Lord, accepted the end of the first man in judgment, in the cross of Him who is now glorified in heaven, that one could not but, as called of Him,

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be for Him here, as united to Him where He is; and hence, glad to steer as clear as possible of the distractions of the scene, happy to take the lowest place in poverty, if need be, so that His interests might fully and entirely occupy one.

I can make no excuse for cares taking the place of the word of Christ in the soul. If a man have a family, he is bound to provide for them food and raiment; and if he has not means, he must work for it, if not called of the Lord to give himself exclusively to His service. If he be, the Lord will surely take good care of him and of his family. But if it be to better his small means, or to advance his family, then, according to the grace given, and trust reposed in him, so will there be with him, like David in Ziklag, bitter sorrow and disappointment, and no success in the thing desired. All turns on the word and light conferred; and if it be not effectual, it is because of thorns; but when the word rules, the heart will rejoice in the Lord, and the "doer" of it be consciously blessed in his deed.

## TESTIMONY.

WE have to be Christ's in a world that has rejected Him, and be the expression of that, one tittle of which is not in the world. We are called to run towards Him in glory. If we have not got the consciousness that Christ is there, that He is in us, and we in Him, we have not got into our true condition as Christians here; for the effect of the Comforter dwelling in us is that we have the consciousness of Christ being in us and we in Him. All responsibility flows from this. I have never got into a christian condition in which to go through this world, until I see my place as seated in Christ in heaven, and indwelt by the Holy Ghost on earth. The responsibility consequent on such a position is that I should in everything manifest the character of *God Himself*. You may say, "How *can* I shew the character of God?" What was Christ? Was not He the manifestation of God? And we are told to walk as He walked. It is in Him as man that the nature we are to imitate is presented to us,



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as it ought to be developed in us here below.

In the life of Christ here, we see God manifest in the flesh. He was moved in His conduct to others by the motives that characterize God Himself. Are we always bearing about the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be manifest in our body? Are our hearts really set upon being *nothing* that Christ may be *everything*? God has given us an object in which He manifests Himself, and which is the object of His own delight, in order to attract and lead on our hearts to Him.

We do not go back to Gilgal, to the circumcision of the cross. We do not keep the cross applied to everything in and around us, and so the flesh springs up, and when it does it hides God. While down here, we have to bear about the dying of Jesus. If we go down with the stream, we may find it is what we like, but it is *not Christ*, and not what suits Him. The Lord give us to have Christ so dear to us that His image may be stamped upon us as we walk through this world.

## THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE.

I SEE a Man at God's right hand,  
Upon the throne of God,  
And there in seven-fold light I see  
The seven-fold sprinkled blood.  
I look upon that glorious Man,  
On that blood-sprinkled throne;  
I know that He sits there for me,  
That glory is my own.

The heart of God flows forth in love,  
A deep eternal stream;  
Through that beloved Son it flows  
To me as unto Him.  
And, looking on His face, I know—  
Weak, worthless, though I be—  
How deep, how measureless, how sweet,  
That love of God to me.

How deep, how full, the joy of Him  
Who sits upon the throne!  
The joy, the gladness of His heart,  
In calling me His own.  
And He has sent me forth to tell  
Of all that joy above,  
The glories where in Him I dwell,  
The greatness of His love.

Not of the joy His ransomed know  
Within that bright abode,  
But, all *His* heart's desire fulfilled,  
The endless joy of God.

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The joy with which the righteous One  
Can call, with hands outspread,  
And welcome to His heart of love  
The lost, the vile, the dead.

The Lord who sits upon the throne  
With them His joy will share,  
And there the sprinkled blood appears  
That He may set them there.  
From drear dark places of the earth,  
*From depths of sin and shame,*  
He takes the vessels for His grace,  
A people for His name.

"To-day with me in Paradise,"  
He needs that wondrous span  
To shew the love that could not rest  
Short of His heaven for man.  
And when in glory of His own  
He shews the spotless Bride,  
Aloud the songs of heaven declare  
God's heart is satisfied.

1869.

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What a relief, to one who has learnt in the presence of God what nature is, to know that it is judged, set aside, in the cross! It is thus alone that one can seek to be apart from it practically now.

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The young ruler was told to go and sell all that he had, and *then* "take up the cross and follow me." Christ wanted fellowship, not patronage.

A

GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST.

It is in the Epistle to the Ephesians that we have the fullest unfolding of the privileges of the saint, and of the Church of God; the highest relationship with the Father and with Christ, and the walk formed on it—to be “followers of God as dear children;” and yet it is here that we are especially in conflict, especially called to take the “whole armour of God.” It is in the measure that we realize our position and privileges, that we shall realize our conflict, at least, conflict of this kind—not with flesh, but with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. Christ has ascended on high, led captivity captive, thoroughly taken us out of Satan’s hand, to make us vessels of His glory in this world; and this is the very thing that brings us into this conflict. If I stand in the place of privilege in association with Christ (the true place of every Christian though not always realized), if I have got hold of my place in glory, I must expect con-

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flict. I cannot cross the Jordan without finding the Canaanite, Jebusite, and Perizzite in the land. The wilderness was not Canaan. There were temptations and snares in the wilderness—exercises of heart and discoveries of what is in the heart (see Deut. viii. 2), which we all know more or less of. But when I cross Jordan, I get into the place of privilege, and therefore into the place of conflict. Many Christians are content to remain in Egypt, and have to think of the blood on the door post shielding them from the destroyer. Some, again, are at the Red Sea, knowing the fulness of redemption, rejoicing that the waters of judgment which have flowed over the Egyptians, have saved them. But do you believe in a God who has placed a Man in glory, in consequence of His having perfectly glorified God about sin? In resurrection I am entirely out of Egypt, and I believe in a God who has raised Christ. Raising Him, and setting Him at His right hand, was God putting His seal upon what Christ has done about sin on the cross; therefore, if I

## A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST. 131

know Him there, I know that all is completely settled between me and God.

In the wilderness we have exercises of heart, we are tried and tested, we prove God ever faithful; He suffers not our foot to swell, feeds us with manna, and brings forth water from the rock of flint. But on the other side of Jordan, we feed on the old corn of the land, not the manna of the wilderness. Canaan is the place of our actual life;—a place ours in spirit now, and to be so fully hereafter. Christ is passed there (into the heavens), and is at the right hand of God, and we have certain assurance of our place there in Him. He sets us there; but we have to wrestle. Christ is expecting till *His* enemies be made His footstool, and while we are sure of our place where He is, He exhorts us to fight; because that very place puts us in conflict with spiritual foes. If we know Jordan as death, we must not forget that what characterizes Canaan is fighting, for the Canaanite is in the land.

As soon as Joshua comes into the

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land, he meets a man with a drawn sword in his hand, who came as "Captain of the Lord's host." The redeemed people are so completely the Lord's host, that He uses them against His enemies. They fight the Lord's battles; but flesh cannot contend in this warfare; if there is an Achan in the camp, there is no power. It is only as really and practically dead that you can fight. Paul does not only say, "reckon yourselves dead;" but when it is a question of serving, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our body." All that was of Paul was completely kept down. A dead and risen man, what has he to do with the world? But it is not only to be dead and risen. Israel had not only to cross Jordan, but, having crossed it, they must be circumcised; that is, the practical putting off of the flesh. There was no circumcision in the wilderness. True, they had to drink the water of death, the bitter water of Marah, after having crossed the Red Sea; but as soon

**A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST. 133**

as Jordan is crossed, "Now (says the Lord) I will give you the old corn of the land." You shall feed on a heavenly Christ, the new life, but you must know the cross—circumcision. Then the reproach of Egypt is rolled away. Practically dead, we become witnesses in the world of what the heavenly Christ is. Now, then, it is, "Put on the whole armour of God." You cannot go through in your own strength: Satan will try to entice you. There is in this day infidelity, superstition, great form of piety without the power—these are some of his "wiles." We must meet it all in complete armour; if we do, we shall be able to go on serving Christ, and manifesting Him in all our ways.

Now let us see what this armour is: "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth." The parts of the armour first mentioned are subjective; that is, relating to the state or condition of our own souls. This must come first. There can be no divine activity till the soul is perfectly in order; no divine activity until God is active in us.



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“Loins girt about with truth,” order and courage, the power of truth, applied to everything that passes in the heart; not only the detection of evil, but the application of truth. “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.” The truth came into the world—that was Christ Himself. He exposed what was earthly, and shewed what was heavenly; and by the light of heaven revealed everything. He came as a man; not in glory to crush, but bringing all that was divine and heavenly, and thus bringing man right into contact with what God was, and revealing all that was contrary to God. Now we have the truth in the revelation; the word of God discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart when effectually applied. These are the girded loins—the garments not trailing in the mud of this world, but tucked up, ready for service. Whether it be to meet Satan, to help a poor sinner, or to serve in the Church of God, *the first thing of all is, for the heart to be completely tested by and subject to the heavenly word.*

**A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST. 135**

In this revelation of Christ, I get the judgment of all that is in me, and the revelation of all that is of God; and when I take the things of God, founded upon the judgment of all that is in me, and the revelation of the blessedness that is in Christ, then my loins are girded; my soul is in a healthy state; not looking back at self, but occupied with Christ, the Spirit taking the things of God and shewing them unto me; and I find myself naturally in a path which is the condition and effect of truth. I walk according to Christ, because my heart is according to Christ; the affections and spiritual judgment are right. This is the breastplate of righteousness. It is not righteousness with God. I do not want the armour with God, but against Satan. I must have practical righteousness to do with Satan. If I have a good conscience, I shall be bold. If I have the breastplate of righteousness, my soul and walk are all right. I have the condition of soul tested by the revelation of Christ, as truth in me. Satan has nothing to get hold of, and I

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pass on with the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. How precious! What a blessed condition! Not selfishness maintaining its rights, but the soul having got its own portion, self-will subdued, meek and lowly in heart, goes on in the power that carries peace, because it has peace within. Its spirit and character is peace, as Christ's was here. Peace was His state; and in His path through the world He carried peace. It is true, that the fruits of righteousness in Him called forth hatred and opposition; but He was the peaceful man, no restlessness; He carried peace with Him, and went on untouched by all against Him.

Next is the shield of faith. Now, having all subjectively right, I need not think of myself, I can think of God. It is quite right to judge oneself; but to judge the existence of the evil nature does not give a bad conscience. If I have failed, it is right to confess it; we are called to confess our sins, not our sin. To confess sins is the confession that we have failed to keep the sin, the

## A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST. 137

flesh, down. But I must have my eye on God; have entire confidence in Him. If I walk in the light, I shall have this blessed confidence. There Satan can do nothing. He may shoot his arrows from his lurking-place, but he cannot break through the shield of faith. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." This is what Christ did. He spiritually overcame Satan. Flesh cannot resist, nature cannot resist; but faith can. Faith looks to Christ, and the dart of Satan can never get through the shield of faith. When resisted, Satan knows that he has met Christ, and flees. It is not a question of power in us, but of being superior to everything through faith in God. Christ has come and has broken the whole power of Satan. He was crucified in weakness. What so weak as death? and yet it was the power of God unto salvation. What so foolish as the cross to man? But yet it was the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Satan is subtle, and a great deal more clever than we are, and therefore you see wise and learned men

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## 138     A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

given up to such follies; but you forget Satan is behind it all. Weak we are indeed; but God's truth Satan cannot touch; and wherever there is a simple soul that has got Christ, he has got everything. He may not be able to tell much about the fathers, or about anything learned; but he has Christ, and the whole world will not be able to persuade him out of that; the shield of faith is up and the darts cannot get in.

The helmet of salvation. One who has on the helmet of salvation has full confidence; a blessed certainty; he can hold his head up, so to speak; he is in Christ and with Christ; and now there is activity and confidence in God for the path. His place is a settled one in Christ. Truth is in the inward parts. Godliness in the walk, peace in the world, confidence in God, salvation covering him, going on to glory. He is "a man in Christ." All is settled as to the practical effect, and now comes activity. The defensive armour all comes first: unless I get hold of that, there will be activity without knowing

## A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST. 139

myself, and sad falls will be the result; but having that, sheltered and shielded by it from all the attacks of Satan, I can set about and fight.

“Take the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.” Self-judged, I can now take the word of God, and use it. We do not always look to see whether we are walking in the condition of power, with nothing between us and God, so that God can be for us in the conflict. When there is an Achan in the camp He cannot. In order to be active, the first great thing is to be completely right with the Lord, and go out from God’s presence equipped with that which God’s presence gives, be it for public or for private service. “Herein do I exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence.” The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; the power of service is inward strength with God. I may not see blessing, but I have confidence in God; I am not amazed, not distracted by half a dozen judgments; I have the secret of the Lord.

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“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.” The word of God and prayer are two things running through the whole of christian life, since Mary of Bethany sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word. Half the battle is carried on with God in prayer. When Peter ought to have been praying, he was sleeping, so when he went out he cursed and swore that he knew not the man. The blessed Lord, when the prince of this world came to Him (Luke xxii. 44), was “praying more earnestly,” and He witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate. Power is not in fussing and activity. We cannot be calm unless God be with us, and for God to be with us, we must be with God.

“Watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” Wonderful as it may seem, God has, in His goodness, given us to be associated with His interests in service. Does my heart yearn after a poor sinner, or does it watch earnestly that every saint should represent God more fully? It is because

**A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST. 141**

He has given me to have part in His own desires. The heart of Christ knows all this more fully and perfectly. We must go to God about it with all perseverance and supplication. It is the same word used here of the saints, as is used of the Lord's prayer in Gethsemane; the heart craving earnestly, and addressing itself to God, yet bowed in will, as the blessed Lord's was, accepting the cup. It is the expression of entire dependence, not simply asking God about things; but God in everything, and the soul going out to Him about everything. This is to be in the interests of God, and to carry on everything in the power of God. What a place of blessing! He has taken us out of the hand of Satan, and given us common interests with Himself; and my heart's desire is for Him to be glorified in the hearts of His people. Weak and feeble as we are in ourselves, we have the power of God. We are the "Lord's host" against Satan, but we need the whole armour. There is no place for dependence like the forefront of the battle; be assured of this,



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the more you are there, the more you will need the *whole* armour, because the more testimony there to God's mind. If you lag behind you will not be in the same danger. But if you have fewer snares and dangers, you will have less strength. If we are witnesses, we must expect snares; but they will only increase our dependence and therefore increase our strength.

Does all you pass through in the day turn to prayer? not by and by, but at the *moment*? I have to maintain Christ's name, His word, and His testimony. All I meet with I have to turn into supplication; and mark the test! "*for all saints.*" Can I intercede for others? Nothing so tests the heart as this. If the conscience is not right, I must think of myself, judge myself, pray for myself, and it is right that I should; but it stops intercession for others. I must be walking with God, not only outwardly but inwardly, in order to take up His service and interests, and so be in continuous intercession for His people in the world.

A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST. 143

This, then, is the whole armour of God, which we have to keep on while here, founded upon peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Our place is consequent on redemption. Difficulties, snares, there will be; but I have got Christ; He is dwelling in my heart. In entire dependence, I can reckon on Him in blessed confidence, until He shall come to receive us unto Himself.

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There is no such thing as a distinction between the gospel of grace and the gospel of glory. *Grace and glory go together.* Righteousness has been established in the death of Christ, has been expressed in His resurrection from the dead, and the Holy Ghost has come down in answer to His person and His work to connect us with Christ in glory. It is from that glory every ray of light has come, and it is with that glory every soul enlightened by such light is linked.

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The man Christ Jesus is now in heaven, that is in His *place*; and He is in *glory*, that is His *condition*. I am seated in heavenly places in Him, and I am united to Him in glory. The one is my highest position; the other my highest condition, according to God. The glory is the finish of the grace.

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

### THINGS REVEALED, ONCE CONCEALED.

“It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.” (Prov. xxv. 2.) Thus spake Solomon, for God reveals, and man learns. The revealer can select his own time for the revelation: till then what he knows is kept concealed. The learner searches out a matter to increase his store of acquired knowledge. How these words (the last clause especially) became themselves an illustration of the truth they set forth, in a way Solomon never surely thought of! for, uttered by him before Israel was separated from Judah, they were probably, with what follows them, not incorporated with the Book of Proverbs, till Israel had ceased to be a distinct kingdom on earth. They were “copied out by the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah.” It was to that king’s honour to search out all that he could of the sayings of the wisest of men replete with divine wisdom, which God till then

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 145

had not allowed to form part of this book.

But the former clause of the verse receives a fuller illustration when we turn to other parts of scripture, and observe how God has concealed things from man, till the right moment arrived to reveal them. Centuries rolled by before He placed in the hands of His people the first written portion of the volume of the book. During fifteen hundred years subsequent to that epoch, the Spirit of God, from time to time, added to the sacred volume, till at the death of John the evangelist and apostle, the pen of inspiration was laid aside, the range of God's revelation to His Church being by that time complete. Commencing in Genesis with the record of the old creation, it carries us on to the new creation of all things, an outline of God's dealings with man and the earth in time, which divides the eternity of the past from the eternity of the future. But as it speaks a little of the eternity of the future, so does it of the eternity of the past. Yet we must penetrate far into

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the book, and read almost to its close, ere we gather up all we are permitted to collect of what took place near the beginning. God reveals things to man, but each in his season.

The history of the creation is an example of this. To learn about it, we naturally turn to the beginning of Genesis, where we find it the special subject of revelation. But all is not told us at once, for we must turn to Job xxxviii. 7 to learn whether any created intelligences witnessed the fastening of the foundations of the earth. To rebuke Job, who was speaking of things he knew not, the Lord mentions the morning stars singing together, and all the sons of God shouting for joy, as they beheld almighty power dealing with this our earth. How then should Job, whose existence, compared with these, was so limited, and his knowledge so scanty, presume to sit in judgment on the actions and motives of his Creator?

Far distant as this takes us back, we can travel in thought to a period still more remote, when we hearken to Wis-

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 147

dom's voice, persuading men to give ear to her teaching, as one fully competent to instruct them. (Prov. viii.) In presenting as it were her credentials in proof of the claims she asserted, she tells us, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old. When he prepared the heavens I was there," &c. In Genesis neither of these matters is stated. God brought them out when needed, the truth in season for men. Do we not feel, as we gather up these notices of creation, that all has not yet been told us that God knows about it? We know something, but only what He has revealed; and His manner of relating it suggests to the heart, that, were it requisite, He could tell us yet more. It is the full treasury of knowledge dealing out at times a little of its store.

If we turn to the Epistle of Jude, we are furnished with a few more illustrations of God's concealing a matter, till the time arrives to declare it, as we read of the sin of the fallen angels, and the contention of Michael the archangel

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with the devil, and peruse the prophecy of Enoch, the seventh from Adam.

In 2 Peter ii. we are told that punishment awaits the fallen angels; for the sure punishment of sins is the subject there in hand. In Jude we learn what their sin was—"Kept not their first estate." But why is their existence kept a secret till so late in the world's history? Why is it that what happened, we believe, before man was created is not disclosed till after atonement has been made? The character of their sin is similar to that of apostate christendom. They left their first estate. Men in the latter days will despise dominion. Both cast off the position of subjection in which God has placed them. Now this evil, having been introduced in the days of Jude, the Spirit by him warns souls of it. The evil then was germinating through the introduction privily of ungodly men to the assembly of believers, who turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denied the only lord (despot)\* and our Lord Jesus

\* "God" is omitted by the best MSS. and textual critics.

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 149

Christ. Great is the sin of these men; but if earth has been a stranger to such daring wickedness, heaven witnessed something similar, when the fallen angels forsook the place God had originally assigned them. So their history is referred to as a warning to souls now.

But if the character of their sin finds a parallel in that of the fallen angels, their presumption, their arrogance, stand rebuked by the conduct of Michael the archangel. Here we are introduced to a contention between him and the devil, which took place, not like the previous event before Adam was created, but, though man was unconscious of it, after Israel had been called out to be the Lord's peculiar people. These men would speak evil of dignities. Michael the archangel would not allow himself to bring a railing accusation against a dignity, even though it was a fallen one—the devil. He would maintain the authority of the Lord. "The Lord rebuke thee." That was the Lord's, not Michael's part.



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They would shut God out of the world, and act in a manner the archangel would shrink from.

Privily had these men entered in amongst believers, deceiving the saints as to their real character, though they could not deceive the Lord. He saw them, described them, and had even foretold their latter end by His servant Enoch. If we turn to the inspired biography in Genesis we read nothing of his prophecy, and should not have gathered from it that he had ever been used as a prophet. Jude however discloses this fact, and gives us the very terms of his prediction; so we read what men before the flood heard and knew, we can listen to language with which some of them may have been familiar. As long as God was dealing with Israel as a distinct people apart from others, the Gentiles were not brought into view generally speaking, except as they were connected with the people of Israel. But now that God will deal with the whole world, and pour out His wrath upon the ungodly, the prophecy of

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 151

Enoch again has its place amongst the revelations He has made, and for the first time is recorded in the volume of His word. It was truth in season for souls in Jude's day ; so, though in existence for more than three thousand years, it was not brought forward, after the flood, till the time for its use as a warning of coming events had arrived.

How simply are these revelations of the past unfolded to us ! They come not as discoveries just made by the writer, but as facts which God had never forgotten.

These examples of God concealing matters till the revelation of them would profit men, might well speak to man's heart and make him pause ere he sat in judgment on his Maker, questioning whether he is as fully informed of all he needs to know as he ought to be, if the actions and character of the Lord are to be judged at the bar of human opinion. How limited is his knowledge of what had taken place before Adam walked in the garden ! How ignorant too is he of what may be taking place

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around him, between spirits invisible to mortal eyes, and impalpable to mortal sense! Who of the children of Israel witnessed that dispute Jude alone speaks of? Who of them was cognizant of its taking place? And how ignorant too man may be of what has happened on earth in bygone ages! as this prophecy of Enoch, recovered by God after the lapse of so many years, strikingly testifies. Reading these notices of the past, man should surely feel there is a history known to God and other created beings of which we know little, and there may be a history of the present some day to be learnt, of which we know nothing. How well then, with these glimpses of what has been before us, to be humble and teachable about the ways of God, instead of proudly judging the omniscient Creator!

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Christ *felt* every circumstance He passed through down here, and that far more acutely than we could; but He was governed by none.

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## ANSWER TO A CORRESPONDENT.

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“IS THE GLORY IN ME, OR AM I IN  
THE GLORY?”

CHRIST is in glory, that is our link to glory. He is there, and we are not there personally, but we are united to Him, *where He is*, by the Holy Ghost; and hence, He in us is the hope of glory.

“Glorify thy Son”—“Received up into glory”—“Glorified his Son Jesus Christ”—are testimonies enough to the fact that Christ is glorified, which no saint would deny; but if He be glorified, and if I am united to Him, I am united to Him where He is; and this is by the Spirit of God. When He appears, I shall appear with Him in glory.

Now, as I see Him in glory, I am transformed into the same image as He *is there*, not as He *was here* merely, though my walk practically would be a reproduction of what His was.

When the Lord says, on the going out of Judas, “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall

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glorify him immediately or straightway" (John xiii.), He presents to us the new state of man, before God, because of His suffering and death. The Son of man is glorified; God glorified in Him, and hence He straightway is glorified. The man here—the first Adam—even in God's chosen people had preferred the glory from men to the glory from God. (John xii. 43.) And the blessed One had found, after thirty-three years' sojourn among men here, that there was no possibility of raising any to His own unique condition as man before God, unless He died; unless He, in Himself, bore the judgment resting on the life of the first Adam. (John xii. 24.)

Now, if He must die in order to reinstate man before God, it is plain that the life for which He dies cannot be any longer tolerated. Hence, in verse 25, as a parenthesis, He adds, "he that loveth his life shall lose it, but he that hateth his life," &c. The life of the first Adam is no longer to be cherished; but, on the contrary, as a mere existence morally, it is to be hated,

## ANSWER TO A CORRESPONDENT. 155

Hence, not only am I freed from the old man (*ο παλαιος ανθρωπος*) in the cross of Christ (Rom. vi.); but I am thankful to be delivered from the body of this death. (Rom. vii.)

Well, then, here I am on all sides surrounded by the first man; but I am a new creature in Christ Jesus, who is not here, but who is in glory. The man who glorified God here is in the glory of God. And I am, through the grace of God, by the Spirit, united to that blessed One *where He is*; and through the self-same Spirit I am instructed in the things ("the fatted calf") which God hath prepared for them who love Him. He *reveals* them to me by His Spirit; consequently, when Christ was definitely rejected from the earth, in the end of Acts vii., then the present action of the Holy Ghost is declared or inaugurated. Stephen, "being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus." The Spirit finds Jesus for him and connects him with Jesus in glory: the first time any one was able to survey

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the glory without any shrinking from it, or fear. And why? Because Jesus is the link to it, and the saint here is linked to Him there by the Holy Ghost. And this is the only true place for the saint now.

But, Christ being rejected from the earth, the grace of God abounds; and it is not only as Philip says (Acts viii. 33), "His life was taken from the earth," which is tantamount to this—your Saviour has no life connected with earth; that is, He is not *here*. But *where He is*, is not added. That link, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus supplies. Jesus *in the glory* is revealed to the chief of sinners. In the case of Stephen, the Holy Ghost had connected the saint with the man in glory; but now the grace of God reveals His Son in glory to the chief of sinners.

Man—the first Adam in his state and condition—was repelled by the glory of God. It demanded righteousness, and he had none. Now that the Son of man is glorified, it is the ministry of righteousness, and the ministry of the Spirit: every room of the glory is thrown

## ANSWER TO A CORRESPONDENT. 157

open to us. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; and instead of the glory repelling, it now claims us as its own, and transforms us into the image of the glorified Man there.

As to position, we are quickened together with Him, and raised up together, and made to sit together in Christ in heavenly places, which is our proper home, and *where* our life is. Hence it is, "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." I am here still to carry about in my body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in my body. I am to live on earth Christ, the *heavenly* Man, who is not here. In the millenium the saint will live as an *earthly* man under Christ, who will then reign here. And this latter is the snare, and tendency of the saints in the present day. If I am connected with a man in glory—the Son of God—I must retire from everything of the man here, for whom He was crucified; and hence, the more I live in union with Christ



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*glorified*, the more am I here conversant in walk and way with Christ *crucified*. If I am brought to God (see Epistle to the Romans), it is the resurrection of Christ which is the grand point presented. If it is a question of my walk here, as in 1 Corinthians, it is Christ crucified," ending in chapter xv. with my resurrection.

The sense to my soul of being able to follow Christ into the glory, and see Him there, by the Spirit, is distinct from being seated in Him in heavenly places. In the former I get a full, unqualified, unbounded sense of my acceptance and suitability in nature to God; in the latter it is more the sense of my exalted position. Seated in Christ in heaven is the highest thing for me; united to Christ in glory, and knowing it, imparts to me the fullest and most perfect sense of God's satisfaction respecting me. His grace raises me to this high position, where the riches of the glory of His inheritance is made known to me, and of which the Holy Ghost who unites me

“HE IS NOT HERE.” 159

to Christ is the earnest. Grace all the work shall crown. The glory of His grace is all He does for us as His heart desires; the riches of His grace is what He does for us, as we need it. He does more than our need demands. He does according to His own will.

The answer to your question is—I am united to Christ in glory, by the Spirit, and *as* I am occupied with Him, I am transformed into the same image as He is there; so that I am in glory with Him by the Spirit, and the power of His glory is in me through the Spirit.

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“HE IS NOT HERE.”

“He is not here!” Ah no! I seek in vain,  
Mid fairest scenes of earth, my heart’s delight;  
“He is not here!” else would those scenes remain  
Unscathed by aught that speaks decay or  
blight.

Death like a shadow rests on all below,  
E’en brightest landscape wears a tint of woe.

“He is not here!” the One my heart loves best.  
Then can I join the giddy thoughtless throng,  
Who, heedless of His absence, careless rest,  
Or fête that absence with gay mirth and song?  
No! He is gone! and not the brightest ray  
Can gild the scene to *me* while He’s away.

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"He is not here!" Oppression, anguish, strife,  
On every side, with solemn voice declare  
Him here no more, the Lord of grace and life.  
How can I then but garb of mourning wear?  
They call me absent;—well, perhaps they may;  
I'm listening for His voice while He's away.

'He is not here!' I want Him every hour;  
My soul would weary of His long delay,  
Save that, like perfume from a hidden flower,  
The fragrance of His spices cheers the way;  
Yet fills my heart with more desire to prove  
The fulness of thy presence, Lord above!

"He is not here!" but oh! He's gone above,  
The earth-rejected One has found His place.  
The Paraclete, His messenger of love,  
Witness alike of power divine and grace,  
The Guide unto all truth, is given,  
To speak of Him whom now we know in heaven.

"He is not here!" but where His steps have been  
We tread. Our home's with Him, our living  
Head,  
In yon bright realms, whose floods of glorious sheen  
On lowliest path of faith their lustre shed;  
Tracing with golden threads our way below,  
Till, in full blaze of light, as known we know.

"He is not here!" He's risen, and soon shall call  
His Bride, His undefiled one, to the skies.  
Then in full splendour reign as Lord of all,  
Where now, alas! He's hated and despised.  
Swell, swell the strain! bow down the head! adore!  
The CRUCIFIED shall reign for evermore.

## THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE.

It is distinctly said by our Lord, to the eleven, in John xv., "And ye shall bear witness, for ye have been with me from the beginning." These words imply the importance, with regard to their testimony and calling, of the fact of their having been with Him from the beginning. And this is confirmed by Peter's words in Acts: "It is necessary therefore that of the men who have assembled with us, all the time, that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day in which he was taken up from us, one of these should be a witness with us of his resurrection." (Acts i. 21, 22.) From this it is plain that the twelve were especially appointed to bear testimony of our Lord's course here on earth and of His resurrection. The Holy Ghost would be in a sense supplemental to their testimony, though foretold it by the Lord and expected by them as the promise of the Father, and *the power* by which they

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should testify. They were told by Him to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high; also, "He shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you;" and "he shall guide you into all truth." "Ye are they (says the Lord) that have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me." Peter says of himself, ~~that~~ he is a witness of the sufferings of Christ and of the glory that was about to follow. (1 Peter v. 7.) They never could give up their distinct calling, and we shall never understand their place of testimony, or how it differed from Paul's, unless we comprehend the definiteness of their mission.

We start then with this, that the mission of the twelve was in connection with Christ's own path here, beginning from the baptism of John, and reaching up to His resurrection and ascension. That was definitely the object and scope of their mission, their having been with Him from the beginning being distinctly

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the ground and reason of their appointment, and the great object of their mission being to set forth this blessed One, whom they had known in His path down here. They had borne Him company, had continued with Him in His temptations, and every step of that road was to furnish them with material for their high and blessed service. **They** were to bear witness of His resurrection in connection with His history and walk here on earth. They could go back and trace His steps and progress here in His earthly path; and then crown all this His course with His resurrection; for not only had they known Him here, and accompanied Him all the way in His walk here, but also after His resurrection, until He was taken up, they were those to whom He presented Himself living, after He had suffered, with many proofs, being seen by them during forty days, and speaking of the things which concern the kingdom of God. They necessarily felt that the burden of their testimony was the course of Jesus on earth—all along, to the

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erowning point, even His resurrection. He had said that the Holy Ghost was to bear witness of Him, "and ye also because ye have been with me from the beginning." And when risen and about to leave them, He commissioned them to go forth into all the world and preach the glad tidings to every creature, and after He had spoken to them, He was received up and sat on the right hand of God. His rights as the risen One (for all power was given to Him in heaven and on earth) they had to insist on, and to recount as personal eye witnesses the walk, course, and sufferings of this blessed One here. For this great and peculiar line they were empowered by the Spirit of God; and no one could occupy this line but themselves.

In the Acts and in their Epistles we gather the line and manner in which they bore this their testimony; but I would turn for a moment to the Lord's last discourse with them, before His death, as descriptive of the moral quality of their mission. In John xiii.—xvii. we get the moral nature and scope of

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their mission during His absence, as will appear more fully when we see how it unites with that of Paul. In chapter xiii. they are told to love one another in personal service, as Christ loved them; and had thus, in washing their feet, actively expressed His love. In chapter xiv. is detailed how they are sustained here, during His absence, by faith in Himself, learning His power, consoled by the presence of the Holy Ghost, and the manifestation and abiding of Himself to and with them. In chapters xv., xvi. they are seen as acting here for Him—His disciples, friends, and witnesses, the Holy Ghost reproving the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, glorifying Christ to them, and shewing them things to come. In chapter xvii. Christ's present fulness and desires for His own are detailed to them while He was with them here on earth. Now all this was embraced in their mission; hence they were to be witnesses to Him, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.



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This mission was, as we have seen, to comprehend Christ's course and sufferings on earth, until He was received up into glory; but besides this, they were empowered to testify and unfold Him ascended, and how He would be known to them, and how they would be led for Him here on earth by the Holy Ghost during His absence.

Now then, having seen what was committed to them, let us note how they fulfilled and adhered to their mission, by examining the words of the twelve in the Acts. In chapter ii. 23, Peter, after relating how "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by signs and wonders which God did by him in the midst of you, as yourselves also know; was crucified and slain," &c., he concludes, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are witnesses." He confines his remarks within these points—His course on earth, His sufferings here, and His resurrection. So also in chapter iii. 13, "The God of our fathers has glorified his servant Jesus, whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the pre-

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sence of Pilate. But ye denied the holy and righteous One, and killed the Prince of life, whom God has raised up from the dead, whereof we are witnesses." Again, Peter in chapter iv., "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead," &c., "This is the stone which was set at nought by you builders, which has become the head of the corner." Again, verse 33, "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the *resurrection* of the Lord Jesus."

Again, chapter v. 30: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things, and so also is the Holy Ghost."

In chapter viii. 1 we find they (at Jerusalem) were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. In the

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stoning of Stephen the Jews had fully rejected Christ, and sealed their own condemnation. They had refused the testimony of the twelve, and of the Holy Ghost in the person of Stephen. Still the apostles remained at Jerusalem. But when they heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent down Peter and John, who when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost, "Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." (Chap. viii. 14—17.) Here the twelve are connected with the giving of the Holy Ghost; but in chapter x. 44, while Peter was preaching the Holy Ghost fell on all which heard (Gentiles) apart from any link (such at least as laying on of hands) with the twelve. And hence Peter, while explaining to the apostles and brethren at Jerusalem, says, "Forasmuch as God gave them a like gift as he did unto us, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God?"

In chapter xii. James is put to death,

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and Peter imprisoned; in chapter xv. we get the judgment of the twelve with reference to the question whether the Gentiles should be circumcised; and in chapter xxi. the counsel of James to Paul which led to his capture by the Romans.

Now when we pass on to the writings of the twelve, we see the same line or limit observed. They never go beyond the resurrection, and the hope laid up for us in heaven, with the Holy Ghost sent down. James writes to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, and dwells on the practical effects of faith. The works enjoined are not works to reach a state, as under Moses; but those which flow from faith, and which, because of faith and patience, are able to bear the temptations which test faith until the coming of the Lord, as "the husbandman waiteth for the fruits of the earth, and hath long patience for them." James traces the course of grace in the soul when trials crop up, instead of the blessings which naturally would have been expected. If there be faith, one is strengthened by

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temptation, which only tests faith; but if not, one is drawn aside by lust. "We are a kind of firstfruits of his creatures," a new order; and the word, His declared mind, is our strength; and as we abide in it we are blessed. God's nature—love, the royal law, is manifested in us as we walk in faith; and we exhibit personal self-government by not offending in word, and have the wisdom which is from above. The existence of disputings prove that there are lusts, from which flow worldliness and discontent. The finish is, "Be ye patient, stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Patience through faith; and patience because of the coming of the Lord. All this is in keeping with the mission of the twelve; the delineation of the walk of faith till Christ comes.

Peter writes to the strangers scattered throughout Asia Minor, and leads them upward to the fruits of the resurrection of Christ; even a lively hope, and an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven. They have to hope

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to the end for the grace to be revealed at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As lively stones they are built up a spiritual house, and looked at as growing unto a temple in the Lord. They are exhorted to good works, that the Gentiles might glorify God in the day of visitation. All in connection with this scene when the Lord returns to it. They indeed are regarded as strangers and pilgrims here (as Christ was) during His absence; and their inheritance is reserved in heaven; but there is no disclosure of anything in heaven; what we get is the fruits of the resurrection of Christ, and a resuming of the link here, where it was interrupted by His rejection. When He returns, this link will be resumed (of course after a new order), and this Peter connects them with. He is the Shepherd and Bishop of souls that need Him as such in this scene. They are to be dead to sins, because He bore their sins in His own body on the tree; and they are to die in the flesh, because He was put to death in the flesh. "But the end of all things is at hand." The resurrection ensures

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the "sure mercies of David;" and "as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad, with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth on you"—finds its rest or resting-place on you. "When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away." In short, the instruction is confined to what the resurrection confers; and what the Spirit of God effects in the saint here on earth, until the appearing of Jesus (first epistle); and in the second epistle, until there be a new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

John presents to us "that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life:" thus very distinctly, though in the innermost sense, connecting us with the One who walked *here on earth*. He is the Life; and His work here, as we see

## THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE. 173

in chapter v., was with this purpose—to impart life to us. The Spirit is the power to make this good in us and reproduce His walk here in us; so that the summing up is—“That ye may KNOW that ye have eternal life.” No doubt this, in its virtues and enjoyments, carries us into the highest and deepest circles of light and glory; but still it is the Life manifested *here*, and within the limit and line of the mission of the twelve.

Jude presses contending for the faith, and the presence of the Holy Ghost. “Wherefore beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” The One who now “is able to keep us from falling, and present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,” still within the limits of the mission of the twelve.

*(Paul's mission, D.V., at another time.)*

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## THE NEW GROUND AND THE PRACTICE.

John xiii. 36—38; xiv. 1—12.

IN John xiii. the Lord sets Himself as recognizing that the door had closed on Israel. His disciples are within. He Himself is conscious of being the object of the counsels of the Father. Perfect in every action. There is no check in the flow of His thoughts—His love, the purpose of His heart. There was weakness in His own. John easily influenced, Peter full of himself, full of thoughts of his competency to stand on Jewish ground. *All* this is known to *Him*, and He is about to bring out His own thoughts of the Father's love, the love He had in His bosom at that time with regard to Peter, John, and the rest. He could not be taken aback or stopped. The state of Peter's soul could not take those thoughts in. Everything was failing here on earth—kingdom going—Israel denying Him, and He says, I have taken you up on another ground. You are associated in my heart with the

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Father, and on this ground I am acting. All the thoughts of the only begotten Son of the Father are toward this. He is going to give them *the stamp of sonship*, and He can pass on to that which is included in the love in which they are to be, in the house of the Father.

The Father of the Lord Jesus is *my* Father! The marks of the fetters of Egypt scarcely off my hands. I weary and footsore. I have the assurance of Abba's love keeping my soul above all circumstances, not only through my life here—no! that love will last in all its freshness through all dispensations.

He shews the *sort* of love it is. He had got his clue from fellowship with the Father's mind. He knew what He was about, saw the whole way from the beginning to the end. Everything has failed in man and He says, *I shall not fail—I shall have a place given me, and I shall certainly come and bring you home at the appointed time. We gather up the blessing,—what the external privileges of sons are; but we do not sufficiently rest on this grand thing*

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presented of God, that this *Person* came into the world, is Himself the revealer of the Father. His walk here was just the illustration of His fellowship with the Father, and His competency to apprehend the Father's mind. He *knew* the Father. The disciples say, We do not know where you are going, and how can we know the way? He gives Himself as the answer, "*I am the way.*" How—to our own shame be it said—we read that down, and think very little about Him! It is as much as to say, You who have followed me, who know the sort of person I am, who have seen my ways, who have heard my voice, witnessed my character, everything I want to teach you about the Father,—is presented in me. I want to bring my Father before you. Now do you know *me*? O I do believe that the children of God at the present time have a word to look at there in connection with themselves. Whether or not they have taken the character presented by the blessed Lord, that flowed forth from Him as the expression of the

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Father. How He said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life . . . . . *If ye had known me*, ye would have known my Father also. There is perfect self-possession on the part of the Lord—complete purpose of His heart to vindicate the Father's marvellous grace, in presenting in such a way, a man as the expression of Himself. His whole bearing, whatever they saw Him do, that was of the Father.

Am I a son? The ground taken of sonship is that the only-begotten Son has been rejected here. I have nothing to do with any world or place that does not know these sons of God. It will not do to have any neutral ground. You cannot stand upon earth and water—all the tide is flowing in. There was a Son down here, *personally* a Son; and I am a "son," trying to carry out His mind. This cuts off a thousand things you would do comfortably if only trying to be a good man. He had no mind but the mind of a Son of God down here. Independently of Him, we could not say to His Father what He could say

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*directly* to His Father. It is exceedingly important to bring in the *place* with the privilege, for it detects the character of what we are carrying with us as we go along. What burden am I carrying with me now? Is it only that which will amalgamate with the inheritance? It will be a pleasant retrospect to be able to say,—I was toiling and labouring; it was what came upon Him, the same in character. I did suffer with Him, and now I am reigning here. How pleasant that will look from the Father's house! But supposing I have to say,—He did drag me up through the dying embers, like Lot in Sodom. But there is my whole course all gone!

*To-day* you have been acting as a son or a daughter, or you have *not*. You have been carrying out that mind, or you have *not*. It will not do to have *one* little chamber of the heart reserved from Him. Now it is a time of great profession, and it must be a time of complete separation. When the Lord was on earth, all was going to the *sieve*—Scribes, Pharisees, and Herodians. There was but

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one spiritual mind in the scene, and that One was the touchstone of everything. The separation took place, and other ground was found for blessing.

*Much more* will the spiritual mind feel at the present time that the crisis is come, and that there is no longer any time for shilly-shallying. Every principle is called into question at the present time. The power of Satan is at work driving the vortex round, and people not knowing where they are drifting to.

Are you a son of God? Does He look down upon you with the affections of that heart pouring upon you as a son? Yes, blessed be God! Well then, are your steps down here, the marks of your feet as you go along through this scene here below, are they the *steppings of the Father's children*? It is not a question of whether I shall get into the Father's house, whether He will bring me there, drag me up as Lot out of Sodom; but *am I walking as a son*? Are you individually walking in such a way that the Father's heart can find satisfaction in you? that the Son of

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God can look down on? Are you walking as those whom, looking to Him, He ever guides? This is practice, the carrying out of God's mind in all the details down here.

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Conformity to His death, to Paul was martyrdom. Reasoning on it, he says, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus." We cannot be trusted to put ourselves to death. "Delivered unto death" is *God's* doing it; giving His helping hand to it. Paul was quasi-martyred—branded as Christ's—ready to die. How far is it so with us? How far are we *ready*? Let every one answer for himself.

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The will of God is as the force of a rushing river. To sail with it is strength; to strive against it weakness. God does not want our work; He can get that done without us; He wants our will. When we give it, we give all; when we withhold it, we give nothing.

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The sense of what it is to have to do with God, and to have flesh set aside in His presence, is a wonderful, never-to-be-forgotten moment in the history of a soul, whatever be the exigency, the trial, the bereavement by which it may be brought about.

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

### THE BODY FULL OF LIGHT—LUMINOUS.

It is a subject full of interest, how one walking through this evil world can in person be full of light, or luminous. Everyone, with any religious sense, feels it is incumbent on him to draw a line of distinction between himself and the irreligion around; and hence it is, as there is conscience, or a sense of what is due to God, so is there real separation. The fact that there must be some line of separation will not be denied by any, except a thorough worldling. If one owns God at all, there must be separation from the habits and ways of those who refuse and turn away from all religion. But it is just here the snare is. Many are contented with a separation which satisfies their own conscience, because they are led by natural religion, and not by the light which has been manifested—even our Lord Jesus Christ.

In a day like this, it is of great importance that we should clearly under-



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stand what really constitutes "a body full of light," or luminous; what is the course of conduct here which will be proof positive that we have a single eye, and that we have clearly imbibed the light which has been lighted on the earth.

In Luke xi. the Lord sets before us the truth that He is *the* light; a greater than Jonas, and a greater than Solomon. The Gentiles—the Ninevites—had repented at the preaching of Jonas, and the queen of Sheba had come from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; but "a greater than Solomon is here." The full light had come, and it was not set under a bushel, or under a bed; but all who come in should see the light. The light *had* come. "The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light." Here it is plainly stated, that if the eye be single—that is, if there be but the one object, and no mixed motive—the effect will be, that the whole body will be luminous; the body will be refulgently

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expressive of the light. Christ is the light. According as Christ simply and exclusively engages the heart, so is the body, the whole being, luminous with the manner and mind of Christ. Blessed consummation! If the eye, that which takes in the light, be not simple, then the body is not luminous; and hence we have to take heed that "the light which is in us be not darkness." The more and the greater the revelation of truth, the more grievous and painful was the departure or perversion of it by those who adopted it without a single eye, and put their own carnal interpretation on it. The truth ever was to glorify God—to express God; but while it distinctly secured the benefit of man, it did so by revealing God; and as there was a single eye at any time, this revelation was accepted, and it imparted the true light for the time to the one thus faithful. But when it was accepted without a single eye, the very light became darkness—that is, the adoption of it in a carnal way was only increased darkness, even darkness greater than if

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there had been no light. The darkness of the Jews was greater than that of the Gentiles. They had received the revelation of God, but having no single eye for it, the light became darkness.

It is a matter of grave moment, that if light be not accepted as it is (and for this there must be a single eye), then the very light becomes darkness. Every communication and manifestation of God to man, when not accepted by an eye referring it to God distinctly, was perverted by the mind of man, and became darkness. Eve, in calling her firstborn Cain, perverted light into darkness; a darkness that would not have occurred had she not been favoured with a revelation, which would have given her light if she had had a single eye—that is, a mind simply occupied with God in the matter. This is the clue to the great mistakes and confusion into which many men, well read in the scriptures, fall. They have not a single eye for the truth; they accept it in a natural way, not as light from God, which it is, and which therefore nothing but a single eye can

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take in. The simplest truth, if not taken in with a single eye, respecting God only in it, is darkness. The commandment to love one another, if accepted apart from God and holiness, is gross darkness. The unity of all Christians, if accepted without regard to the holiness of God's house, is again grievous darkness. And hence, when there is an evil eye—that is, admitting self as an object, having a mixed motive—then there cannot be a body full of light. It was even so with Noah, Abraham, and Moses. The light and truth of God, when appropriated and applied naturally, only led them into darkness, and in the very opposite line to the truth. Noah is placed in rule over everything; but he fails to rule himself, and falls into self-indulgence. Abraham, when his eye was not simply occupied with God, would have Ishmael for his heir; and Moses, while using the power and name of God at Meribah, introduces himself and dishonours God. The mind of God, the more fully communicated it be, and hence the more fitted to instruct and guide us through

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this dark world, becomes to us the greater darkness if used according to the natural mind or evil eye, as man would interpret it for himself. Hence, now that the perfect light has been set up, if there is not a single eye to take it in, the knowledge of it will only be darkness indeed. The candle of the body is the eye, that which takes in the light. If the eye be not single, light has been misunderstood and unappropriated.

The full light now has come; and if the candle of the body be simple, the body will be luminous, expressive of Christ Himself in this evil world. The effort to make the will of God subservient to man's glory has been the great and continued snare. Nothing so tests what is in a man as to demand of him to submit himself to the mind of God. The utter inability of Saul to rule for God was exposed by entrusting to him the solemn task of extirpating the Amalekites. If he had had a single eye, one occupied only with the communication and mind of God, if he had understood the mind of God in

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that solemn charge, how could he have spared Agag the king? But he lacked the single eye, and that which would have been a light to him only enveloped him in thick darkness, and led to his forfeiture of the throne of Israel. Thus with the Pharisees in the Lord's time. Their great desire and effort was to express in their walk the perfection which the law enjoined; but it proved to be darkness indeed to them, because they thought only of what man would approve and not of what would please God. It is here that the want of light is always betrayed. We see man consenting to the truth and yet unable to comprehend it. He adopts it as contributive to his own consequence or elevation; that is, there is another object in it besides God. It is taken in with an evil eye. Hence the people who accept the truth of God, without a single eye, are always the greatest opponents to the light, painful as is the fact. The amount of the good done to man must not deceive us. Saul might plead that they had destroyed all that was vile and

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refuse. The Pharisees might boast of their good conduct, and that the house was swept and garnished, but God was left out. Man is primarily considered, and hence Saul's act, with all its apparent denunciation of what was vile and refuse, was as the sin of witchcraft; and all the sweeping and garnishing of the Pharisees would end in seven devils entering in, and the last state being worse than the first. We see in John xviii., xix. that the Jews, to whom were committed the oracles of God, are more opposed to Christ, the Son of God, than the Gentiles.

The greater the light, the more will man be distanced from the will of God, if he takes in the revelation with an evil eye, that is with reference to himself, and not with reference to God, and thus the light is darkness; and if the light be owned, and at the same time be used with reference to man, the end will be, that while there may be much consideration for the poor, and great display of interest for them, there will be the greatest opposition to the

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truth, as manifested by Christ. No amount of good works, or of putting away of the vile and refuse, should beguile the faithful into the delusion that these things constitute a body full of light. Though such may and do obtain credit and acknowledgment among men, as if they were the highest and best, and though they themselves be filled with the idea that they are the most exemplary people on the earth, they will yet always be found in the greatest darkness and to be the most bitter opponents of the truth of God. There are no people in the present day so opposed to the truth of Christ being all in all as those most exemplary for charitable works and good deeds; and the only way to account for this is, that they cannot admit the full truth and at the same time pursue the great aim and the end of their works; namely, benefiting man and improving society. The more the name of Christ is connected with them (alas! it is even so), the more do they hinder the truth, and hence, that which is in itself light, when taken



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in with an evil eye—an eye for man and not God simply—is gross darkness.

And here every Christian needs to be on his guard, because there is a tendency to direct our attention to the outside appearance; and thus the true character of the light has not been appreciated. Nay, it will be found that the more fully we are in the light, while the more perfect we shall be in every detail of life, still we shall *not* be occupied with our own *appearance* (for that is not a single eye), but with Christ.

The single eye feeds on Christ; and the ~~personal~~ expression of the effect here will be, not ~~fearing~~ them that kill the body. Fearlessly occupied with the confession of Christ, we shall have no anxiety about what we shall eat, or ~~what~~ we shall drink, neither shall be of a doubtful mind—giving away present things, but providing a treasure in the heavens that faileth not. “The loins girded about and lights burning. And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and

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knocketh they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants," &c. Such is the body full of light! How beautiful, how striking the splendour of this light, when exhibited in the saints in this evil world! Now if the body be not thus full of light, there is some part dark. There is not the clear shining or blaze, as when a candle (or lamp) doth give light. Hence the word, "~~and your lights burning.~~" The lights are not burning, ~~nor is there the~~ true character of the light and the testimony maintained, unless there are these brilliant outgoings from us. Fearlessness as to those who kill the body—confession to Christ our object—ourselves overlooked even to death—so secure in God's care for us that we are as quiet and restful about the things most necessary for our existence, such as food and raiment, as the birds of the air and the flowers of the field. Present things we give away. The treasure in heaven holds our heart in its own region. We wait, as in duty bound, but also with joyful expectatio

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for our Master's knock, that we may open to Him immediately. This, I repeat, is a body full of light.

I dread the efforts I see to get a good character from the world, as if that were the end proposed for the saint on the earth. The end and aim for the saint as to the earth is to be a body full of light, intolerable to the world, but well-pleasing to God. Nay, the more one attains to be an object of reputation among men, the more one is sinking into darkness and failing to be a body full of light in the midst of this adulterous and sinful generation—an epistle of Christ—a portrait of Himself!

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When we (perhaps after long experience) practically assign to Him the place which is His before God, we are "fathers." (1 John ii. 13.)

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It is no good to look for strength before obedience. Strength is only found in the path of obedience.

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Peter got strength by learning he had none at all.

## PAUL'S MISSION.

### NO. I.

HAVING glanced in the last number at the mission of the Twelve, as delineated in the word, let us now examine the nature and scope of Paul's mission.

Acts xxii. and xxvi. present to us its elements. The former is the account of his call to the Jews; the latter to the Gentiles. But first, let us note that (as we learn from Gal. i.) there was a peculiarity in the mode of his call, which of itself gave a complexion and a distinctiveness to it. There was no instrumentality used; it was "not of men, neither by man." Its commencement was entirely divine; there was no linking, or connecting, of the one thus commissioned with any previous acting of God on earth. It came *de novo* from God.

Saul of Tarsus—recklessly doing his own will, unrelentingly opposing the chief and choicest purposes of God, persecuting the Church in the most virulent manner—is arrested by a light from

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heaven, above the brightness of the sun; that which rules here by divine appointment is eclipsed and surpassed. The revelation is direct from God, without a link with any previous dealing or way of God on earth. That had been fully preserved and provided for in the mission of the Twelve. But now, to Saul of Tarsus, there is a disclosure straight from God, out of heaven. A great light shines around him; and Jesus, whom Saul was persecuting, is revealed to him then and there, the Son of God. (Gal. i. 16.) Paul's mission dates from this manifestation. He might and did thoroughly learn the ways of God which were antecedent to this date, but his mission takes its rise from this point, when Jesus, the Son of God, in light from heaven above the brightness of the sun, appears to him. However wide was the extent or range of his mission, here, at any rate, was its beginning; and from its beginning it derived its peculiar feature, and strength too. It was from Jesus, the Son of God, in heaven. If we would know the origin and source

of Paul's mission, we cannot find the clue to it by any of God's previous ways on earth; for this, we must revert to his call. God's wondrous ways previous to his call, he undoubtedly did learn both by revelation and from the scriptures (as the book of Hebrews fully testifies); but always in keeping with his mission, in the unique and heavenly character of his call, of which all his ministry bore the stamp. How else could it be if he were true to it? Let the peculiar and heavenly nature of Paul's mission be admitted, and then it is simply a question of whether he was true to it or not; for if he be true to it, he must view everything in a heavenly way; that is, from God's side. If he did not, he would be untrue to it.

Moreover, at his call, the Lord defines to him the nature and extent of his commission in these words: "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." The things he "had

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seen," and "those in the which I will appear unto thee," comprise and define his mission. What he had seen was Jesus in the glory, apart from any and every earthly connection. Of this he was first and foremost to be a minister and a witness; and next, of what the same blessed One should, in time to come, appear unto him.

Hence, with regard to the gospel, Paul can say of himself, "In me first." (1 Tim. i. 16.) No one had ever yet been instructed in the fulness of God's acceptance of a sinner as he was. There had been no gradual opening out to Paul's soul of the greatness and goodness of God's grace; but in a moment, all its transcendent blessedness, in full force, fell on him, who, up to that very moment, was utterly benighted, and unconscious even of the need of it. Everything therefore was of a new and divine order, and as it is with God and from Him, it is irrespective of what man is. Nearness or distance is not taken into account. The full unfolding of what God can do,

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for a sinner, is presented in this wonderful way to the chief of sinners — chief in opposing above all men the will of God. It was indeed the day-spring from on high visiting man, to make its own mark on him, even as he says, “to reveal his Son in me.” This, as I have said, is the origin of Paul’s mission, and with its origin the whole of it must be in keeping. Every development must necessarily bear, not only traces of its origin, but be a fuller unfolding of the nature of that origin, which gives it its character and value. Now, every point of truth presented or taught by Paul unequivocally bears this stamp. From God’s side, from a heavenly point of view, he sees everything. It is not that he does not descend to the minutest point on man’s side; but he treats of it as it appears in the sight of God, and as His grace provides for it. Heretofore every revelation of God had been among men and through men; and the action of the Holy Ghost was to lead man up to His mind; but now a new thing is disclosed,



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a new era is entered on, and God's own satisfaction in Christ is disclosed to Saul of Tarsus; for Jesus, risen to His own right hand, is the model, and summing up of all His pleasure and glory. The only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father had declared Him here on earth. The twelve had borne witness of Him with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; but now, this blessed One having been refused a place on earth, when He is able and ready to come forth, in full grace, to bless Israel in all the sure mercies of David—a new era commences.

Could anything be more painful or terrible than that He, having secured all blessing for His own, should be openly and determinedly refused and rejected? Yet it was even so; and Saul of Tarsus is now chosen of God to be the vessel through whom the Holy Ghost would set forth to the saints on earth the place and glories of the rejected Christ. Hence, man having sealed his condemnation on earth by rejecting God's Son, God in His grace

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calls out Paul to be, as Christ commissions him, a minister and a witness of things entirely from God's side—of things as they now are with God. Man's side has not been overlooked; far from it. Everything had been done to lead man to God. God Himself had been fully set forth in the walk of the Son here on earth. Man had proved himself unworthy on every point, and incompetent in every respect, and now God comes, in this definite way, and declares what He will make of one so unworthy and incompetent. It is God, from Himself and according to His own pleasure, forming and placing him according to the model which alone suits His heart, but in so great and magnificent a way, because of Him who is the model, that we can only worship while we trace the manner and details of this wondrous grace.

In the wrapt silence of souls astonished, and yet subject, do we study Paul's mission, where the *first* man—he who was the cause of all the death and distance—is supplanted; but where another,

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a new man, is introduced and revealed in all the brilliancy of God's eternal satisfaction—the man Christ Jesus. And as we study and gather up the lines of this great revelation, accepting the grace as we comprehend it, and though amazed at its greatness, yet rejoicing to be subjects of it, our hearts surely must exclaim, "My soul doth magnify the Lord; my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

*(To be continued, if the Lord will.)*

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Redemption rends the veil, and puts me right into the presence of God, on God's side of the cross.

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Go, and with more than angel violence, drag them out of Sodom. Tell me, Are you conscious that you carry about with you a moral dignity that can never mingle with such a world?

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The moment I turn to God, it is all melody and joy with me; I am in the element that satisfies me.

## STANDING AND WALK.

THERE are two positions in which the Christian is set before us in the word.

1st. *As in Christ.* “No condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” “If any man be in Christ he is a new creation.”

2ndly. His actual state as passing through the wilderness. Redemption is the foundation of both. Looked at as in Christ, all is perfection, “Old things are passed away,” &c. The place where God has set us is in His own presence (not yet as to the body, of course, we are now waiting for the redemption of the body); but we are united to Christ by the Holy Ghost, “Members of his body, of his flesh, of his bones.” On the other hand, we, as redeemed out of the world, have to pass through it as strangers and pilgrims. If I can say I am in Christ, my place is a perfect one. If I speak of the wilderness, I have to get through it amid difficulty and temptation. Our place in Christ is more than merely sins forgiven; sins are put

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away, but it is more than that—we are put into a new place. As a child of Adam, it is a question of simple faith in One who has borne my sin. When I come into His presence and appear before His judgment-seat, I meet the One who has put away my sins, and He must deny His own work if I am not free of all condemnation; but as a matter of experience I find sin in me; and this often distresses and perplexes the heart. When we find sin springing up, it is right to be distressed, but wrong to be perplexed. We have died with Him: this is the other side of the truth and more difficult to get hold of. If I tell a person sin is put away, his debt is paid by another, he will understand me; but if I tell him, You are *dead to sin*, and the world, and so on; No, he says, I am not; I was in a temper to-day, this is not being dead. But scripture says you *are* reckoned as much *dead* as you are forgiven, though it may be more difficult for the heart to believe it. We are to “*reckon* ourselves dead unto sin,” in spite of what we are: this gives settled

peace. Christ is become my life, and consequent on redemption I can say, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." "In me there is no good thing;" but sin and flesh were condemned on the cross. Christ died to sin. He becomes my life after He has died, therefore I can say, I died because He is my life. If Christ is my life, I am to treat the old man as dead; and here comes in holiness of walk. "How should we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" How can you live in that life which is gone? You have got your place in Christ's death, how can you be living in sin? We have died with Him—in Him "we are not in the flesh." But for the apprehension of this we must have the Spirit of God dwelling in us; this is not only to be born of God. The leper (Lev. xiv.) was first washed, then sprinkled with blood, then anointed with oil. We are washed with water by the word, sprinkled by the blood, and *after* that receive the Holy Ghost. "In that day [the day of the Holy Ghost] ye shall know that I am in the Father, ye in

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me, and I in you." I know it by the Comforter. We are in Christ before God, and He is in us before the world. Christ having died accomplished the work of redemption; He has risen again and become my life. *I am in Him*, not in the flesh; no longer a child of Adam, *Christ is in me*. My path in the world is to be an epistle of Christ. Christ is to be read in me as the ten commandments were read on the tables of stone.

We have died in and with Christ, and therefore we have deliverance from flesh, not only forgiveness of sins, and we are to deal with the flesh as with an *enemy*, and to watch against the snares of Satan. This is wilderness work. It is the knowledge of our place in Christ that gives settled peace. Many know what joy is in the sense of forgiveness, and then they find the motion of sin working and get perplexed. As regards my conscience, it is perfect rest—I am accepted in the Beloved; but in my path here, I have constant conflict—much affliction, but joy of the Holy Ghost. The same thing that gives me the consciousness of

being in Christ, sets me in conflict with the power of evil.

God quickens *unbelievers*; He *seals believers*, makes them temples of the Holy Ghost. This is the fruit of being perfectly clean. The Holy Ghost cannot dwell in us if we are not clean. In the sight of God we are as clean as the blood can make us; therefore He can dwell in us. The character of the believer now is that the Holy Ghost dwells in him. This is founded on redemption. God never dwelt in Abel, or Abraham, though it is a beautiful picture to see His condescending grace in coming down and talking with them. When Israel came out of Egypt, God said, "I will dwell among them." (See Ex. xxix. 45.) This was the consequence of being brought to God Himself. The moment too we get redemption, holiness is spoken of.

The Red Sea was redemption, and it brought them into the wilderness. In the wilderness we have to learn God, His faithfulness, and to learn ourselves—to have our senses exercised to discern good and evil. But this does



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not touch the perfectness of our place in Christ. We are brought into a place where every atom of our practical state is put to the test; but with the full, blessed certainty of God's faithfulness. To learn what I am, and what God is, is wilderness work. I am there put through a process where I learn, often in a very humbling way, that "in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth *no* good thing." But I have to trust God for all I need. This is not rest—it is rest as to conscience, but not rest as to the path; but it is God's way. Moses said, "If I have found grace in thy sight, shew me *thy* way," (Exodus xxxiii. 13) not *a* way. God has a way of His own, and but *one* way. If I know the way you are walking in, I know yourself. Thus, when I know God's way, I know God.

What is God's rest? It is not that He can be weary, but He rests when everything is according to His heart. God rested in creation because He could say, *It was very good.* When the fruits of His grace are complete, His purposes and counsels fulfilled, He will

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“rest in his love.” He rests when He has done His work completely, and the work has fully satisfied His heart, when He has made us happy enough to satisfy His heart, holy and without blame before Him in love. “He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.” Who is the happy One in Luke xv.? It is the Father! God’s joy that is brought out. When He has brought His beloved into the likeness of Christ, then He can rest, and we shall enter into His rest—perfect rest. We shall be in His presence, where the divine nature He has given us knows full, unhindered satisfaction. But on the way “He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous.” God’s eye follows our hearts in their folly and foolishness, watches over our character and ways. “He withdraweth not his eyes,” &c. Flesh is detected in me here, evil there. In the wilderness there is no food, He sends down manna; no water, the smitten rock gives it forth. Faith is thus exercised and dependence is learned. What first brought sin in was distrust of God; lust followed; and now God is leading us back in His ten-

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der, gracious way, to unbounded confidence in His unbounded love.

God uses two means for carrying us through the wilderness: the word of God and the priesthood of Christ. The word of God searches us, brings into the light whatever is within. How blessed to have the word amid all the darkness of this world, amid all the heavings and restlessness of men's minds! I get God's thoughts in the word, light from heaven, which shews me heavenly things, shews me Christ, and shews too all in me that is not heavenly—is not Christ.

The other means is the priesthood; Christ is always interceding for me. He is in the presence of God for me in order to supply mercy and grace to help in time of need. The word of God searches me according to the revelation He has given of Himself; and Christ is ever living to sustain me. What a blessed rest we shall have with God when we are completely like Him, and are in His presence, capable of enjoying Him when we enter into *His* rest!

What are we waiting for? Is it for Christ to come and receive us unto Him-

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self? Are our hearts looking for Christ? Would it give them joy to see Him? God may have much to teach us, to judge in us, but He counts them blessed who watch for His Son.

It is the time of labour now. The Lord give us to labour to enter into His rest with earnestness and purpose of heart; to be like Paul, doing *one thing*; and on the other hand, may He give us entire distrust of ourselves, but entire confidence in Him. May we have every day more and more the sense of dependence, knowing that without Him we can do *nothing*, and may He teach us to walk as dependent ones. The first thing we lose when we get away from Him is the practical sense of true dependence on Him.

The characteristics of the new man are obedience and dependence, as we see in the man Christ Jesus. "Man is to live by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Is that the way we are living? The Lord give us to walk in distrust of self; full childlike confidence in Him who has given Christ, and with Him everything.

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

### THE LEAVEN OF LAODICEA.

It is worthy of note that Peter, the one to whom was revealed the rock on which Christ builds His Church, and who there is confirmed in the name Peter, as himself material (*πετρος*), for this new and unique structure, that he, at that very time, as recorded in the same scripture (Matt. xvi. 16—24), should have given utterance to a sentiment which has done more to damage and spoil the church on earth than any other; and one which the blessed Lord at once refuses as being of *Satan*, because “savouring of the things which be of man, and not of the things which be of God.”

Christ's death on the cross closed the history of the first man before God. He, in love, and doing the will of God, accomplished righteousness, in bearing the judgment on man, and in His death ending the one before God for whom He was judged; and hence rising out from among the dead by the glory of the

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Father, He is the source and founder of a new race. This, definitely and of necessity, involved the judicial ending of the old race before God; for if a new race succeeds, and displaces the old, there is proof positive that judgment has passed on the latter, and a judgment which rested on the life. The life has been claimed in righteousness, and surrendered in judgment; and as surrendered, it can no longer be assumed, or reckoned on, or acknowledged; but this is the very thing that man in nature cannot accept. Skin for skin, all that a man hath, will he give for his life; and this leaven we find, more or less, running through the whole history of the Church.

In Corinth a place was given to the flesh. It was not crucified; it was sanctioned; and hence every variety of evil sprang up. Divisions (1 Cor. iii. 3); reigning as kings (chap. iv. 8); internal disunion; external self-satisfaction (chap. iv. 18); no sense of defilement by contact, no discipline (chap. v.); going to law one with another, before the world

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(chap. vi. 1—6); no sense publicly of their unique position (chap. vi. 9—20); eating in idols' temples (chap. viii.); profane carelessness at the Lord's table (chap. xi.); wilfulness in the use of gifts (chap. xiv.); ending with the denial of the resurrection (chap. xv. 12), which was the climax, Satan having gained control over the mind of man.

In the churches of Galatia, they, having begun in the Spirit, were seeking to be made perfect in the flesh; seeking to reform and subdue the flesh, by placing it under law; instead of maintaining that in Christ they had crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts, so henceforth were to walk in the Spirit, and not in the flesh. (Gal. iv. 9, &c.)

In Colosse there was evidently a borrowing from Judaism and philosophy, or rationalism; and there, man received a twofold exaltation—one in ordinances, or outward exercises, the other intellectually. Now we must remember that all these forms of evil germinated in connection with Christianity; so much so, that we can hardly

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be surprised to find the apostle warning Timothy when in Ephesus (2 Tim. iv.), of the direct energy of Satan in the latter days, introducing a standard of sanctity in the flesh, forbidding to marry, commanding abstinence from meats, in order to set aside and divert souls from the godliness which the presence of Christ can alone impart; and again in 1 Timothy vi., of another activity, that of counting gain godliness, anything which would raise man in the scale; and this is in fact our modern radicalism. Thus, the two lines in which the flesh works are presented in these two epistles; the religious line, and the positional line; the former exacting testimonies of self-denial, self-control, in order to prove that there is inherent virtue in the old nature; the other, to prove that self-elevation was just and suitable. These are apparently diverse activities; but both contribute to man's status in nature; they were reduced to system as we have seen in Colosse, and the progress of them comes out in 2 Timothy; the latter (the intellectual) being what the Church in



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its normal state would suffer from, and what the apostle warns them of in Acts xx.

First, there is the desertion of the truth which had been learned from Paul: "All they of Asia have turned away from me" (1 Tim. i. 15); and secondly, a turning to profane and vain babblings, saying that the resurrection is past already. (Chap. ii. 16—18.) One deserts the truth that had been accepted, and the other audaciously destroys it, thus indicating the low and irreparable state of the house of God, as to the vessels in it; consequent on this state of things, as recorded in chapter iv. they shall turn away their ears from the truth and be turned unto fables, the creations of their own imaginations, which reach their consummation in the last days (chap. iii.), when there would be a form of godliness but denying the power thereof; and when these teachers are compared to Jannes and Jambres, the magicians who resisted Moses by imitation (Exodus viii.); so do these withstand the truth, and their followers

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are described as "silly women," a class marked by effeminacy of the weakest kind, and hence ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. This is the state of things in the Laodicean times, of which we are forewarned, when the leaven had so affected the mass, that the Church, as the vessel of testimony here, is spued out of the mouth of Christ; and thus we get how the eye of Christ views things in the last days, and the message which in consequence He sends to the Church of that time. In 2 Timothy the servant is instructed how to deal with the state of things. Here (Rev. iii.) the Lord declares His own judgment of the state, and accordingly He sets forth the condition of their hearts and the self-satisfaction with which they regard their own ways. He denounces them as wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; while they said of themselves, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." It is undeniable there was very great activity, great cause for self-laudation,

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externally ; for they must have had good data for their assertion, one which the Lord quotes as their own advertisement of themselves.

The manner in which the Lord presents Himself to them is as the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God. He brings before them the line of truth, by which He is measuring them, to strengthen them if they are in it, as those in Philadelphia were ; but to convict them if they are not. The Laodicean leaven is the fullblown result of 2 Timothy iii. ; the claim of true godliness has been lost ; and while the form is specially retained the power is denied. And man by imitation supersedes the real thing so completely, that he can assert he has need of nothing ; but when this is measured by Him, who is the beginning of the creation of God, the faithful and true Witness, the One who only fully declared God, there is nothing really within or without for His eye to rest on ; there is no gold tried in the fire, no white raiment ; there is not the creation of God ; it is not the true

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thing; and with all the display and boast, there is not that which He can commend. He says, "Thou art lukewarm." He does not say there is no warmth, but a mixture of hot and cold; and the result of that mixture is, that there is a state of things highly satisfactory to the natural eye. It is, in fact, all in a human way; it is the human element which is active and which is satisfied.

I am not considering the extent of this Laodicean leaven now. I am only tracing its growth, and how we have to beware of any tendency to this state of things. We are told to put one another in remembrance of these things. We are not to suppose that because we have escaped from the delusions of Popery, we are proof against the leaven that is working all around in the Church. That leaven is Laodicean, and its test is "The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."

Now we must guard against everything assuming to be service for Christ which in any degree partakes of this leaven; and if we are walking with the

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Lord, we shall not fail to see and detect what is not in keeping with His mind. Whenever flesh is allowed a place, this heaven is assuredly working; and one cannot fail to see it in the way the senses are addressed in every popular religion. On one side the senses are addressed through genuflexion and bodily exercise; on the other, through the intellect; but in neither, is man ignored in the presence of God's Son, risen out of judgment on the first man. The national churches are notorious for the first, the dissenting more for the latter. Popery and Puseyism are the extreme of the one, independency and rationalism of the other. But where true saints are most in danger in the present day is in connection with evangelicalism, because of the blessing brought to souls through what is called *revivalism*. This is an element not easy to grapple with, but one which eventually will render the Church nauseous in the eye of Christ, and lead Him to spue it out of His mouth because not of the creation of God. It is here, I repeat, that the true hearted

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are likely to be ensnared and damaged. In all the activity in which I admit many have been converted, man is made so prominent—not in the mummeries of the ritualist, but in the specious and attractive form of sensational preaching, appeal to the feelings, &c.—that there is (in those converted under such preaching,) no sense in the soul that man as he is must be utterly repudiated. There is not real repentance. I do not deny that there is true and genuine conversion in many cases; but I think I am warranted in saying that rarely, if ever, do any under this teaching find the Church, or give up the world. Now we know that there is no true sense of being material, *πετρος*, for the structure which Christ builds, but as the soul receives from God the knowledge that Jesus is the Son of God. (See Matt. xvi. 16—18.) And this is the selfsame truth which enables one to overcome the world. (See 1 John v. 5.) The reason of this darkness is apparent. The gospel preached is simply forgiveness of sins, through faith in Jesus. Man's need is the only

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thing pressed on souls. They are not convicted of being by nature in that man which is judged before God on the cross, and they have no *real* peace: they are not clear of Egypt and the Egyptian—of all that which has been judged on the cross. The gospel presented is imperfect and one-sided, only occupied with man; and the name Jesus, which is almost exclusively used by them, indicates that they confine Him to our level, as if He imparted forgiveness to us in our old standing, instead of seeing Him in resurrection, the Lord of life and power, imparting to us an entirely new standing, altogether apart from, and superior to, the old one. The works which flow from this order of preaching bear the stamp of human feeling rather than of divine power. Their charities are more those of benevolence, conferred as from benefactors, than the expression of love, occupied with its objects, and extending from the inner circle of Christ's affections to the good of all men. Again, if there is association, it is socialism

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without discipline; and lastly, there is no advance in the knowledge of Christ and His ways. Nothing is so markedly painful and foreboding as the patent fact that any, however true, who are *held* under the influence of revivalism, never seem to get on one bit farther in light and truth than that which they received in the freshness of their new birth.

Now that which will set aside and prevent Laodicean leaven we are told by the Lord Himself in Revelation iii. 18: “*I counsel thee (He says) to buy of me*”—first, gold tried in the fire, divine righteousness proved in the heart which is exercised in the ways and mind of Christ—this is the internal thing; secondly, white raiment, practical righteousness, the true, proper clothing for the saint: gold within, and white raiment without; reality of the finest order and value within, and everything pure, comely, and divinely beautiful without; not the mere ways and manner which men could approve of, but what God approves of. Finally, the



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eye so anointed that there is power to receive the truth as it is.

If the eye be sound; if its vision be unimpaired and unaffected by the influences around; if it be simple, entirely engaged with Christ, then the truth will be received without any mixture, and the body will be full of light; for the disciple is practically the transcript of Christ, whom the anointed eye receives and possesses.

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We see one soul go through deep exercises before it gets peace, in which the world and all is sifted; and when peace comes, the world is a judged thing. Another jumps into peace at once, gets into Romans vii. before Romans iii.; and if he keeps close to Christ, he will either learn what the flesh is, or, if not, fall into some sin to be made to learn that in his flesh dwells no good thing. The flesh *must* be broken, the world *must* be broken. I must either find out what the flesh is with God, or find out what it is with Satan.

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## WEEPING FOR JERUSALEM.

WHAT would you think of persons escaping from a wreck caring nothing for their companions left behind? A thousand in the ship, perhaps only twenty saved! the stately ship gone to pieces! Must they not take it to heart? Must not their joy have a fringe of sadness on it? Their position is surely a grave one.

How are we feeling about other Christians? Thousands are immured in religious forms, who do not know that they are saved. Thousands who *do* know that they are saved, do not know where they are, and have no comfort in Christ. Thousands who have a measure of individual rest in Him, have no sense of being members of His body on earth, and therefore cannot witness for Him. Must not all this touch the true heart? And then the fearfully gross departure from the truth! Must not *that* affect it?

There is too much levity about us. In Ezra's day there were those indeed who shouted for joy when the foundation of the temple was laid; but the chief of the

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fathers, who knew what the original temple was,—wept!

I am not called to do anything wonderful, but simply to devote all my energies to Christ's interests on earth; and this is within the compass of anybody. Joseph did so when he gave commandment concerning his *bones*; Ruth when she abode with Naomi; the widow of Luke xxi. when she dropped her two mites into the treasury. All that is wanted is simplicity and purpose of heart. Paul, the leader and master-builder, was reduced to a unit, for he says, "All men forsook me." "Nevertheless the Lord stood by me and strengthened me." The Philadelphian has but a "little strength," but a little strength does all the work. The great thing is to use the little strength we have in simple faith. It may be latent; you must *use* it, turn it to account. "The way of the slothful is as a hedge of thorns; but the way of the RIGHTEOUS (not the diligent) is raised up as a causeway."

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## OUR PORTION IN THE FATHER'S HOUSE AND OUR POWER TO ENJOY IT.

IN John xiv. we are shewn, first, our portion in the Father's house; and, secondly, our power to enjoy it. While Christ is absent, I am present in the body, absent from the Lord; but my comfort is, to enter into the place where God has brought Him. Where the heart of Christ is, is the soul's portion; when I have got Christ before me, and the Holy Ghost working in me, where He lives I live also in spirit.

The Lord is here going away, having accomplished expiation, and He says, "Do not be troubled." He was going to the Father; they were losing Him. What was to be the comfort of their hearts? First, His coming again; secondly, the Comforter whom He would send. He says, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself." He could not stay with His disciples here; but He could take them to where He was going.

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The world had rejected Him ; and there could be no link formed with Him here. " If I wash thee not [He says to Peter], thou hast no part with me." We have to stay here, but we have part with Christ where He has gone. God could not rest in this scene of sin and wickedness; but this only brought out the blessed truth, that Christ was going to give us rest, where He had His rest with His Father. His work is so perfect, all His ministry in grace so effectual, that when He re-entered the glory which He had with His Father before the world was, He could give us a place there—a portion where He had got His rest, in contrast to all that was in the world—fruit of the travail of His soul. *His* Father's house, where He was at home, according to what He was in His eternal nature as Son—*there* He was going to prepare mansions for us! What unspeakable blessedness! A place with Himself where He is perfectly at home! Think of what the home of such a heart as Christ's must be! where all His divine affections could flow out; the

divine Son, and yet a man. Think of the kind of delight He would have there, and think that *that* is the place He is going to bring us to. O wonderful thought—where He is at home! “I will come again and receive you unto myself.” It is not, You shall follow, or I will send; but “*I will come.*” Though gone into glory, and sitting on the Father’s throne, He will leave it to come for us. He is not satisfied without coming Himself. What deep personal interest He had in them! Occupied about them in coming at first to make atonement for them; occupied about them in going away to sit on the right hand of God for their justification; occupied about them in coming again, to receive them unto Himself.

Now it is not merely that all this is unspeakable blessedness *to us*; but it is the *revelation of the heart of Christ*. He wants to have us with Him; and it is of all moment to have our hearts won into the affections of Christ. Why do I love my mother?—Because her love has laid hold of my affections. So it is

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with regard to Christ. When we know His love which passeth knowledge, our hearts are drawn out to Him. "I will come again," &c. This is no truth which may or may not be held; it is essential to the daily walk of the Christian; it is the proper, only, blessed hope for every child of God. The Thessalonians "turned from idols to wait for the Son from heaven" (1 Thess. i.), they were converted *to it*. The servant's saying "My Lord delayeth his coming," led to all the failure of the Church. How far are we habitually waiting for Christ, in our affections, in our lives? To be living in this hope is the best way to testify of it. "Found of him blameless." I should not like Christ to come and find me in something I should have to pull off; but doing the duties He has given me to do, with bright and blessed affections.

What the Lord brings out as that which tells us where He is going to, is *His Person*; He is going to heaven. If you send a child to a place he would like it to be a nice place; but the great

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point of anxiety is, what sort of a *person* he is going to live with. That is how the Lord meets us here. *He* is going to the *Father*. That lets it all out to us. Heaven is a nice place, but heaven is a vague word. What do I know about it? We delight in divine love, in the holiness of divine nature; but if love were not there, could you and I dwell in a holy place? Oh no; there would be an immense gap for the heart. Therefore when the Lord speaks of bringing us to Himself, He tells us that the Father is revealed in Him; and that it is to the *Father's* house He will take us. Hence, in knowing the Father, we know where we are going. What the Father is, becomes, then, the important thing. Philip says, "Shew us the Father." What, says the Lord, hast thou not known *me*? Have you not known the Father? You have been seeing Him all this time; you have been in intimate acquaintance with Him; "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." In the object before them, all that the



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place He was going to could give, *they had got!* Can we say, I so know Christ that I know heaven as a present thing? I have so seen the Father in the person of the Son that I have found all. I know what my everlasting blessedness will be. All that divine favour resting on Christ resting on me! Have we followed Christ in His history in the Gospels? Have we learnt the Father's ways in that revelation of the Son? Have we come to Him as Mary did—sat at His feet and drank in His words? Have we seen that whatsoever the Father made known to Him He passed on, in His own perfect joy, to His disciples, that, as He says, “Ye might have my joy in you?” All the favour and blessedness thus revealed rests on us. I cannot learn anything of it that is not mine; for Christ dwells in it, and conducts it down into my heart; nor can we know that, but by having it: “He that loveth not, knoweth not God.” He is the only begotten Son, and all the Father's delight centres in Him. He it was who

declared Him. Though on earth He was ever in the bosom of the Father; and in reading His life down here, my soul gets at home with the Father and the Son. The Holy Ghost occupies my soul with the Father's love to the Son; and He says, "all that is yours."

"Fellowship with the Father and the Son!" Is not that enough to fill me? Fellowship is a great word: it shews what a place we are brought into, if only through grace we walked in it, free from all these disturbing influences; and by the Holy Ghost the heart drawn to the Father and the Son in holiness of thought, and affection, and piety—divine piety, according to the divine relationship, for fellowship is having common thoughts, joys, affections, feelings. When we are in the power of the Holy Ghost, our thoughts and feelings suit the Father and the Son. Supposing my soul dwells on the blessedness of Christ's obedience here, when He says, "Now is my soul troubled; what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour." "Father,

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glorify thy name," &c. My soul sits there adoring, contemplating Him, feeding on Him. Does not the Father contemplate it too? Does not He delight in it? Again, Christ says, "Therefore doth my *Father* love me, because I lay down my life," &c. Do not *I* love Him because He laid down His life? And so also, as the Son delights in the Father, we, as sons, delight in the Father. Our object, feelings, character, are one. What is before us as our object, leads us into what is our everlasting portion. "He that hath the Son hath the Father also." What we shall have in heaven is what we have in spirit now; and according to the measure in which we are spiritual, have we our home there now. Do not rest satisfied if you do not know what it is to enjoy the Father's favour in the Son. He has come down in the way of grace: the veil is torn away. He is the perfect revelation of the Father. How much have you learnt of what is in His heart, to make you know where you are going, and what your portion there is?

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Then He goes on to say, "I will give you another Comforter, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him." The world ought to have received Christ; but the world has nothing to do with the Holy Ghost. He belongs to the saints. "But ye know him, for he dwelleth in you," &c. Here is a contrast. Christ could not abide; and still more, though the Father was revealed in Him, He dwelt with, but not *in* them. The new Comforter was to abide for ever with and in, not only the Church, but the individual. Until the Church is taken away, the last saint will have the Holy Ghost abiding with and in him. Now, being sprinkled by the blood of Christ, we are perfectly clean; not merely born again, but righteous before God, and the Holy Ghost can dwell in us. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost. God dwells in us as a guest! What a thought! Who that thinks of it could use his body for sin? Who that thinks of it could deck it out with vanities? We forget it, or we never could. If our

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hearts had really got hold of this truth, what servants of Christ we should be in everything—not grieving the Spirit in anything! We dwell in God and God in us. The effect is that we know that the Son is in the Father. “At that day ye shall know,” &c. (Ver. 10.) This blessed Man is in the Father as the divine Son. He whose countenance was marred more than any man’s, who went through all those outrages here, *He* it is who brings God to us, and us to God. And what follows? “And ye in me and I in you.” This is no abstract truth, but I am to live in the consciousness that I am in Christ and He in me. In Christ before God I have the consciousness of divine favour resting upon me; but Christ in *me* is the standard for my walk. Christ is before God for me, and I in Him. I am before the world for Christ, and He in me. Now if Christ be in you, let me see Him. I expect to see nothing but Christ in you. In your ways, thoughts, habits, dress, manners, do you express Christ? Do you manifest Him in all

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that constitutes your everyday life? How far is He filling all that middle region of the heart, in which the heart's time is spent? Is it spent in Christ or in the tittle-tattle of the world? Oh to have the free flowing of the Spirit in us! What springs up when we meet one another? Whatever is in the heart. Is it the springing forth of the fountain of Christ? "Strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith," we realize His presence, and, amid the thousand things we have to do in this world, Christ comes out.

And what is it He gives us? Peace. *His* peace. "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you." (Ver. 27.) The world gives as it can spare: it gives away and has it no longer. Christ gives what He has Himself, and in Himself as its source. We find what His heart is while we are living and walking in His love; and we find too the way in which He identifies Himself with us and expects our hearts to be identified with Him. He *expects* our

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affections to be occupied with Him. He says, "If ye loved me ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father." I do not know a more wonderful expression of how near He came to us, or how near He has brought us to Him than this. Such condescension when we think who He was! It shews how His heart goes out in expectation that our hearts should meet His.

The Lord give us to have our eyes resting on His beauty, and the blessedness of the grace that is in Him; so that we may find the full sufficiency of His strength, which is made perfect in our weakness.

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People think, If God be for me, surely thousands will fly before me; there can be no difficulty. None whatever to *God*; but what of *you*? While He is teaching you and developing your understanding of the treasure in the earthen vessel, you are at your wits' end because He does not *appear* for you. Ah! but you do not understand His ways. He does not mean to put His power under you, that *you* should shine. He is the God that quickeneth the dead.

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## THE RIGHT PLACE FOR THE ALTAR.

SHECHEM, Bethel, Moriah, Hebron, Beersheba are names of places connected with patriarchal times, and localities of patriarchal worship. At Shechem both Abraham and Jacob built altars; the former to Jehovah, who appeared to him (Gen. xii. 7); the latter to El-Elohe-Israel. (Chap. xxxiii. 20.) Near Bethel, in the mountain, Abraham erected his second altar; at Bethel, Jacob reared one up, and called the place El-Bethel. On Moriah, and at Hebron under the oaks (not in the plains) of Mamre, Abraham built an altar to Jehovah; whilst Isaac, alone of the three, erected one at Beersheba. What guided them in the selection of these places for altars may not be always apparent. Abraham had dwelt at Beersheba before Isaac fixed on it as his abode (Gen. xxi. 32—34; xxii. 19); there he had called on the name of the Lord the everlasting God, and planted a grove (margin—a tree); but though he



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built altars at Shechem, near Bethel, on Moriah, and in Mamre, it was left for Isaac to erect one at Beersheba.

From Bethel Abraham journeyed to Egypt, and sojourned there, but built no altar in that land. His grandson Jacob passed twenty years in the country of Abraham's birth, and amongst his own mother's kindred, without building one altar to God in the land of his exile. He returned home with his family and wealth, and rested awhile at Succoth, yet built no altar till he had re-crossed the Jordan, and fixed his abode at Shechem.\* To Egypt he subsequently descended with God's permission, and, with the assurance of His presence, there ended his days, as did the twelve patriarchs likewise, without once building an altar in that country to God. Joseph feared God and served Him faithfully in Egypt, yet what altar did he build in the land of his captivity? Thus from Abraham to Joseph, through-

\* We should probably read, "And Jacob came in safety to the city of Shechem." Shalem should not be treated as a proper name.

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out the patriarchal era, no altar for the worship of God was erected by them outside that land of promise, which God gave to Abraham and to his seed for a possession for ever. Was this an accidental circumstance or was it the result of divine guidance?

Moses, at the back side of the desert, when receiving his commission from the Lord, was warned of the holy character of the ground on which he stood, yet built no altar on that spot where God had appeared to him. Jacob built one at Bethel, where the Lord had appeared to him; Moses did not follow his example, though he witnessed the appearance of the angel of the Lord in the flame of fire in the bush, Jacob was in the land of Canaan, Moses was not.

Till the fourth generation, the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt, and then left it; but no altar was erected by them to the Almighty God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, on the soil of Egypt, and no altar after Jacob's altar at Bethel was made for the worship of God till the people were brought up out

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of Egypt. As the redeemed people an altar was needed; but as travellers through the wilderness, it must be independent of locality if erected for the purpose of worship. This was a new feature, differing from what we have noticed as characteristic of patriarchal days. Under the shadow of Sinai, in the wilderness of Kadesh, and wherever they sojourned, the altar for worship was found, not now as an altar of any particular place, but as the altar in connection with the tabernacle of the congregation in the midst of the camp of Israel. When Abraham left Shechem he left his altar behind him; as the people journeyed they carried their altar with them. As they moved it moved. Where they rested it rested; an inseparable part of the sanctuary, whose place was in the midst of God's redeemed people.\*

From time to time they were reminded of the wilderness condition being an exceptional one. It would not always

\* The altar at Rephidim was an altar of memorial, not made for worship.

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be the place of their abode, wanderers would not always be a fitting designation of that multitudinous host. They had a country, a permanent dwelling-place designed for them centuries before they marched out of Egypt; for, when God divided unto the Gentiles their inheritance, He set the bounds of the nations according to the number of the children of Israel. (Deut. xxxii. 8.) But, whilst in the wilderness, and after, this principle in connection with worship, then first brought out, was to stand good, that the altar God could own was to be found in connection with the sanctuary, and all the sacrifices which He could accept must be offered on the altar of His selection.

Once in the land, worship was again connected with locality. "In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee and I will bless thee" (Ex. xx. 24), God had promised at Sinai. At Shiloh, Nob, Gibeon, and afterwards at Jerusalem, the altar of God was found, the place for the people to offer up their burnt offerings. But these places were

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all west of Jordan. East of that river, as in the wilderness, no settled resting-place was found for the tabernacle. For that it must cross the Jordan. Then first at Shiloh, about midway between Shechem and Bethel, "the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation." Josh. xviii. 1.

In common with patriarchal times, the altar was thenceforth connected with a locality in the land of their inheritance, and in common with the wilderness epoch it was found only with the sanctuary. These two features of worship once brought out have never been altered. Inside the land and in the court of the sanctuary the altar of God was fixed. The localities, after the people crossed the Jordan, were different (Moriah excepted) from the spots hallowed by the altars of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but in no other other land but in the land of their possession was an altar for worship built by Abraham and his descendants when acting in accordance with God's mind.

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The captivity took place, the temple was destroyed, the altar laid low, and the people again experienced what it was to be sojourners in a land not their own. They went forth captives to Babylon, but carried no altar with them. To build houses, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them, and to seek the peace of the city whither they were carried captives, and to pray unto the Lord for it, was God's will concerning them; but we read nothing of their attempting to build an altar in Babylon or along the banks of the Tigris. Jerusalem was the place of God's sanctuary, the only place on earth they knew of where an altar could be lawfully erected for the worship of the Lord Jehovah. When they returned to it, they rebuilt the altar. Till then they only built houses and dwelt in them, and planted vineyards and ate the fruit of them, for without an altar they must be whilst they continued outside the confines of Canaan; for as long as God is dealing with an elect family, nation, or people, no place for worship does He sanction outside the inheritance

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He has provided, or when once erected, apart from the sanctuary in which He dwells.

But where is the place of worship now? The temple at Jerusalem has a second time become like Shiloh, the worship too of God has long ceased to be carried on in connection with the earthly city, yet the principle we have traced out holds good still. "The hour cometh," said the Lord, "when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father." (John iv.) Where then can the redeemed now worship? The heavenlies, not Canaan, is the country; in the true sanctuary, not at the temple at Jerusalem, can acceptable worship be carried on; for what befits the country and what comports with the sanctuary is that, and that alone, which God will receive. What that is John iv. defines. Where the sanctuary is, Hebrews ix., x. makes plain. The ritual ordained at Sinai, and added to, as regards the service of song, by David, differed greatly from the simple sacrificial worship of the patri-

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archs; and the spiritual worship now offered by God's saints differs more markedly from them both; but in this they all agree, that in the inheritance God has provided, the altar can alone be reared, and in the sanctuary of His appointment true worship alone can be rendered.

One word more. There was a time when an altar could be built, and the sacrifices offered on it be acceptable, outside the land of Canaan; and there will, it would appear, be a time when that will be manifested afresh. Noah built an altar and God accepted the offerings. In Egypt an altar will be reared, for the Egyptians shall know the Lord, and do sacrifice and oblation. (Isa. xix. 19—21.) In Noah we have the millennium foreshadowed, and God is there dealing with man and creation. In Isaiah we read of millennial times prophetically described. Hence the difference as to the place of the altar. There will be the temple at Jerusalem, to which all the families of the earth will go up from year to year; but there



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will be, what there never has been yet, an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt. Till that time arrives the principle which actuated the patriarchs and was carried out in Israel is the one to which all must adhere. The worship God accepts must be offered up in the land and in connection with the sanctuary.

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### THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

#### INTELLIGENCE WITHOUT CONSCIENCE.

WITH the amount of intelligence around, we do not see corresponding practice; hence there must be some imperfection in the acceptance of truth.

The effort and unceasing aim of Satan in the present day is to exalt man, and set aside Christ; and as he is the prince of the power of the air, everything is charged with this evil influence, though in different ways, in the world, and in the Church. In every age the truth that God is pressing on His people, and calling on them to maintain, is always the one that Satan resists the most. To

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oppose and hinder the acceptance of Christ is the attempt of the adversary in this day; the opposition in its character is simply antichrist. God has set Christ—the man of God—at His own right hand, and as the risen One He is superior to all the power of Satan, under which the first Adam still is; and hence, as the last Adam, is owned, and maintained, all Satan's power is vanquished and ignored; and hence, Satan must violently oppose the maintenance of a truth which entirely strips him of power and influence, and where he cannot succeed in fully denying it, he will qualify it.

Both the body and mind of man are used by Satan to hinder the truth and work of God, and in different ways. At one time the sword is the instrument of violence; at another, it is the mind and its subtleties; the latter is the more dangerous, because I may suffer from it unconsciously; and it is fatal, simply because the natural mind understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God; for if any subject or point be within the

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grasp of the natural mind, it must be below the divine idea; it must be limited to my own measure. The saint has the mind of Christ, he understands the things of God by the Spirit of God; but then his natural intellect must not speculate on them, it is used to explain what has been unfolded and taught to one in the word. It must not suggest, it may only repeat, and the more truly the natural intellect is under the control of God's Spirit, the more perfectly will it be a good servant in repeating what the Spirit of God has taught in the word of God.

Now, it is easy to detect the working of the natural mind in a Christian; for it must always make man its object and not God. It could not rise to God, it may speciously appear to accept from God, but it will always limit to man. One need hardly dwell on this; it must be so self-evident; for the mind of man cannot go beyond itself; the mind of Christ is of the measure of God, and hence, God, He being the greater, is of necessity made prominent. Man's mind

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cannot rise higher than man; and if anything greater than his mind be contributed, he must either receive a mind equal to the truth communicated, or, in order to admit it, he must reduce it to the limit of his natural mind, and this is the cause of apparent intelligence without conscience.

The more the human mind is exercised, the more it likes to be supplied with material to work on. Its appetite increases by exercise, and as the evil influence is in the very air, saints ought to be on their guard, lest they should be ensnared by feeding their natural minds with the truths of God. In a way, there is no truth that the natural mind may not attempt to accept, and the imperfection of the acceptance will be betrayed by a defective practice; the conscience will not be affected by it. The truth, as I have already stated, is accepted with relation to oneself, and with regard to the benefit it confers on oneself; but the relation to God is left out. The latter could not be comprehended but by the Spirit which is of

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God, that we might know the things which are freely given us of God. When man's mind thinks about a truth, it necessarily limits it to man, and hence, if I hear or read of God's purposes to the saints, in which are set forth great and wondrous favours for them, I may appropriate the favours to myself, and exult in them; but if I do so in my natural mind, I do not connect myself with God in and through them, and therefore with the intelligence there is no conscience; i.e. an increased sense of what is due to God, from one so highly favoured by Him. It is one's own benefit, and not one's relation to God, that the natural intellect dwells on, and in this intellectual acquirement there is little or no conscience, or sense of the relation in which God has placed me to Himself. In short, it is intellectual, and not spiritual. I may value a privilege for what it confers on me, but not because of the place in which it sets me with God; and so, when I accept privileges in the natural mind, I limit the benefit to myself, and they impose

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no greater claim on me to walk like Christ. There is no practice though there be an acceptance of the place or ground of privilege. Lot is in Canaan as much as Abraham, but his natural mind works, and he thinks only of himself there, and not of the call of God, and the claim which that call imposed on him if he had held it in dependence on God; and hence, alas! a privileged man is in practice as bad, if not worse, than the worldling.

Jacob returns to Canaan (Gen. xxxiii); and, after he has received the name of Israel at Peniel, he allows his own mind to work, he arranges for himself, and he seeks a resting-place for himself where he was called to be a pilgrim and a stranger, and the name of his altar, El-elohe-Israel, betrays the selfishness of his heart in his thoughts of God; and before the world, instead of being God's witness, he is, like Peter in the high priest's house, a reproach!

Being in the place of privilege, or accepting the truth which confers the privilege, is not a safeguard against

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the working of the natural mind; and if it works, self is only thought of and God is left out; and however great the intelligence and position, there can be no practice. Two persons like Orpah and Ruth can receive the truth in the most contrary ways: the one in the natural mind, only thinks of one-self in connection with it; but the other, because in the Spirit, thinks of God, and in Him embraces all. The spies who searched the land went to the same place, and saw the same things; and yet ten of them, seeing them in a natural way—that is, with reference to man — only discouraged the people; while Caleb and Joshua, who saw with the Spirit's eye, judged of them with relation to God, and acted for God, and according to His word. Thus we see that the same truths may produce very opposite effects. Saul and Jonathan receive the same David and know his work; but each in a totally different way, and yet probably each would have given verbatim the same account of what he had done; but of *himself*, in

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 253

relation to themselves, they think very differently. Saul will indeed have him to come home with him; but Jonathan thinks of *him*, and how much he is *entitled* to, and strips himself to make much of David. Just so the Pharisee of Luke vii. receives the Lord into his house; but the woman—the sinner in the same house—manifests to the Pharisee's guest how far beyond all human perception *she* sees Him; and that He is to her an object entirely eclipsing herself; and this she owns in the most practical way.

In this day there is a great amount of avowed intelligence about truth, without any corresponding practice, or testimony to Christ and His worth. If privilege or position is all with reference to myself, then the acceptance of either subjects me to no sacrifice, and this suits the natural mind; but if, on the contrary, every privilege places me more in association with God, which it does when spiritually accepted; surely the sacrifice would be in keeping with the privilege; that is, there would be distinct and absolute renunciation of everything



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which did not honour God, and express Christ, in accordance with the place in which He has set us. Every truth spiritually accepted places us nearer to God; and the nearer we are to God, the deeper is the sense of what is due to Him; and thus there is conscience in proportion to our intelligence. But if the intelligence be used to exalt myself; that is, if I am ensnared by the natural mind to think only of myself in connection with a truth; then, though there may be a great knowledge of the truth historically, there will be no power from it, no increased conformity to Christ, because it has not been received in relation to Christ, but only to myself; and this limiting it to myself, reduces me, like Lot or Jacob, to the level of the world or worse; and though there be seeming intelligence, there is no practice. When the conscience is in proportion to the intelligence, we know God, and we see spiritually what suits Him; and He in His love ordains, that what suits Him, should be most for our benefit and blessing.

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May souls be warned against the snare  
of the intellect in this day, and may  
they, with godly jealousy, watch and  
see how each truth connects them with  
Christ, that they may be more and more  
like Him.

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THE FATHER'S HOUSE.

LORD, to be with Thee in Thine own abode,  
The place prepared where Thou wilt have us  
dwell ;  
Brought home unto Thy Father and Thy God,  
Where harpers harping shall Thy triumphs tell.  
Sons of His love ! heirs of His festal joy !  
What bliss ! how full, how pure beyond alloy !

To gaze around in that effulgent light,  
With not a mist from earth to intervene ;  
Thy majesty, Thy beauty, full in sight ;  
Thy glory flooding all the boundless scene.  
Thy love in its perfection, known at last—  
'Twill solve the long enigma of the past.

To read in full the story of the cross—  
Known dimly—but with growing wonder now;  
To measure, by God's glory, what it cost,  
Beneath His curse, Thy holy head to bow.  
Thy royal garments (in that hour laid by)  
Proving the depths of Thy descent—to DIE !

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To hear Thee leading, in our midst, high praise  
To Him whom Thou hast glorified on earth;  
Whose will, the rule of all Thy pilgrim days,  
Made Thee a suffering Stranger from Thy birth.  
Proof—Thou, the slain One—highest heavens  
above,  
Of sovereign mercy and victorious love.

To know how Thou hast made an end of sin;  
Swept every hostile element away;  
To see eternal righteousness brought in,  
And watch the universe Thy mind obey.  
No longer to perceive and know in part;  
But feel with Thee—behold Thee where Thou art.

To worship Him who sitteth on the throne,  
Whose Church are we, the purchased by Thy  
blood.

Thine incorruptibility our own.

The dearest purpose of Thy heart made good,  
And through eternity's exhaustless days,  
Our Lord, our Saviour! to sound forth Thy  
praise.



The present sanctification has all the elements  
of the future glory; and the future glory has all  
the qualities of the present sanctification.



Maturity is a person distrusting himself and  
leaning on God.

## PAUL'S MISSION.

### NO. II.

LET us now trace through scripture how Paul in his ministry sets forth the nature and purpose of his mission.

### THE ACTS.

Chapter ix. 20 we read, that immediately on his call at Damascus, "Straightway he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." Here then he speaks of Jesus with the distinctness and peculiarity of one who had seen Him in His exaltation, in entirely a new way; he presents Him in all the glory and greatness of His person; he announces that the man who was humbled and rejected here, is the Son of God. Amazing fact! No fact could be greater than that Jesus—the One who had suffered unto death here, at the hands of cruel men — is the Son of God. Saul had seen Him in His glory, and as He is, in His divine dignity, he now proclaims Him in the scene of His humiliation. It is of immense importance that we should

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grasp the force and intention of the Spirit of God, in presenting to us this great truth. To Saul had been declared things as they were on God's side; and now he preaches in the Jewish synagogues, that Jesus is the Son of God. "He spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus." (Chap. ix. 29.)

In chapter xiii. 16—41 we have recorded Paul's word to the men of Israel, in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia. He reviews the times of God's way with them up to the birth of Christ; and then, tracing His course through suffering and death up to the resurrection, he says, "But God raised him from the dead;" and then he adds, "We declare unto you glad tidings [or the gospel] how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise,

I will give you the sure mercies of David"—now assured in Him. And then sums up by, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

There are two distinct points in this discourse; one, the glad tidings—viz., that the promise had been fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus; the other, that through Him they were not only forgiven but justified; a distinct and beautiful unfolding of how God could now deal with them—according to His own mind, in the riches of His grace, and fulness of His mercy.

Chapter xiv. We have Paul at Lys-tra, among Gentiles, where, because of the healing of the impotent man, the people exclaim, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men," and would have done sacrifice to them, &c., (see ver. 11, 12) which, when Paul and Barnabas heard, they rent their

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clothes, and ran among the people, saying, "Why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things therein; who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." Here these heathens Paul exhorts to turn from vanities to the living God, whom, in His works of creation and His temporal mercies, he brings before them, announcing that hitherto God had suffered all nations to walk after their own ways. What he presents is simply this—that there is a living God who made everything, and gives all natural blessings;—that up to the present He had had forbearance, but had now manifested Himself, but not in connection with man as he had been set on the earth. In fact, nothing is referred to but the living God, un-

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connected with any former dispensation. This it is that Paul brings before them; and thus his ministry is in keeping with his mission.

Chapter xvi. 30, 31. When the Philippian jailor demands, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul replies, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house." He directs him to nothing existing or in connection with earth, but to the Saviour in glory; not the man in humiliation, but the Lord Jesus Christ, whom he presents to his faith, for the salvation of himself and his house.

Chapter xvii. Paul had preached Jesus and the resurrection to the Athenians, as they met with him in the market place. And in the Areopagus he says, "The unknown God, whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you;" thus presenting God before them, as the Creator of all things, and hence superior to everything. "He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things, and he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world, in righteousness,



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by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given proof to all in that he hath raised him from the dead."

All again in connection with God, apart from any former dispensation; but now in connection with His purpose through Christ.

Chapter xix. Paul finds certain disciples at Ephesus. On inquiry he learns that they had not heard of the presence of the Holy Ghost. Again, the apostle connects them with no former dispensation, but states that they should believe on Him, who should come after John Baptist; that is, on Christ Jesus. And when they heard, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus; not the man in humiliation, but the one now in glory. And in verse 8 we read of his disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. Paul has been impressed with the deepest and fullest sense of God's rule in glory; and hence he insists on it according to the force and nature of it, as it has been made known to him. All previous displays of

His kingdom on earth he entirely overlooks, and from the glory he presses the nature and claims of His sovereign rule. On the contrary, the twelve, as we have seen, seek rather restitution. "Wilt thou [they say] at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Further on we read, "Fear fell on all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified."

Chapter xx. 17. Paul recounts to the elders of Ephesus how he had kept back nothing that was profitable unto them, testifying, both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. "And now, brethren (he says) I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified." (Ver. 32.) So simply and definitely does he confine himself to that which he has received (ver. 24) of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Chapter xxii., as I have already noticed, is Paul's account to the *Jews* of his call; shewing definitely how it was

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from God in its source, above everything heretofore displayed on earth, and extending far hence unto the nations.

Chapter xxvi. is his account to the *Gentiles* of his call. Here again we find no notice of anything pre-existing; but Saul of Tarsus is called out to be a minister and a witness of the fulness and greatness of God's grace, of which he himself is the "first" and the "pattern." (See 1 Tim. i. 16.)

Chapter xxviii. 23—31. Paul in prison at Rome makes a last and final appeal to the Jews, "to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening," thus seeking to awaken their souls to God in His own sovereignty in His kingdom, to which Jesus in glory is the link. "But when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost, by the prophet Esaias unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people and say,

Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing, ye shall see, and shall not perceive. For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them:" the same passage as was quoted by our Lord before His death. (John xii. 40.)

The book of the Acts closes with telling (ver. 31) of Paul "preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ." God's kingdom and what concerns Jesus were necessarily the subjects testified of, by one who was commissioned to unfold the mind of God as it is, independently of every previous thing here on earth; who was to introduce and insist on everything, as it was on God's side, in all its perfection and blessedness, through that man who had accomplished everything according to the will of God.

## ATTAINING & MAINTAINING.

Two things are essential to attainment in any subject: the beginning and the end of the course; the two must be perfectly known. If I undertake a voyage, ignorant of the point of departure, or of my destination, progress is impossible. In Christianity this is of paramount importance, though in the cases of thousands of souls, and of their teachers, it is entirely overlooked; hence leanness, uncertainty, and sorrow, where strength, confidence, and joy should abound.

Now the believer's starting-point is "accepted in the beloved." "By one offering perfected for ever." Having redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins; the old man crucified with Him, and our life hid with Christ in God. Called, justified, and glorified; saved and called with a holy calling by Him who hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son, we can truly say that nothing whatever has to be attained to as to peace, relationship, standing, or perfect acceptance

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in Christ before God. "Whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it" (Ecc. iii. 14); and "It is *God* that justifieth." Again, the end of the believer's course and of his hopes is glory; not only with, but in the image and likeness of God's Son. But between these two — the perfection of justification, and the perfection of glorification—lies the race to be run, and in which attainment has to be made towards the end.

But some may say, on reading the foregoing: What you put as the beginning, is the end of all my hopes; and we are sure there are many many souls who are in this state. Ignorant of, and untaught in, God's way of peace, they put *His* beginning for *their* end, or mix the beginning and end together, looking for peace as well as glory at the end, and thus spoil both. For a soul that has not found perfect rest in Christ cannot hope for glory; it looks for peace, and, with this primary and paramount desire unsatisfied, cannot rise to higher

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hopes. A starving man could take no delight in gorgeous robes, and gold, and jewels.

Again, it may be objected, if the beginning and end of the course are thus secure, what need of effort in attainment by the way? To this we reply, A perfected Christian, a spiritual man, is not made in a day, though saved in a moment. A man in the world is more than a mere existence. He has a name, and character, which, whether for good or evil, stamps him, and makes up that which leaves the impress of him upon our minds. And so the Christian. He is not saved merely to be glorified, or God would take His people at once out of a scene so fraught with danger to them, and through them, alas! often with shame and dishonour to Himself. God has His purpose here in their salvation, and seeks His glory here by their means. They, too, have to make attainments in the knowledge of God, in a condition and in circumstances for which a whole eternity of glory will offer no such opportunity.

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Attainment then is the laying hold of the love, the grace, and the glory of God, and of His purposes and counsels for Christ, and for those for whom Christ has died and risen again. As step by step the soul thus increases in the "knowledge of God," and enters into His thoughts of peace, love, and glory, so does it attain, and only so. Paul's present object was "to apprehend that for which he also was apprehended of Christ Jesus." Christ had taken hold of Paul, not merely to save him from death and hell, but to carry him through the world, overcoming every difficulty and obstacle by the way, and set him with Himself in glory. By faith, Paul knew this; practically, he desired to prove it. It is with this prospect before him that the apostle exclaims, "If that by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." It is for this goal that he "so ran that he might obtain," and urges us on in the same race. Yet could he say, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly." The beginning, the way, and the end



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were all secure, for he knew who had taken hold of him. Attainment towards an end can only be made as that end is kept in view, and this the apostle did.

Now, there are two ways of attainment towards God and in the things of God: faith and experience, and the first and highest of these is faith; for "we walk by faith not by sight." It is by faith we know God, and by faith it is our privilege to learn everything concerning Him. Experience is always the confirmative of faith. By experience we prove and realize what we have already believed and learned, and are therefore fully prepared to expect. And blessed it is to experience the abundant grace, the pitifulness, and tender mercy of God; to find indeed that He who has not spared His only-begotten Son, doth with Him freely give all things. It is however striking to find Paul, after his exhortations to the Philippians to attain, not measuring God's ability and willingness by the riches of His *grace*, but "by the riches of His *glory* in Christ Jesus." He not only can look back and say,

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“what may I not expect from Him who has given His Son for me?” but “I know what *you* may expect from One whose riches in glory are so vast, and according to this will He supply all your need.”

That many of us alas, have lower hopes and aspirations before us is too true. Hence the low standard of christian walk and holiness to be observed amongst Christians, and the worldliness that so largely prevails, for we cannot rise above our prospect, or attain to higher things than we aim at. If we aim low we shall not rise high. Christian attainment and experience is too often limited to the believer's knowledge of his own heart; a poor subject indeed for occupation. It is however as much our privilege to learn by faith our own badness, as God's goodness, but whilst we most surely must and shall experience and prove the latter, it is not necessary to experience the former. That we do learn what we are by bitter experience is too true, but it is good to remember that it is our privilege to live

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and learn in God's presence where all is light, and in communion with Him. We need not stoop to depths to know that there are depths, Christ has been into death to bring us out of them. From above we may see and learn enough of them to teach us how to avoid them. Moreover, no one learns the true character of sin or corruption when in it. It is only when restored, when again in God's presence and fellowship, that it can be known, that is, known and judged as He judges it.

But it is not only necessary for the saint to attain; "Whereunto we have already attained let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." What we have attained we must *maintain*, or we shall slip back again. Paul, with full confidence in his purpose of heart to go on, could say for *himself*, "This *one* thing," but for *us* he says *two* things. Not only attain, press toward the mark—but hold fast and maintain each step. If, through faith in communion with God, or by experience (it may be painful and humiliating) you

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have learned something fresh of the hope of His calling—of the unsearchable riches of Christ, *maintain* the ground you have thus gained, and go on again. What you have made your own, keep. Each step that has brought you nearer in fact and in experience to resurrection, and thus further from the place of death make good and establish. From earth, and that which is earthly, to heaven, and that which is heavenly, so far as practical realization goes, is a very steep path, and in making a steep ascent each step must be made secure, and maintained before another can be taken. “That which ye have already hold fast till I come.” “Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown,” tell us the deep need of the apostle’s exhortation to “take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” But when, as in this path, and looking down from the heights on which grace has placed us, and up to the higher places of glory yet above us, we wonder, and “fear and

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tremble," lest we fail in working out "our own" and God's "great salvation," how sweet the word of encouragement, "yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand." In climbing a precipice, some of us may have observed that, so long as the eye is kept on the summit the ascent is easy, and each step can be securely taken and maintained, but if we look backward and downward, the head reels. So also to descend is more perilous than to ascend, and one step backwards often involves more risk than all the forward journey.

There is no difficulty in these things for the simple soul, for the one who has found its rest in Christ, and who desires to "follow on to know the Lord." May the Lord give us understanding, purpose, and earnestness, that each may go on towards the same end, though it will be in different tracks. He knows well enough that nothing but Himself can satisfy us even here, and that we can never know full satisfaction until "we awake in his likeness."

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

### THE MEASURE OF OUR STRENGTH.

WITH an increase of knowledge, and apprehension of the truth, there is a constant sense that we are not practically up to what we have received; and hence the measure of our strength is not the enjoyment of a truth, but the extent in which we maintain what we believe, in spite of every obstacle. It is the way in which we surmount the difficulties in our path, which really indicates our strength and not the enjoyment of the truth which defines our position.

The revelation unfolds God to us in His nature and purposes, and as we believe in Him, thus revealed, we depend on Him and use Him in every circumstance in which we are placed, and everything, the smallest as well as the greatest, tests and proves our faith, where nothing is in accordance with it; hence *the measure of our strength is the strait we pass through in the power of Christ.*

There is a genuine delight in the soul in seeing any of the portion which God

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has given us in Christ; but delight is not power, though the delight is lost if there be not power to sustain oneself according to the truth accepted, whenever or howsoever challenged; and here it is that one is so tried. The revelation has been received, and the beauty and excellence of it delights the heart, but the commonest thing—nay, everything here—challenges it and denies it. Hence it is not the truth revealed, but the power of Christ *whom* the truth has revealed, which will alone enable us to rise above the power of evil. The revelation has set before me what God has given me, but everything here is hostile to God. Satan attempts to deprive me of it; and it is only as I am superior to the opposition, that I retain in any degree, delight in, and possession of, what I have seen. The more I see of God's favour to me—and in that way the deeper my enjoyment—the more I must be practically superior to everything that would rob me of it. A lesser portion would expose me to less opposition; but the highest portion must expose me to op-

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position from everything where everything is contrary to God. It is as I am able, in the power of Him who has revealed my position to me, to refuse and counteract every opposing thing that I am really strong, and strong *skilfully*; that is, strong in wisdom's ways, for wisdom indicates to me the path for my faith. The more distinctly I see my position, the more necessarily must I see everything which would interfere with or compromise it. Now merely *seeing* this is not strength; but as I triumph in faith over this and that which opposes me on every side, so have I strength; so that the higher my position, with regard to everything here, the more must I maintain my superiority or be compromised, while I profess and am entitled to superiority. According as I maintain my height spiritually, where everything naturally opposes me, so am I strong in enjoying my high position, though in the very midst of my enemies. I overcome them. Thus, while my position indicates the extent of the power required and conferred too, my *strength*



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really is only as I surmount each rising hindrance, that would degrade or debar me from my position; and my faith in God, as to His favour in Christ, in putting me in this exalted position, is tested by everything here.

We read or hear His word, the light reaches our heart, we are delighted, we see His grace and purpose towards us. Now if we are walking in faith, and have received the truth in faith, we are not shaken by the things here which refuse and deny it; but the contrarieties only prove and manifest it. Hence it is the "trying of our faith, being much more precious than gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire," and as there is faith,—as one stands the test; patience—enduring power of holding out,—is ensured. The believing soul experiences a sense of enjoyment in the reception of the truth; but it is when we come in contact with contrarieties that we prove whether we are really dependent on God with respect to it. If everything were favourable, there would be no sifting or testing, no disclosure of

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the amount of faith; but when faith is tested, then patience is acquired, power to bear up against what is adverse; and therefore the measure of our strength is the strait we pass through with God. A man who passes through no straits has no sense of strength: he has not needed, as to his experience, the *power* of Christ, and he has not used it: he knows not his strength. Abraham in faith obeys the call of God, and into the land of Canaan he came; but soon a famine in the land tests his faith in God, and the measure of his strength is proved to be this,—that in faith he could enter the land, but that he could not remain there in a famine.

The revelation of God's favour, outside this scene of sorrow and rebellion, of which we are by nature a part, must necessarily expose us to tribulation in it, if we accept in faith what He has revealed. Jacob is subjected to much tribulation before his dream at Luz (Gen. xxviii.) is fulfilled at El-Bethel, nearly forty years afterwards (Gen. xxxv.); and his strength was not in keeping with the revelation,

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until he had returned to Bethel and set up an altar to the *God* of Bethel. The revelation defines the extent of my position, and my strength is, as I maintain my position in circumstances entirely adverse to it. Paul, as a man in Christ, is carried into the third heavens—a revelation of untold blessedness while in the light of it; but when he comes back from *that* region, where everything is for him, to *this*, where everything is against him, Satan buffeting him, &c., his strength is, as he maintains himself here in the power of Christ. As one entitled to so great an elevation he feels his weakness as a man more than ever; but this to faith is only an occasion for the power of Christ, commensurate with the position given him in Christ; and as he rested in Christ, and was exercised to maintain what was revealed to him, so did he receive of the power of Christ to maintain him in Christ, as surely here where everything was against him, as in the third heaven, where everything was for him; and the measure of his strength was as he was in Christ,

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*not* where there were *no* hindrances, as in the third heavens; but *here*, where there were the *greatest* hindrances, and where the strength was challenged at every turn. The revelation defines the scope of the faith; and as there is faith there is strength; and faith accepts nothing short of the revelation; and hence, as there is revelation, there must be deeper and greater tribulation to test the faith, and to make known to the soul the power of Christ, in whom I am graced and blessed.

There is no personal knowledge of God but as we count on Him, as we are practically conscious of depending on Him, and of His caring for us. One without straits, and exercises, and victories, really has no growing acquaintance with God; and where there is not this, however great the intelligence or sincerity, there is little or no savour. It is the trials and difficulties of the way which are the opportunities for our hearts to grow in acquaintance with Him; and it will be found, while there may be great enjoyment in ministry,

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and in the unfolding of truth; that really there is not strength, but in proportion as one has learned how God has been for and with one in the trials and sorrows of the way; and as one has known Him in them, so is one able to speak of Him. Intelligent Christians are often confounded when a trial occurs, simply because they have not been accustomed to cast all their care on God. They have not learnt in their own history that in everything He cares for them. I refer not now to the rest that this would impart to themselves, but rather to there being no sense of strength, because there is no sense of how God had hitherto sustained them. When David's strength was challenged, he could say, "Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God." If I am resting on God, difficulties only test my faith, and faith, like the rising sun, scatters the darkness that seemed to obstruct and dispute its power. You will never find a soul possessing a truth un-

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less it has been tested by some circumstances as to it; because the more I value it, the more I fear being deprived of it; but when it is tested, "tribulation has worked patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which he has given us."

Truth received in power always displaces everything in me which is opposed to it. "The strong man is not only bound, but his goods are spoiled." Surely, as I accept a truth, which introduces me into a position contrary to everything I am in, so must I, as I am true to it, deny and refuse all that I am. And hence everything which hinders and assails is a tribulation—it tests the reality of my possession of the truth; and I am assured of my possession as I overcome that which would naturally overcome me. As I overcome, I know my strength, and my victory is the result of my strength; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our

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faith. I know what faith *has* done, but I must *keep* in faith to be cheered and encouraged by what it has wrought. Former faith cheers and encourages, but as the next step is never like any former one, so must there be fresh faith for every step; fresh dependence on God. The heart derives strength for each fresh trial in its thanksgiving for former deliverances, and the strength is assured and measured by the victory.

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There is one Man on terra-firma, resurrection ground, and He is my life; a life introducing me into all the virtues and enjoyments which belong to that great sphere of bliss. The man here is in the sea of death. Christ is, as it were, an island that has been raised out of it; and on that island, which eventually will fill all things, we are landed. May your feet rest firmly on that island, while you breathe there the life that is eternal, ever vigorous, ever fresh.

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If one thing that has not Christ in it be removed from me, I shall see more clearly to remove more.

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## TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU.

CHRIST was sensible of His rejection, yet He says, "I thank thee, O Father." We get man taken up in his responsibility; it is all over with him, and we get the perfect submission of Christ to all that came upon Him. The world cast out Christ, yet He is still the life of the world; He knows what the world is, that there is no rest in it. He says, "I have gone through it all, there is not one thing in the world, where one who has the mind of God can find rest. Well, if you have this sense of labour, *do you come to me.* If my word has so reached you that there is a want in your heart, *come unto me.* If your heart has discovered that you are one of a world which had rejected me—*come to me.* If your heart has tasted the bitterness of being away from God, or known a craving after something you have not got, because of evil, a craving after perfect good, *come to me.* I will give you *rest*, I will reveal the Father to you. No man knows the Son but



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the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him. I will tell you, not only of God, but of the Father. What? That it was the *Father who sent the Son*. Are you heavy laden? He gives you, not help, but *rest*. Oh that is a great word in a world of toil. Is there no toil in your hearts? Whence comes it? From sin; distance from God; that is toil. The Father loves you, does not *that* give rest? I get a perfect conscience and a heart that rests in love, and it is a perfect rest because it is where God rests. He rests in His love. I take God's thought not my own as to the work that has done it all. He has set Christ at His own right hand for my righteousness, and He is going to give me glory as well as peace, and I learn more every day that He who gives me this rest is God.

But there is another kind of rest, for those who have already got rest from Christ, for those who have perfect peace of heart and conscience before God, for whom every question is settled as to sin.

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Well but after *that* is all settled, is your *heart* always thoroughly at rest? Is there no thought about setting things **right** down here? Is there never any sense of **unrest** in your spirit? Do you not know very well that you have an unbroken will, and that is not rest? The Lord says to you, "Take my yoke upon you." There I get a practical condition of walk, when He has given me rest of conscience, and it is a condition in which I **FIND** rest. Is my will subject as Christ's? It is a dreadful thing to see man rejecting Him, rejecting the truth about Him (through us it may be); but the Lord says, If you are submissive as I am, you will find rest. I have no will to resist. I go to another village. (See Luke x. 52—56.)

The renewed heart cannot find rest in this world. If you are wishing for even one thing in this world, you cannot find it; but if you have got your will broken, Christ's will is enough for you: you are delighting in it, and nothing else. Christ says, See how I bow to everything; now I expect bowings of

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heart to *me*, and in practice, if you take my yoke upon you, you will find rest. It is not easy to have a meek and lowly heart; one that does not go out after the things in this world, but has simply God and Christ for its object, living to Him who died for us and rose again.

Do not let any one for a moment make Christ's word not true to you. If you come to Him, He gives you rest. If, having got this rest, this peace of heart and conscience, you take His yoke upon you, you practically *find* rest. Here in a world of unrest your spirit has learned to find it. O let Him not have to reproach you because you repented not, because you are turning round and round your own poor heart, instead of coming to Him. The Lord give us to take His yoke upon us, in the midst of the pride and wickedness of man, and to find rest unto our souls.

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Our hearts are made for God; this poor empty world is too small to fill them.

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## THE CHAIN OF TRUTH IN HEBREWS, PETER, & JAMES.

THE distinction between the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God, is a fact maintained throughout the scriptures. The difference between the first two, in the Old Testament, was established morally by Moses and Sinai, by means of the law; and governmentally in rule by Solomon and the royal line of Israel's kings. The Church is the subject of a revelation, and is therefore found only in the New Testament. It is alluded to first in the teaching of the Lord Himself when on earth; but only brought out into existence and formal order by the actings of the Holy Ghost, consequent on the new place which Christ took in the heavens, at the right hand of God, when He was raised from the dead.

Beyond these general remarks, the attentive reader of scripture will find that the Jews get a distinct place (that is to say, "the remnant according to the election of grace") in the Acts, and in the

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epistles of Peter, James, and Paul. My object is briefly to trace this in the respective writings and acts of these apostles—in truth, the ministry of the twelve in the Acts, called out and separated from the nation, “those who should be saved,” the Lord on high adding such to the Church daily. Paul’s Epistle to the Hebrews especially recognizes this company of believers, and adapts itself, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, to the cast of mind and habits of the Jewish worshipper under the old formulæ of its typical priesthood and tabernacle service. By these means he carries their faith onward to the perfection of christian standing, that they may have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and to acknowledge the great High Priest of the christian profession, passed through the heavens. There is an interesting connection, as I think, in the mind of the Spirit, which is carried out by James and Peter on the basis-work and heavenly calling of Paul’s Epistle to the Hebrews; but which extends itself, by a further application, to

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this company of the elect Jews, giving them citizenship in heaven and stranger-ship on earth. Thus Peter meets these Hebrews, belonging now to the holiest, and as "a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory to be revealed," addresses them as the "elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." This is their new position before God. They no longer boast of having Abraham as their father; but, as *this* elect, trace their new genealogy from the Son Himself. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise." Peter, as an anointed priest of "the sanctuary in the heavens, which the Lord pitched," gives them their first lessons as a *holy* priesthood, a spiritual house, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ; and then introduces them into another order, and bids them, as a *royal* priesthood, a peculiar people, to shew forth the praises of Him who called

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them out of darkness into His marvellous light.

Passing out of these priestly orders and services, he leads them as the "heirs of promise" of Hebrews xi., and of the "heavenly calling" of Hebrews iii., into the new inheritance, by "the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," an inheritance reserved for them in heaven; they, moreover, kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. The rebellious nation had closed up the way into their earthly blessing, by crucifying their Messiah and King; and Paul had subsequently shut out all hope of his return to Jerusalem, by declaring that the sure mercies of David were now established in a risen Christ, and must be waited for by Israel till after "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

If I may so say, Peter is acting as "the apostle of the circumcision" in his two epistles: and meets these Hebrews at the point where Paul dismissed them, commending them to "the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our

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Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant," that He would make them perfect in every good work, to do His will, &c. It is with this great Shepherd that Peter associates these "strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Asia, and Bithynia," passing them into their new flock, as sheep who had gone astray, but were "now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls." As an under-shepherd he also takes his own place in this fold, and exhorts the elders to feed the flock of God, which was among them, and adds, "When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

Further, he takes them on the larger ground of "the blood of the everlasting covenant," where Paul had brought them in the last chapter of the Hebrews; and establishes their personal redemption by "the Lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world," and associates them *outside* all Jewish hopes, with that God who had raised up Christ



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from the dead, and given Him glory, that their faith and hope might be in the God who had done it. Having thus introduced them to these relationships, Peter puts them into the place of obedient children on earth, passing their time of sojourning *here* in fear, calling upon the Father. Nor does he overlook their relation to the power of God whilst *transferred* to the hands of the Gentiles, but bids them submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well, "having your conversation honest among the Gentiles." In short, Peter's ministry is to make them at home in the heavens, through a *risen Lord*, in their incorruptible and undefiled inheritance; and to make them equally at ease as pilgrims and strangers on earth, where they had nothing, as the witnesses of a *rejected Lord* and Christ.

If we now turn to the Second Epistle of Peter, he who had "the keys of the

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kingdom" opens it to those who have obtained like precious faith *with us*, through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ; and shews the divine power, necessary for life and godliness, to travel along the pathway of the exceeding great and precious promises, that by these they may be made partakers of the divine nature. He further exhorts them to diligence, and to add to their faith all that is suited, that they may not be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; that so an entrance should be ministered unto them abundantly into His everlasting kingdom. Having thus put them into their new christian relation with this kingdom and its glory, he acquaints them with the power and coming of our Lord, by which it will be established; and, finally, presents them to the person of Him who "received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice from the excellent glory." They are thus brought within the precincts of the kingdom, and ushered into the presence of Majesty.

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In the meanwhile, till that morning dawn, he points to the "day star" arising in their hearts as the present and blessed witness of participation in a closer and far better union with Christ Himself, in the circle of His own delights and bridal affections. Peter has thus set them in "the better thing," which Paul said "God had provided, that they without us should not be made perfect."

Leaving Peter, we now turn to the Epistle of James. He likewise waits upon these Hebrews as worshippers in the holiest, where Paul had led them, through the rent vail, and greets them as "the twelve tribes scattered abroad." James is more in the Levitical order, and takes them consequently into a different path from Paul or Peter. The first verses of his epistle shew this, as well as the character and objects of his ministry. It is in truth their new book of Numbers for a new wilderness journey. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience; but let patience have her per-

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fect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Their moral principles and practices are to be of the first order it is true, but the sources of supply are equal to the demand he makes: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." Paul in Hebrews xiii. had commended the elect company of that epistle to God in these words: "Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ." Nothing less than perfect is before the eye of James. "Do not err, my beloved brethren," is his word of admonition as they come under his finishing hand, "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us . . . . that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." It is to such he gives out afresh the "royal law of love," but in connection with

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“the law of liberty,” affirming as their ground of confidence, “this man shall be blessed in his deed.” Nothing that is double-minded, double-hearted, or double-tongued can be allowed in his school. All weakness of moral principle, as well as positive evil in practice, are traced to their respective sources. “A double-minded man,” with James, “is unstable in all his ways.” “A waverer,” is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed; he is worth nothing as a witness for the earth, nor as an object for the heavens. “Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.”

The brother of low degree is to rejoice in that he is exalted; but the rich, in that he is made low. Outward and earthly distinctions are gone. “The sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof fadeth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth.” These sharp engravings and deep cuttings bear witness to the master-hand and chisel-strokes that produced them; but these

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are the men for James, and for the glory of his Lord, on the earth. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." Not only is the apostle exact as to individual conduct, and what produces it; but he passes these scattered ones through the new assembly, under another standard and with a divine authority. "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons;" and lays bare the hidden springs of a corrupt nature, by the instance of a gold ring and gay apparel, or a poor man in vile raiment. Another lesson is given by him from the same height of moral perfectness. "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body," which, under the figure of the bits in the horses' mouths, and the great ships with a very small helm, introduces the least of our own members, the tongue, as a world of iniquity, which defileth the whole body, and set-

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teth on fire the course of nature; and is itself set on fire of hell. No longer can the tongue be suffered to lend itself as the expression of that wisdom which descendeth not from above, and is earthly, sensual, devilish; but, true to his line of things, James puts the little member into connection with the wisdom that cometh down from God, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy; adding to this, that the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace—but where envy and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work. Evil things are uncovered in their real connections and exposed. Wars and fightings come from natural lusts, which “war in the members.” Good things are put into association with their sources, and come down from above. “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.” “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up,” is a part of this new law of liberty.

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James finally gives out the prophets—to “these twelve tribes, scattered”—as old examples to a new faith, for patience and suffering. The patience of Job and the end of the Lord are brought together, to shew that the Lord is very pitiful, and of great mercy. Nothing less than the highest pattern of a past period suits this apostle. The righteous man of to-day must not be behind the illustrious Elijah of yesterday, either in faith or in prayer, as to the taches and hooks which can draw the curtains across the heavens, when occasion requires, and shut them up that they rain not; or part them asunder, that the rain may descend and the earth bring forth her fruit. Elias is put upon our level, as to the fact of his being “a man of like passions with ourselves,” but only that we should rise up to his height as one who was mighty with God. His parting words to his scholars are these: “My brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall



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save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins." It is in these heavenly exercises of faith and prayer toward God on the one hand, and of charity towards the sinner on the other, that these new lessons of divine righteousness and grace are carried out. "He shall save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins," close his Levitical instructions, and leave an opening, and give the opportunity to "him that hath an ear," to become the living embodiment and witness of these precious exhortations.

Blessed by God in ourselves, may we be a blessing to those around us!

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What token have I in this world that I am a son of God? The only evidence of it down here is suffering with Christ. If my name be cast out for Christ, that is the world giving its certificate to my sonship. The world does not know Christ, and does not know me. The only proof it can give of my sonship is a stone cast at me, or a door slammed in my face.

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## THE WORLD OR GLORY.

(1 Cor. ii.)

THERE are two things contrasted here, the wisdom of God—the things of God; and the wisdom of man—the things of the world. Modern infidelity says, that we cannot understand, and so far it is right. Man is totally ignorant of the things of God, and of the nature of God. With all his learning and talent, when he meddles with the things of God, it is all confusion, and ends with Pilate's question, "What is truth?"

Not so with conscience, however vague. When sin and ruin came in, conscience came in. God gave that to us to use or to get hardened.

"We have the mind of Christ." What a wonderful expression! The thoughts of God about us, before the world began, are revealed and brought out, consequent on the death of Christ. We are in a world which has indeed its own wisdom and glory. But what did it? It crucified the Lord of glory. The cleverness of man only finds out

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the things that existed since the world began—chemistry, geology, harmonies—but man uses the talents which God has given him, to make himself happy without God. And even Christians will often do this. It is not that the things themselves have harm in them, but it is the use man makes of them, even to hide himself from God.

God's purpose always was to bring out His counsels; but He first put man under responsibility. The Second Adam is the man of His counsels: the first Adam was under responsibility, and failed. Law brought out man's failure more fully. Then Christ came and man would not have Him. Then the Church is put under responsibility and fails too. There is not one thing in which He will fail to fulfil His own counsels; but man's failure casts him upon Christ to find grace. Every soul must go through this in himself; and finding his failure in responsibility, be cast completely upon Christ. Christ put Himself in charge to meet man's responsibility completely and perfectly. Sin is com-

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pletely removed and God is completely glorified. The first thing is totally judged; the Second man is a new creation.

We have to go through a world which Satan has formed round nature. The question is, whether we will have *it* or the *Christ* that it has crucified, and the world which is formed round His person—whether the first man is to be exalted as a sinner, or the Second man as a Saviour. God has ordained that unseen world and the glory surrounding His Christ for our glory. Are our hearts, our affections there? If Christ be hid, we are hid. God has associated us with Christ, but it is His purpose that we should pass through this tinsel world to test us, as to whether our hearts are in it, or in the place which He has given us in and with His Son. The presence of the Holy Ghost is consequent on redemption. It is the seal of the position I am set in before God. Life gives me capacity to enjoy; the presence of the Holy Ghost gives me the sense of enjoyment and power. When Christ

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was set in glory, the Holy Ghost says, as it were, Now I can come out, and unfold these eternal counsels. The Man in heaven is the centre of all the glory and associates us with Himself on the footing of God's righteousness; and the Holy Ghost is come to bring out all this. Has He shewn it to you? People say, We do not know these things, and quote, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither has it entered into man's heart to conceive." Well, that is quite true; man's heart cannot understand them, but what follows? "God hath *revealed them unto us by his Spirit.*" Have you never found anything in Christ which made you open your heart? Is it nothing to be able to say, I have come to God? The Spirit reveals, not redemption merely, but holiness, Where Christ is, there is not a jar, in, or around. He is the centre of all, and we too, for we are united to Him. Have you never realized this? Have you never thought of the white stone, the secret known to each that *has* it, besides the general glory? The glory that dazzles all eyes

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is that of Him that loved and saved us. Is it nothing to us to see Christ, the one who suffered for us, thus glorified? The Spirit of God has taken these things, and revealed them to us, that we may live in them. Paul enjoyed them in his own heart; but they lit him up, as a candle does a lantern, to give light to other people. He received it by inspiration, and he gave it out by inspiration. It came out as it went in; revealed by the Spirit, and communicated by the Spirit. Are our hearts touched by these things? Are they thereby separated from the world, or does the world still stick to them like burr? Are we occupied with and living in what He has brought us *to*, or what He has brought us *out* of?

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Heaven is not an unknown place if we are living with God. The Father's house is no vague place, if we know the Father and the Son in our hearts.

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## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

### THE FIRST WORK.

WHEN I have rest in Christ, then I begin to find all my joy and strength in Him, and I occupy myself with Him. This is the first step, or the foundation of true devotedness. I do not become devoted in the true sense until I have found rest in Him. I am, up to this, rather looking to receive from Him. I am more an object to myself, but as soon as I find how fully I am an object to *Him*, then my heart is at liberty to make Him its object, He having made me His. A great deal of what *apparently* is devotedness is an effort to obtain a sense of His interest in one; it is a devotedness to *obtain* intimacy, instead of devotedness *resulting* from intimacy. Hence work is resorted to as affording a kind of joy, according as there is success; but the acts, done with a motive of this kind, betray their source in that the doer is more occupied with success than with assurance of Christ's approval, and is consequently

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dependent on good results for cheer and encouragement. Hence, I repeat, it is when occupation with Himself is the chief delight of my heart that I have reached the foundation stone and the true support of real devotedness. Without this, there may indeed be joy in the work, but there must be something to shew, to make it interesting and encouraging, and this can be known by one, not enjoying His society, not sitting under His shadow with great delight. If He be the delight and resource of my heart, nothing can equal the joy and satisfaction which I find in occupation with Himself. Of this Mary is an example when she sat at His feet and heard His words. There is really no deeper or greater delight or gain to me than sitting in the sanctuary with Him, learning Him. How can anything that I do ever be equal to His society and the unfolding of His mind to me? And when the great work of devotedness is wanting, I am assured, however great or selfdenying the other works may



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be, that they fall short of the mind of Christ.

Nothing can be plainer than that if I desire to be devoted to a person, my first work must be to be well acquainted with that one, in order to do exactly as he wishes. But how can I know what would please Christ (one so infinitely above me), unless I have first studied Him? I must seek acquaintance with Him, and for this I must sit at His feet and learn His word. This is the first thing, and the want of this, even when there is zeal and ability, has led to much unsanctified activity and really profitless work; because if there be zeal and ability, without knowing where and when to use it, there must be a turning to take counsel from nature. And this is just what Martha did. She had zeal and ability, but instead of seeking to understand what was most on His mind, she cumbered herself with a very useful service, but one which was suggested by her own mind. Every servant who has ever known the "good part" can trace in his own course how often he has made

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this mistake and addressed himself to something apparently, and in his judgment, a most useful undertaking and service, and afterwards found how arduous and uncompensating it was to his spirit; while on the other hand, surely the true heart knows well that there is nothing equal to the rewards it receives from Christ, when simply and exclusively occupied with Himself, and seeking His mind and thoughts. And one may always question every work of devotedness, if this first one is wanting. It is in fact the Gilgal where every truly serving one returns to encamp, and whence he issues afresh like the sun to run his course, and like a giant refreshed with wine.

I do not consider that prayer for the work, and waiting on the Lord for guidance and blessing, answers to what I call the foundation of devotedness. It is much more, it is seeking Christ personally, singularly, and peculiarly for His own sake. Oh that we had more of it! more delighting our souls in the beauty and fragrance

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of His ways and counsels, answering to the prayer in Ephesians iii., "That Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith," &c. This is something very rare indeed. It is the Ruth-like heart that cleaves to Naomi when apparently there is nothing to be gained by doing so; and who does so merely to satisfy the affections of the heart. Such an one is always ready for the next work, and that is, doing the immediate will of the one who so entirely controls me. Ruth does exactly as Naomi instructs her, and gleans in the field—an evangelist indeed! Mary Magdalene does exactly as the Lord tells her; and she goes and tells His brethren the very first and chief line of thought in His heart for *them*. In both these cases the personal devotedness came first, and the serving devotedness came next. But it is well to bear in mind that not only is it in His society that I am satisfied myself, but it is there I become qualified for being an exponent of Him who satisfies me, otherwise I am speaking of one I do not know. But if He be sufficient to absorb

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my heart, as I learn Him, so am I qualified, not only to communicate my knowledge, but I do so with the force of one delighting in Him with a satisfied heart. I am not only increasingly delighted myself, but I have increased ability and material to set forth what has satisfied me. This double gain is acquired from association with Him. I am more fully acquainted, deepened, and enlarged in my own heart in that which satisfies, and hence the better qualified to set forth His virtues, and lead others into what I enjoy. It is evident that the first work is occupation with Christ where He is; the next is acting for Him according to the desires of His heart. It is not whether it is the most useful thing, or the thing which by common consent all would commend; but it is that which is distinctly the thing nearest His own heart, what is called the "things of Jesus Christ."

The first great injunction of our Lord to His disciples, when leaving them, was "love one another as I have loved you." He loved us and gave Himself for us, and

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the first desire on His heart is, that His disciples' love should be where His own is, and after the same order too. He gave His life, and He enjoins us to give our lives for the brethren. It is very important to see how we are to please Christ and truly answer to His mind as those acquainted with Him. His heart is in the Church, and He cannot set any disciple, whose heart is near His own, apart from this line. This is His first line, and it must necessarily be ours. And no service would lose by springing from a centre like this. The evangelist works in the far country outside this circle of interest, and yet his heart would always turn to it, and when he finds a lost silver piece (see Luke xv.), he sets it there, for he answers to the heart of Christ who had gifted him for this service.

It is impossible to abide in the heart of Christ and not learn what is nearest His heart; and here was the first great declension of the Church: she had lost her first love. Now there is no recovery, without doing the first work, and

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the first work, the foundation stone of all the rest, is *occupation with Himself*. Then follows engagement with His things, in the line in which His heart moves. Where else could a heart true to Him care to move but where He moves? There is nothing that true love values more than following in company with the loved one in His deepest, closest interests, and no higher favour could be conferred than that He should permit and accept our company in that line; and here it is, the disciples alone get the name of "my friends," the highest position any could ever occupy for Christ on earth.

In every dispensation the heart true to God testified, by the way it clung to the circle of God's interest on the earth; and this not so much when all was in order and security; but the more so when all was imperilled, and when it could not be done without exposing the disciple, the friend, to danger and loss. See the captives in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. See Daniel on the eve of his being cast into the den of lions

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(Dan. vi.), praying to God with his window open toward Jerusalem; his eye still lingering to the last on the spot dear to God. Just so in another day, the widow of eighty-four years *departed* not from the temple (Luke ii.); and again, another widow gave all her living to the treasury for the temple. (Luke xxi.) All these are speaking witnesses of the same devotedness which the teaching of the Epistles fully corroborates.

In Romans xii. we are exhorted to present our bodies a living sacrifice to God. We find in verse 4, of the same chapter, what is the first line of occupation, for the living sacrifice is in connection with the *body of Christ*; and, by extending circles, it widens out into the commonest detail of life; and even to kings, governors, &c. It *reaches* to these, but it *begins* where the heart of Christ is occupied. Again, in Eph. iv., when all the revelation of God's purpose to the Church has been disclosed, then comes the exhortation to walk worthy of our high calling; and the

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first injunction is with regard to the Church; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; and from thence it widens out, and extends to the slave in the household. The Marys know the first work—their hearts are exclusively occupied with this, and hence, when they act, they know what suits His heart. One anoints His body for the burial and the other communicates His mind to His brethren. Occupation with that which is His, peculiarly and distinctly mark each of them in their works on earth. They are exactly in keeping with His heart; they learn its services in secret with Him, and they express them here with a familiarity and ease which an angel could not adopt. They are Christ's ministers to His saints on earth; and, like Timothy, they mind the things that are Jesus Christ's, and naturally care for the state of those on whom His heart is set, or like him they do the work of the evangelist to gather up the missing ones into the rest and delight of His heart.



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If I begin right, there is always something to revert to; but if my beginning be unsound, everything subsequent must partake of the imperfection; and alas! the great error of the day is that there is a great deal of work and toil, without doing the first work.

May the Lord awaken His saints to their double gain in beginning aright, namely, in finding unbounded satisfaction for their own hearts, and the best and most suited service for Him on earth. Amen.

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God has made an horizon for us, and separated us off to it. I look back at God's own proper eternity, and begin with God where He began with me. My walk here ought never to vary. The Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, came down here and walked in a peculiar way, and that is the way I ought to walk. The walk of an adopted son is entirely irrespective of circumstances. The eternal life, which the eternal Son of God has quickened me with, leads me straight up to the Father through all the circumstances. Sonship is companionship with the Lord Jesus Christ. If you want to know what it is, ask God what Christ is and has. *You* are winding the thread round yourself, *God* is winding us all round Christ.

**"PHILADELPHIANS."**

BLESSED are their eyes that see Him,  
Him the holy and the true;  
Gathered round Him, He amongst them,  
His despised rejected few;  
He who hath the key of David,  
God of resurrection power;  
He hath opened heaven before them,  
Shut them in for evermore.

Feeblest works, yet dear to Jesus,  
Weary hearts that wait for Him,  
Eyes that look upon the glory,  
Till all else is dark and dim;  
Midst the wreck, the desolation,  
Where the glorious city stood,  
Called to raise the lonely altar,  
One last witness for their God.

He the golden door has opened  
Of His temple's holiest place,  
Midst these latter days of darkness  
Called them in to see His face:  
None can shut where He has opened,  
None that "little strength" withstand,  
Which He gave amidst their weakness,  
By the touch of His right hand.

Precious to the heart of Jesus,  
Love that keeps the word He spake,  
Knowing somewhat of the sweetness  
Of rejection for His sake;

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Yet so little of the glory,  
Of His scorn, and cross, and shame,  
That His love can witness only  
“Thou hast not denied my name.”

He *their* names will tell in triumph,  
Rest not till the scorers own  
All the love wherewith He loved them,  
Till they see them on His throne.  
He for that bright day is waiting,  
They are waiting till He come:  
Ere the judgment thunder pealeth,  
He will take them to His home.

He their Lord is coming quickly—  
Brethren, yet awhile hold fast;  
In His God's eternal temple  
They as pillars stand at last.  
Here to be cast out, rejected,  
Here to bear the brand of shame;  
There go out no more for ever,  
Bear in light His God's own name,

He will write that name upon them,  
His God evermore their own,  
And the name of His bright city,  
Of the bride who shares His throne;  
And His own new name of triumph  
Then shall shine upon their brow—  
Shall they not rejoice in bearing  
His reproach, rejection now?

1869.

## PAUL'S MISSION.

### THE ROMANS.

IN this epistle the apostle shews how a sinner is brought to God acceptably; and he begins (chap. i. 4) with the Son of God; and how He was marked off as His Son in power, by resurrection according to the Spirit of holiness; and hence in chapter i. 9, Paul terms his mission "the gospel of His Son." It is here he begins, and now everything intervening must be cleared away, and hence, there is a review of the whole character and extent of the evil and distance between the sinner and God; and all this is reviewed in order that it may be shewn how completely it has been removed and answered for by the Son of God. Man in his natural state is traced in his first departure from God (ver. 21) up to the aggravated state of society in general, described in verse 32. Then in chapter ii. the state of the Jew is exposed; and the Scriptures are quoted, in chapter iii. 10 — 18, to prove his desperate and ruined state. And now, all being fully

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disclosed, on man's side; all the world having become guilty before God, the righteousness of God (for man had none) is manifested. It is now, "Being justified freely by his grace, which is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus."

Now the first point is reached. All the enormity on man's side has been met by the propitiation of Jesus Christ and faith in His blood appropriates it; a great and wonderful step; so that God is just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. It is on God's side the righteousness is. He is free to justify me, and therefore the next step is, that I am justified; that is, that righteousness is reckoned to me, hitherto nothing but sin and guilt, and this comes out in chapter iv. 23: "But for us also, to whom it (righteousness)

## PAUL'S MISSION. 323

shall be imputed, if we believe in him, that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." To the one believing in Jesus, God is just; but the one believing in Him who raised up Christ from the dead, is righteous, or just; he is accounted just, he is in the place, through the resurrection, where his soul can enjoy the state which God raising Christ from the dead secures for him. Hence, the second step is, that I am accounted righteous.

The next is in chapter v. 1, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God." But now comes out another state; and one of great magnitude, chapter v. 10: "For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Here we have the death and the life of His Son, the point from which the apostle begins, and the point to which he is bringing us: shewing us how the gospel of His Son has removed every

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thing which stood in the way; and not this only, but also that we are now sustained by His life. This is a great point to reach to, and hence, the finish of that point is, to joy in God, verse 11: but from there, in the remainder of the chapter, the apostle goes into the subject of life. Now we have reached justification of life; not only being justified by faith, but being in a life which is in itself righteous: and hence he concludes, the grace of God reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. The Son's death cleared away in righteousness the evil on one side; and we are now in life in the Son, and thereby living in the righteousness secured by Himself.

Then follows in chapter vi. that we are dead to sin, that the old man has been crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed; that as He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. The glory of the Father is the measure and expression of the Son's reception from the dead, and

hence opens out a new and wondrous sphere of life for us, apart from the old man, for which He died, and from which (in chapter vii.) we have only relief in Christ Jesus; and in Him there is no condemnation. But not only is the Son raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, thus opening out a new life for us, outside of the man under judgment and sinful; but God (chap. viii. 3) sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh—dealt with it in the cross, that all the “claim of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.” And hence, if Christ be in us, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. The whole of the old man is cleared away, and we are assured of being quickened in our mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwelleth in us. We are sons and heirs, and in verse 29 the finish is reached—even that we should be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.



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The circle is now completed. The Son of God marked off by resurrection was the starting-point. (Chap. i. 4.) And now the apostle, having traced the removal of everything between the sinner and God, through the blessed One, and having set us as heirs and sons, sums up by saying that we are to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. The Gospel of the Son of God not only relates how He has met everything against us, and has brought us to God as sons and heirs, but also that we are to be conformed to the image of the One who has done all the work; and besides, we are to measure His love as to everything by this gift, for if God "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

In chapters ix.—xi. the state of Israel, as the people of God on earth, is reviewed; and while their failure is fully owned, their hope is the absolute electing grace of God, by which the Gentiles are admitted into blessing. All is

traced up to God, and He has concluded all in unbelief that He may have mercy on all.

Chapters xii., xiii. map out the saints' course here. First, beseeching them by the mercies of God to present their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, which is their reasonable service; then the manner of the devotedness from the body of Christ—the *first* circle, down to the *personal* circle, in all its details; and on to the *public* circle (chap. xiii.), kings and all in authority, down to the neighbour (ver. 10); and finally, "put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh." (Ver. 14.)

Chapter xiv. down to xv. 7, describes how we are to receive one another, even as Christ also received us, to the glory of God; that we are not to demand of one another to subscribe to a certain routine of religious liberty, &c., but to allow a free exercise of the conscience before God in things affecting it before Him.

The rest of the book, in a very distinct and peculiar way, unveils the high

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and great position which the Gentile saints occupy before God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost; concluding with, "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith. To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."

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"Shew forth the Lord's death till he come."—  
 There is no strength or blessing on earth for us save in connection with that death, and Christ Himself up there. All rolls round Him there. He cannot have a wish but it must come true. He has sent a message not only to Paul and the Church, but to you and me individually, that He wants you to carry in your hearts and lives down here His death until He comes. That death is the sole bud and blossom, and that is to push all else out of the globe which He has redeemed unto Himself, and to push out Satan too.

## VICTORY OVER THE WORLD.

WE are not of the world, as Christ was not of the world. It is not that we *ought* not to be, but we *are* not. All true practice flows from position—from what we *are*. First I get this blessed settled truth; then I find that this life which I have is Christ's life. Our connection with the world is simply as His was—to pass through it. He went through every variety of circumstance in it, but he was always Christ in every circumstance, and we ought always to be *Christians*. He brings into this world that which tests every one in it. He comes as light and He comes as love; He cleanses the conscience, detecting all that is contrary to Himself, and attracts the heart, binding it to himself, enabling us to say "we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one." Many are afraid to say this; and it is true that saints and sinners are so mixed up together now, that it is hard to draw the line, but let God be true and every man a liar, and He *says it*: Christ is our

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life, and Christ is our object, and we have a capacity to enjoy that object.

The word of God pierces between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. It brings in what is absolutely, perfectly, of God; and yet what is perfectly suited to man, as the light of man—the revelation of Christ, to attract the heart, He Himself being the living word. “For their sakes I sanctify myself that they also may be sanctified through the truth.” The word of God reveals what is in God’s mind, and detects everything that is in man’s mind; attracts to the person of Christ, and gives Him to us as an object in glory, that we may run after Him, “forgetting the things that are behind.” If He is the object to be gained, I shall count everything that hinders my reaching this object as dung and dross; and if the world is all dross and dung to me, it is very easy to throw it away.

“God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.” Our life is in the Son, and where do I see

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the Son of God in the world? He had "not where to lay his head." The world could not understand Him, and would not have Him; He could understand the world thoroughly, and therefore would not belong to it at all. He began the world in a manger; there was no room for Him in the inn. Now an inn is a place where you know your position: if you are a great man you will get a great place in the inn, and if you are a poor man you will get a poor place. He got *no place at all in it*, and the end was the cross—crucified between two thieves! The devil carried the whole world in willing bondage to get rid of Christ: then it was not merely *no place*, but absolute enmity. If I really believe that this One, crucified as a malefactor, is the Son of God, then I get the victory that overcometh the world. If I let the world in, just in as much as I do, Christ becomes less precious. If I am occupied with Christ, I do not care about it. If I cling to the world, the commandments of God are "grievous;" if I am clinging to Christ, they

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are not grievous at all; it is all Christ to me.

In 1 John v. 8 I get a threefold testimony to the fact that God has given to us eternal life. Well, where is this eternal life? In His Son. How comes He to *give* it to us? We have nothing of it in ourselves. In my natural life I hate God; and I may go on in that hatred and be for ever miserable in it, unless I get the divine life. There is no divine life at all in the first Adam, it is in the last Adam. We have to insist on this now, that men in their self-love are everywhere talking of improvement, and God is left out entirely. Without God they can make a great deal of man; *with* God, they can make nothing of man, so they leave God out, and they are wise in their generation; for once bring Him in, and all the falseness is detected. Eternal life is only found in Christ. "Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood ye *have no life in you*;" that is to say, If you do not come into the place of death, you cannot have eternal life. You must own

## VICTORY OVER THE WORLD. 333

that flesh is judged entirely, in the cross of Christ, and that the *first thing you need is atonement*. There are three witnesses to shew that eternal life is given of God, and only found in His Son: the Spirit, the water, and the blood. Where did the water and the blood come from? The pierced side of a dead Christ; and the Spirit came down consequent on His ascension. There is no cleansing from sin, no expiation, but by a dead Christ; and this proves that there is no link at all between the old life and God. Many would take the water without the blood; they would pass over death and the need of atonement, and take the water to cleanse Adam's children; that is, they will try to moralize them, and fancy they can do it. They have been many thousands of years about it and how have they succeeded? If I come into God's presence, I *must* own that I need cleansing from guilt, and cleansing only comes from a dead Christ; the blood must be shed to expiate sin. I am responsible to God. I cannot have the washing of



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water except from the death of Christ: it is by the *blood* I am cleansed. The death of Christ was the judgment of everything in the world. *Then* it was that an entire breach was made between God and the world. It would not have His Son; the whole world banded together to get rid of Him.

The third witness is the Spirit. When Christ had wrought redemption for man, and God had placed man at His right hand, then the Holy Ghost could come down, to dwell in those who had been taken out of the place of death and put into the place of redemption. We have a place in the Father's house because of the death of Christ, which has cleansed us for it; and life in Him, eternal life, gives us capacity to enjoy it, and the Holy Ghost comes down as a witness to this. God is not improving the old Adam, He has *done with him*. I have a right to say, I am crucified with Christ, and the life I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who is gone into heaven. My heart is in heaven, and I care nothing about worldly things.

## VICTORY OVER THE WORLD. 335

If I have this life, I say, Ah, I have got it in consequence of the work which has not left a spot on me, and has given me a title to be where Christ is in the glory.

Have your souls got the thorough conviction that what you have to do with the world is to overcome it? that the friendship of the world is enmity to God? Do you think you can improve it? If you can, you must be wonderful people, for *Christ could not*. He came down to see if there was *one* good, and He found—no, not one. If last night the world had crucified Him whom we love, could we go on all comfortably and happily with it *to-day*? And what difference does it make whether it was last night or eighteen hundred years ago? The fact is the same; and if our hearts were clinging to Christ, we *could not* go on with it.

How far are your hearts fixed on Christ? Have you really taken into your hearts the witness of an ignominiously rejected Christ; the witness of the water and the blood; the witness of

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the Spirit dwelling in you, as governing your every affection and thought?

The Lord give you to know in the simplest, fullest way, that the blood of Christ has cleansed you from all sin, and given you a title to be where there is no sin at all—with Him in glory; and to know, too, that the cross of Christ judges all sin; that you are crucified to the world and the world to you; and you have to live by the faith of the One who is gone into glory, the faith of the Son of God.

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**THE EVANGELIST.**—There are vacancies in the heart of Christ, and the evangelist is gifted by Christ to go out and seek the lost ones to fill them. He starts from the heart of Christ and brings the lost piece to where the rest are. He knows what a shelter the heart of Christ is, how it loves and cares for them; he knows what that heart is; and goes out and seeks the lost, because the Lord came to seek the lost. He searches through all the dust here looking for the silver piece; but where does he put it? Surely he knows the place he comes from, and knows the delight there will be in heaven; not merely the delight of the person's own soul, but the delight of heaven. If I am occupied with the heart of Christ, I am occupied with the circle of interest in which that heart works.

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

“SEEK THE THINGS ABOVE,”

THE things which I seek necessarily impart a character to me. It is not only that I must have the nature, which seeks what will suit itself; but that which I seek strengthens the nature which induces me to seek it. Hence the character and walk here is in correspondence with the study and occupation of the heart. It is not what a man *does* that forms him; what he does reveals what he has *sought*; his acts tell the nature of the things he has really pursued. They are the expression of his ability and taste, not *merely* of his ability, but of his ability in the line of his desires. A man seeking to be rich betrays in his acts the extent and force in which he is really seeking riches. The thing sought gives a character to him, and the strength of the prepossession is disclosed by the acts; so that two things are manifested—the nature of the thing sought, and the force in which it is sought. I gather from the acts the

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desire and ability of the man; but he is formed by the thing he seeks. Hence we see the importance of the word, "If ye be risen with Christ, seek the things which are above." If I seek the "things above," my acts here will reveal what I seek, they will be heavenly; because the acts must follow the occupation of the heart. But not this only. If I am seeking the things above, I cannot seek the things here; and the things *above* are where "He sitteth;" the things *here* where He has been refused. And the more my acts reflect and support my seeking, the more eagerly and heartily do I seek; and I am not only seeking, but *thinking* of things above, and not of things on the earth.

To a saint set here on this earth it must be a most serious question, what he is to seek; for what he is to do will follow, as I have said, from the things sought; and it is in every way important, for a mistake here affects every act of his life. Now, all through scripture, we find that the saint was tested by this very thing—the thing which he

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sought; and the word of the Lord alone determined what he should seek. Noah was not to seek the earth as it was, but the ark, and he was blessed accordingly, and the thing he sought imparted a colour to his whole course and ways. Abram must turn his eye from Babel, and, a sojourner in faith, "seek a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Hence he confessed he was a stranger and a pilgrim, "for they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country." If it be admitted that I am here, where Christ is not, and if Christ be my life, there can be no question as to the claims on me to seek the things where He sitteth. I am set to journey through a scene where He is not—to be a follower of Him who has been refused here. And how else can I know what suits Him, save as I am conversant with the place and things where He is? Moses is shewn the tabernacle, the figure of the true, in the glorious mount, and surely we cannot walk in unison with Christ, who is in heaven itself, if we do not

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"seek the things above, where he sitteth at the right hand of God."

When I seek the "things above," I necessarily turn my eyes from things below, and I find myself in association with Christ "where he sitteth." The seeking is in connection with the scene where I am blessed with *all* blessing. If I am risen with Christ, I must occupy myself with the scene where He is, or I shall fall back to the things out of which He has risen; and the very fact that I am in the scene where He is not, makes it the more necessary that I should be occupied with the scene where He is. How are we to conduct ourselves in a scene where He is not, if we are not connected with Him, and do not cherish and strengthen our links with Him in the scene where He is?

The "things above" only instruct us as to what is due to Christ, while we are mixed up with things here where He is not, and where He has been rejected. And hence, when the rejection of Christ was consummated at the stoning of Stephen (Acts vii.), then the

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 341

Holy Ghost, filling the heart of Stephen, gave his eye the new and right direction: "He looked up *stedfastly* into heaven," with no uncertainty or hesitation, but *stedfastly*. Everything now was to come from above. There, now, Christ must be known and enjoyed; even as Elijah said to Elisha, when failure was at its height in Israel, and nothing more was to be looked for here; "If thou see me when I am taken up, it shall be so unto thee." (2 Kings ii.)

Gilgal was the spot to which the army of Israel was to return after victory (Josh. v. 6; ix. 6; x. 15, &c.), in order to revive and refit for conflict, in occupying the land. Now it is "above," clear outside all, where the reproach of Egypt is rolled off; *there* we must be in spirit in order to be adjusted and fitted for the duties and warfare of the scene. Let us examine scripture, and we shall see that it is from "above" that we derive adequate ability to meet every duty; and that every blessing and gain also comes from thence. Begin where we may, it will be found that the magazine,



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the place of supply for everything connected with us, is from "above."

As to ourselves personally, where do we circumcise but "above?" where obtain power to mortify our members on earth? And it is because souls are so occupied with the wilderness, and its need, instead of with the "things above," that they do not circumcise, and cannot really and truly deny their own wills.

But it is not only that in seeking "things above," I am enabled to circumcise; *there* indeed I *must* be circumcised; but the only true way to maintain myself there is, "forgetting things behind, and reaching forth unto the things before, pressing toward the mark for the prize of the calling of God on high [or above]. (Phil. iii.) Being above, I get free from the evil membership on earth; and in my walk here, I pursue a true course, because I press toward the mark for the prize of the calling of God above. And when I turn to things in relation to God, how entirely am I connected with "things above!" I pass into the holiest—heaven.

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itself—through the blood, through His flesh, the new and living way; and I have a great High Priest over the house of God.

There is no intelligent or happy acquaintance with my position before God, but as I am “above;” and there is no expression of worship, such as He seeks, except as I am in the holiest of all. Nor am I able to hold fast the profession of my hope, but as I am in the place to which faith leads me. But besides worship, I only know the things which have been prepared for me, as I am in the Spirit, who searcheth all things, even the deep things of God. What is prepared is “above;” and if it be not revealed by the Spirit, there can be no ability to comprehend it, or any of the deep things of God. How can I, in a scene which is in the hands of the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air, be able to form a right judgment about anything going on here, but as I am above in the sanctuary? See Psalm lxxiii. 17, there I learn for myself the solution of everything, and

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can rejoice in my position there, away and apart from all here.

Again, if it be with respect to things to come, it is with me now as with John. "Come up hither, and I will shew thee," &c. (Rev. iv.), because the same things seen from God's side, and from man's side, present a very different appearance. The head of gold to Nebuchadnezzar is a lion to Daniel. High or low, things human or things divine, all obtain their value and true direction from being connected with that which is above. Even for temporal wants I am to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto me. A master is to remember that he also has a Master in heaven (Col. iv. 1), in order to regulate his conduct toward his slave on earth. If the "above" is not sought and kept before the soul, as the place where Christ sitteth, and whence every sustainment must come, there must be manifest defect here in every act; for He is passed into the heavens, touched with a feeling of our infirmities, apart from

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sin, in order to supply to us from Himself the grace that was in Himself down here, and thereby to enable us to walk as He walked, the Son of man that is in heaven. And it is as I behold the Lord in glory that I am transformed to the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord; and am qualified to minister of the Christ now in the presence of God, either to saint or to sinner; for there only can I know the glory of the Lord for the one, or the terror of the Lord for the other.

There is neither growth nor gain of any kind but as I "seek the things above."

We work on here only as connected with this scene as in a diving bell. A diving bell is maintained in the waters by connection with the air above, and so we are maintained in the scene by connection with our life outside it, where He sitteth at the right hand of God. It is quite as possible for a tree to grow and flourish without any sustenance, as for a saint to act according to Christ's mind apart from Himself, where He

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sitteth: and every defect in doctrine and practice is simply traceable to neglect of this—the only proper direction of the eye, viz., “things above.” It will be said that we are ever receiving favours from God on *earth*, and are we not to enjoy and prize them? I reply, Certainly, but where are they to carry the heart? Is it to rest in the scene where Christ is not, or to rise to the hand which has liberally and bountifully provided for us? God is the same and has the same love for us below as above; but here He provides for us with reference to our new place and relationship, and not simply with reference to our natural state and condition; and hence all His arrangements for us, if rightly accepted, would lead us above, instead of binding our hearts to what is below. His gifts come down to ease us in a world like this, that our hearts may rise the easier to the scene where He displays the fulness of His love for us. And if there be chastenings in the circumstances here, it is only the more effectually to detach us from all here and to lead us to the home *where*

## THE MANNA.

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He has given all to us. So that "seeking the things above" ensures every good thing for us, in every condition.

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## THE MANNA.

ONE of the last things to be overcome in the wilderness is the tendency to grow weary, and our souls to loathe the monotonous supply for the road. There is nothing very novel in the wilderness journey—still a desert, and still a walk, and still the same self to combat with. It is remarkable that it was after a great victory that the Israelites loathed the manna. The stirring and exciting scenes of open warfare were strangely in contrast with the daily gathering of manna, to sustain life. It is in the wilderness that we learn dependence, and the vicissitudes of it only can teach us. Day after day we are made sensible how utterly incompetent we are to cope with the trials here, and then we are cast on God, and find the manna—Christ as He walked here. His walk and steps on

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earth, all and each indicate to me how He will sustain me here. We are not called to any path here where Christ cannot sustain us, and He affords us the same grace which sustained Himself in our circumstances.

The blessed Son of God has traversed the human pathway, depositing manna as small as coriander seed all along and on every side, to meet the smallest as well as the greatest trials by the way. Never was the path here trodden by such a One before. He has not only traversed it, but He has surmounted every difficulty therein, bequeathing to us the fragrance and power of His grace to conduct us along the scene. Every rose has its manna on it and every thorn, so that we are preserved from the snare of the one, and from the pain of the other. In the smallest quantities it is strewn all around on every point. Our occupation before the sun is up is to gather those minute quantities; and if we gather, we are supplied. The gathering ensures the supply, but the gathering is not in large but in minute portions.

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They are attached to everything, as the dew to the blades of grass. The good is acquired by the soul in the acquaintance formed with Christ, in connection with all the little things around; and as the heart is exercised in this, there is imparted to one the strength and grace in which He passed through them all. I am literally seeing Him in everything. I see them as He saw them, and walk in them as He walked. I abide in Him. How He would be here, and there, and everywhere, in the minutest detail, is the study and acquirement of my heart; and that before the sun is up; before the focus and centre of this system gains a prepossession of me. I am provided, before natural influences can be brought to bear on me. I am occupied with, and assured of, Christ's ways here, before that which would affect me ordinarily as man has interfered with the lines and expressions of Himself. It denotes the seclusion with which we must gather the manna; no natural influences are to be allowed, or there will be a melting away, a dissolving of



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the expression of Christ, which it is so important for us to gather up, in order to be prepared for another day in the wilderness. We are learning Christ in grace, and each day seasons our souls more deeply and fully in God, as touching His interest about ourselves. In Canaan we are occupied with His interests; we have His joys; in the wilderness He enters into our interests, and hence we learn dependence on Him. If we are discontented, it impugns His interest about us, and we must refer it to the serpent, who first suggested that there was in God a lack of interest about us. There is nothing exciting in the wilderness, there is manna only: how the Blessed One walked through this dreary scene, a man of sorrows, but always well pleasing to God. On God's side, and in Canaan, there is plenty of novelty in form and variety; but this is not man's side, nor with reference to man's condition. In the wilderness man is in his condition dealt with in mercy; but in Canaan he is entirely new and circumcised, eating the corn of the land.

**"THE GLORY OF THAT LIGHT."**

I WAS journeying in the noontide,  
When His light shone o'er my road—  
And I saw Him in that glory—  
Saw Him—Jesus, Son of God.  
All around, in noonday splendour,  
Earthly scenes lay fair and bright—  
But my eyes no longer see them  
For the glory of that light.

Others, in the summer sunshine,  
Wearily may journey on—  
I have seen a light from heaven,  
Past the brightness of the sun ;  
Light that knows no cloud, no waning,  
Light wherein I see His face—  
All His love's uncounted treasures,  
All the riches of His grace.

All the wonders of His glory,  
Deeper wonders of His love ;  
How for me He won, He keepeth,  
That high place in heaven above.  
Not a glimpse—the veil uplifted—  
But within the veil to dwell,  
Gazing on His face for ever,  
Hearing words unspeakable.

Marvel not that Christ in glory  
All my inmost heart hath won ;  
Not a star to cheer my darkness,  
But a light beyond the sun.

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All below lies dark and shadowed,  
Nothing there to claim my heart,  
Save the lonely track of sorrow,  
Where of old He walked apart.

I have seen the face of Jesus—  
Tell me not of aught beside;  
I have heard the voice of Jesus—  
All my soul is satisfied.  
In the radiance of the glory,  
First I saw His blessed face,  
And for ever shall that glory  
Be my home, my dwelling-place.

Sinners, it was not to angels  
All this wondrous love was given,  
But to one who scorned, despised Him,  
Scorned and hated Christ in heaven.  
From the lowest depths of evil,  
To the throne in heaven above,  
Thus in me He told the measure  
Of His free, unbounded love.

1869.

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There may be piety without the knowledge of justification, but it takes the shape of *desires*, instead of the settled certainty of the heart and soul having its enjoyment in God's favour. When I have *this*—His approval ruling my heart—*then* comes fellowship, and I get where my heart is active.

## THE OFFERING UP OF THE GENTILES.

I DESIRE to call attention to another part of Paul's ministry than that which usually commands the consideration of the Lord's people—in the Ephesians and Colossians. These two epistles contain the doctrine (as is well known) of the pre-eminence and fulness of Christ, as Head of the Church; and of what the body and its members are, which He nourishes and cherishes as His flesh and His bones.

The Epistle to the Romans, which is the subject of this paper, has to do with mankind as such; and therefore looks at Jews and Gentiles in the governmental and dispensational actings of God, whether in His "goodness or severity." The geographical change of place, so to speak, gives a further interest to this epistle; for God is no longer occupied with Jerusalem, as the centre of light or as the city of the great king; but with Rome, as the metropolis of the Gentiles, and with their times. "To

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them which sat in darkness, and in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up." The sovereignty of God's will and His electing love are now manifested in *their* midst—for whatever the changes may be, as to country or people, still God is active both in wisdom and in grace toward them, and He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

The special point to which I wish to direct the attention of the Lord's people is the offering up of the Gentiles, in Romans xv., xvi., "acceptable to God, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." Another point is likewise stated by Paul regarding himself, "That *I* should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God." Tracing this subject of especial interest to us, we shall find the stability of our souls needs to rest upon the statement of James, "Known unto God are all his works, from the foundation of the world."

In the earliest days of our great mystery, when Simeon saw the Lord's Christ, and took Him up in his arms

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and blessed God, he said, " Mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." Moreover, Simeon said to Mary His mother, " Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be spoken against." I quote this passage because we shall find these statements form the constituent parts of God's actings in the Roman Epistle. In Simeon's prophecy, we see the Jews and Gentiles are both recognized *as such*, and so in the Romans, but with this additional fact, which Paul states, " we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are *all* under sin," so that " every mouth may be stopped, and all the world brought in guilty before God; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Both had reduced themselves to a common level morally as men; and governmentally they were shut up under the righteous judgment of God. At this point it is, and on account of this break down, that

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the hidden purpose of God found its opportunity to come in; and through a crucified but risen and ascended Lord and Head, God is calling out the Church, as the body and bride of Christ.

The prophetical order of the ways of God on the earth was and is, "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the earth with fruit." And though this order may now be suspended through Israel's unbelief, and the calling out of the Church for the heavens, yet it cannot be changed. Indeed this is the order which Paul maintains by the quotations from the prophets and the Psalms in Romans xv., "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, *with* his people;" and again, "Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles, and laud him, all ye peoples;" only that this order (of the Gentile nations being blessed with and through Israel) is in abeyance, while the Jews are broken out of their olive tree, and the Gentiles are grafted in. This, however, is only a dispensational cutting off, as Romans xi. plainly shews, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of

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this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness *in part* is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved," &c. In truth, their own history, as detailed in Romans ix., ought to have made the Jews acquainted with the sovereignty of God, as a principle on which He had acted in their midst; for example, "They are not *all* Israel which are of Israel: neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but In Isaac shall thy seed be called." As it is written, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

Historically, therefore, the sovereignty of God in chapter ix. should have been familiar to them, and have led them to see that it was capable of being applied to the Gentiles, equally with themselves. Dispensationally, they were to learn from Romans xi., that "*their* casting away would be the reconciling of the world." Again, "If the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the



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Gentiles, how much more *their* fulness? . . . . . And what shall the receiving of them be, but life *from the dead*?" Ministerially too, in chapter xv., the people of Israel were appealed to personally by Jesus Christ, when on earth as their Messiah, proposing to establish blessing in their midst, according to the prophetic order, which has been noticed. In verse 8 we read, "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy." Under this ministry, John the Baptist, as the forerunner of the Lord and the preparer of His ways (as well as Christ Himself), preached "the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" but Israel's rejection of Him, and therefore the kingdom in His person, caused the Lord eventually to weep over Jerusalem, and to say, "Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." They stumbled at that stumbling stone, nevertheless the prophetic

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order of the God of the whole earth abides: "For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her (Jerusalem) like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees; as one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem."

It is not consequently in *this* dispensation that the order of God, either as regards the earth or the heavens, the Jews or the Gentiles, the Church or the world, Christ or Belial, God or Satan, can be manifested to sight; this is reserved for the millennial age, and constitutes the public reign of the glorified Christ, as Son of man upon His own throne, when He takes to Himself His great power, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

In the meanwhile God is now "calling out from the Gentiles a people for himself." There is also a remnant called out of Israel "according to the election

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of grace," and these two companies may be plainly seen in the end of Acts ii., and at Cesarea at the close of Acts x. Paul, in Ephesians iii., declares not only that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, the Church; but also "partakers of his *promise in Christ* by the gospel." This latter point is one of great interest, in considering the ways of God in relation to the blessings in Christ; and is yet more distinctly expressed by Paul in writing to the Galatians: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

It is *this* which enables Paul to take the place as the apostle to the Gentiles, and to offer them up (as in priestly character) a new meat-offering to the Lord, acceptable, being "sanctified by the Holy Ghost." It is only the elect Gentiles surely who are thus offered up out of the nations; while the professing Christendom of our day, or the Gentiles, are

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dispensationally grafted in among the Jewish branches, under responsibility of continuing in the goodness of God, otherwise they also shall be cut off.

Nationally, the Gentiles are partakers of the root and fatness of the olive-tree; that is to say, of promise and grace, as we have seen. And further still, Paul, writing to the Ephesians, says, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." Dispensationally, the Gentiles are thus grafted into the olive-tree of Romans xi., and partake of the grace of God through the promises to Abraham; while, ministerially, this grace and these promises, are presented to them in Christ; and this gospel constitutes the responsibility of Christendom, whilst Israel is nationally broken off. But the offering up of the Gentiles, sanctified by the Holy Ghost, is the elect whom God has called out from the Gentiles, a people for Himself, and is similar in this dispensation to the offering up of the Levites by Moses.

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“Aaron shall offer the Levites before the Lord, for an offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the Lord, and they shall be mine.”

In this epistle to the Gentiles of the Roman earth, Paul does not look at them corporately as the Church, with the ascended Lord as the Head; but treats them as on the earth, and in the ninth and eleventh chapters clears this subject, in reference to the Jews and Gentiles, from all difficulty as to the governmental actings of God. With regard to the prophetic order of blessing for the earth, Jerusalem will be still the centre, and Israel the people. But this order is in abeyance till the millennial age commences, in consequence of their rejection of the Messiah, “Jesus Christ, the minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God,” &c.

The close of the Roman epistle brings forward in the meanwhile the fulness of the Gentiles, which Paul offers up to God as the fruit of his testimony to Christ among the nations. This com-

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pany takes a place on earth, as suited to a rejected Christ in heaven. They are not of this world, even as He was not of this world. It is a new holocaust to God—fruit of Christ's work and of God's sovereignty towards us, while "the veil is upon the heart" of the nation of Israel. Further, the apostle declares, "I have therefore whereof to glory through Jesus Christ, in those things which pertain to God; for I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Spirit of God."

The fifteenth chapter is properly a postscript to the whole epistle, and recognizes, not merely this new offering up of the Gentiles, "sanctified by the Holy Ghost;" but consistently therewith "knows no man after the flesh." We therefore find an entirely new genealogy for the people who compose this offering to God, and another mode of salutation corresponding to them as new creatures

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in Christ. "Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who were *in Christ* before me."

"Salute Rufus, chosen *in the Lord*."

"Greet them which are of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord."

So also there is a new form of commendation, which recognizes these, not only as in Christ, but in church connection. "I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church . . . . that ye receive her in the Lord." "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus, who have for my life laid down their own necks . . . . likewise greet the church [assembly] which is in their house." Lastly, as regards labour, "Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord."

The Jews were the people who might *rightly* boast of descent and succession. They had whereof to glory, as their ancestry proves; for of them, as concerning the flesh, Christ came. But we

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Gentiles can only date our new and remarkable genealogy from the end of man in the flesh, and even refuse to know a Christ after that order. We begin where descent and succession have no place nor register. "The offering up of the Gentiles" is one with a risen Christ and Lord. We date from a new starting-point, the man in glory at the right hand of God, where there is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all."

This epistle, which is the charter of our privileges as Gentiles, and still more, the epistle of our liberty and title as the beloved of God, is addressed to the saints, called out of the great metropolis of the Roman earth, and closes by instructing them that though, as Gentiles and Jews, they could *not* receive one another, looked at as in the flesh; yet that in Christ risen and glorified these distinctions are done away. Paul therefore teaches them how to use christian liberty and christian charity towards one another "as regards meats and drinks" and days and years;



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for the kingdom of God is not any longer meat and drink, but "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" wherefore receive ye one another—quite outside these fleshly differences (a lesson which Peter was taught by the sheet)—"*as Christ* also received us to the glory of God."

It is in keeping with our epistle, to notice the way in which Paul commends them to the God of patience, for this needed grace of unearthly and open-hearted reception; as well as the motive for its exercise, which is supplied from the Lord Himself—"now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another" in all that is relative and spiritual, according to Christ Jesus, "that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." We may notice another form of commendation to the God of hope for every thing personal and moral—"now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy

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Ghost." As regards all that is external to themselves, this same God, but as "the God of peace, shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." The disturbing power of the devil shall be set aside, in faithfulness to Christ, and for the glory of God.

In these presentations of God, it is not in covenant names and relations that He is announced, for these are Abrahamic, and Davidical, to which, as born of the flesh, the Gentiles were strangers. To a people "without God, and without hope, in the world," He is become the God of hope: and *now* in Christ Jesus, "ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ; for he is our peace." Disgraceful, and defiling things—the sins of Jews and Gentiles—were met and dealt with in righteous judgment on our substitute and sacrifice at the cross, in the earlier chapters of this epistle.

The application of grace, according to the principles of God's will, in government towards Jews and Gentiles, occupies the middle or dispensational part. The

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whole disturbing and separating power of Satan is challenged in chapter viii. "who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" So that finally, God on the throne of majesty, in the heavens (where the glorified man *is*) can displace the devil, and "bruise Satan under our feet shortly."

Thus, it is beyond and above all the prophetic and dispensational promises, and actings of the Almighty God, or the Jehovah of Israel, that *we* are called to acknowledge Him. Where a risen Christ now is, and we in Him, God is outside all the narrower circles of covenant and promise, which refer chiefly to what is human and earthly; and as the God of patience, the God of hope, and the God of peace dwells in the infinitude of His own sphere (where the glorified Lord is), and calls us to know Him there as "reconciling all things to himself, by Jesus Christ."

Finally, this epistle, which recognizes "a remnant according to the election of grace," out of the Jews (chap. xi.) while Christ is hidden in heaven; as well as

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the sovereignty of God in "calling out from the Gentiles a people for himself" in chapter xv., does *not* make these two companies "one new man" by the baptism of the Spirit, as the body of Christ; though it does shew us this mystery in the distance, as seen in the last verse of chapter xvi. Paul does not teach what the Church *is*, doctrinally, nor how the body is *formed*, though he does allude to the fact in chapter xii.; "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."

"The mystery" itself is stated last of all; and left for other writings of the apostle to unfold, but it is not his starting point or theme. On the contrary, the various lines and dispensational actings of God *on earth* are traced out as leading on to it, in this Epistle to the Romans. This mystery of the Church is an adjunct, and is introduced by a doxology: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my

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gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but *now* is made manifest, and by the writings of the prophets [New Testament prophets] according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith, to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."

May we remember our new elevation, and live in the power of it, as "the epistle of Christ (upon this earth) known and read of all men;" the only fit and proper expression of a people thus offered up to God, sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and waiting for the coming of the Lord, and our gathering together unto Him!

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The question of sin passed between God and Christ in thick darkness on the cross. *Man was shut out.* There God dealt in judgment with the whole thing, root and branch. In Christ, my present is the favour of God; my future, the glory of God.

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

### THE SAINT NOW.

THE cause of confusion to many souls is the inability to distinguish between the standing of a saint now, and in any other time. And the distinction cannot be seen or maintained if Christ's position be not clearly seen and maintained.

Let us examine and trace how the difference of His position affects the saints. Before the death of Christ, man was under trial. God had made trial of man in every way since his first trial in Eden. Left to himself for more than fifteen hundred years, ending with a development so fearful—violence covered the land—that God repented that He had made man upon the earth; and the end of all flesh was determined on. (Gen. vi.) Noah was saved, and placed on the earth under a new covenant. From this there was entire departure. Babel was built; men combined in self-dependence and disregard of God, who had set them on the earth on new terms. Then Abram was called out, and to his

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seed (Israel) everything that could be done for man was done; as it is written, What could be done for my vineyard that I have not done for it? At length the Heir comes, whom they ought to have received; but they caught Him, and cast Him out of the vineyard, and killed Him. Every effort to restore man has proved in vain. The "corn of wheat," the blessed One, must abide alone unless He died; but if He dies, He delivers up man, in His own Person, to judgment; and out of death He brings forth much fruit. The Son of man must be lifted up: there is no door for life to man but through the death of Christ. It is the Son of God, coming into the world from God's side, who bears the judgment on the first man, and then, rising out of it, becomes the Head of a new race; hence the trial of the first man must be over, and life now flows from the Son of God, risen out of the judgment on Adam; for "in Adam all die;" but "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." Man in his

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sins must either receive life from the Son now, or suffer judgment from Him hereafter.

As the trial of the first man is over, everything now depends on the position of the Second man. If the trial of the first man is not over, then Christ is not the Head of a new race; but if Christ be Head of a new race, then the first man is no longer under trial. The atonement has been made, not by man himself, and thus entitling him to retain his status; but he having been proved thoroughly incompetent (the wine out in his brightest moment, as we see in John ii.), and incapable of retaining any blessing or favour bestowed, God, from His own side, brought in salvation. He laid help on one that is mighty—He gave His Son.

The simple fact that the atonement was provided *for* the sinner *by* God, proves the entire incompetence of man to meet the first need of his case. And while it determines the utter inability of man, it sets forth the grace of God,



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providing in mercy for the sinner; and with this purpose, to bring in a new order—a new man, born of water and of the Spirit. The trial of the first man is over in the cross of Christ. In crucifying the Son of God man has no cloke for his sin, “For they have both seen and hated both me and my Father.” The act that proved man irretrievable brought in the sacrifice.

Now it is evident, that as the first man is no longer under trial, and that as Christ risen from the dead is the last Adam, every position of the believer here must be determined by the position of Christ. If Christ were on earth, the believer would be an earthly man fully and perfectly according to the mind of God for a man on earth; but if Christ be in heaven, he lives according to the heavenly man, with no place here.

Christ being now in heaven, the Second man, there is no link to Him there but through the Holy Spirit; through whom is made known to the soul the mind and objects of the heavenly man. Christ is the heavenly man, and because

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He has been refused a place here, He now is known to His saints *where He is*, and thus the heavenly status is known and enjoyed by the saints still on earth.

Properly, the heavenly standing is not fully known until we pass away from this scene; but this peculiar blessing came in, consequent on the rejection of Christ, and is made known to us through the Spirit sent down from heaven. This then causes a great difference between the saint now and at any former or future dispensation. The saint now has to do with a Saviour who is in heaven; and hence, through the Spirit, constituted heavenly in tastes and objects, while empowered to fill in a superior manner every claim and relationship appointed by God for the earthly man. The saint's blessing and position now is determined by the Second man. If Christ were on the earth, ruling in His might here, the man of the earth would be maintained here, as God had appointed, and this will be fully exhibited in the millennium. Then man will live here, in the enjoyment of every

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earthly blessing; nothing to mar the ordering and favour of God and man; and he himself kept through grace in accordance with the law, which defines the course and walk of a man on earth. The fact of Christ's absence involves an entirely different position for the saint now. He is not where Christ is, and Christ is not where he is; He is not *of* earth but *on* earth; he is *of* Christ in heaven, but he is not *in* heaven. It is anomalous to find a saint where the Lord is refused, and hence possible only to faith to apprehend his true status in consequence. It is so anomalous and strange that, practically, souls go back to the dispensation before the coming of Christ, or, more properly speaking, to His first advent. They own His coming into the world as the Saviour, and they prolong, as it were, that period indefinitely. They do not see His rejection, and while they own His death sacrificially, they adhere to the former dispensation, only adding to it the sacrifice of Christ. Now this presupposes the state of man to be

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just the same as before the death of Christ.

In current theology two things are thus really overlooked; first, that the trial of the first man is over in the cross, and an entirely new man brought in; and secondly, the fact of Christ's rejection. Now without seeing both, there can be no comprehending the status of the saint of this period.

The first point to be settled is, whether the first man is still under trial. Is God seeking or using any methods, with the view of testing man's ability to do anything for himself. Has it not been proved that the old bottles cannot hold new wine, and that there is no competence in the first man to retain, or to turn to good account, the favours and ordinance of God? Man has failed in his own condition and in relation to God, either to enjoy and secure to himself the blessings of earth, or to revere God through means of the imposing temple ritual. In the one case the wine is out; in the other, the house of God becomes a den of thieves. (See John ii.)

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But now there has been an atonement in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ for the man who has failed; and as the atonement has been provided by God for man, it testifies of the entire inability of man to do anything for himself; and as it is in God's hand only, He does not restore that which had ever proved itself unworthy and incompetent; but He introduces, in Christ risen from the dead, an entirely new man. If man, since the sacrifice, is still under trial, one consequence or another must ensue: the trial must either be successful or unsuccessful. If successful,—if man answers to the trial, then he is sinless; if unsuccessful, then there must be another sacrifice; for if man is under trial again and *fails*, there must be another atonement, or he is lost. Now to escape this dilemma, there are in the present day two systems of theology; one (the Romish) which maintains that the sacrifice or mass is a continual one; and hence there is no room for seeing that there is an end of the old man judicially in the cross, or

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that the new has come in and is before God in His Son, risen from the dead. The first man is looked at as still the one under trial. The other (Protestantism set on foot by the Reformers) admits that the sacrifice is one and sufficient, but with no consistency; for they practically neither own that the trial of the first man is over on the cross, nor Christ's rejection from the earth. Hence the law is their rule of life, and the believer seeks a position on earth as if Christ were reigning. They call the sacrifice of Christ a full and sufficient atonement, but they do not see it as brought in by God in His love, when the first man was proved utterly worthless; or that the believer is risen with Christ, in whom and from whom he receives a new life. The last Adam is a life-giving spirit, and therefore everything for the saint now is determined by the position of Christ the Second man.

Nothing is more evident than that the atonement being provided by God for that which has been proved thoroughly

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worthless, and unfit for Himself, He does not restore it: He judged it on the cross of His Son, and, in Him risen, receives every returning prodigal in a new nature and life. To sum up, Christ's position in heaven determines ours. He is where we are not. We are where God's Son has been refused. We are surrounded by man who refused Him, and who is no longer under trial, because God has brought in a new man, in His Son, who is in heaven. Hence the status of the saint now is heavenly, united to Christ in heaven, by the Holy Ghost sent down; through grace he acquits himself in a superior way, in every duty incumbent on the first man, as God has appointed: but he has no link or place here, as the millennial saint will have; for *then* Christ will be reigning here, and the saint will be where He reigns, instead of, as now, where He *is refused*.

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