

A
V O I C E
TO
THE FAITHFUL.

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

VOL. IV.

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A Voice to the Faithful.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

IN the parable of the prodigal son, Luke xv., the Lord Jesus is unfolding the heart of God to the returning sinner; the knowledge of God as the apostle terms it in 2 Corinthians ii. 14, when he thanks "God who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of *his knowledge* by us in every place." It is the knowledge of *what He is*—the state in which He can meet the sinner. It is not only His love. True, all springs from that; it is the source of everything. I enjoy the blessing of it—I drink of the stream; but more than this, I know that its origin is in God's own heart, and that it can never fail. But that is not the point I would consider now, but the *state* of God's heart with regard to the

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returning sinner. This is a great thing to see. It gives rest and vigour to the soul to know what God is, and the nature of His feeling towards me.

The prodigal comes tremblingly enough, but the fact that there is bread in his father's house, encourages him, while on the father's side, the kiss greets him. "When he was yet a great way off, his father ran and fell on his neck and kissed him." God sends the kiss to me *where I am*, that I may know the thoughts of His heart towards me. We get the same idea with regard to Isaiah (chap. vi.), when the live coal touched his lips. One of the seraphim flew, having a live coal in his hand, and laid it upon his mouth, where he was; and it gave him a distinct intimation of his place with God. It made good to his soul the state in which God was towards him; how He could receive him. "Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged." Now if I turn to 1 Timothy i. I find that Paul uses the expression, "the blessed God," when he speaks of the

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glorious gospel committed to his trust, which may be translated more literally, "the gospel of the glory of the *happy* God." That is the condition in which God is, happy in receiving sinners. What a condition ! That was what was committed to Paul; he who was before a blasphemer, and persecutor, and injurious, says, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me *first* Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should believe on him to life everlasting." Note the two *firsts* in this passage. He was the first or chief of sinners, and the first of saints as to the manner of his reception. The first on the list of sinners; that is, there never was a greater, for he was rushing on in direct opposition to the will and heart of God; and the first as to the manner of his reception, he is a "pattern to all them who should believe to life everlasting." Paul is the

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pattern, and the thing entrusted to him is the gospel of the glory of the *happy* God; and hence, as in the case of the prodigal son, what is presented is the Father's reception of the sinner; and what the Lord studiously describes in that parable is, the wonderfully happy state of the father's heart in receiving the returning one. Hence the kiss comes to him "a great way off;" and is an unquestionable, unequivocal assurance of the nature of the reception that awaits him. It is not merely an intimation of how happy *he will be*; but of the happiness of God in having him. It is not that he is looking for the kiss, he has not a thought of it; his thought is all about bread. The kiss surprises him—the father fell on his neck and kissed him. This was a distinct intimation of the state of the father's heart, and how free it was, to come forth and express itself, according to its own will and pleasure. It is not only the love from which it all springs, but the liberty of the father's heart to express that love; and this is the knowledge of God, and

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what the gospel of the glory of the *happy* God discloses.

Now in 2 Corinthians iii. we find how this has been brought about. The apostle says (ver. 6), "God hath made us able ministers of the new covenant." The terms of the old covenant were that righteousness was demanded; that of the new, that righteousness is ministered. A distinct revolution has come about. Once it was a ministration of death and condemnation; now there is a ministration of the Spirit and of righteousness; not of the letter, or letterwise, as demanding something of me; "for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life;" therefore he says, "the Lord is that Spirit." Christ is the essence of the whole thing; the beginning and end of everything. See the amazing change. If (says he) the ministration of death, which was to be done away, is glorious (glory is the expression of what God is in His own attributes), how much more glorious must that be which will remain! If the exaction of righteousness was in

glory, how much more must the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory !

Let us note the character of this revolution which has taken place, for if we do not see it, we shall not understand the gospel of the glory of the happy God. God on mount Sinai demanded righteousness. He was entitled to demand it, but there was none; now the marvellous thing is, that He ministers righteousness from God's own presence, instead of exacting it from us. We may illustrate this revolution by the difference between my demanding money of a man who is indebted to me, and my filling his purse with gold. Thus it is with the ministration of righteousness. It comes forth from God in glory, maintaining God in His own perfection. It is not that He overlooks the debt, but He has received in Christ satisfaction for the debt; therefore it is not mercy only, but a ministration of righteousness. Now there can be no righteousness unless there be an answer to its first demand, satisfaction for everything that incurred the judgment

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of God. Mount Sinai's demand must be perfectly met before God could minister righteousness. Could I meet it? There is judgment and death on me! How then has it been met? How has God got all He demanded? I will now consider.

God's Son comes into the world; for thirty years He walks here the beautiful expression of God in every attitude and circumstance; then comes forth as the servant of God, encounters Satan and every character of contradiction in a world that is hostile to God, exhibits all the beauty and blessedness of divine love to man, meeting every shape and character of grievance; relieving every sore on humanity, bearing their sicknesses and carrying their sorrows; manifesting the Father fully. And what is the issue as far as man is concerned of those thirty-three years in which was exhibited all the perfection of God in a man? This Blessed One says, "I am alone; I have not brought one to the same level as myself, as a man before God." "Except a corn of wheat fall into the

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ground and *die, it abideth alone.*" (See John xii.)

Now mark what must happen! That glorious One—who made everything in the world, by whom the heavens and the earth were created, on all of which the eye of God could rest—must now suffer on the cross for man. After having shewn what the ways of a man ought to be in every minutia of life, a perfect transcript of the living God in the compass of a man, He must die.

This perfect man must undergo the condemnation of death. He must meet the question of righteousness, in all the terrors of Mount Sinai. And more than that, He not only bears the penalty but that which incurred the penalty. "He was made sin for us who knew no sin." He says, "Father, save me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour." What a thought! This wondrous, perfect One, must be broken up *for me*. He undergoes the sense of having incurred the judgment of God, and cries "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

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In John xiii. 31 we read, "Now therefore, when Judas was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." It is in the perfect vindication of God in all His nature and attributes in the cross, that the moral glory is perfectly declared; and there also is the complete triumph over Satan and all the combined power of evil. This transcendent moment is of the deepest interest to the soul! There are two things which none but Christ could know, and both impossible for us to know: one is, that He knew perfectly the nature of the love that was in the Father's heart; and the other, that He knew fully the righteousness of God, and how great the offence done to Him. Now He came to fulfil the righteousness (for He only knew what would meet the mind of God), in order that He might declare the love that He only could fathom. We have a very faint idea of the righteousness or the nature of the offence, and how Christ in everything met the will of God. He endured the demands of God in righte

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ousness in the same moral perfection in which He was when transfigured on the holy mount, where He was not in relation to sin at all. There He was glorified as the perfect man. As the veil of the holiest, on which were wrought the cherubim in needlework, so beautiful in everything was He to the eye of God, that a voice comes from the excellent glory, declaring, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." That very man, then and there glorified, is the one that was crucified for me! On the mount of glory I see Him as the faithful and true Witness, receiving dignity from God. On the cross, I see Him going under the wave of judgment, into distance (my distance) from God for me, bearing it in a like perfection, in such unswerving trust in God, in that terrible moment, inscrutable to us, when His soul was made an offering for sin, and He suffered the just for the unjust.

"Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway

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glorify him." The perfection of moral glory has been reached, and hence the glory of the Father claims Him as its own, even from under the judgment of sin. Glory comes down as the seal of the work on the cross. It is not here that He goes up to the glory, but the glory comes down (the glory in heaven) to greet the fullest moral glory on earth. "He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father." How wondrously blessed! He was down under judgment, so unique, so honouring to God, so meeting all His righteousness, the nature of its exaction—every atom of it; baffling in holy energy Satan and all the bulls of Bashan in that terrible hour of darkness, and glorifying God so in it, that the Son of man was glorified in the very moment that man was condemned. He is raised out of the death of judgment; taken up from the dead by the glory of the Father; the glory claims Him as its own, and He is set down on the right hand of God!

The One who has fulfilled all righteousness has gone up to the right hand

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of God. He is the Mediator of the new covenant, of which He makes us "able ministers." Hence it is that righteousness is now ministered. There is no difficulty in comprehending the ministration of righteousness, if it be seen that it is the man that is changed before God. It is no longer the first Adam, but Christ the Second Man at God's right hand. *To* one there was a ministration of death from mount Sinai, because there was no righteousness. *From* the other there is a ministration of righteousness, because righteousness has been established in Him risen from the dead. And the knowledge of God is, that He can now come forth as the "happy God," in all the brightness of Himself, and take a poor sinner into connection with this righteous One in glory.

Paul calls it "the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, which is hid to them that are lost, and whom the god of this world hath blinded, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of

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God, should shine into them." It is an immense fact to look up and see righteousness ministered from the glory of God. Have we the sense of it in our souls? Can we say, 'I see the Son of man glorified, the man who was condemned for me? I have to do with Him now?'

Now for an example. Paul was the first, the chief, as to sin; the first as to grace, in its fulness. Saul of Tarsus, irreproachable in man's eye, correct as to the law, was chief of sinners in God's eye. To him God reveals His Son in glory, and expresses to him the state He is in towards him, without any previous preparation at all. Paul tells his own tale. "At midday, O king [he says], I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun." Everything on earth was entirely eclipsed. The sun rules the day. The most learned cannot tell the amount of its influence. But now a light from heaven, *above* the brightness of the sun, arrests the career of Saul; and the very One whom he is persecuting is

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manifested to him *there*, in light that eclipses everything *here*; as he says, "When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me." What a magnificent sight! What a display of the happy God! Is not this the kiss? It is the seal of the state God is in, when He can take up the worst sinner down here, and reveal His Son, the eternal life, to him. Previously there was no change in Saul; but God effects the whole change. He comes forth in all His eternal majesty, and manifests His own Son to the chief of sinners. The light is above that of the sun, because He is striking out a new path for Himself, and picks up the worst sinner on earth and connects him with His Son in glory, who has brought about the revolution of the ministration of righteousness, instead of the ministration of condemnation. The glory is the seal of what His Son has accomplished. In Paul, first, God will shew forth the liberty and happiness of His heart in receiving the sinner.

The thing that is puzzling people is that they add to the gospel exaction of

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some kind; but if I think there is exaction, I do not believe that the glory has come down and sealed that wondrous work on the cross, and taken the One who bore the judgment out of the judgment that He bore *for me*; that He has been glorified, He who glorified God under judgment *for me*. Christ was glorified out of the condition which we are in, and there He also glorified God.

Supposing I am in a boat, and it sinks to the bottom, if one comes to where I am, and I get into his boat, and his boat is taken up into heaven, should not I be brought up too? Christ came to the bottom of my sin and judgment. Through grace I come up in Him. "We are quickened together, and raised up together, and made sit together in heavenly places in Christ." People's difficulty is, that while all Christians allow that Christ was glorified, they do not see that He was glorified *from under judgment*. If He be glorified out of the judgment of sin, where is the believer but in Him in glory? It is not only that

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Christ has put away my sin, taken me out of the water, borne judgment for me, but He has done more. He has gone up into glory. Supposing I owed money to a bank, and a friend cleared away my debt; I should be quit indeed, but that would not produce any tie between me and the banker, and I might never enter the bank again, or the bank care to see me. But supposing the bank illuminated, to express its satisfaction that there was nothing between me and it, then there would be a distinct expression of the feelings of the bank towards me, and my heart would be assured of the existence of this. Well, God, the happy God, now illuminates. The illumination is the testimony to the returning prodigal. The light of the glory is the expression of satisfaction and gladness; and the glory could not be manifested unless righteousness were established.

There will be feebleness, if we do not see that to faith the cross has removed all the offence, and God is glorified therein, and hence He is set at liberty to reveal His Son to the chief of

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sinners. By faith I have now to do with the One in glory. It is not a question of where it places me, but it gives me a sense of having to do with God in Himself. It is the knowledge of God, therefore it is "eternal life to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." It is not a cold formal thing, that my debt is paid, my sin gone; but the *Father's house is illuminated*. Can Paul forget the greeting he received? Can the prodigal forget the kiss? The illumination, the glory of that light, shone round about him, and when he could not see for the glory of it, Ananias is sent to him, saying, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee, in the way that thou camest, hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost." If his eyes are opened again on this scene, it is in connection with the Spirit who unites him with Christ in glory, and he can say, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

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May the Lord lead souls to see how the revolution has been effected; righteousness entirely met, and that they have to do with the man in glory, the Head of a new race, who fulfilled righteousness. It is not merely that God forgives my sins, but that He has glorified the One who took them all away, and is thus able to take me up on new ground, and to receive me in a new nature in the Person who glorified Him under judgment for my sins, and to express His happiness in doing so.

In looking up to God, let us not stop short in saying "I am happy." Can I say, God is happy in having me with Him? He has come forth to receive me to Himself, giving me intimation here of the wondrous reception there is for me in connection with that blessed One who glorified Him here. Do I rejoice before Him in the eternal scene of light and love into which He has brought me? As I do, I understand "the gospel of the glory of the happy God," and it imparts a tone and a character to me which nothing else can,

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE FIRST INTIMATION OF HIS COMING.

IN 1 Thessalonians iv. we get the doctrine of the coming of the Lord brought before us. The Epistle to the Philippians gives us the power of communion with the life of Christ in the service of the apostle down here. We get two glimpses in Philippians iii., which tell us how the heart of Paul, as fully led by the Spirit of God, was in connection with the hope of His coming. First, "I count not myself to have apprehended." This one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind, I press toward the mark. Secondly, we look for the *Saviour*. His heart was set on that personal meeting *of the Lord* at the end of his course. It was not so much a question of glory with him, but that which would satisfy his heart—the presence of Christ. He was loved by Christ, he was brought into service by Christ, and he was one to whom the person of Christ was so dear that he

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ever with the Lord?" He comes in answer to the longing desire of those whose hearts say, "Come, Lord Jesus." Do you find yourselves saying such words as, "I wait, Lord?" Are you putting your soul into this position? Is your own heart so in the secret of His presence, that He is able to say of you, "That is one who is in the position of waiting for me?" Who is in this practical position of soul? Are you putting yourself in this position, and saying, "I am a weak one, but, Lord, I wait for thee?" This is the comfort of heart, that will keep us through troublous circumstances.

Possess Christ and you will be sure to express Him ; and there will be a solidity about the expression which no activity can equal.

If you have to think of yourself, your joy is not full ; but if you, as having the Holy Ghost, can think of Christ as the one object before you, then your joy *will* be full. When the soul is occupied with Christ, full of Christ, there is nothing to grieve the Spirit, and all He has got to do is to fill us with joy.

THE RACE AND THE REST.

OUR history is properly written in double columns; the one recounting the wilderness journey; the other our heavenly progress. In the former we are learning dependence, in the latter gaining possession. In the one I am learning Christ as He walked here. "When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them." Hence our journey here is called a race. We are sustained to run, and we run in dependence, because there is nothing to rest in. So we grow in dependence. We run the better, but dependence is the great lesson of the wilderness. The other side of our history is heavenly progress. It is with Christ Himself, *where He is*. Your growth in power and joy is as you are occupied with Him. The first fruits is in heaven. The heir is there, and I am consciously united to Him, though not actually in possession. I enjoy Him who is the Possessor, and hence the Spirit who unites me to Him is the earnest of the inheritance. There there

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is no need, no thorn—it is all rest. It is not there as He was in my path here; but as He is in Himself, in His own peculiar blessedness, that I learn Him. *Here* it is a race, and I am to come forth from *there* as a strong man to run a race. *There* I know Him as my treasure, better than the best things here, and though needing His succour all along the road, yet I give up the good things here, in order that I may freely and fully know Him as my gain, “that I may win Christ.” My need here calls out my dependence on Him; but His riches in glory give me independence. As I enjoy Christ in heaven, the rose is eclipsed and the thorn is forgotten. If I drop the weight in order to run, I relinquish all I have here; for where my treasure is, there will my heart be also. As milestones mark the road, so do the wells of His mercy mark the stages in this valley of the shadow of death; but we traverse it as those who know what it is to lie down in green pastures, and be led by still waters. I am a racer and a restor. As the one,

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I am dependent on Him for everything;
as the other, I am independent of every-
thing *here*, because so consciously en-
riched in Him and by Him. May we
abound in both !

THE WILDERNESS JOURNEY.

How blest is the wilderness scene,
How pure and how clear is the air,
Around, there's not one speck of green;
Above, 'tis all beauteous and fair.

My heart with deep gladness can beat,
Nor asks of the desert for cheer;
Press on still unwearied my feet,
In the waste howling wilderness here.

For not *here* doth mine eye turn to rest,
But far hence, where my heart finds her home,
In that blest One, in whom I am blest,
Who has passed from this scene to the throne.

Yes! He my forerunner is there,
Whose footprints I find in the sand;
Who once breathed the wilderness air,
And made it a sanctified land.

And now that He's gone to His home,
He has sent, from the glory above,
A Comforter with me to roam,
And tell me the tale of His love.

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Oh! tale of rich comfort to me,
Told out as no other heart knows;
Oh! wondrous the skill with which He,
To faith, that blest absent One shews

The sun may be scorching by day,
The dews may fall coldly by night;
But I heed nor the chill nor the ray,
While I sit 'neath His shade with delight.

No food can the desert supply,
No waters meander the waste;
But His wellspring of love's never dry,
And His fruit—it is sweet to my taste.

And the Comforter tells me of home,
And gladdens my wilderness gaze;
With the light of the glory to come—
Illumines the path with its rays.

And centres the heart and the eye
On the glorified Man who is there,
Once here, now ascended on high,
For me that bright home to prepare.

Then speak not of weariness more,
With Him my blest portion is cast,
My cup by the way brimmeth o'er,
My heritage waits me at last.

This path which I tread in the waste
Is one vast disclosure of love;
Begun in the passover haste,
Fulfilled in His presence above.

THE PRUDENT MAN.

(Prov. xxii. 3.)

It is necessary to keep in mind the power that is against me, as well as the power that is for me. If I do not know the power that is for me, I have no rest, because I am ever made to feel how little I am able to cope with any of the circumstances around me; and I become irritated in proportion as I desire to master them, unless I have the sense of possessing a power *for* me which is superior to them: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" If I know this, I am not irritated by any circumstance, however hindering.

In fact, I must first learn that God is above everything for me, or I cannot, in such an antagonistic scene as this, have any rest, or anywhere to rest; and the better I know the nature and aim of the power against me, the less am I surprised or unprepared for any assault; and the more I discover the force of my enemy, the more shall I be led to calculate on my resources in God. They

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who see their enemy small, count on small support. They who see him in his true force and violence, look out for and reckon on a corresponding support from God, and receive it.

In heaven I shall not need a conscience ; here I have to watch.

Whenever grace gets into my heart I justify God. The world sets up to judge God, because it is far from Him. If I am near Him, I *must* justify Him, even though He condemn me. When the word of God reaches the heart it proves itself. I do not need to judge it ; it judges me.

Do not let us rest in the cold consciousness of being saved ; let us live in those things into which we have been brought.

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

What the dying of Jesus embraces must be your measure, if you would have the life of Jesus manifested in your body.

PAUL'S MISSION.

NO. III.

1 CORINTHIANS.

IN examining the writings of the Apostle Paul, we find that whatever the nature of the subject may be, he always treats it in accordance with his mission; and hence, the more accurately we are acquainted with his writings, the more able we are to comprehend everything in keeping with the light committed to him.

In 1 Corinthians the subject before the apostle is the place given to the flesh, by the saints at Corinth, who, though endowed with many and special gifts by the Spirit, were carried away by their acquisitions, so that they were elated in the flesh. The point from which the apostle starts in writing to them (as those called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord) is *Christ crucified*. They are now in fellowship with this Lord. How then can they boast in that for which He was crucified? Christ crucified is

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to the Jews a stumblingblock, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto us who are saved, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Christ looked at in connection with man in the flesh is the crucified One; but this crucified One is, on God's side, the power of God and the wisdom of God. The One who maintains the highest and the fullest place with God, has occupied the place of deepest humiliation in judgment on man's side. Accept Him as your Lord, and you must accept Him as the power of God and the wisdom of God; and hence, no flesh can glory in His presence. "He that glorieth, let him glory in the *Lord*." The Lord is in contrast to man in the flesh, and is referred to no less than eight times in the first chapter. In fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, I cannot glory in the flesh; because if my fellowship be true, then I must connect myself with Him in crucifixion, and there the flesh is ended in judgment. The apostle shews that in Christ we have no connection with the flesh; and in chapter

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ii. he reminds them that his theme among them was Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He gave the flesh no place, lest their faith should stand in the wisdom of man, and not in the power of God; and then points out that the things of God can be comprehended only by the Spirit of God; that the natural man can neither receive them nor know them. It is a most interesting point. If the natural mind be allowed to take the lead, we cannot comprehend the things which are freely given us of God: we have lost the intelligence, which belongs to us, in fellowship with our Lord, for we have the mind of Christ, and hence cannot descend to the natural mind. Thus in these two chapters, first, the flesh as a whole is set aside in crucifixion; and secondly, as to its mind, its incompetency and inferiority are presented.

Now in chapter iii. the apostle shews, that with the carnal there is envy and strife, and a setting up of one man in preference to another. There is no foundation but Jesus Christ, and if any

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build thereon in his own wisdom, his work shall be manifest, for the day shall declare it; because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If the work of any one abide, which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward; but if the work of any one be burnt up, he shall suffer loss; he himself shall be saved, but as by fire.

In the former chapter, we have seen that the mind of man could not comprehend the things of God. Here we are warned that *the works* will expose the source they come from, as not only ignorant, but mischievous. The point here is, that when the flesh is permitted to act, it tampers with Christ's building and thus it can be detected. Hence, the apostle says, Let no man deceive himself. If any man thinketh himself to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise that they are vain. Wherefore let no man glory in men, for all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or

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the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come: all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

Next (chap. iv.), the apostle refuses to be examined by them or by man's day, but refers everything to the coming of the Lord (ver. 5), who shall also bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart. The foundation of everything here for God is Jesus Christ. His day, His coming, will decide about everything. Man's day is not the time for examination, we must get into another light; and then he describes the great practical distinction between himself and them. They are in everything as men in nature, filled, enriched, and reigning; while the apostles, on the contrary, are appointed to death. "We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised, &c. (Ver. 10—16.) The sum is, "Be ye imitators of me." In chapter iii. it is the internal, the im-

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perfect building; and here the external, the low, unworthy testimony.

In chapter v. is exposed the vileness into which the flesh sinks when unchecked. It has not been crucified on any side; on the contrary, it was gloried in, and here is the consequence. Evil had sprung up in the Church exceeding what was known among the Gentiles, and the saints were not troubled by it, but puffed up. So blinding and deluding is the flesh, that instead of mourning as godly ones would, that such a one might be taken away from among them, they are puffed up, they have no sense of defilement by *contact*, the flesh never could. There is no church conscience, as I might say.

The remedy for this state is simple. Paul reverts to the *Lord*, in whom we are in fellowship, and directs "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, you and my spirit being gathered together in the power of our Lord Jesus Christ," to deliver the offender to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, which had not been crucified. Through the name and

power of the Lord Jesus Christ, the ground is cleared, and then the apostle explains, that Christ, our passover, having been slain for us, we are to keep the feast of unleavened bread. We are on entirely new ground, the ground of redemption, feeding on Christ risen. Now, with this insensibility which belongs to the flesh, as to what was due to God's house—the Church—there was also a glaring evidence of ignorance and insensibility of their own true dignity; for they in matters of dispute went to law, with one another, before the ungodly; an insensibility necessarily consequent on the former; for, if I do not see what is due to God, I cannot see what is due to myself as a saint. This leads to the distinct truth (chap. vi. 13); that the body is the Lord's; a truth which gives the clue to every duty and calling.

In chapter vii. marriage must be in the Lord.

In chapter viii. another working of the flesh is rebuked and corrected. Selfishness only thinks for oneself, and

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never considers how much another may be injured by the use of liberty, and indifference to the conscience of the weak; therefore it is sin against Christ.

In chapter ix. the apostle points out how he waives his rights, in order to serve others; and still more, he kept under his body, even for his own benefit.

And then in chapter x. he clears the ground by shewing our avowed connection with the Lord. Having first warned them by Israel's history he calls on them to flee from idolatry, in verse 15, and then he adds, "I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" Summing up with these words, "Ye cannot drink of the Lord's cup and of the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." The higher association severs us completely from the lower. "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?" Thus, in every

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form in which the flesh betrays itself, the apostle, true to his mission, rises to the *Lord*, and in the light in which he views the flesh, in any of its works, so he bears down on it, sets it aside, and leaves the Lord master of the field.

(To be continued, D. V.)

THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD:

THE BODY AND BRIDE OF CHRIST.

THE Lord's teaching in Matthew xvi. introduces the subject of the Church, and follows very necessarily the question put by Him to His disciples, at Cæsarea Philippi: "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" Simon Peter's reply is all important as the true confession of His person: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and with this stands connected these assuring words, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven." In this precious circle of faith and blessing, into which

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this confession of the person of the Son of man brought Peter and the disciples, is found the nucleus of the Church's existence as well as of church security and of church extension, for the Lord adds, "I say also unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Further, it is of great moment, as regards "the kingdom of heaven," to notice that in whatever associations it may have been previously presented to Israel by Jesus and His disciples, it gains an additional glory, as the Lord, in the title of the "Son of man," passes out of Messianic prophecies to the nation, into the wider range of manhood relationship and blessing, as well as of Godhead purpose and counsel. The enlarged relations of Christ Himself, both human and divine, as Son of man and Son of the living God, impart their own character to the kingdom and its glory, and constitute a new basis for that other revelation, now called "my church," which was to be built upon

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this confession of Christ's person. Moreover, He adds, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Consequent upon this new revelation of the Church and kingdom, the Lord charged His disciples "that they should tell no man that he was Jesus, the Christ." The earthly relationships were closing up to the eye of the Messiah, as these heavenly ones were opening out to His heart. Therefore, in verse 21, it is emphatically said, "from that time forth *began* Jesus to shew unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."

These foundation stones, upon which the Church and kingdom were to be based, and this new title of redemption, in which He would take their glory—till, by resurrection power, He would come into each in their proper seasons—

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were beyond Peter's conception: "be it far from thee Lord, this shall not happen unto thee," marked the distance of the natural heart from the ways of God and the mind of Christ. Little does the assumption of Christendom (which claims succession from Peter) remember the Lord's rebuke to him, touching His betrayal and death, "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." The Church's earliest lesson (we may say) of the difference between faith and feeling, and between flesh and spirit.

Our new discipleship in verse 25, springs out of the same ground on which Christ lays His own glory, "who-soever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." Death is the new way to life, whether in the Lord and Master, or in the disciple.

In this important chapter we are thus taught upon what the Church is founded and who is its builder, as well as the extended nature and character of the

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kingdom of heaven. Consistently with this ("after six days), Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." Peter says respecting this scene and its king, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of His majesty, for *he received* from God the Father honour and glory," &c.

In the wider relation of "*I* the Son of man," in which He presented Himself to Peter's faith, as well as in the title and royalty of David's Son, He is accepted and acknowledged in the unclouded light of the mount of transfiguration, and it is correspondingly from God the Father, though the Jehovah of Israel, that He receives honour and glory. Moreover, majesty is reached in His righteous title and bestowed on Him as the Son of man, thus regaining more than Solomon and

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the royal line of David had forfeited, and holding it for Israel's future blessing and Jehovah's covenanted promises as their king, but on the yet larger and far more precious relation *to us* of "Son of the living God."

We may here drop the kingdom of heaven, to follow other scriptures respecting the Church. Next in importance to its foundation on the Person of Christ in death and resurrection, is perhaps the coming together of the disciples upon the confession which Peter made to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Matthew xviii. gives us this step in advance, by that well-known passage, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;" and this is a great dispensational fact, though anticipative; serving not only for remnancy at the end of the age, when all is in ruin, *as now*, but as the ground of the Pentecostal assembly in its perfectness, as at the outset. The Son of the living God is likewise the risen and ascended Lord, "the name" to which

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we are individually gathered, and kept by the promise of "*there am I in the midst.*" We may easily see the comfort and strength which this brought to these disciples when they returned to Jerusalem, and went up into an upper room, and there continued in prayer and supplication. Many can as unhesitatingly declare the encouragement and blessing the twos and threes have realized in these our days, who have found an unfailing resource in the abiding promise of the Lord's faithful love.

Still, neither of these passages (Matt. xvi. and xviii. is final, as to the measure of the Church's portion, or what constitutes the Church, though they are so precious in themselves as resting-places for our souls on their way to the apprehension of the mystery of the Church, and the unity of the Spirit, on earth. A moment's consideration will lead us to discover that these chapters are incomplete; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, nor was the Lord in His proper place on high, as the Head of the body.

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As introductory to the mystery of the Church, these scriptures are invaluable: but Jesus, after His resurrection (in John xx.) breathed on these disciples, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," thus bringing them into closer association in life with Himself, as the risen One, and putting them on the ground of relationship with His Father and their Father. Acts i. is the next link, when, as the ascending Lord, He promises "to baptize them with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Moreover they were not to depart from Jerusalem, but wait for "the promise of the Father." On the day of Pentecost "there came suddenly a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." The Spirit which abode on Jesus in the form of a dove, now rests on these men as in cloven tongues of fire. The Holy Ghost descends as the power of gathering these believers into a oneness with the glorified Lord and Head now on high; and He added to the Church daily such as should be saved. Jerusalem was still

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the place of this new action of God, as the yet existing centre on earth of His promises and ways. In acknowledgment of this, Peter and John went up together into the temple, at the hour of prayer, and preached to the nation, that the God of their father Abraham had "glorified his Son Jesus;" exhorting them to repent, that their sins might be blotted out, when "the times of refreshing should come from the *presence* of the Lord."

Most are familiar with this double character of the ministry of Peter and the other apostles to the nation, as shewn in the Acts. Peter preaching *restitution* of all things as the proper Jewish hope; whilst the company gathered out to the name of the rejected Lord, and forming the Church, *sold* their possessions and goods and parted them to all, as every man had need. Thus we see the character of the new testimony which converted out of the nation, as well as the new power of the Spirit in gathering to the risen Lord; and further, what was the outward ex-

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pression of these converts who abandoned Judaism for Christianity? Three thousand received the remission of their sins in Jerusalem, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Samaria's fields were already "white unto the harvest," and the Ethiopian eunuch went back to his country rejoicing; but the responsibilities of Israel toward God, in His long-suffering goodness, were not yet come to their end, though all the means of recovering grace had been spent upon that people.

The testimony of Stephen fastens on their conscience the further sin of rejecting the Holy Ghost's presence on earth, and His witness to Christ, by the apostles, and, so to speak, seals them up in their unbelief—"Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost."

As yet, however, the truth of the Church, though abundantly established in fact in the Acts, had not been the subject of the Holy Ghost's distinct teaching. James and others were occupied with the work of concentration in Jerusalem as the earthly centre, though

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preaching the rejected Messiah, &c., as the Prince of Life. Peter, too, proposed to the nation the return of "the same Jesus, who before was preached unto them," though declaring that God had made Him both Christ and Lord. Stephen goes beyond all this, for he sees Jesus, "the Son of man," in glory, at the right hand of God, as the new character of witness; and accordingly does not hold out to them any promise of His *return*, but seals this testimony by death, and *goes* to Jesus; thus he becomes the first martyr of the Church.

We come now to Saul, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, on his way to Damascus. This man is himself arrested by "the light of the glory of the Son of man" from heaven, which shone round about him. The Lord, as He was seen by Stephen, Jesus Son of man at the right hand of God, opens out a new testimony to Himself in heaven, as *one* with the suffering and martyred member on earth, and says to Paul, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest;" and he, falling

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to the ground, asks, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Historically, the first twelve chapters of Acts clear the foreground of all the complications, necessarily existing from the fact of Jews, and afterwards of Greeks, becoming the subjects of testimony and of Holy Ghost power. Now that Christianity and the Church are come out from behind every cloud, Paul receives from the Lord by revelation the mystery "that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel." It is Paul only who declares that in the glorified man, Christ Jesus, "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision but Christ is all and in all."

The sheet let down from heaven taught Peter that God would cleanse Gentiles, as well as Jews; and henceforth he was not to call things common or unclean—he therefore goes down to Cæsarea and gathers in Cornelius and his near kinsmen and other Gentiles, on the fact "that God is no respecter of

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persons," so that there were thousands in Judea with the apostles, and a multitude of Gentiles with Peter, on whom the Holy Ghost fell "as on the disciples at the beginning," but *two* distinct companies. It was beyond Peter to make these Jews and Gentiles one, nor could James and the other apostles solve the difficulty, though they admitted "that God had granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life."

It was part of Paul's ministry to affirm "by one Spirit are we *all* baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, and have been *all* made to drink into one Spirit." Moreover, Paul is the chosen apostle to add to all previous witnesses, That *man* in the person of Christ is gone up to God's right hand, and become "head of the body, the church, which is the fulness of him that filleth all in all." We here get the truth of the Church, and further, the doctrine respecting the body and bride of Christ, which had been hidden in God, but now made manifest to His saints, "to whom God would

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make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of glory." The apostle of the Gentiles declares of them "that they are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." In this scripture the Church is also presented under three aspects: as to ourselves, "we are of the household of God;" as regards Christ, "it groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord;" as respects God, "we are builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit."

In speaking of the body of Christ, it is necessary to mark, that in the Ephesian epistle, believers are no longer regarded as "two or three gathered in my name," as in Matthew xviii., but as members, brought into a unity, formed by the Holy Ghost with the glorified Head in heaven, and this unity, viewed as the body of Christ on earth, where those who compose it are formed, "*you*

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hath he quickened who were *dead* in trespasses and sins." Consequently as members, we are exhorted in Ephesians iv., to endeavour to keep this unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and this is our new responsibility. "There is one body," and but one—not bodies of Christians, gathered under denominational names and sectarian badges; but ye are all one in Christ, as in fact the Church (or the assembly) was visibly at Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, &c. Any two or three (hundred or thousand) who are not meeting *manifestly* as members of this one body, in the disavowal of all sects which violate this unity of the Spirit, are clearly on the ground of independency.

Whatever the ruin of the dispensation may be, none can draw any reason, except a bad one, for disowning the epistles of Paul, and retreating on earlier scriptures and accepting lower ground. Any attempt to display the unity of the body, as though manifestly complete in all its members, in any given locality, would be fatal to this unity itself and

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a denial of the ruin of the responsible Church as a witness for Christ on earth. Any refusal to gather the members together upon the ground of this unity of the Spirit and the one body, would be disobedience and only lead to schismatic action.

To take a stand *now* upon Matthew xviii., as though it were the last thing Jesus said about the Church and its blessing, instead of almost the first, would be to stop short of His own headship, the baptism of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, and the unity of the Spirit on earth. These are necessary to constitute the Church of God and the body of Christ.

Finally, as the bride, "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." This is what the bride is to Him, as the object of His love, till He comes to take her to Himself.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE DISTINCTNESS OF OUR LINK WITH CHRIST.

WITH every truth in relation to the saints there must be a practical consequence; every status has a claim on us peculiar to itself. If the standing be accepted, the duties, habits, character, and effect flowing from that standing must be maintained, or the standing is a dead letter. A standing which claims nothing, which confers nothing, is in itself a nothing; but the more the standing claims and signifies, the higher and more important the state which results from it. Now, generally, the mistake is more as to the nature of the standing than as to the state; though the state discloses the imperfect apprehension of the standing, or the want of conscience in maintaining it. When people profess a thing and act contrary to it, they must either have imperfectly apprehended what they profess, or their conscience is bad. Man may have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

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the sense, that He holds me by the right hand, but that my soul is united to Him by the Spirit; the link is as distinct as possible. No link could be greater, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh; nothing more positive or more defined. If one is ignorant of this great favour, of course he seeks it not. If he were not ignorant of it, but assured that this is his standing, he would rest in Christ, and know the effects or state which would result from this—his true standing. If he misapprehends the standing as many do, the state will be proportionately low and imperfect. And if, like some others, he sees the true standing, and does not exercise his soul as to the claims of it, his conscience will be bad, and consequently he will be defective in every act and judgment; for if the conscience is bad, as to any truth, there is surely a want of conscience, even to the commonest details of life.

The Lord grant that those who see the true standing may seek to preserve the high state which it claims, and which grace confers with it!

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1 CORINTHIANS XI.

As we have seen in the former chapter, our fellowship at the Lord's table was an avowed one of fellowship with Christ in His death, and that this necessarily precluded us from any other fellowship. Now in this chapter it is, first, the fact that the head of every man is Christ, and the headship is His, as to right and claim. At the Lord's supper we shew forth His death till He comes; and if we discern His body broken for us, we judge ourselves. We spare not that for which the Lord suffered. Thus not only is Christ risen the head of every man, but every one partaking of the Lord's supper judges himself. The headship on Christ's side and the judgment on mine leave the Lord all in all—one and His name one. Hence, in chapter xii., the question of spiritual manifestations becomes the subject. Carnal actings have been disposed of. No one can call Jesus Lord—give Him

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His dignity—but by the Holy Ghost. The sum is, that the gifts of the Spirit are in the body: the body is of Christ. All the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is the Christ. And then (chap. xiii.) the love that was in Christ, the perfect servant, is the way of surpassing excellence in the exercise of gifts.

Then in chapter xiv. spiritual gifts are spoken of in a twofold way: one as to manifestation, the other as to prophesying; the latter to be preferred because it was edifying to the saints. Let all things be done to edification. This is the sum. It is the Spirit's gift to individuals, in this chapter; but they must be in subjection to the Lord in the nature, the charity, in which He serves. The point is, that though the gift or tongue be of the Spirit, it must be used in the love of Christ, who loved the Church and gave Himself for it. It has been shewn that the flesh cannot glory in His presence; and now it is insisted on that the gifts of the Spirit (entirely apart from the flesh in

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themselves) must not be exercised in one's own will. The rule is, edification; the principle of action is, love, which entirely sets aside the selfishness of man in nature. Rules are therefore given in the word for the right use of gifts; and "if one think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him [says the apostle] recognize the things that I write unto you that they are the commandments of the Lord." The Lord has instructed His apostle to write rules for the proper exercise of gifts in the assembly. The word of the Lord was required in order to guide the possessor of gifts in the proper use of them. There are distinctions of services, but it is the same Lord over all, and who determines for each his appointed service. And He gives commandments as to the exercise of spiritual gifts in the assembly. The point before us is that the Lord is the One who decides everything. We are called into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and He is pre-eminent, whether the subject be the flesh or the gifts of the Spirit. As to

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the former, it is, He that glorieth, let him glory in the *Lord*; as to the latter, He legislates respecting the use of them, according to His own will.

All, concerning the intrusion of the flesh and the government of the Lord in the assembly, having been considered, what remains is that the gospel should be freed from the heresy which had sprung up respecting the resurrection of the body. Chapter xv. begins with, "I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, and which ye have received, and wherein ye stand." Not only had the flesh acted and pleased itself, but through it the enemy had found an opportunity of introducing the terrible heresy that the dead rise not at all. There had been license given to the flesh at Corinth, as if being in this life was everything; and yet in the same place is the doctrine tolerated that the body, which is to be gratified according to its will in the present time, is not to rise at all. Made ever so much of and unduly indulged in this time and not to

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rise or to appear in the next ! Now to meet this, the apostle insists that the gospel springs from *Christ risen*. "If Christ be not risen, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins." He starts from the point from which God can receive a sinner, as we have seen in Romans, declared to be the Son of God by resurrection. If Christ be not risen, there is no salvation. It is from this point, the resurrection of Christ, that God can deal on new ground with the man under death ; for in Adam all die. Christ risen is the ground and basis of salvation. Christ died for our sins, according to the scripture, and He was buried and rose again the third day. He went under the judgment, but He must be out of it in order to confer a life exempt from judgment. The resurrection through grace ensures my salvation and at the same time condemns in judgment the first Adam, because there was no salvation except through resurrection. In fact, nothing so entirely sets aside the first man, as ruined and lost, as to insist that there could be no salvation but

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through resurrection out of the judgment which lay on him. The resurrection is the proof that there was life in *one* man, the Lord Jesus Christ, which could surmount the judgment on man; and in this life He quickens as many as are given unto Him.

Now the resurrection of the saint was denied, when the flesh was fostered instead of being crucified, and if the saint be not risen, then is Christ not raised; but if Christ, the first-fruits, be raised, then they that are Christ's at His coming. But not only in life is there a distinction between Adam and Christ; but as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. The first man, is of the earth earthy, the Second man is the Lord from heaven. Not only are we quickened by the last Adam, but we are to be in heavenly bodies, like the Second man who is the Lord from heaven. We have now reached the highest point, in heavenly bodies like the Lord from heaven. The Lord will change our bodies into likeness to His own glorious body;

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a wonderful climax! Deliverance from sin and death in the resurrection of Christ; and not only this; but this poor body, mortal and corruptible though it be, shall be changed into a heavenly body, in likeness to the Second man, the Lord from heaven. Surely we may say heartily: "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The Lord Jesus has triumphed over everything, and we share in it. How completely all of the first man is distanced and left behind and out of sight, when the place and position in which the Lord sets us is apprehended by our souls.

May we with much profit study this blessed scripture, and understand how the apostle, true to his mission, and for our fullest blessing, sets aside everything, while he sets the Lord in His true pre-eminence.

The remaining chapter xvi. is occupied with two points of practice; one, collections for the saints, and the other, due appreciation of the ministry, both in the word, and in other services. And

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these two are the first-fruits of our walking here, according to the Lord. The apostle concludes, "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha;" and also, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. . . ."

If you are crippled by a thorn, like Paul, it will be an excuse for Christ to come in and do the work; but crippled or not, all you have to do is to go straight on. The more crippled you are, the more you will find Him with you—the more occasion for Him to put forth His power. There is nothing but infirmity to be found in the vessel, but all power in Christ. The child of God may be going through a thicket of difficulties; but the more the difficulty, the more the occasion for God. Be sure of this, if He brings you into a pathway of difficulty, He will be with you and act for you. "My grace is sufficient for thee."

The measure and standard by which I am to walk is God Himself. How *can* I take in such a word as that? The answer is, Christ was God manifested as a man, and He is my pattern: walk in light, walk in love. That was as Christ walked here below.

OUR EXTREMITY IS GOD'S OPPORTUNITY.

IN 2 Corinthians iv. 6 we have life coming into death, the almighty power of God speaking *light*, where there was *darkness*; bringing in *life*, where there was *death*. In Ephesians ii. we have the state and circumstances of those to whom He gave life. We find there the entire absence of anything good in the creature. We see in verses 1—3, the pit from whence they were digged and who is the master of it; and then is brought out (ver. 4) the motive of the divine mind—"rich in mercy." It is an old thought that if we look at the origin and close of anything we shall form a correct judgment of it. Look at this pit, and then the finish of this perfect work, when the Lord appears on the cloud, what does it shew? all *weakness* in the creature, all *power* in Him.

Paul had been looked into by the Lord Jesus Christ in glory, he had given up all his plans, he had got a new master, he was a new man. But some

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time or other he had to go through the process of learning what the entire *impotency* of the earthen vessel is, when any claims are put upon it. We learn grace, but we have to learn too what the earthen vessel is — that “in *me dwelleth no good thing.*” The soul gets a sense of its *total incompetency*. We must and can only get at what is right through *death and resurrection*. *Faith* must be in exercise; but often when we ask for faith, instead of the rest and quiet we expect, waves and billows arise. The wave of death rolls in, which brings us to our wits’ end. Christ works all our works in us. We feel we ought to be this or that, but where is the power? He that plants the seed in us breaks up little bits of the rock that the water may make it bud, and that the seed may grow up. Are we struggling against lusts, &c., and forgetting that it is “not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit?” We do not realize enough that everything is secured for us up there. Some who know how to sing the song of redemp-

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tion, in the wilderness, have yet to learn their connection with the perfect power of Him who is risen from the dead, and have, as to themselves, to go on in the sense of cripplement and perfect weakness. I could not ask the Lord to take the law of sin and death *out* of me. The light shined into Saul's heart, it did not take anything *out* of him; but it enabled him to be master of all his lusts and passions. He had to learn that he was but an earthen vessel.

God is the God of resurrection. God's way of dealing with His people is the display of His strength in their weakness. You need not be afraid of being brought to death if He is the God of resurrection. Have you the sentence of death in yourself? It is a thing of everyday wear; a christian man should never take a step but on the principle of having the sentence of death in himself. God often brings us up to the last point, to see if we have the sentence of death in ourselves. If He lets us down into a pit where there is no water, there is light above: "Who

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hath delivered and doth deliver," &c. (2 Cor. 1—10.) Past, present, and future, all is connected with Him, as the God of resurrection. If we want to know Him as the "Father of mercies and the God of all comfort," we must be prepared to be put into circumstances to experience our need of mercy. *Mercies* are the forms, in which the *mercy* which dwells in the heart of God expresses itself. The Corinthians did not think they needed much comfort, but Paul, who had to run the world round, and who carried the churches in his bosom, found out *his* need of mercy and comfort. Paul was kept from glorying in gifts, for God rolled in upon him the sentence of death every day; so while the Corinthians were boasting in their gifts, God was letting Paul down into all sorts of extremities, that the rain of His mercies might flow in. In 2 Cor. i. we get the word "comfort" ten times. We shall get lots to bring us into the want of this comfort. It *must* be so, if we have much to do with Himself. Every step of the wilderness must have

OUR EXTREMITY GOD'S OPPORTUNITY. 77

the principle of death and resurrection. The servant of the Lord who has known Him longest, I would ask him, Which are the times which look brightest *now*? Is it not when you have been brought to your wits' end, and perhaps had little faith, and were almost in despair, when you did not know how the truth or yourselves were to be brought out of it? Then, your extremity has been God's opportunity to shew Himself the God of resurrection. John never gets his cup so turned upside down as to his service, as when he found himself in Patmos. He was brought there that a book might be written, without which the Church could not well get to the end: there was the power of God blending itself with weakness. When Israel went out of Egypt, God could have led them any other way; but He had prepared the wilderness for them, to teach them that He was the God of resurrection. He knows how to turn the wilderness into a standing water. People say, Oh my weakness! my leanness! but we never should talk of

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weakness if it were a realized thing, a recognized thing. Sometimes we come and expect rest, and we find disquiet, because He wants to make His strength perfect in our weakness. Do you give thanks for the discovery of weakness? Directly we give thanks for a thing that is trying to us, Satan is worsted; he says, That will not serve me. If in a burning fever and you cannot sleep, and you give thanks, he will send you to sleep directly rather than be the cause of your giving thanks. There is sweetness in the very thing, because God is letting in His strength.

Where are the saints who, with outstretched necks, are saying, "Come, Lord Jesus!" Where are those from whom the testimony is going out? Who are tapping at every door and heart and saying, There is mercy in God's heart for you? You are wanted to display His mercy. God prepares the place beforehand for us. His purpose is that the principle of death and resurrection should be spread over our whole course, from the Red Sea till we enter the Rest,

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE FLESH LUSTETH AGAINST THE SPIRIT.

SINCE the fall of man there has been a distinct line of separation between God and man. Sin initiated the distance, and to remove this sense of distance is the attempt of the conscience, whenever it is at all active. All religion, from that of the Pagan up to the most enlightened ritualist of the present day, springs from this felt need of the conscience. The distance is admitted to exist, and the attempt is, that the man—the one who caused the distance—should of himself repair it. This is the root and motive of all religiousness. It is a terrible thing to man to be shut out entirely from having any act or part in effecting reconciliation between himself and God; and so deeply is the desire fixed in the heart of man, that even in those who are clear as to the doctrine of grace, and who see that all blessing and salvation come to them through the free gift of God, still they give the flesh a

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not flashed into the heart. I do not deny that; but I say, when it is so, *that is the moment of danger*; for then there is spiritual progress, and against it the flesh lusts, and seeks to hinder its divine efficacy, by offering its own excitement, to give weight, apparent weight, to the spiritual communication.

But like produces like; excitement of the flesh in me only tends to produce excitement of the flesh in others. The power of God is lost. The still small voice, which is not in the great and strong wind, the earthquake or the fire (1 Kings xix.) is superseded and frustrated, and the impression made by such ministry, however overpowering at the time, is evanescent. It does not effect what the light of God effects. The latter searches the heart and sets Christ before the soul, daily deepening it in the sense of His value to it.

The truth is that man under grace, both in mind and body is the Lord's; and that He, by His Spirit, uses *both*, in His service; and that, as they are so used by the *Holy Ghost*, there will be

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no carnal excitement, but on the contrary, that gravity of expression in manner and word, which indicates how entirely such an one is under the control of the Spirit of God; and thus the servant produces the like in those who hear him, the spiritual being is ministered to, and the kingdom of God is enlarged in the soul.

THE HINDRANCE TO GROWTH.

THE one simple hindrance to growth is, whatever diverts the soul from Christ as an object. As the brazen serpent on a pole was the object for cure, to the bitten Israelite, so is Christ the object for eternal life to every one believing in Him.

Occupation with the object secured the benefit to the sufferer. To an Israelite the relief was from the bite of the serpent. To us, deliverance from death and judgment, to life in the Son of God. Now it is the continuance of that occupation which *first* brought

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relief, which promotes growth; and it is the loss of this occupation which hinders growth. It is evident, that if the faintest look secured untold benefit, a continuance of that look must insure more. The grace of God is, that outside and apart from ourselves, He has provided for us life in and through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, and hence the first action of grace in our souls, is to turn us to Jesus. The word to the jailor is the word to us: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." We are thus directed to an object outside of ourselves; "He that seeth the Son and believeth on him that sent him, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

No saint would deny that his blessing came from Christ, and that through grace, he looked to Him and found blessing. He was the only source and spring of it; and all that is real and vital in his soul, has sprung from Him to whom he looked in faith. Now if so much benefit was the result of the first look, of the first faint trembling occu-

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pation of the soul with Christ—when, like the woman in the Pharisee's house it was as it were “behind him weeping”—how much more from continued unbroken occupation with Him.

First, let us bear in mind that life—life eternal—flows to us from Christ. He is our life, and therefore the more we are occupied with Him, the more conscious must we become of what life in Him is. I say the *manner* of the grace, for when we were ruined and without hope, God gave His Son, that through Him He might give us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. If the manner of the grace is seen, that it is entirely outside of me, as ruined and lost, that God has provided life, and that I obtain the benefit of it by believing in Him who is the life. If, I say, this be simply held, then, there cannot be any ground or liberty to turn away from Him in whom all my blessing is secured, and that undeniably the moment my eye is turned from Him, I have been diverted from the only source of life and blessing; and there cannot

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be any advance, any growth. The incipient form in which saints are diverted from Christ is by occupying themselves with the effect produced. This is the general way in which the hindrance occurs, even when the manner of the grace is well understood. Every saint must be conscious of a distinct effect produced on him by believing in Christ; but how constantly does he dwell on and seek comfort and assurance in the effect produced, instead of being encouraged to fix his heart the more on Him who has produced it. Every one knows the pleasure of a great acquisition. I admit the greatness of the acquisition, but I say that growth is hindered the moment I am diverted from Him who produced the effect to the effect produced, and that growth takes place when I am more occupied with the Producer, because as I am, more is produced in me. Occupation with the effect does not of itself augment the effect, but occupation with Christ who produces it, does enlarge and extend the effect in divine power and fulness. Plants are developed by the

THE HINDRANCE TO GROWTH. 93

sun, and according as they are developed their capacities are enlarged for taking in more sun. Just so, the soul, by occupation with Him, is developed into the virtue and fashion of Christ, and as it is, it is capable and adapted for taking in more. The secret hindrance to growth is the desire to be independent, to be able to rest in something in oneself. The variety of ways by which we are seduced into this snare are endless. To each in a different way, but the simple aim of each in the hand of Satan is to divert the soul from Christ, and thus to check the flow of strength and engage the heart with that which has no power in itself. The great and crowning moment of blessing to every saint on record was when, from one set of circumstances or another, he could not look anywhere but to God, and it is necessary for the assured sense of growth that the soul should be thus taught.

Abraham, in ascending Mount Moriah, must falter and sink if he looks away for one moment from God, who raiseth the dead; but as he looks, his soul is

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deepened and enlarged with might, and in the goodness of God, and he grows and prospers. The darkest moment to him, naturally, was the brightest and most vigorous to him, spiritually. When Moses finds redeemed Israel in idolatry (Exodus xxxiii.) his cry to God is, "Shew me Thy glory." There is nothing here to rest in or cheer the heart, but everything to sadden it; but then his heart is fixed everlastingly on God, and then he acquires a fuller apprehension of His favour than ever before, and his face *shines*. So again with Stephen, when all around him was the murderers' hate, then he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw "the glory of God and Jesus." There was nothing but a terrible death; but by the power of the Holy Ghost he is carried from what is around him, and from its effects on him, to Jesus. He is made to know in his soul the power of Christ, and thus acquires ability to surmount everything. This growth came from *occupation with Christ*.

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Each of these men might have dwelt on the greatness of the power and favour previously conferred on them; but had they dwelt on this, they would have made no progress in power, in accordance to the trials, to which they were subjected. A Lot, a Samson, a Peter, a Barnabas, is not equal to the occasion. But grace is always equal to the occasion. "Skilful in the word of righteousness, with senses exercised to discern good and evil." People may retort and say: "But are we not to judge ourselves, examine our motives, and watch our steps, &c.?" Certainly, I reply; but where? Where you can see them perfectly, where you can give them no quarter, in the presence of Christ; not where you can dwell on them as if you could excuse them, or account for them or seek to find out some way by which you could alter your nature and reform it. Be assured the hindrance has occurred whenever the eye is diverted from Christ, no matter how plausible the reason; and the more reasonable the more damaging, simply

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because the manner of grace is departed from.

But the deception most difficult to expose, and therefore the more effectual hindrance, is the readiness and tendency to occupy ourselves with the working and effect of grace. Now as this effect has been produced by faith in Christ, there must be a stay to the effect, while I am occupied with the effect; whereas, if I am simply and abidingly occupied with Christ there will be in me an increasing flow of grace and divine effect, and I shall be more and more established in the benefit and virtue which came to me from connection with Christ—I mean that conscious connection with Christ which arises from the habit of occupation with Him—the benefit flowing from it would thus be more established in our souls; and we should be increasingly more conscious and gladly assured of His word—“Without me ye can do nothing.”

PAUL'S MISSION.

2 CORINTHIANS.

THE reader of these papers on Paul's mission will kindly bear in mind that the object of them is to point out how the apostle treats every subject concerning the saints, from God's point of view, and this is the simple characteristic of his mission. True he does not overlook the condition of souls, as they are; but whatever be the condition, he presents God's mode and manner of meeting it, and not the actual, practical, experience which a soul passes through in answering to the manner of His grace. In this epistle what we have on the side of man is the death of man, in some form or other—and on God's side, His power over death and in His own glory. The contrast presented in the former epistle is the flesh and the Lord; here it is the weakness of man unto death, in contrast with the God of resurrection and glory; and in accordance with this contrast the apostle deals with it, in every form in which it appears.

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In chapter i., having begun with the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, he unfolds what God had been to himself, when he despaired even of living; and adds, "We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead." Weakness altogether on our side; but power, unbounded power and deliverance, on God's side, who delivered us from so great a death and doth deliver; in whom we confide that He will yet deliver us. And in chapter ii., after touching on the sorrow that he had caused to the Corinthians, and warning them lest Satan should get an advantage over them and lead them now to undue strictness as before to undue laxity, he relates his own weakness, on account of not finding Titus his brother, but adds, "Thank God who always leads us in triumph in the Christ, and makes manifest the odour of his knowledge through us in every place. For we are a sweet odour of Christ to God, in those that are saved, and in those that perish. To the one an odour

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of death unto death; but unto the other an odour of life unto life." The contrast is brought out in the preaching of the gospel; and is a solace to the apostle, in the review of his own personal weakness.

Hence, in chapter iii. he connects his ministry with God, shewing how effectual it was in them—that they were epistles of Christ, not written with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not on stone tables, but on the fleshy tables of the heart. The contrast is manifest: the letter kills, but the Spirit quickens. When righteousness is required of man from the glory, it is a ministry of condemnation; but then, "If the ministry of condemnation be glory, much rather the ministry of righteousness abounds in glory. The weakness unto death was manifest, when man was before God in himself; but now in Christ there is the manifestation aboundingly of what God is; so that with open face, beholding the Lord's glory, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.

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Chapter iv. The minister practically finds this treasure—the communication of Christ in glory—is in an earthen vessel, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. There is a sense of satisfaction in the contrast; and hence, practically, he says of himself, “I bear about the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifest in my body.” Nay more: “We who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our *mortal* flesh.” Death, the utmost weakness on man’s side; but everything renewed in the vigour of life on God’s side; and hence, if “the outward man perish, the inward man is renewed day by day.”

In chapter v. is a step onward, where the apostle states, that if the “earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, he has a building from God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” One passes away, but is superseded by that which is heavenly and eternal. The mortal shall be swal-

lowed up of life. He who hath wrought us for this very thing is God, who has given to us the earnest of the Spirit. And the sum is, "The love of the Christ constrains us, judging then that if one died for all, then all were dead." There was no hope any longer on man's side: they are proved as under death, and hence "he died for all, that they who live should no longer live to themselves, but for him who has died for them and risen again. Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh." That order of existence is no longer acknowledged. Man has been proved perfectly powerless and feeble." "If any one be in Christ he is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. Thus there was nothing but weakness on the side of the ministers; but God in all His greatness and fulness was using them. Therefore in Chapter vi. he speaks of, "In every-

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thing commending ourselves as the *ministers of God*," beginning with, "much patience," and ending with, "as having nothing, yet possessing all things;" and then the apostle winds up by charging them not to be unequally or diversely yoked together; but to come out, and be separate, and touch not the unclean, and be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. They were to leave everything not of God and to be entirely of the divine generation. Everything to be renounced in order to be of Him, who has all the might and blessing.

Now in chapter vii. the apostle dwells on how God encouraged him in his weakness, when his flesh had no rest; and when troubled and afflicted on every side, God came in and encouraged him by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but by the tidings he brought of them; so that he adds, "I rejoiced the more." The weakness was the occasion for God to come in. So also, their grief being according to God, it had been great gain to them; for

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sorrow, according to God, works repentance not to be repented of. So that the grief which if according to the world would only have worked death, the utmost weakness, being according to God, worked thus—that they had entirely cleared themselves of that failure, which was the occasion of their grief. Thus God uses our very weakness as an opportunity to manifest His favour and mercy.

THE MEASURE OF OUR WALK.

WHERE are we to seek for the measure or standard for our walk as Christians on the earth? No true Christian will hesitate to answer, "In Christ." But how to use Him thus, how to apply Him to our ways, as our example, is a problem which many fail to solve. Many and many thousands of souls have sought to know and to follow Christ after the flesh and have failed in their attempt. "Imitations of Christ," and "examples" in Christ, have been

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written for the guidance of professing Christians; but all of them necessarily speak more of law than of grace, of the letter than of the Spirit, failing, as they do for the most part, to lay a good foundation and to shew the title and power by which alone Christ can be truly known and followed.

For we must know our standing before God ere we can hope to form our walk aright; and we must be conscious of our *power* too, or we surely shall break down. But we address ourselves to those who through faith know Christ crucified for their sins, raised again for their justification, and are conscious that from Him now seated at God's right hand they draw the streams of everlasting life, and ability also to walk in the power of that life. And we must say on behalf of our God, that He does not give an example whom we cannot follow. He does not set before His people a task, without conferring also the ability to perform it. An example could avail us nothing unless we had capacities and

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powers similar to the one whom we are to imitate. If God then has set before us the Son of His love, who did always the things that pleased Him, it is that we may, abiding in Him, walk even as He walked. God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. The eternal life which was with the Father has been manifested unto us, and to as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God. God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba Father. Partaker of the divine nature, having the Spirit of God's Son, the Spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind, the believer has all things that pertain to life and godliness. Sonship, heirship, our portion, we are to walk in the sense of this even now in the world, and to walk even as Christ walked in the power of the Holy Ghost; as it is said, "as many as are led of the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Now Christ, our example, though Son of God, walked down here the Son o

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Man, anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with power, doing perfectly the Father's will in the position and circumstances in which He *then* found Himself. Made of a woman, partaker of flesh and blood, He fulfilled every claim to parent, to neighbour, in perfection. Of the seed of David, made under the law, He walked as a faithful Jew, fulfilling, not setting aside, the law of His God. In fact, according to the then state of Israel, and of the world, He walked perfectly with God; and, with reverence we would say it, such must have been, and must ever be, the character of His ways, at any time that He might be manifested on the earth.

And it is thus that Christ is our example and the measure for our walk, that we may also walk perfectly with God in the day and circumstances in which we find ourselves. This is how *He* walked; this is how we, if we abide in Him, and are led of the Spirit, shall also walk. It is important to lay hold on this, and to remember that the day in which we live is not the day in

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which He lived; that we must not therefore form our walk on the mere letter, but on the spirit of His. We know not Christ after the flesh. We know Him at God's right hand, redemption accomplished, and the world judged by His rejection in it, and God's glorification of Him to the place of power.

When the Son of God was upon earth, man had not been finally tested, Israel not set aside. God, and His offers of grace, not finally rejected. Thus Christ's ways were framed accordingly toward God and toward man.

But all is changed now (though men admit it unwillingly). Christ the Son of God has been rejected and cast out by the world, which would have none of Him. God has exalted Him to His own right hand and thus shews how He is at issue with the world. It is there, a Prince and a Saviour, the believer knows Him. It is there the believer is united to Him. "As He *is*, so are we in this world." Our walk then, to be like Christ's, must be formed by the

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relation in which the world and God now stand one towards the other, and in which we as Christians stand towards them. Our path is plain, we are to take God's side, and to walk with Him. Our ways are to be framed, not merely in the letter of Christ's in the flesh, but on the state of things consequent on His rejection, His death, and His resurrection to glory. In all however that marked His ways with the souls of men and sinners, in grace and love, and in obedience and faith in reference to God, He is the same yesterday and to-day and for ever, and thus our perfect pattern; but as to our associations in the world, and to the religious profession in it, we shall find no parallel, but contrast, for the scene and circumstances are all changed. Then Judaism, though on its last trial, was still owned of God. He had yet an elect earthly people. The temple, the synagogue, the nation, were therefore owned of Christ. The marriage supper at Cana, the feast in the Pharisee's house, were not inconsistent with the place He had taken in grace

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in Israel. Death, however, closed this scene of association in grace with Israel and the world, and God has given to Christ in glory a new place, a new title, new authority, in virtue of His work down here. As to the world, He has been rejected. As to the religious profession in it, He is outside the camp. The Christ of whom the world makes much now-a-days and professes to honour, to whom it performs rites and ceremonies, dedicates vast buildings (but whose word withal it despises and uses as it pleases); though historically the same, is indeed another from the one the spiritual Christian knows as the rest of his heart, and the Lord of His actions.

All things have indeed been delivered to Him of His Father. All power given to Him in heaven and in earth. His people even now not only are saved *from the wrath to come*, but find themselves associated with Him in life and glory. "Justified and glorified." The world, life, death, things present, and things to come, all are ours, for we are Christ's. What then shall we do with

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these things? What Christ is doing, must be the reply. Though at the right hand of power, He exerts it not. Though all judgment is committed unto Him, He condemns not. Though all things are His, He claims not one thing on earth that is His own, except indeed it be the hearts of those who know and believe His love, and have found their rest in Him. He is content to wait, and, as He waits, to save all who come unto God by Him. His judgment against an evil world, and against those even who reject His name, is suspended, if so be that they may yet hear His word and live. "The long-suffering of our Lord is salvation."

If the Christian looks around him here, he sees a selfish, self-seeking, Godless world, a mass of religious, yet for the most part Christless, profession, both drifting rapidly into infidelity and anti-christianity. What place has Christ and His name in this scene? What must be the inevitable end of it? May the Lord give to His people exercised hearts, to learn their place and calling

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here. To be willing to go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach, and to esteem this reproach greater riches than all the treasure of Egypt. In fact, to get the measure for their walk from Christ rejected in the world, and glorified at the right hand of God. Wonderful grace and wonderful glory to be given to us not only to believe but to suffer for His name's sake. To be allowed to associate ourselves with Him in His rejection, His self-rejection in the world, and to draw even down here our springs of peace and joy, of patience and of hope, from what we know He is for us in the presence of God. "All things are yours"—what a possession!—"and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." But what a holy limitation as to their present use. May we use this world as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away!

The most exquisite moment with a soul is when it can say, I have no will but God's. God sets me complete in Christ; but He begins with me down here by stripping me of a will.

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sin: all unrighteousness is sin, and there is only righteousness with God. Besides this, there is a system of evangelicalism which warps the conscience; for, while in that system, there is a sacrifice for sins, and it is preached that belief in the sacrifice is that which gives relief to the conscience, yet this relief may not go beyond the security which the Israelite had in his conscience, after offering the right offering. The conscience is not purged from dead works to serve the living and true God. The conscience must be relieved—that is all that is required or enjoined; and there is no power to walk nor sense of communion with God; and all because the conscience is made a guide and a standard instead of simply a guard; a point which I may consider another time, if the Lord will.

When redemption is known, there can be no superstition. Therefore Puseyites can never bear with it. They, and even infidels, will speak of incarnation most beautifully; more so sometimes than Christians; but never of redemption, never that Christ has stood in my place and gone up into glory.

THE
LAND THE LORD THY GOD CARETH FOR.

Deut. xi.

THE land, the glory of all lands,
Beyond the Jordan's wave—
Beyond the weary desert sands,
The land beyond the grave!
Now safe within that glorious land,
We prove His faithful word;
Midst Canaan's golden fields we stand,
The ransomed of the Lord.

Amidst the burning desert's drought,
We learnt His watchful love;
Streams from the flinty rocks He brought,
Sent bread from heaven above.
Our God in weariness and need,
His love was measured there,
By hunger which His hand would feed—
Wants answered by His care.

Now know we in Immanuel's land
Immeasurable grace—
No longer looking to His hand,
But gazing on His face.
Our need, ourselves, forgotten there,
Himself our hearts adore;
The fulness of *His* joy we share,
His pleasures evermore.

His joy fulfilled in us who tread
That land His love has given;
We followed where His footsteps led,
And found ourselves in heaven.

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No lower resting-place beseemed
The well-beloved Son;
And we have seen, on us has beamed,
The glory that He won.

No lower resting-place—and we,
Are we content to stand
And look afar from Pisgah's heights
Upon that goodly land?
There, where the Shepherd goes before,
The sheep must follow on—
How green, how fresh the pastures are,
Where Christ the Lord is gone.

One spirit with our glorious Lord,
Our joy to Him is sweet,
As to His heart the love that poured
The ointment on His feet.
How dear to Him the fellowship
That owned Him in the tomb;
How dear to Him the fellowship
That shares His blessed home

That shares in glory far above
This scene so dark and dim,
The sweetness of the Father's love,
In unison with Him.
In Him we tread those glorious heights,
His endless joy our own;
The full deep tide of God's delights
He would not drink alone.

1870.

PAUL'S MISSION.

2 CORINTHIANS.

IN 2 Corinthians viii. and ix. the subject is, ministering to the saints. The service which was enjoined in 1 Corinthians xvi., as the first-fruits of practical unity, is here referred to as an accomplished fact in Macedonia. The apostle traces the manner of it as a voice to the Corinthians, "How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves." It is remarkable how their deep poverty abounded unto their liberality. The principle we have been tracing, through this epistle, is manifest in this service; namely, that when there was deep poverty, there was, through grace, an expression of the power of God; and hence it abounded unto their liberality. It is a greater thing for the poor to give of his little than for the rich to give of his much.

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Tithe, from a man who had only ten lambs, was much more, as to the nature of the gift, than tithe from one with ten oxen. It is more for one to give one penny out of ten pence, than for another to give one pound out of ten pounds; and hence the grace of God is more manifest in the former than in the latter. There is nothing but weakness or poverty on our side, but this becomes the very occasion or opportunity for the power of God's grace to be manifested. Hence he adds: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." Christ entered into the poverty of our side, that He might secure for us the riches on His own side; and the apostle dwells, not only on the power of God (chap. ix. 8) to make all grace to abound, unto every good work, His power making an occasion of their need to display itself; but he shews that the giving away of their little property, while it made them poorer on their own side, made them

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richer, because of God's supply; and hence, "enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving unto God; and by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

In chapter x. the apostle speaks of himself as a servant on the same principle. "Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you." While he speaks thus of himself, personally, he adds, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds." It is very important to present to man, meekness and gentleness; that which is within every one's reach and command; but at the same time, that though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh; for cavillers had said his letters were weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence weak, and his speech contemp

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tible. It is well when they can only condemn our outward appearance, or our mode of delivery, but at the same time own that our deliberate acts, such as letters, are weighty and powerful; and then it becomes us, like the apostle, to see that our deeds tally with our letters, for he adds, "such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present." He has no confidence in any comparison with man; he dares not enter on that side; and winds up according to the teaching in the First Epistle: "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth."

In chapter xi. the subject of the apostle's ministry is continued. It is worthy of note that the two subjects of practice, which he had pressed on the Corinthians, in the close of the First Epistle, are the two subjects he dwells on here so fully. He had in the previous chapter shewn that his power lay not in outward appearance, but in

the word of the Lord, and that he dared not to enter the lists with those who commend themselves. But now he descends; "That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting. Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also," and he recounts his claims according to the flesh; but then proceeds to his sufferings as a minister of Christ, and winds up, "if I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities." What an argument to prove our superiority! And then he relates, how at Damascus through a window, in a basket, was I let down by the wall and escaped the hands of the governor. He was nothing among men, but see the place given him of God!

In chapter xii. he tells us that it is not expedient for him to glory, but adds, "I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord," and details what had been disclosed to him—"a man in Christ about fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether

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out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth); such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities." There is an amazing contrast between Paul let down in a basket, through a window, to escape from the governor of Damascus, and Paul a guest in the third heaven; intelligent too in the wondrous converse there. Nothing as to place among men, but exalted by God to the highest place; the principle verified in himself—weakness on man's side, but might and excellence on God's side. And still more, as to power, he is the sport of Satan on earth; but though buffeted, the grace of God is sufficient for him, and when he is weak then is he strong. When he is utterly powerless God's power is manifested; thus does he confirm that great truth, that there is

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nothing on man's side, but everything on God's. And that is made known to the man in utter weakness.

In the last chapter he sums up, by declaring, that, "if I come again I will not spare: since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you. For though he was crucified through weakness [on account of man] yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him; but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you." This is the true principle and ground of all service, and then he can add—"we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection"—the only true aim of a servant of Christ. And he concludes, "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." As self is set aside, God in His grace and power will be with us.

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“GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.” Very different therefore is the character of Christianity from all that went before it. God held intercourse with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; He spake to Israel by Moses and the prophets; but He, who thus communicates His mind in old time, not bound to any particular method of revelation, hath in the end of the days spoken unto us by His Son. All who owned this in apostolic times, and were obedient to the revelation communicated, found themselves in a new position, gathered together on new ground, in which families sprung from one common ancestor on earth, or people formed by language and locality into a nation, had by virtue of earthly ancestry or nationality no standing there. For the first time, since the tower of Babel, men witnessed an association formed without the recognition

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of a dominant race or privileged community. Israel had been God's elect nation on earth, they are so still, though at present dispensationally disowned; but now there was found to be an election out of the earthly people. Professed obedience to Moses no longer sufficed as the test for all who were faithful to God, for His Son, by whom He made the worlds, and whom He had appointed heir of all things, had come into the midst of His own people Israel, and had drawn souls around Himself as the centre and the shepherd of the flock. And more than this, He had gone before the sheep, and led them out of the fold, to discover outside it the existence of sheep, of which, till then, they were ignorant, who with them formed one flock under one shepherd.

As this movement progressed, and the election out of Israel was called forth, a name was given them by the Jews, and as the work spread outside the land a name was bestowed on them by the Gentiles. For this movement, so new, yet so decided, so marked and

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so strange, could not proceed unnoticed by those in whose midst it progressed, having, as all saw, a vitality which threats and actual persecution however bitter could not diminish, and a power hitherto unknown, of attracting, and uniting into one common bond of brotherhood, those who by training and hereditary predisposition, had before been opposed to one another.

There is a great deal often in a name, affording a clue to the feelings of those who confer it, or telling something about those who receive it, embalming some peculiarity which, as long as the language lasts, shall not sink into oblivion. To this the name given to the Lord's followers, by the Jews and by the Gentiles, forms no exception. Saints, disciples, believers, they were; but these appellations were not sufficiently distinctive. The faithful of old before Christianity existed were called saints. (Ps. l. 5; Zech. xiv. 5.) The followers of any teacher, whether Jewish or Pagan, might be called disciples of their respective masters; and believer, unless

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what he believed was defined, was a term which a Jew, who abhorred the followers of the Lord Jesus, would appropriate as equally descriptive of himself. A new name was then wanted by the Jews, which would designate without the possibility of confusion the new party, that had risen up at Jerusalem. By the Jews therefore they were called Nazarenes (Acts xxiv. 5); by those outside them at Antioch, Christians; and by themselves, Brethren. (Chap. xi. 26-29.)

That the Jews should fasten on them a term of reproach is not surprising. The spirit of opposition, where it cannot by force or persuasion check a movement, will often attempt to answer it by reproach or ridicule; and since the place associated with the early years of the Lord Jesus supplied them with one just suited to their purpose, it is not surprising that by the term Nazarenes His followers should henceforth be known, wherever the Jews had a sufficient influence to guide public opinion.

But little did they who were ready to confer this name, think how it told

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against themselves. Had the Lord never died, the name applied to Him whilst living (Luke iv. 34; Mark x. 47; Luke xxiv. 19; in some MSS) might have designated His disciples likewise. But, when applied to His followers only after His resurrection, it expressed what their knowledge of Jesus was who called them Nazarenes. The home of His childhood they knew, the place from which He came forth to commence His public ministry in Israel (Mark i. 9) all were cognizant of, so the Jews sought to connect His followers only with the past, for what more did they know about Him? He had lived at Nazareth, He had died with the name of that town over His head, His death the centurion witnessed, the place of His sepulture the guard of soldiers attested. Beyond this concerning Him, the Jews knew nothing. Applying therefore this term to the disciples, whilst they sought to cover them with reproach and dishonour, they really attested their own wilful ignorance. They confessed by it to a knowledge of His

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life on earth, but of anything connected with Him beyond earth, they shewed they were ignorant.

From Jerusalem the work spread, and those who were Nazarenes in Judea, found themselves called Christians at Antioch. Whence this name, coined for the purpose? The Jews never would have given it, for it must have been a condemnation of their position, a confession of their unbelief. They elicited from Himself that He was the Christ, but their rulers in the Acts never call Him by that name. The Christians did not first claim it or invent it, for the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch. Those at Antioch, outside the Church, gave the name to those who were so often speaking of the Christ. A name new to heathen ears was constantly on their lips, and formed the subject of their teaching. They spake of Christ, they believed on Christ, they followed Christ. Hence surely the name; for whatever the motive of those who invented it might have been, had they not heard

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the disciples speaking of Christ, they would not have called them Christians. Such a term then attests what the disciples taught, a witness of their bold and constant confession of the official glory bestowed by God on the one whom Jews and Gentiles had together crucified. "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ," was Peter's announcement by the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. From that day His official title, which the Lord had forbidden the apostles to speak of when on earth (Luke ix. 20, 21) was fearlessly proclaimed. "Daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." (Acts v. 42.) His followers knew, what the Jews did not, what He was, and where He was, and this name which they received proved that they professed to be disciples of one who was on high. Nazarenes told that He had been on earth; Christians that He was declared to be risen and in heaven.

But to describe themselves neither of

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these names would suffice. They were conscious of a relationship to each other never known before. They felt it, and gave outward expression to it. All who believed on the Lord Jesus, at Jerusalem, owned the tie of brotherhood among themselves. But it did not stop there. A bond united as closely all who believed on the common Saviour, whatever their nationality might be, whatever their previous feeling to each other had been. Not nations now but a brotherhood they owned. Not two families with some interests in common, but one family, with one object at heart, they found was now on earth; and into it they had all been brought: "By one Spirit baptized into one body." (1 Cor. xii. 13.) The first expression of this as extending to the whole Church, shewing that the middle wall of partition was indeed broken down, came from believers at Antioch, formerly Gentiles, stretching forth the right hand of assistance to the poor saints in Judea. "Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send

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relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judæa." (Acts xi. 26.) Distinction of race and national jealousies melted away before the presence of the Holy Ghost, uniting all believers into one common brotherhood. They were brethren in the Lord, and so brethren was a name by which they spoke of each other. Something positive had been formed, and they felt it. And this recognition was not onesided, for Peter the Apostle of the circumcision (and it is nice to read it) makes especial mention twice over in his epistle of the brotherhood. (1 Peter ii. 17; v. 9—Greek.) It was never to be forgotten, for this bond once formed must exist on earth as long as the Church is down here.

Thus these three names are expressive, preserving more surely than if written on stone or graven on the rock, what the Jews acknowledged of the Lord, what the Gentiles heard about Him, and what the disciples felt existed on earth because He had taken His place on high. Should not the tale still be told and the bond still be recognized?

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

OUR NEW CONDITION.

No favour is valued but as it affects our condition, in making us gainers by it. The sense of gain as to our condition becomes the measure of every favour conferred. Increase the sense of gain, and you enhance the favour, for the value of the favour consists in the consciousness of having gained by it. This must be the case when the condition is imperfect, for how could anything be valued, unless it met one's need? and according as the need is met the condition is improved.

To man, fallen, and sensible of his fallen condition, nothing can be of value but as it tends to improve that condition. Cain knows that he is not on terms with God, and he feels that there can be no real improvement in his condition until his relation to God is a satisfactory one. When Abel secures the acceptance denied to himself, he is filled with envy. He sees Abel's condition improved, while his remains unaltered, and even worse

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knew how satisfying the portion was, and therefore he pursued it, at the loss of everything else. To him to die was gain; because he already knew in his soul that it was far better to depart and be with Christ. If the outer man perisheth, the inner man is renewed day by day. There is a conscious personality of the new man, which enables one to rise superior to the claims and desires of the old, though still clothed with the old. There is a daily deepening conviction and assurance of the greatness and the magnitude of the new, and thus there is not only a more defined separation from the old, but a fuller apprehension of what it is to be in a new condition, given by Christ, the Head and source of the creation of God; and with it, a testimony characteristic of His grace, which must be compromised, if this be not seen and accepted; for if our condition be not perfect, our relation to God cannot be perfect.

THE DEVOTED ONE.

NONE are so above the difficulties of this scene as those wholly devoted to Christ in it. The more difficult the day, the more devoted you must be. Danger there will be. The moment you become a witness for Christ, you are a target for Satan; but you must not be as one who *propounds* truth, but one whom truth *controls*. Ruth is an example of the devoted one; and she finds Boaz (which is "strength, a pillar"). Of him that "keeps the word of my patience" it is said, "I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God." Paul had found "strength" when he said, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content. . . . I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." He was independent of everything, because he had got one object — Christ, the source of everything — the one his heart was governed by. There is an ease of heart in passing through this scene, which none but one thoroughly devoted to Christ can know. Such an

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One is superior to circumstances—able indeed to enjoy the bright day if it comes, but able to dispense with it if it goes; having a distinct path of blessing, devoted to Christ because it is his duty to be so; but so enriched as he travels along, by being thrown into company with Himself, that he finds the absolute loss of all things to be gain; the friend of Christ, he is informed in His mind, useful, personally contented, and satisfied in Him.

THE TREE OF LIFE.

Soon we taste the endless sweetness
 Of the Tree of Life above;
 Taste its own eternal meetness
 For the heavenly land we love.

In eternal counsels founded,
 Perfect now in fruit divine;
 When the last blest trump has sounded,
 Fruit of God for ever mine.

Fresh, and ever new are hanging,
 Fruits of life on that blest Tree,
 There is still'd each earnest longing—
 Satisfied my soul shall be.

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Safety, where no foe approaches,
 Rest, where toil shall be no more,
 Joy, whereon no grief encroaches,
 Peace, where strife shall all be o'er.

Various fruits of richest flavour
 Offers still the Tree divine;
 One itself, the same for ever,
 All its various fruits are mine.

Where deceiver ne'er can enter,
 Sin-soiled feet have never trod;
 Free, our peaceful feet may venture
 O'er the paradise of God.

Drink of Life's perennial river,
 Feed on Life's perennial food;
 Christ the Fruit of life, and Giver,
 Safe through His redeeming blood.

Object of eternal pleasure,
 Perfect in Thy work divine;
 Lord of glory! without measure,
 Worship, joy, and praise are Thine

But, my soul! hast thou not tasted
 Of that Tree of Life on high,
 As through desert lands thou'st hasted,
 Eshcol's grapes been never nigh?

Ah! that Tree of Life was planted,
 Rooted deep in love divine,
 E'er the sons of God had chanted
 Worlds, where creature glories shine.

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Love divine without a measure
Godhead glory must reveal;
In the object of its pleasure,
All its ways of grace must seal.

As a tender suckling rising,
From a dry and stony land;
Object of man's proud despising,
Grew the Plant of God's right hand.

Grace and truth in love unceasing,
Rivers in the thirsty ground;
Every step to God well pleasing,
Spread their heavenly savour round.

He the Father's self revealing,
Heavenly words none else could tell;
Words of grace each sorrow healing,
On the ear of sorrow fell.

Yes! that Tree of Life is planted,
Sweetest fruit e'en here has borne;
To its own rich soil transplanted,
Waits alone the eternal morn.

Fruits that our own souls have tasted—
By the Spirit from above;
While through desert lands we've hasted,
Fruits of perfect endless love.

CHRIST:

WHO HE IS AND WHAT HE DOES.

IN the beginning was the Word. Here we begin before Genesis, for we are in not what is *made*, but what *is*. We are raised above creation to the One who is the very centre of it, the One you have with you here. In Him was life but the life was the light of men. He came to His own but His own received Him not; but inasmuch as any did receive Him, they got into association with Him as *sons*. Into the very association, title, name, He has Himself. Then comes the actual manifestation, and what have we got in Him? The word made flesh we see Him dwelling among us in this way, rich yet for our sakes He became poor, and every step of His poverty was the expression of divine love; the lower He came the more He proved that He was God. He became obedient unto death; now obedience is the place of a man, of a servant, therefore God exalts Him as man. The eye opened upon Him sees the infinite

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perfect way of divine love become a man, and His delight is with the sons of men. We worship Him when we see who He is, as a man walking through the world from day to day. His miracles, not the fruit of committed power, but the display of personal goodness. To those who ask where He dwells, the Lord says, "Come and see." He never refuses acceptance, He came to be received, came to gather all our thoughts and affections round Himself—came to be ALL to us. He who was the power of God and the wisdom of God—in whom was the fulness of the godhead bodily, comes to me, just where I am emptied and humbled; as light which does not bid me come up to it, but meets me where I am; and what is more, meets me by my wants and by my weakness; but how does it come down to me? As the glory of the only begotten of the Father. If I want to know what that is, the Son of God brings it down in flesh, to dwell among us. Do you want to know what is the glory of the Son with the Father? what the

intimacy of a Son is? what the obedience of a Son? you must look at Christ. He is the first-born among many brethren. It was exactly what Satan tried to get Him out of. If you are the Son of God make these stones bread. No, says the Son, I am obedient; I am hungry, but I have no *word* to make stones into bread. And mark, He was led of the Spirit to be tempted of the devil, on purpose to bind the strong man for us. And there was as much *power* displayed in that simple answer, as in casting out a devil; quoting a few texts met the power of Satan. O mark the power of scripture in the hand of Christ! the only and adequate weapon with which He bound the strong man. It shews the power the scripture has, how the Son of God valued it. It was of such value and importance to Him that He used it to meet Satan with all his wiles, for he could quote it too, but *could not answer it*—he must try something else. The wretched wisdom of man can pick holes in that which the Son of man used to

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bind Satan! The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, He is come into this place that we may see the glory of the only begotten of the Father; it could not be learned elsewhere. Even the angels have to learn it all through us. "Through the Church the manifold wisdom of God." But for us He comes among us, and He that sanctifies and they that are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call us brethren. What a thought to connect our hearts with Him to make us feel the wonderful place we are brought into by God. If you want to know the perfect blessedness of what it is, look at Christ, He who was in the present enjoyment of the Father's love—in the bosom of the Father, and as still there (for He never left it) declared Him.

I have a blessed object in the person of the Son and at the same time the Father revealed, so that I have seen Him and known Him in Christ, and of His fulness received. My heart has found the Father, and the communi-

cating source in Him makes of this fulness flow down to me; so perfect, so rich its character is, that I am partaker of it, associated with Him where all divine blessing flows unto Him as man, flows unto us through Him. Now we see in very truth that He will have us in the perfect enjoyment of what He enjoys. That is the *way* Christ loves! He will have us enjoy from Him, with Him, in Him, of His fulness, divine love, divine life, divine favour; *He* has brought me into it all, and has given me grace to sustain my heart in order to enjoy it. Yet our hearts are lading themselves with thick clay, weary of it too, often, and of the world we are weary of, and weary in, yet we go on slaving to enjoy or enjoying to go on slaving. What is it all in connection with the fulness that is in Him? All blessing has come down to us in Him, that we might have an object to draw our hearts out of this scene, to feed on Christ Himself as the food of our souls. Is the bread which came down from heaven that which constitutes

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your life—your heart going on with Him from hour to hour? In Him you will find all you want to keep your heart from the husks of this world. It must turn to something, and if you do not get Christ filling the new man, you will get the old man going after something that shuts God out—no matter what it is—a very little thing will do it.

Grace and truth *came* in the Son. This was not sending a command to be something for God, but He has come and *is* something for us. He tells us what man is in the purpose of God—tells us all the heart of God. There is nothing He does not tell us about, from the worst to the best, from the lowest to the highest, from Satan up to the revelation of the heart of God. Light tells it all. Every heart is revealed, but love came with light, to bring the heart back to God. I have got into light as God is light, and I have got into love as God is love. God Himself sought me—won my heart by His grace to a lost sheep. I found Christ and found

this great love in God. Now I know Him, I have got to the centre of the core of the heart of God. Christ came out of it, and I know Him. I know God's heart better than my own, for He has given His Son for me, and He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. I found Him, and then I found this blessed truth, that nothing can conceal or cover what He is to me. Now how far are we feeding upon what He is as a present continual thing? We have no life, if we have not eaten His flesh and drank His blood, but if we have life, it wants food. Is there a diligence of the new man, looking for more and more enjoyment of Christ? not going to Him with a heart wasted by the things in this world, but practically dwelling on the things that God has prepared for them that love Him, living on these things apart from the vanity which is very near to us if we are not watchful. Oh that there may be some depth in our hearts! If Christ be not there, all is shallow. Christ gives us depth. Does the word of God fall on the hard-

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beaten track of our hearts, so that there is none of that blessed apprehension of what Christ is, and His word fails to awaken any worship or delight of heart? The time will soon be when He shall appear. How far practically are we prepared for that? Is there nothing now in your heart but the Father's and the Son's love? Will there be no great gap left, when all the rest is taken out of it? Be assured that if ever love can bless us, if wisdom can bless us, if lovingkindness can bless us, the heart of Christ can bless us. May we live by Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Our bodies are the 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.

In the path of the divine will, whatever there is of divine power in me comes out. Lowliness of obedience, denial of self, is always the means of the display of divine power.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST IN US.

PHILIPPIANS i. shews us the life of communion, which Paul had, expressing itself in all his service; and the marked feature about it is, his triumph in trial by the way. Every step of his way was a step of triumph, though also of trial. In chapter ii. we get the perfect *standard* of life down here, not (as in chapter i.) the picture of the *measure* to which men of like passions with ourselves could attain, but the perfect standard of it in the Son of God, the Son of man—no imperfection whatever, and that alone is the standard of the eternal life down here. Then in chapter iii. he gives where all the power for this is found. All that Paul saw in Christ is what gave his soul its strength and liberty before God; and it was the same thing that moulded all his thoughts and affections. Lastly, in chapter iv. he shews to us the bearing of these things on those to whom he was writing.

“Rejoice in the Lord always.” He puts before us the person of Christ as

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the matter of joy. There is nothing that will get us over our difficulties or over the sense of our rights as joy in the Lord. If the heart of Euodias and Syntyche (see ver. 2) had been flowing over with Christ, they would have stood back like Abram with Lot. The consciousness Abram had that he and God were *together* put him in complete freedom to let Lot choose what he liked. God was quite enough for Abram. So it would have been with these two. If their hearts had been full of Christ, the heart and hand would have been open to let everything go, because they had Christ. "Let your moderation be known unto all men." That is just what we see in the Lord, and just what the apostle did himself. "Be careful for nothing; but in everything in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, make your requests known unto God. And the *peace of God* shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Here we get what brings peace to the heart. Very often we are passed through very difficult circumstances. Paul had to

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carry the whole state of the Church in his heart. If he had done that as a man there would not have been strength for it, but in the midst of it all he had the bosom of God to turn to, and he could let out all his heart there. He lets out all his heart to God and has perfect confidence in God. God is in his heart, and there is *perfect peace*, the peace of God. This was no new thing. The Lord Jesus says, "My peace I give unto you." What was His peace? Never did things appear more right to Him than when they seemed perfectly wrong as to circumstances. Even the very cup gave Him the opportunity of shewing out the compassion and mercy of the Father. There was perfect peace in His heart. Take care to empty out all your care to God. A strong current may trouble the waters, but it cannot trouble the rock.

And the God of peace shall be with you. Are we so walking with God as to find Him with us? The heart looks up and knows that Christ is the only answer to every need. But Christ

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says, If you treasure up my words I will come to you and the Father will come to you, and we will make our abode with you. You shall have a bright light shining all around you. It is not only that we are to roll all our cares off, but we are to have a certain walk. God is absolute in His breaking in on the soul; Saul of Tarsus could not keep Christ out. The same power that broke into the dark cavern of Saul's mind, called that man to walk along a certain and distinct path, and he chose to walk along it. Will you walk in that path? Israel refused to walk in God's path. What a gracious thing it is for God to say to a people, I have chosen you, now will you walk with me? We are the choice of God, and He expects to be our choice, and that in this world.

A strange life is that of a Christian. He never finds himself so full as when he has got nothing. If you had asked Paul, what have you got now? he would have said, I have got Christ, and Christ and I understand one another well.

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“I know how to be abased, and how to abound.” Let that go home to our hearts. Many a saint has missed seeing that everything that nears them is, if walking in the Spirit, a matter of thanksgiving. It is part of the Lord’s wisdom in dealing with us, to let us abound sometimes. It is the same Christ that is required in power to enable me to walk in abundance, as in abasement. Change of circumstances are often permitted, because He will not allow a mere habit formed. *What He wants is life.* We find the same Christ in Bethany as in the temple and on the cross; because in Him was the power of life. The apostle can say, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Notwithstanding ye have done well that ye did communicate with my afflictions.” Why? He saw Christ in the contribution. If you can get hold of what is of Christ in a person and point it out to them, you have no idea how it cheers their hearts. Everything that has been the expression of a saint down here, having tasted His love,

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is counted by Christ. He knows exactly what His people have been down here, and will mention it too by and bye.

We never really give until we come to deny ourselves before we give. If what we give costs us something, it is the offering of love, and the effect of it on the heart of those to whom it goes will be to move their hearts with a savour of Christ, if they know that it comes from the expression of self-denial. We are so very little living in the liberty of the life of Christ that we do not know the difficulty of the heart in receiving such an expression of love. Perhaps a poor widow had put in her two mites. Well, says the apostle, I cannot refuse it, but *my* God, the God that gave His Son before the foundation of the world, the God that I have well proved ever since He called me by His grace, the God that will just do for me according to His own perfect wisdom, *that* God shall supply all your need. He was perfectly sure that God would care for the people who had stripped themselves for Him. And it is not

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only the God of the wilderness that has been true to me, but now it is the God of the glory, of Canaan, of the land flowing with milk and honey. It is according to His riches in *glory* by Christ Jesus. It is one thing for Paul to say, God has never failed *me*; but another thing to say He has a land of His own, a blessed place to which we shall come, where everything that can satisfy the mind of the Spirit is communicated, and *that* is the God who shall supply you—and that is my comfort.

“Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” That is the desire of Paul’s own heart for Him, that there should be glory to Him for ever and ever. Well, the time-state is part of that “ever.” We often forget that. How are you walking to His glory *now*? We can glorify Him in the wilderness: it is part of the eternity. Now it is that all the love that is in Him flows into our souls, enabling us to do all things here to Christ, and for the Lord Jesus Christ. The joy of salvation

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while we are triumphing in all the trials of a wilderness course is never tasted more than there, because of the very contrast. The world says, How can I *get*? The saint says, God has given me to Christ, and the heart passes through it all, making the wilderness to resound with songs of joy, giving out a special sweetness to the soul, who having nothing, yet possesses all things.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE BALANCE OF TRUTH.

TRUTH is things as they are in the mind of God. It is not one side of them nor another side, but the whole as they stand in the eye of God. The exposition of any subject according to man's mind is true to his mind; that is, it is stated as it is seen, or can be seen by him; but this is not in itself *truth*, for if a thing be capable of presenting a different view when seen from God's side, then, however true it may be to the human conscience, it is not in reality truth; and

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thus the view of a subject which might appear to be true to man, would be one-sided, if the light in which God sees it be not apprehended; and this accounts for the partial and one-sided view in which doctrines or subjects of scripture are spoken of—the truth is not grasped. The great mistake in every age, and the great cause of difference about doctrines and subjects in scripture, is attributable to this one-sided view of them. If any subject be clearly seen from God's side, there must be accuracy and perfection in it. It reaches as far as He has designed it, and it springs from Himself; whereas, if it be limited to man's view of it, it is only seen as it affects man, and he at best can only trace it from himself upward, instead of seeing it from its source as it is with God, and reaching downward to man. There can be no balance if the grace of God be measured by man's gain from it or his need of it, because then it is made a thing entirely confined to man, and man is made the measure of it. This must be one-sided, because it is the lesser side that is made

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prominently get a place? Surely there is no balance there. It is not only the sinner's freedom from condemnation which the gospel proclaims, but that God has found him a *Saviour*—not only that he is safe; but that as *forgiven*, he is NOW NEAR unto God. The step between the right and wrong is often very small, yet it is plain that if the gospel be limited to the benefit it confers on man, then man is before the mind rather than God. Surely that is not according to the balances of the sanctuary. The gospel sets forth the grace of God to man; but it presses on man what the God who has this grace is; not merely the effect on man's heart, but a sense of Him who confers it; not the relief only, but the One who relieves; not the deliverance only, but the Deliverer.

It is the same principle as to all truth and all teaching. If the saint's benefit, or happiness, or order be looked at and sought apart from Christ, or as making Christ secondary, it will soon be seen that the truth has been lost; there is no balance, and this is not readily

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seen, because what is addressed peculiarly to oneself, and for one's own special benefit, seems so good and useful, and comes so within the comprehension of the natural mind, that many contend for the practical usefulness of it. The evidence of every failing dispensation is, the attempt to exhibit in externals that which is lacking internally, and hence ritualism and Pharisaism will always crop up when the heart is not occupied with Christ, like Saul destroying all that was vile and refuse, and sparing Agag—(1 Samuel xv. 9), or the Pharisees in our Lord's day, or the Laodicean leaven in our own day. Man's side is dwelt on, but God's is overlooked. All is one-sided, and the balance which marks the truth is lost.

What though I may have the eternal life, I cannot get on without the word. The example we have of it in Christ shews it to us as a life of obedience, and He Himself used the word to rout Satan. And I believe the real secret of our little power of walk is in that we either do not know the word at all, or that it is rusted over in our minds with unbelief and worldliness.

ON THE WING

EVERY day I am more and more convinced that we must be on the wing, if we would be preserved from the snares on earth. "Vain is the net set in the sight of anything on wing." (See margin.) If you are above, and see what is going on below, you are warned and thus preserved. A bird has the air for its domain, and from thence can survey all that is going on here. The dove sent out of the ark surveyed the earth, and because it found no place to rest in, it returned to the ark. This is our true position sustained by a power, the wing of the Spirit of God, which keeps us above the earth as it is; and yet we are visitors to it, missionaries of one errand or another, and though walking here as ordinary mortals, yet always with wings. A bird on wing is then our true position as to this scene; but while it is so, we must keep in mind the home and the enjoyment of the bird on God's side. These are described in Psalm lxxxiv.: "The sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O

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Lord of hosts, my king and my God." The sparrow signifies properly (as used in scripture) any bird. It has power to keep above the earth and its snares, but it has also found a house, the house of God ; a house, a home in heaven. Stephen knew this home when, "being full of the Holy Ghost, he looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God and Jesus." The bird that had soared above the din and tumult, the murderous hate of man, had entered the ark of God and had found a dwelling in the house of God. What a rest to a poor bird like Stephen to find such a home, or to Paul when he found it in the third heaven ! Nothing but the Spirit of God can carry one to it, or unfold to the heart the delights of it.

This is the first thing for us, as Psalm lxxxiv. sets forth. We must first "dwell in thy house, and be still praising thee." We must know its delights, as did Stephen and Paul, before we can be the *swallow*. (Swallow signifies liberty: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.") The

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swallow has not only a house, like the sparrow, but a "nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars," &c. She is in full rest there, hatches her young, and bears fruit. Typically this describes the ease and the formative power of the glory of the Lord; and hence the ability, as Moses with a shining face, to come forth and testify here of God, and bring forth fruit in patience. Stephen returns to this scene of perturbation and violence, with all the dignity of one who had a nest in fulness of joy outside of it; and he exhibits to his murderers how superior he is to all their evil and malice; and one of them, Saul of Tarsus, was one of his "young," the fruit and answer to his prayers. This *second* part, the Psalm expresses as, "Blessed is the man *whose strength is in thee*, in whose heart are the ways of those who, passing through the valley of Baca, make it a well." The one in the known enjoyment of *the swallow* is the one whose strength is in the Lord, and in whose heart are the ways of a well-maker in Baca; that

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is, ministering cheer and blessing in the land of sorrow, where it has really no part. I fly from the earth, like a bird; and I find a house with God; and there at rest, and furnished with blessing, like the swallow, I can contribute to a scene which contributes *nothing to me*. In the one case, you fly from it to heaven, like the dove to the ark; and in the other, you are so replenished and invigorated there, in the grace and power of Christ, that you can make a well—minister blessing to the weary, in a world of sorrow and trial. This sparrow and this swallow you are to be, having nothing here but everything in heaven—a house and a rest. And as you know both, you will be still praising for the one, and because of the other you will contribute to the cheer of others—make a well in Baca, you yourself going from strength to strength.

The Lord grant you abounding joy in your home and rest above, in the Father's house; and then there will be praise *within*, and the making of the well in Baca *without*.

"THE MARK."

My soul, press on! press on with speed,
The time is short! pause not, nor stay;
If aught thy progress would impede,
Cast it behind thee! Haste away!

Thou hast one object to pursue,
Enough to fill life's fleeting day;
One glorious prize to keep in view,
Look not behind thee! Haste away.

Thou wert not formed for earthly things,
For those poor trifles of a day;
Look to thy birth-place, spread thy wings,
Leave this low region. Haste away.

Do not thy restless yearnings tell
That nothing here *can* be thy stay?
That thou art formed with God to dwell—
Heaven is *thy* country? Haste away!

In spirit there, e'en *now* by faith,
Christ is thy life; the bonds of clay,
Which keep thee in this vale of death,
Shall soon be broken. Haste away!

Hasten to meet Him—watch each hour,
Redeem each moment of delay;
Full soon with resurrection power
Thou shalt adore Him! Haste away.

JUDGMENT.

“Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out.” (John xii. 31.) Here is announced an event of great magnitude, consisting of two parts; viz., 1st, the judgment of the world, and, secondly, the prince of the world being cast out. The Lord makes this announcement in connection with His own death and resurrection. If on one side the door of mercy is thrown open through His death on the cross; on the other side, and at the same time, it is the crisis of the world and its prince. The judgment is not announced until the voice comes from heaven, in answer to the request “Father glorify thy name”—“I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.” The Son of man is glorified—raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and now is the judgment of this world, and its prince will be cast out. If I accept the one, I must accept the other. The Son of man raised out of death, by the glory of the Father, determines the state of the whole world. As there is in Christ glorified by God in resurrection a basis

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and a centre according to God, then all the rest must be subject to judgment. The fact of One being raised out of it, and thus opening the door of mercy to all in it, necessarily involves the rest in judgment; but this is not proclaimed until He can add, "and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." If there be no other way to meet the judgment on man but the death of Christ, surely and plainly, when He opens a way of escape out of it, there can be nothing now but judgment. If in Him only there is safety out of it, judgment must come on all the rest. Man, by sinning and yielding to Satan, had formed the world, the present state of things; the Son of God comes into the world, bears the judgment on man—in death destroys the power of Satan; and now, lifted up, He is the power to draw every one out of it. Judgment is on everything but on Him; who having borne the judgment has been glorified by God out of it. The truth is, that there is escape from judgment through Him who is lifted up;

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but that elsewhere, in the world, there is judgment, and the power that influences men there shall be cast out.

When in the history of man God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth (Gen. vi.) God said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; . . . and God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood." Judgment on the *cosmos*—on the ordered thing here, is not a new thing. The judgment of the flood was general, and all was involved in it, except the ark. It only was safe, and preserved from the judgment which swept unsparingly over the whole earth. The entire ordered thing — the *cosmos*, was destroyed—"perished," but in the ark there was perfect preservation. In this terrible judgment there was after all but a type of the judgment to come. The ark in

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the days of the flood but feebly represented the mode of safety now offered. *Now* it is, "And I if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me." The ark did not propose anything of this kind. Noah prepared it for himself and his house; and by it he condemned the world. If I embrace the mercy offered me, I am not only safe myself, but I condemn the world—the system of things here which will not believe in the goodness of God. And hence, the greater His mercy, the greater the judgment of the world in refusing it. Now it is not an ark limited in its resources and its benefits which is presented to the world with the offer of salvation; but the Son of God is come, and having died, having borne in Himself the judgment of death resting on man, He is the One to attract all men to Himself; and being glorified by the Father, there remains nothing but judgment on the world. He is the only One free from it. He has endured it, bearing it for us, but having glorified God therein, He is raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, an

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He becomes the real and full ark for every one desiring to escape from the world, for which nothing remains now but judgment, and that its prince should be cast out. The more perfectly my safety in Christ from all that is against God is seen, the more must I see the judgment on the world. If Christ be seen and known as the way of escape from all that is against God, and that the only way of rescue is through His death; then it must be seen, that there is nothing but judgment elsewhere, on all that is connected with man. Christ in His death has destroyed him that hath the power of death; the prince of this world must be cast out. Christ has triumphed over him, consequently his domain—the world—must be swept by judgment. I cannot be saved by Christ's death out of the judgment on man, and overlook the judgment on the world, a system which is the offspring of man's rebellion and departure from God. The world is the fruit of man in rebellion, aided by Satan. Hence, when Christ dies for man in the world, and

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opens out a way of escape for man, then with the way of escape in Him, there is judgment on that which is contrary to Him. The perfection of the one makes the other imperative. The way of escape out of it in the cross necessarily exposes the sphere of man's rebellion to judgment. If one were in the world without any way of escape, one would be still liable to judgment; but when the way of escape is manifest, the more must the other be defined; and consequently, any one admitting the way of escape, must in proportion accept the judgment and the overthrow of the antagonistic power. The more Noah insisted on the necessity of the ark, the more he announced the judgment; but the moment he stepped into the ark, he thereby proclaimed that the judgment was at hand, and that the rescue and the judgment came in together. Those in the doomed earth may not have comprehended what was impending, but when the way of escape was accepted, then the judgment must be admitted; or why prepare an ark? Hence the moment the ark was entered,

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the line of demarcation was defined between judgment and safety, in the most distinct and effective manner.

If Christ be my salvation out of this world, the scene of man's works and Satan's influence, then, the more definitely He is so, the more must I not only see that I am safe from the judgment, but the more must I admit that there is judgment on everything which is not of Him. If it were not so, why should I need salvation? He only is out of it; and, like Noah in the ark, the more I find my salvation in Him, the more do I rejoice in being separate from that exposed to judgment. As the earth, when the waters of judgment rolled over it, had lost its charms for Noah, so did the assured sense of safety, through the favour of God, grow deeper in his soul; as the unsparing judgment swept around him, he turned his eyes from the scene where the judgment was; in fact he was prevented from looking at it, for the window of the ark was in the top. He knew the judgment was all around, and he found his blessing in dwelling on the

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grace which had saved him, and as he appreciated it, he had communion with the righteousness of God in the judgment. He was conscious of the excellence and peculiarity of his position, saved by grace out of a scene on which judgment rested; and hence, as he was marked off by the favour of God, so was he aware of and consenting to the judgment because of man's evil.

The way of grace cannot be fully accepted without the course of judgment being distinctly admitted. It is from an imperfect apprehension of the escape, and the terms of it, that there is so little apprehension of the judgment resting now on the world; and hence it is that things and principles, and the power of the world, can in any measure be used by the saint. They could in no wise give these any place if they apprehended that salvation, through the death of Christ, necessarily involves judgment on the whole course of man's works, which are in subjection to Satan who rules him. In Christ who died and rose again, I am as it were on an island, above and apart from the sea of judg-

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ment all around. And the more I am established on the island, the more am I conscious of separation from the scene out of which I have been delivered; and the more also do I recognize its character and doom. All I desire to set forth in this paper is, that as there is conscious safety in Christ through His death and resurrection, so is there admission and a sense of the judgment on this world, out of which He has saved us; and that in the death which He entered for us, He destroyed him that hath the power of death, and thus the prince of this world will be cast out. There is therefore the deepest and broadest line of distance between Him, the Saviour, and the world with its prince; and as we are of Him, as we enjoy salvation in Him, so do we recognize as a consequence of His work, "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out."

Our power, while passing through a scene under judgment, I hope to consider in a future paper.

NATURE HAS NO LINK WITH GOD.

It is a wonderful thing to see the Lord, in Mark x., how He comes into this world in the midst of all our sorrows and trials, so entirely above them that He could recognize all that was of God, and at the same time shew what the hearts of men really were. The Lord Jesus owns all that God has established good in the beginning, everything, down to the simple-hearted subjection of a child; and on the other hand, He probes man's heart with all its intents and purposes to the very bottom. He shews His perfectness in that way—in His power to own all that was of God, but power to detect all that is in man, which is enmity to God. God never denies nature: He made it, but He shews that *it has no link with Him*. It is a great thing to learn that, and to be able to recognize what God has created and at the same time to have self thoroughly and perfectly judged. There is a danger amongst us of not getting with God above the evil: if we

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are not in the place where we are conscious that God is thoroughly above it, the evil is apt to get power over our minds, to hinder confidence in God, to hinder our getting power over it for ourselves, to hinder our being gracious to the evil-doer, to hinder our judging ourselves as to it, and hence to hinder our consciousness of the grace wherein we stand. But in this place we can in His own blessed grace take notice of all that God can own of His own works, and it is just that man who can fully and completely own that there is no good in man. Jesus could say, "consider the lilies." He, the blessed man of sorrows passing through this world, with hatred all around Him for His love, was so completely, practically with God, so entirely above the evil which He saw and judged, that He could admire the beauties of the flowers of the field, perfectly above the evil, to think with God, to think of them as the work of His hand; and wherever there was anything with the stamp of God upon it, He was capable of seeing it, because He was

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with God; and I do look for Christians to be so walking with God as a present thing, that nothing may ever hinder or dim our sense of superiority in God to the evil around us, and because superior to it, able to take delight in every work of God. If I care for things in the flesh, I am all wrong, they have come between my heart and God; we see how the Lord runs a sharp edge through it; there is no harm in things, but it is the use that we are making of them that is the harm: as Adam used the trees of paradise to hide himself from God. The use that man is making of the things in the world shews where his heart is. And every day we see Christians saving some little bit of man, some accessible point, some remains of good in man, and calling it spirituality and fine names, but the Lord denies it altogether. It was enmity to God; there was no understanding, no seeking after God; the will was all wrong, lust was there, sin was there, and the love of sin; therefore man commits sin. But death to sin comes in the cross for us. Guilt was put

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away, He gave His life a ransom for many. I find in the cross by faith death to man and death to sin. I can look at the sin because I am out of it. I can judge all that is in my heart. We see the way the Lord, because He was perfect, was judging man completely. He takes up the children here as the expression of what God had created; the simple confidingness of a child: the Lord says, That is what I like to see, and if you do not get all your pride and selfwill broken down, you do not belong to the kingdom of God. So with the young man, the Lord looked on him and loved him: it was not the special love of relationship in grace, but he comes, running up to Christ, ready with the willing mind to learn everything good. He wants to inherit eternal life, to be as perfect as ever he can be, not upon the ground of being *saved* at all; the Lord takes him up on his own ground, but adds: "Come, take up your cross and follow me." He went away sorrowful—his heart detected; the moment the cross came all the loveliness was gone,

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It came out all at once that there was no basis in the human heart on which anything of God could be founded, no holdfast in the heart of man for God. Jesus looks around and says, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter the kingdom of God!" The disciples are surprised: a rich man, with all his means of serving God according to the law, is it hard for him? who then can be saved? Then mark another element: with men it is impossible, but with God all things are possible. The Lord has stated the principle; there is no one good but God. Oh what a word! A lovely character, but there is nothing good but God, and the heart of man detected by that which expressed God's goodness in the highest sense—he turns away from it sorrowful—loveliness of character will not do for God, it has no link with Him whatever.

But do you think that God in His grace will choose the lovely characters and take them into heaven, and that He is going to leave out all the vile characters? Oh no, these amiable qualities are the very thing that shew

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the wrath of God, which has come, not to build up man, but to judge him. And now the word of God comes, and, while entirely above the evil, takes notice of everything good in God's creation—says to you, Is there anything in your heart that answers to God? Nothing whatever. This puts the gospel on the right ground: it deals with men tenderly; no reproaching with sin; but it is always light which must detect the conscience. The word always strikes its root into the conscience; then the false state of heart is detected. (See Luke vii.) He has grace for open sin; but in the Pharisee, through the thick coat of self, self must be detected. The arrow of His eye pierces through the fair show in the flesh and shews the heart at enmity to God. We cannot go to God at all, unless the flesh is judged; but we are in the presence of God with opened heart; love and light laying bare our hearts give us such confidence in Him that we ourselves delight to lay them bare, to bring to His light everything, to bring it consequently

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to His love, all He brought out He bore —the sin that He detects He has borne —there is peace. Christ close to us detecting us, *must* claim our hearts. Peter says, We have left all and followed thee, and the two disciples ask to sit at His right hand, they are even thinking of going to glory in a carnal way: the Lord says, If you follow me, I can give you the cross, that is all I have got—if you are going with me to glory, the only thing you have to reckon on is the cross —if you serve me, follow me, and where I am there shall my servant be. You must have your hearts practically there —that is the road I am going to glory and you will find no other. Now, are you ready to take up your cross? Not making crosses for yourself, but following Christ so closely that you are able to say, Christ is right, His word is truth, His word is love. In this world of corruption, with this treacherous flesh the more I get of the cross the better. All that is of the flesh, the will of the flesh and the love of the world, can never do anything but separate me from God.

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Just at this time the Lord stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem. The disciples are amazed, and as they follow they are afraid. Not only will and lust have to be detected, but we are *afraid* to follow Christ. The moment we deal with God we get an instinctive sense that the world is against us. We cannot get on with a corrupted world and follow Him. We are afraid to confess Christ in our habits, houses, tastes. Look at Paul in Philippians iii.: he did not go away sorrowful or follow tremblingly. He says, I must run till I get the prize. I count all else but dross and dung to win Christ. Stripes and imprisonments, &c., were on that road, but Paul was not afraid of them that kill the body, bearing about in his body the dying of Jesus. The life also of Jesus was manifested in his mortal body.

We get sufficient in the cross to deal with all that is of man—blessed liberty with God! I have confidence and an open heart before Him. This is the spring of power. It is no sacrifice to

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me to give up all that I possess, to throw it away as an evil thing or as a weight to a man in running a race. Then comes the fact, the Lord is in heaven and His cross on earth. While I am in the world, ten thousand mercies I receive in the goodness of God, but the question comes, what is in our hearts? There is none good. I have known it by the cross, the only thing practically that I have to do with now: by it I am dead to sin, dead to law, and alive to God. When Christ put forth His own sheep He went before them: how far are our hearts in truth and simplicity disposed to follow after, disposed to think His love is right, to trust His love when He speaks of the cross, as that which cuts off my vile flesh? When the heart thoroughly trusts Christ and abides in His love, it is HIS reproach, HIS cross, and I am taking it up as that which detects the old man perfectly, and as that which is leading me into His blessed path.

The Lord give us to trust Christ fully, that we may have courage to follow Him.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

APOSTASY—ITS BEGINNING.

MAN is an object of blessing, and God is the source of it, but if the blessing becomes man's *object*, then God, the source of it, is overlooked, and that through His own gift. Satan insists (Job i. 9) that God's gifts were Job's object, and not God Himself, from whom they came. This tendency in man is characteristic of the fall. It was by proposing a benefit that Satan ensnared Eve. The gain was made the prominent thing before the mind, and in order to secure it, God was overlooked, and sin entered. If in an innocent happy state this snare was so successful, how much more likely is it in our present fallen state, that the blessing should occupy the heart more than the source of it—that there should be an eager grasping at the blessing, because of the benefit it confers, and engrossment with it. To divert the heart from God, is the very thing Satan aims at, and the moment the heart is directed to that side, then there is a beginning of that

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day, notwithstanding the amount of truth and light they have received. May Christ in His word and name be more simply the object of our hearts in this evil day!

NIPPING AND BUDDING.

IN the millennium every saint will flourish like the tree planted by the rivers of waters. Everything he doeth shall prosper. How beautiful to see a man in every way prospering, and every leaf, every movement, expressive of beauty and vigour! That is what man as man will be in the millennium. The saint now is, on the contrary, the expression of a heavenly man; to bear leaves and fruit such as Christ bore; but unknown, undistinguished here among men. The most beautiful ornaments cannot be seen in the dark. The leaves and fruit of the heavenly plant can be seen only by those who have heavenly sight. But the part trying to nature is, that the more I am the hea-

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venly tree, the less do I seek the leaves of the earthly tree. The leaves of the latter wither, or are blighted, as those of the former are budding and asserting their place; and this accounts for much of the chilling weather and frosts which afflict the saint now, on his journey. The leaves of the two trees cannot grow together. We are made to feel the nipping of the leaves of the old tree, that we may then look for the budding and blossoming of the new. It would be a poor thing to endure the nipping of the one, without the budding of the other; but if we have the budding, we need not sorrow because we suffer from the nipping.

It is interesting and instructive to mark the different kinds of nipping the saints are subjected to. I believe that as a rule all are subjected to the one most trying to them—the one which naturally they feel most. Job says, “That which I greatly feared is come upon me.” Where there is fear, there is vitality in the old tree; and death must supervene — the nipping must come.

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But when I come fully to lose sight of myself in abhorrence before God, and because of Christ, then I am assured that though every leaf wither, I have a portion and joy in Him, which will not only endure, but will surpass everything here, and deepen every day more and more in its perfect blessedness. When death has really been entered on, I have so died to the value of the leaves of this scene, because of having been introduced to—delighted, nay, satisfied with—what is entirely outside it, that though they may surround me, they are but a garnishing to my table, the hyssop on the wall, to the cedar of Lebanon. 1 Kings iv. 33.

May the fragrance and beauty of the Tree of life so fill our hearts, that everything which would come in between us and Him may be quickly and fully refused, and may we have increased power from Him to raise us above the trials of the way, and thus prove His virtue in our very infirmities.

THE MYSTERY OF GOD.

THE truth which the apostle with "great conflict" laboured that the saints might be kept in must command our utmost interest. He says in Colossians ii., "For I would have you know what great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face in the flesh." There are two things evidently before his mind in this conflict; one, the greatness and importance of the truth he would have them to know and retain; the other, the power which would endeavour to wrest it from them, and their liability to yield to it.

First, it is a fact that there is a sphere where God has in grace set us, in which we are safe from every evil influence; and secondly, it is of great interest to us to know that the Spirit of God leads the servant of Christ to labour with conflict to preserve the saints in that fulness of blessing which God confers. This is ever the aim of the true servant; his toil, his prayer, his combat against every opposition is

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that the saints should be preserved according to the mind of God. It is not their salvation merely; he has not a doubt of that; it is not for *that* he has a conflict, it is not for *that* he agonizes, but that their "hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." For this, is the apostle's conflict for them in Laodicea, for them whose face he had not seen in the flesh, reaching down to us and the last state of the Church. This is the aim of the great servant, nothing less; for this he toiled and combated every opposition; he proposed nothing less, he contended for nothing less, and he would not be satisfied, cost him what it might, with anything less. He was in concert with the purpose of God, and he could not yield or concede to anything lower than what was in the mind of God for His people, even that which Christ had secured, and necessarily the present

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testimony of the Holy Ghost. How encouraging it is to the soul when this height is presented to it, to be assured, no matter what the nature and power of the opposition, that it has on its side the counsel and power of God. Paul was conscious of the various and subtle forces which would be exerted to deprive the saints of this great position. He not only knew the greatness and goodness of the treasure given to them, but he practically had to resist the hostile energies which would undermine it. He knew that the field was of the richest pasture, but that every sort of decoy would be used to allure from it. Nothing could be greater than their position, but to enjoy it, they must be in Christ. In it were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; but, (like Shimei of old, 1 Kings ii. 36—46) if they left the sacred precincts for a moment (and it was *natural* to leave it), they suffered. Their only safety lay in continuing in this great and elevated position. If they descended at all, the first step downward was evidence of

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defeat. They had lost the mystery of God. They were not consciously united in love and in the understanding of it; therefore he adds, "And this I say, lest any beguile you with enticing words of man's wisdom." If they had an ear for the persuasive words of man's wisdom, they had not continued in the Head where were all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. If I have tasted and known that which is infinitely superior, how can I, if enjoying it, lend an ear to that which is contrary to it, in tone and intention, and in every way derogatory to it? Can I enjoy the happiest home association and suddenly be allured by the company of ruthless strangers? Could I hear Him who spake as never man spake, and in measure comprehend in Him things beyond all human grasp, and yet readily listen to the conjectures of the human intellect? The apostle's conflict is that the saints might enjoy the greatest thing, knowing that in possession of it, they would be safe from the influences which would otherwise corrupt them.

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Has the servant now-a-days a conflict of this kind? Does he see, and feel, and combat for the saints that they may be in the full knowledge of the mystery, in order that they may be preserved from the evil currents here? There is no way of preserving the saint but by his remaining in the height in which God's grace has set him. In every time the people of God were safe from the adversary, while they were true to their calling—the calling of God. And simply for this reason: that to which God called His people was necessarily the sphere to which His own mind and power converged, and consequently the place of perfect security to faith. This is simple, but a great principle to grasp; namely, that if I adhere to the purpose of God for me, then through His power I shall be preserved from every influence which would damage me if I were outside of it. We see this throughout scripture. Be it the patriarchs as to the land, or the children of Israel as to the temple, departure from the highest point with God, plunged

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them in distress and eventual captivity; and the unvarying mark of true restoration always was, that they returned, positionally and morally, to the highest point in the mind of God; and if they did not, as was the case with the returned captives in Haggai's time, their own blessings were forfeited. (Hag. i.)

Oh! how the apostle knew what loss and wreck it would entail on the saints if they were not kept in this blessed height, and well he knew too, and suffered on account of it, that the sphere in which it was most necessary to keep the saints according to God was that from which Satan would in some way or other endeavour to dislodge them. Satan's aim is to deprive us of the very thing which the true servant has great conflict to hold us in; and we are a prey to Satan the moment he can get us out of it. The wisdom of the saint is to be invulnerable. If I am invulnerable I am invincible. The art of Satan, his "wile," his byepath is to deprive me of the truth, the girdle, and then of all the rest; for the rest of the

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armour even if preserved, would only still leave me in a very poor position, when I had lost truth, the girdle. Hence, the girdle is the first thing to make sure of, and the first thing of which Satan, by his wiles, endeavours to deprive the saint. If a saint is in the truth, enjoying it, he is safe; he is above the influence which would delude him and lead him astray. First, he has not an ear for the enticing words of man's wisdom; on the contrary, he is rooted and built up in Christ, established in the faith as he has been taught, abounding therein, with thanksgiving. Therefore the apostle says, "Beware [now that ye know Christ] lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." We have got Christ as an object, rooted and built up in Him; now, nothing from the teaching of men, or the principles of the world, is to lead us aside, and simply for this reason, because in Him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and we

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are complete in Him, who is the Head of all principality and power. And not only this, but on our own side, we are circumcised in the cross in the putting away of the body of the flesh, through death. There is no place for the flesh and its will, we are buried in baptism; our status is gone, and we rise on entirely new ground; and thus Christ is our Head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together (the same word as in verse 2), increaseth with the increase of God. Thus, having died with Christ from the elements of the world, we cannot be subject to ordinances. How could that which is dead be subject to impositions? But **then**, being risen with Christ, we seek the things above, where Christ sitteth; we set our mind on things above, and not on things on the earth, our life is hid with Christ in God.

How thoroughly in this scripture are we instructed in the great results which would accrue to the saints from holding the high position, in which God in His

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grace had set them, as well as in that which is of all importance, and cannot be too strongly insisted on, viz., that if saints are not led into, and kept in this great sphere—the mystery of God—as together united to Christ the Head, they cannot be preserved from the snares of Satan, through which otherwise they will be made a prey. Nor does the servant of Christ labour according to the mind and feeling of the apostle, unless he endures and earnestly endeavours to set and preserve the saints on this ground.

In the present day there is very little apprehension of what the mystery of God is, and every allusion to the subject or attempt to unfold it, is generally met with the repulse, “It is too high,” shewing at once that there is no true idea of the nature of the benefits which it confers, or of that true devotedness to Christ, which even in the youngest will never think anything too high which offers greater nearness to and association with Him. For such an one, even like John’s two disciples (John i. 35—37), will

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naturally, as I may say, because simply devoted, have taste for the highest point. Though strangers, they say to Christ, "where dwellest thou?" They instinctively seek the place where He could be best known, and in the greatest intimacy; their hearts leaped onward to the point which only could satisfy them. Oh! for the true servant, the true energy, that the saints might be awakened to the counsel of God, and thus that there should be an acceptable offering for Christ out of that which is ripening for judgment.

In conclusion let me remark, that the subject for prayer which the apostle especially commends to the saints, both in Ephesians and Colossians is this mystery. In Ephesians vi., he calls it "the mystery of God." Now many lose the meaning of that expression, by leaving out the word mystery, and thus construe it, as referring to the gospel to sinners. In Colossians iv. he calls it "the mystery of Christ."

The Lord give us all to see how responsible we are for maintaining the

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truth; how unsafe and untenable is our position otherwise, but, in it how perfectly preserved we should be from the dire currents which are breaking in on every religious association, decoying souls into formalism or rationalism; and all because they do not hold to the only spot where they would be perfectly according to God's mind, and perfectly safe and happy.

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It is well to have, in view of what sin is, the work of God in itself before the soul. It shall be said of Israel and Judah, What hath God wrought! Then we say, What must the need have been! He need not have drunk that dreadful cup, unless it had been there for us to drink if He had not. We rest through grace upon that wondrous love that has wrought for us in the Lord Jesus Christ. Psalm xxii. winds up with, "He hath done this" and through eternity that will be the theme. We shall look

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back to it as that which revealed the whole character of God before the world existed—the thoughts of love which remained steadfast and immovable. Here we get below the surface, below all the wickedness of man. We get the question of what sin was in God's sight and how God dealt with sin. We get Christ able to do it and we see that He has so completely glorified God that everything into eternity and for eternity rests altogether and entirely upon what Christ did on the cross, the attractive point that would draw all men unto Him. It is not the living Christ that saves, blessed manifestation of God in love, in holiness—rejected as such. But here He works out all that God is, in righteous dealing with sin. The work goes on between God and Christ alone—all alone. The darkness of that moment shut out everything human, shut out man and everything of man, but God dealt with sin. And here we get—what a blessed thing!—the word of God directly from Him and for us to express what God is for us. It is the inspired

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expression of what Christ says—blessed expression of the *Person* in the circumstances around Him, the declaration from His own heart of what that expression was. Blessed to find Christ unveiling His own heart to us by the expressions given to David! Unveiling to our hearts as sinners what was the expression of His heart in doing that work for us; a thing that comes home to us to draw our hearts by the grace in it. When I think of the sin, I find Him speaking under it, of the wrath, He was in it, and I get the expression of the blessed Lord's own heart when He offered Himself without spot to God. Our hearts come to see, to apprehend, to listen to Christ telling of Himself what He felt, what He said, and what He did. Now I know the thing done, I know the love that did it, and I know the efficacy of what is done—that it reaches on to eternity, and that all blessedness before God is founded on “He hath done this,” not *in* me (it must be that too to care for and believe it), but *for* me; and the absolute perfectness of it

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depended on the one who did it, who had capacity to weigh the whole extent and bearing of it. Here I get Christ telling it to me, and the blessed effect on my heart is to shew me where He was for my sake, where God was glorified in righteousness by the just judgment of sin, where the power of Satan was destroyed and death destroyed—the work by which He redeemed many souls unto glory, according to righteousness and according to love.

The first thing He does before He begins His work, is to go into the wilderness and meet the strong man for us; He proved Himself the faithful man under Satan's temptations, refused to go out of the place of simple and total obedience. Every effect and fruit of sin, the power of Satan over men's bodies, He met by the power which came in goodness. Then came the cross, the Lord having full and distinct apprehension of all that was coming upon Him, says, Be not thou far from me, for trouble is near, for there is none to help. In Gethsemane it came out fully. Sin

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was there in all its enmity against God, in all its guilt. What is at the *root* of the condition of man as a sinner, that he would rather have anything in the world but God—rather have husks; and Christ, not now shewing forth God in goodness, but *standing before God for us*? If He took up man's cause He must be lifted up from the earth, perfect blessed love in God! Greater than our hatred, for in that hatred God has testified of love. Christ was made sin, He, who, the more tried, the more tempted, the more His perfection came out that in Him was no sin: all the terrors of Satan upon His soul only brought out His perfection. I get in divine love God's Lamb, the perfect victim, fully tried, and fit for the work for God. Blessed to contemplate His personal perfectness, God's own Lamb offering Himself by the Eternal Spirit without spot to God. “That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given me commandment, even so I do.” He loved the Father infinitely, obeyed Him infinitely, His dependence infinite.

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looking it in the face, sweating great drops of blood, He says, Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not my will but thine be done. Alone, He looked and there was no man, not even His disciples: there was everything to awaken indignation if it were possible. Alone, betrayed, and yet in entire heart Nazariteship to God, He offers Himself *that He might bear sin*. We learn not only the spotlessness of His character but His perfect obedience and perfect love. It were confusion to an angel's mind to see the sinless One made sin, but the Father had to be glorified, and He gave Himself up absolutely for God's glory — gave Himself up for poor vile wretched sinners who were deserting, betraying, and coming to crucify Him; there was the triumph of divine love over all the hatred and sin of man. What hath God wrought! He gave Himself up completely that sin might not be on us before God but on Him. As the high priest confessed all the sins of Israel, so he confessed all our sins on

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His own head; ALL the sin of your state, and the actual sins of His people, divine in power to know it all, divine in power not to screen Himself from it, but divine in power to offer Himself for it, and to bear the wrath where sin met God and God met sin. This was apostate Israel's hour and the power of darkness from the dogs that compassed Him, from the bulls of Bashan, He appeals to God; our fathers trusted in thee and they were delivered. He is alone, in those hours of darkness, lifted up from the earth, totally away from man and man from Him. Alone with God to deal with sin as one capable of sustaining all its weight in the same blessed perfection, He says, “My God.” He never lost the sense of absolute dependence, the perfectness of His heart to God shines through it all; and just in the measure in which He was divine and perfect did the terror and shaking come upon Him, feeling it as He alone could feel, infinitely. Infinitely one with the Father, He knew what it was to be separated from Him; infinite in love,

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He felt what it was to be forsaken; infinite in holiness, He felt what it was to be made sin. He knew divinely what the cup was, and the very act was obedience to His Father. "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" We can answer, "*For us!*" We see Him untouched even when the full cup was there. All the sin and all the temptation only proved that in Him was no sin. Perfect in every thought, in every feeling toward God, and every thought the expression of the perfection of His Person, crying in Gethsemane, "If it be possible," &c. Sin as sin was met by God as God, and He was the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. The new heavens and new earth depend on that, and the whole reconciling of all things in heaven and in earth. The absolute work of Christ can never fail. He ascended up to fill all things as Redeemer that He had once created as Son. God is so glorified by man that a man goes up into glory, and for us it is the full testimony of God against sin, the full testimony of

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His righteousness. But mark a solemn thing: the world sees Him no more. It will never see Him in the character of grace again. The righteousness of God is displayed in setting Him in glory at His own right hand and not letting the world see Him any more. The blessed Lord goes down in love and breaks the bonds of death and comes up again in resurrection. It is all gain to me now. He has destroyed the power of Satan. He was allowed to do his utmost, as sin and man did their utmost; but all were judged, captivity was led captive. Nothing remains but the unclouded love of God in righteousness, and the grace that reigns through righteousness. What hath God wrought! Look at this. The question of sin is so settled that He takes me up as part of His glory; if not, He has not got the fruit of the travail of His soul. He will have us with Himself, to enjoy us as the fruit of the travail of His soul, and He will be satisfied—infinite, tender, devoted love will be satisfied. Wonderful the way He clings to the thought of being a man

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in the midst of His Church ! The moment He is heard from the horns of the unicorns, the first thought He has is, I will come and make them as happy as myself. I have come out of this dreadful wrath; I am going to declare thy name unto my brethren, that my God is their God, my Father is their Father; and in the midst of the Church He will praise, He will lead their praises for the work of accomplished redemption. He is now at God's right hand, the constant abiding, perfect Witness that sin is put away in God's sight, the One on whom God's eye rests as on the blood upon the mercy-seat.

The Lord give us to bow in adoration when we think of the work that Christ has done—that He hath done this. May we praise God for ever, now in weakness and infirmity, then in glory.

Am I so consciously in the realization of my complete identification with Him who is at God's right hand, dead with Him, risen with Him, that when there is a movement of sin in my heart, I judge it, because I have received mercy?

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE MARKS OF A TRUE CONVERSION.

IN a day like this, when the mind of man is, as I may say, opening itself to be acted on, and not content unless acted on by something, it is of great moment that the servant of Christ should weigh and understand from the scripture the marks of true conversion, of one born anew—born of God. That faith or credence can be produced without the power of God, is not only admitted in scripture, but it is referred to, in order to be refused. In John ii. we read, “Many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. *But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men.*” Still more distinctly in 1 Corinthians ii. 3—5, we find that Paul avoids the line and taste of the Corinthians, in order that their “*faith* should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” And we also learn, from the parable of the sower, that in some cases, even where there was an appear-

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the fragrant ointment which would have distinguished herself. Thus, too, was it with Jonathan (1 Sam. xvii., xviii.), when he saw the head of Goliath in the hand of David. *First* he "made a covenant with him, for he loved him as his own soul;" and finally, he stripped himself of his robe, his garments, even unto his sword, his bow, and his girdle, and put them on David. *These* are the acts which accompany salvation. (See Heb. vi. 9, 10.)

There are two things very grievous in this day. One, the easy way in which conversion is spoken of, as if it were the effect of a cogent, well directed appeal, as one might be affected by hearing of a devoted patriot or crusader, and thus without any just sense of the *creation* which is wrought of God in the soul at conversion. The other is the almost indifference with which the progress of the converts is regarded. They have made a certain profession, they have been acknowledged as born again; but where is the "travailing" that Christ may be formed in them, or where the

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“great conflict” of which the apostle speaks? Be assured, the latter is traceable to the former. If there were a deeper sense of what conversion really is, there would be a deeper concern for the converts. Indifference to a thing gained, betrays a want of earnest toil in gaining it. We are always most devoted to those for whom we have suffered most.

The Lord give us to share in His own love for His people, and to look more for the marks of genuine conversion.

DAILY LIFE.

It is a marching time. There is the whole and the daily journey to Canaan. Like the earth, there is the annual and the diurnal motion. The former is the whole course of faith, the latter that of practice. That is to say, one fulfils the whole journey in faith, and one has in practice to travel all the road, all the variety of seasons are to be known to the soul; but we are not to be occupied

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with the journey, but to be each day prepared for it, before the day's toil begins. The manna was gathered before the cloud went up. Your heart is to be stored with Christ before the demands of the day are upon you; but you must be ever ready for the word "march." There is some new experience to test us almost every day, at any rate there is seldom a repetition of the same experiences except in new combinations. The Israelites were conducted through the wilderness, in order to be, in their biography, ensamples to us (upon whom the ends of the world have come), in their one journey through this world; and no doubt with them there was a tarrying at one place until the lesson connected with it was learnt. You are to begin each day with a supply from Christ which will enable you either to remain in the old halting spot, or to enter on a new one. You pitch at one, you remove to another; but the point is, that you are not thinking of one or the other. The one thing you do is preparing for either; you are prepared

to march as well as to remain, but before you are prepared to march, i.e., to enter on new circumstances, you must first be proved in prior ones. It may not be any very remarkable circumstances but something new; a fresh demand of some kind. It may be the visit of a worldly friend, or an interview with a worldly saint, something apparently small, but so new that it calls forth a new energy in you, and with it a fresh sense of dependence; but of this be assured, that if the manna has been gathered, if your soul has been fed with Christ for the day, it is sufficient for the day; the day's provision is given *before* the day's demands come on. The Lord knows all that is before us, and if we seek Him, He reveals Himself suitably, that is, in accordance with the need in which we shall be placed, whether it be to remain where we are, or to march—to enter on new circumstances of some kind or other. If I have begun the day with the Lord, I have the sense of possessing Him, and that is sufficient for all the demands of the day.

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What an interesting journey it is! What a tale the earth could tell of its annual and diurnal motions, and surely we can tell a much more interesting and wonderful tale, as we perform our orbits and are supplied by Christ each in varied ways, for all that the way requires. The only strength you have is the strength which Christ has supplied, He is your only food. In the wilderness there is really no food to nature, and as Christ is the only food, every energy is characterized by Him who is the food and strength of your soul.

You must know what you are before I can put the question to you, How are you living? Can you say that you are more conversant with being born again, with yourself as a new creature, than with the thing you are dropping off, which God has judicially put to death? We are out of focus if we do not know ourselves in the new creation.

Fruit-bearing is being like Christ; for the fruit must be according to the seed sown. Everything Christ did was fruit. So is all that I do like Him.

THE INNER MAN.

WHILE all Christians admit the fact that they are born again, or anew, with many there is not a distinct sense of the difference between that which is new, and that which is old. A birth by water and the Spirit is the origin of every saint, and this birth, effected by the Spirit of God in the soul of the saint, cannot be there without some sense, and the strength of the sense depends on the measure of the Spirit's power in present activity; for as by Him the new birth takes place, so by Him must it be sustained; and as He is present in action, so is there power and distinctiveness imparted to this new being, which is called in scripture "the inner man."

If it be admitted, and it cannot be denied, that every saint must be born again or anew, it only remains to ascertain the nature and power of sustinment of this new being; and whether it derives anything from the former being, in which it is set up, or whether it is entirely independent of it; and

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finally how and in what it is in relation to it. The necessity of new birth arises from the fact that there is nothing in man to act on; he is irretrievable, not only gone in sin, but there is nothing in him to which you can attach a new element, by which to work out a reformation of the whole. There is no inherent power in man now to retain the good conferred on him. "The wine is out," is the conviction of every shrewd thinker, and hence, no one in his senses thinks that man in his present status can attain to a state of perfect happiness. Nay, on the contrary, he knows too well that the brighter, and the more perfect the circle, as to natural things is, the more the taste or capability to enjoy is gratified, and in action, the more (because the perceptions are quick) is awakened the sense of its non-continuance; so that the nearer one reaches to perfection, the more solicitous one is for power to retain it, because there is the sense of feebleness, as well as insecurity of life. Hence the richer and the more prosperous a man is, the more tenacious is he of life,

and the more fearful is he of everything which would affect it injuriously. Every philosopher points to the future for perfection, and in doing so he admits that it is unattainable here.

When Israel, after all the divine care and provision shewn them in the desert, tempted Christ, God sent fiery serpents among the people. He exposed to them the evil power from which they suffered; their true state was exposed—they were proved incorrigible; and then God wrought from Himself, and told Moses to put a brazen serpent on a pole, and every bitten one, who looked on it, lived. Here the two things were brought out; the irretrievable condition of man after every expression of favour from God in the wilderness; and consequent on this, God in grace bringing in life in an entirely new way outside of man, and conferred on man, not because of anything in man, *but need*; but conferred on the one believing in God, and thus owning that there was nothing in himself to rely on. As I turn to God I admit that there is nothing in myself

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to turn to, and this is really the moral power of faith.

Now this was a foreshadowing of the great purpose of God to bring in life through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no life but in the Son, "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." It is therefore necessary, not only that there should be new birth, but there is no life, no perpetuity of existence with God, but to the believer in Christ. There is a new being with a new life, a life which is out of death, in Him who bore the judgment on man by nature, a being formed by the Spirit of God, independently of anything previously existing, and wrought in the soul, independently of the power and actings of the old man.

How the body is used by the saint, while still in the flesh, will be considered lower down; the thing to establish first, is the unique character of the inner man. It is entirely a new generation wrought by God in the soul of one in an old state, and with this there is given

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life in Him, who bore the judgment on us. So that in the Christian there is a new man, in every sense new and of a different order to everything he ever knew, "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." It is entirely new and definite, and the mode of birth wholly apart from man, and entirely of God. Nothing can be plainer; and Nicodemus quite understood that it was real birth and no mere figure of speech. No saint could deny the fact of a new birth, a new work wrought in the soul; but we all fail in not comprehending better the entire distinctness between it, and the old; and hence the power which invigorates and develops the new man is quite different from that which is the life of the old. That which sustains the new is necessarily of the same as that which formed it; namely, the Spirit of God. Admit that there is a new birth, a new man with a new life, and you must admit that nothing can sustain and support it but that which formed it.

But seeing that it is in the same

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person these two natures exist, it follows that either of them must take the lead. For this reason the apostle says, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Now the old man has nothing in common with the new, it is simply *superseded* by the new, and is required to yield up unconditionally to the new. There is no power in the old to use the new, the new must have a power of its own to sustain itself and to turn the members of the body, once under the will of the flesh, into instruments of righteousness. We are not to suppose that at one time the old is to have the sway, and at another time the new. No, full sway is really the property of the new in its proper power; we are not debtors to the flesh to live after the flesh; and if Christ be in us, the body is dead because of sin. It is the calling and right of the new to control and direct the whole machinery of the first Adam, man, according to its own feelings and tastes. True, it has not yet a body

like itself wherewith to express fully its own affections and tastes; but it is empowered by the Spirit of God to displace the old in its contrariety to God, and to express itself as a new man created in righteousness and holiness of truth—to live Christ, into whose image we are being conformed. The body is the Lord's, and though the redemption of it has not come, He has redeemed it; and hence the new man is taught of God, how to order the body for Him. The great thing for a saint to know and to cultivate is, that he has an inner man while still in the old one, and that the inner one is vastly superior in sentiments and everything to the old. And though the mind and feelings of the old man are turned to account, that it is not from itself, but from the new, through the Spirit, that it obtains and acquires either quality or moral greatness. It is the musician who gives a character to the harp.

Surely if we were more possessed with assurance of the greatness of the inner man—"not I, but Christ liveth in

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me," He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, one piece, now in the risen Christ, bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh, the fruit of the One who died—we should be so engrossed with Him from whom all development proceeds, that the old in its tastes and pursuits and spheres would get no place.

Let us look at the three places in scripture where the term, "inner man," is used. First, Romans vii., "I delight in the law of God after the inner man," the man within; the organization is that of a man. It is not merely a new mind put into me, that is true, but it is more; it is a new man. In this inner man one delights in the law of God. God's claims, instead of being irksome or impossible, are approved of, and delighted in, by the inner man; and yet it is distressed, because, while its own innate delight is in the law of God, it is surrounded by a man in which there is a will working right against the law of God, that the other delights in; and this is consequently the state of souls

who do not see that the old man has been disposed of righteously, in the cross of Christ; and hence, instead of continuing a useless conflict with the flesh, one has simply to take up new ground; and that ground is being in Christ; and the answer to that painful cry: "O wretched man, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" is, "I thank God through Jesus Christ;" and there is no condemnation to them that are in Him. We see here that the mere fact of the existence of the inner man will not impart rest and vigour to souls: there must be besides, the sense of being *in Christ*; and thus a knowledge of the Spirit's power which sets one consciously in new nature and life above all the evil and dominion of the flesh. And unless there be this sense of the greatness and position of the new man, there is not relief from the sense of the inability and unwillingness of the old man to please God. This accounts for the harassing state in which many of God's children are found. If they realized that they were

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of a man within—entirely new, formed by the Spirit of God, it being in every sense wellpleasing to God, because it is of Christ, and hence that as we are sensibly true to its quality and order, even that of a new man in Christ—there is not only remission of sins, but a freedom from everything in which we were once held, which deepens our repentance and repudiation of the flesh. The result is “life and peace.” Thus even for the youngest believer, how necessary is it that he should be in the full sense of a new man.

The next place in which the term occurs is in Ephesians iii. 16, and there it is with reference to a saint (set as in the previous chapter), in the highest position, seated in Christ in heavenly places, but while there, still here in the outer man. The apostle prays that we may be strengthened by His Spirit in the inner man. The inner man is that which the Spirit of God strengthens, and the result of His strength, that Christ might dwell in our hearts by faith. Here everything great is con-

nected with the inner man. If it be to raise one from the flesh and its consequences, it is the inner man that is spoken of. (Rom. vii.) If, as here, to connect us with the scope of God's counsels, to carry us to the highest point, to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we might be filled even to the fulness of Him that filleth all in all, it is through the inner man. Thus whether it be from the lowest point on my own side, or to the highest point on God's side, that favour is shewn, it is the inner man that is exclusively and individually engaged.

Thirdly, the term the inner man is used in 2 Cor. iv., where the subject is ministry, with reference to the difference between it, and the outer man. As the outer man perisheth the inner man is renewed day by day. There is progress and advance in the latter, while there is decay in the former; but this outer man is the vessel in which the inner man is, and it is through this vessel that it is manifested here; and hence, in order that the life of Jesus may be expressed

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in the outer man, there is the carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus; there is a practical crucifixion of the will of the flesh; a refusal to borrow anything from it; a sanctifying of the affections, mind, or anything of that sort, but such a distinct mortifying of the deeds of the body through the Spirit, that the mind of Christ, and His feelings, through His life, may be expressed through the body, in which naturally the will of the flesh works. The natural mind and heart, the powers which apprehend and feel, are used; but not to express mere natural sentiments or tastes, but sentiments and tastes authorized by Christ by whom I live in the inner man. The outer man is the vessel, or vassal of the Spirit of God, carrying out the mind of Christ, which we have as new creatures in Christ Jesus; so much so, that the life of Jesus is manifested in our mortal body; and as it is, the outer man is so kept under by the Spirit of God that it is used as a vessel, and while it perisheth, the inner man is renewed day by day.

CHRIST MAGNIFIED.

It is a blessed thing for a man to be practically a Christian. It is a blessed thing for a man to say, All my springs are in Christ. Christ is my life. The end of my whole being is Christ. To me to live is Christ. Paul had a stronger character than any of us in nature: his sins were of a high order, but he was wholly devoted to the Lord. Christ turned his whole course; poor crippled one, feeble as he was, every part of his life, from the highest to the lowest, was a savour of Christ. Paul knew the love of Christ, and that Christ was the channel of all the eternal love of the Father. He knew his personal, individual love to Him; and if Christ was altogether *for him*, in the Spirit, he could say, I will be wholly for Him. There was the consciousness of the connection between the Christ of God and himself. The Christ of God was everything to him; he would be everything for Christ down here. He says, "That Christ should be magnified;" not that Christ could be made greater than He

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was, but that that which Christ was should be more *apparent*; that the largeness of Christ should come to light, and so it did. Christ was the companion with him all through the circumstances of his path. He makes a mistake and goes to Rome; but Christ is with him, and lights up all the various circumstances of his path. Christ was carrying the light of His love with His servant, and He let the light of His personal, individual love appear plainly before the captain of the ship. (See Acts xxvii.) The light of the gospel had shone out through Paul's bonds and stolen the hearts of some in Cæsar's household. Christ was magnified in his body, whatever they did. He was subject to all the groaning which being chained to a soldier would call out. Never mind, says Paul, it shall turn to my salvation. Can you say, That is a description of myself? I not only know that in the end He will gather me up, that there will not be a thing left about me that will have the savour of the wilderness; but I know

too "To me to live is Christ, to die is gain," *that Christ should be magnified in my body, whether by life or death.*

It is very important to see the responsibility that is connected with the new nature. No heart that has tasted divine love could be satisfied with getting blessing only. It seeks to know the solace and joy of being ready, when Christ says, I have something for you to do for me—to give this message here—be ready when I call. He never will break the backs of His people. He lets the river of God's love into our souls, in all our toil, whether it be the mother caring for her babe, the overworked servant, the man who is called to make bricks. Divine love has given each his place and says to the heart, Dost thou love me? then seek that I should be magnified. When our eye begins to be opened, we must be astonished at all the circumstances around us that hinder our seeing; but the one who is girded in the power of divine life, who is living *for* Christ, *to* Christ, and *with* Christ, will

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pass unscathed. A single eye alone can keep us; it will keep the heart when God takes the veil off wickedness; when we discover how the power of Satan is working all around. Let us remember, till the redemption of the body comes, there is such a thing as these bodies of ours being used by us that Christ may be magnified, whether by life or by death.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE TRUTH.

THERE is nothing in the present day more patent than the inaccuracy or want of precision in the knowledge of the truth, even when there is an avowed acceptance of it. Every faithful one feels, both with regard to himself and others, the great need of watching that one's views and statements should be derived from the word of God; and the fact that in the last days (2 Tim. iii.) there will be a class of persons "ever

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learning and never able to come to the acknowledgment of the truth;" that is, a clear knowledge of it, is enough to awaken our most earnest attention to the subject, and to make us watch diligently the mode in which this harm occurs. We cannot be too often reminded that there is no evil dominant at any time to which the saints are not exposed. The great aim of Satan, the god of this world, is to hinder and contravene the work of God in the souls of the saints, and it is his masterpiece to enable men to imitate the truth, as the magicians did in the days of Moses, that souls may not be brought under the power and action of the word of God. Since Satan will succeed in having a class of learners who never reach to the knowledge of the truth, let us see what is the only true way for us, and also mark how and where this dreaded leaven finds an entrance.

Truth cannot be acquired by any human means; it is imparted by the Spirit of God, and therefore it is in harmony with and helpful to every bit

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learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

The Lord lead us all into purpose of heart "to buy the truth and sell it not," that we may be sanctified through the truth, even as He is.

WAITING FOR THE LORD.

THE youthful, hasty thought about the return of the Lord is, *I* am going to Him: He is coming for *me*. But as we go on we get more matured, and Christ becomes the centre of our thoughts and not ourselves. He says, I am the centre of everything before God, you will come in as the bride of my love and you will be welcomed heartily. You will come in in all the welcomeness of which I shall be welcome. You are coming in *with me* and will be the reflection of my glory. The first thought is, *I* shall be caught up; but when the heart ponders, it finds that *Christ* is the centre of all God's thoughts and counsels.

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There is a man who has been sitting on His Father's throne for eighteen hundred years. He comes again on the horizon of this world, and shews Himself as the resurrection and the life. Many a one has been waiting for this; but He has not come in their day. Has their waiting been all a mistake? Oh no. Once a father told his child to wait for him in a certain place and he had forgotten he had told him, and the question was asked, Where is the child? The father, who in pressure of occupation had forgotten, knew the loyalty of the child's heart, went after him and found him in the *very spot* he was told to wait. Would it not be to the father's heart such a proof of his filial love that he would speak of it to the end of his days? Would it be lost labour to the father's mind? Paul was on the look out for his Lord, but it pleased Him to pass him through death. Was the bright light that had shone in his heart a delusion? If you are waiting for the Lord, you are not waiting for anything else. If you

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are expecting Him, your thoughts will be concentrated on Him. He must be the centre of everything to you. Have you thus got Christ with you? Is He filling your present and your future? Is Christ everything to you, and *nothing but Christ*? When He comes He will fill up the body with eternal life; there will be no room for mortality. Till He comes we are to purify ourselves as those set apart for Himself, to seek that spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto that day. These are difficult days, but I am put apart by Him for the day of His glory. He is keeping me all through the wilderness. His grace is sufficient for me, His strength made perfect in weakness.

If a divine sentiment gets a place in us, it is no trifling matter, for there must be a displacement to make room for it. There was the wrestling with Jacob all night, before the name Israel was given.

HE COMETH.

"I come quickly." Blest assurance!
Lord! to meet Thee I arise,
'Tis Thine own—Thy special promise;
"Even so," my heart replies.
In this scene where all disown Thee,
I, a part of Thee, still roam;
Left to serve Thee here while list'ning,
For the "shout," to call me home.

Here, the tones of earthly voices
Long have died upon mine ear;
What a moment—gracious Saviour,
When *Thy* blessed voice I hear!
That same voice which by Thy Spirit
Oft my spirit's yearnings staid;
When Thou hast in wondrous favour
This poor heart 'Thy "mansion" made.

Then 'twill call me up to mansions
In the Father's house above,
There to know more deeply—fully—
All Thy glory, all Thy love.
Sure that shout of resurrection,
Like one chord of mingled tone,
Will sound forth in thrilling cadence
All of Thee we here have known.

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In that joy of full communion
 Each shall have his special part,
 Each a spot, reserved, O Father,
 In Thy house, and in Thy heart.
 Every vessel brimming over
 With its prize—the Christ of God;
 Small and great in joy ungrudging
 Thou, our centre, Holy Lord.

Now, Thy wisdom we are learning,
 Now, by faith Thy glory see;
 As we gaze, our hearts are filling,
 Satisfied, O Lord, in Thee.
Then, when we reflect Thine image,
 When Thy beauty nought shall hide,
 Thou shalt see Thy soul's deep travail
 And *Thy* heart be satisfied.

Come, Lord Jesus, claim Thy people,
 Here we wait and watch for Thee;
 Thy blest voice shall be the key-note
 Of eternal jubilee.
 Gath'ring us—Thine own creation
 To Thyself in Thine abode;
 Like Thee—with Thee—and for ever
 Near Thy Father and Thy God.

THE GOSPEL.

THE gospel is the good tidings of God's grace delivering man from the consequences of sin, and renewing him suitably to Himself. Enoch sets forth the new man characteristically; he walked with God, and he did not see death. He did not undergo the judgment resting on man because of sin, and here on earth he walked with God. Thus, he, the seventh from Adam, set forth through the grace of God, the characteristics of the new man according to the mind of God. In the gospel both are secured. First, the passing from death unto life is, on account of the work of Christ, assured to the soul by the Spirit of God; and, secondly, the walk with God, in every way well pleasing to Him, is effected, by Christ living in me, through the self-same Spirit. The gospel would not perfectly meet our case if it did not secure to us these two sides. It is evident, that to me, a sinner, under the righteous judgment of God, the first is of chief interest; though one may be stirred up to think

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of his own state, because he feels in his conscience how little he does anything to please God on earth; and hence many have tried to please God, in order to secure an assurance of the first. The law was on this principle, and the saints of God were exemplary on the second point, even though they had a very imperfect hope about their future state. They simply sought God for the present, and as they experienced His mercy, they counted on Him for the future. With them it was God now, God for ever. Every one reading the Old Testament must be struck with the distinct way in which the saints lived for God in the present, without any defined hope of the future, beyond a promise; while in the present time, they exposed themselves to great sufferings, in order to be according to the mind of God. Abram is a stranger in the land where he has no inheritance, and his entire walk is one of faith as to the present. Doubtless he had the promise of the land. It was not assurance of the promise which engaged his mind, but how to walk here

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as one assured of the promise. Thus with Moses, or David, or Daniel. Their one simple purpose is to act for God in the present time, resting in the present favour, as a sure guarantee of the time to come, which in itself did not primarily occupy them. I am not supposing that they had not a hope, but their hope, whatever it was, had not the effect of making them overlook the present; but on the contrary, to be greatly occupied with it.

In the New Testament this is still more evident, though there the saints have the most assured sense and apprehension of their future. Consequent on the resurrection, they are in the enjoyment of eternal life, and they rejoice in the hope of the glory of God; but with this, their life is more than ever for God. They are not, with their increased assurance of future blessing, and the nature of it, relaxed as to their course here, in the present time; but on the contrary, the character of the future, as there is certainty of it, is reflected in their walk in the present. So that the

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more they are convinced of and in spirit enjoying assurance of the future, the more are they consistent with their prospects, and as careful about the present walk as if everything in the future depended on it. Assurance and intelligence then about the future do not make one careless as to walk now; but on the contrary more careful and more earnest, that the present should tally with the assured future. The present, from Enoch down, has been the one great study and aim of the saints of God.

The gospel then, while revealing the certainty and blessedness of eternal salvation, does ensure in the highest degree the present life and walk of the saved one. Nay, it makes the walk here the chief accomplishment. While offering nothing in the way of salvation for anything *done* here, it occupies the saint with conduct as much as if his salvation depended on it, and as if his security or final salvation could be endangered by inconsistency. In the gospel then the present is as fully as-

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sured, as the future is assured. The latter is necessarily the first thing made known to the sinner, and the first presented in scripture.

In the case of the thief on the cross we see how all connected with the future is fully and blessedly assured to him. The very moment the work of Christ, assuring our future, is done, it is revealed through this example. The thief, whom man can no longer tolerate because of his bad conduct, and who is declared by his fellows to be incorrigible, is the one to whom first the greatest expression of the grace of God is revealed. The one rejected of man, who because of crime, lay under the penalty of death, is rescued by the grace of God. Jesus on the cross, dying the just for the unjust, is now revealed to his soul, at the very moment when he is undergoing the sentence of death, and exposed to the judgment of God if he died in his sins. To him the Saviour is revealed bearing judgment for him, and that just when all hope was gone, thus setting forth, not, as is generally said, the possibility of a

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death-bed repentance, but the grace which in man's extremity has come in the person of the Son of God, to bear the judgment on man. And at the moment when there was no power in man to do aught, then grace was perfect, then it declared itself fully to the dying thief; and so fully, that without any thought of himself, and only occupied with the revelation of the goodness and mercy in such magnitude before him, he sees the great King in his dying Saviour; and with easy unbounded confidence, he, the one whom man's righteousness had cut off from the earth, prays to be remembered in His kingdom. The Lord replies, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." His simple faith turns away from himself as hopeless, as incapable of doing anything (for he could do nothing), and counts on the goodness of Him who here in death commended the love of God. The man in the same condemnation who did no sin, is the One for his faith to count on, and he is assured of more than he asked for, even that "To-day shalt thou be

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with me in Paradise" or the third heaven.

The worst of men—the most hopeless, because of conduct and position—finds through Jesus, a dying Saviour, an assured way into heaven and the highest position there. With Him there, who died for him here, the perfection of salvation is secured. He dies, assured of his title to heaven, in the most unequivocal confidence: not a cloud nor a question can ever arise. There is before him an eternal guarantee of everything, and the word of the Lord in his soul sustains the comfort of the work which Christ has effected. The rent veil testifies of an open way into the house of the Father. The prodigal is welcomed home! Thus in the thief we have the example of one who has received perfect and full assurance as to the future. The fear of judgment is entirely removed and the certainty of endless bliss fully established in the heart.

But in him we have nothing of the other side—how the one hitherto at a

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distance from God is now walking with Him, where heretofore he was not. We do not find this side in the case of the thief: there is no place for it. He is dying when the mercy meets him, and assures him that he is for ever saved from judgment, and that his place in heaven is with his Saviour. If he had come back to sojourn here, after this assurance, then this point would have been demonstrated; but no, grace, up to this moment, goes no further than that the most helpless and undone can be assured of the best place in the Father's house. It is a wonderful thing for one to know; but this is only part of the gospel. How one thus favoured acts, or the nature of his power and walk here, is not yet revealed. It is important to see that this side is perfectly met, and this is the greatest that up to this moment could be expressed. All that man wants as to relief is perfectly established; but all that God desires and provides for the sinner is not set forth here. We must turn to Saul of Tarsus to find how,

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through the gospel, a sinner is formed to walk with God on this earth. We have seen in the thief how he is provided with a full unerring passport into heaven; but in Saul of Tarsus we shall find that the chief of sinners is fitted by the Saviour to remain on earth, well-pleasing to God, and at the same time as sure of heaven as the thief who had gone there. Thus in the gospel to him is completed both the present and the future.

The presentation of grace is different to each. To the thief it is the Saviour dying for one lost and powerless, and then opening out a new and sure way for him into heaven. To Saul the Saviour *comes down*, while he is actively opposing Him here on earth. In the midst of his violence and wilfulness the Saviour is revealed from glory and he falls to the *earth*. In the one case it is the Saviour opening the way into heaven for the lost, in the other it is the Saviour coming down from glory to arrest the sinner here, not only to assure him of heaven, but to connect him with Himself

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in the brightness of His glory. The Saviour in the glory of God revealed to a sinner conveys to him the deepest and fullest assurance of his title to glory. If he be not consumed thereby he must be saved therein; and this is the kiss to the prodigal (Luke xv.) as it was the live coal to the prophet (Is. vi.): "This hath touched thy lips, thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin is purged." If it were not so, they could not be tolerated in the glory of God. If I am connected with the glory of God, it must be through a Saviour, or the glory of God would have lost its holiness. But being accepted in the glory, and in the midst of my sins, there must be the deepest and fullest assurance, not only of my safety, but of the remission to me of everything which would debar me from the glory. Thus what was made sure to the thief is *abundantly* assured to Saul; and still more, it is revealed to him not only what Christ *does*, but what Christ *is*; as he says, "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by

his grace, to reveal his Son in me." It is not mainly to assure him of his safety, though that is included; but to impart to him in Christ, a new status, and one which would utterly refuse and supplant the old one; so that he can say, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." It is not the future so much that he is assured of, but the present is the guarantee of the future. He is assured of the future, by the measure of his gain in the present. As a sinner he falls to the earth, unable to do anything. The light, above the brightness of the sun, overpowers him, and in a state of utter helplessness, he learns the grace of God. His Son is revealed in him. If I am living Christ when everything is hindering, plainly it will be natural and easy for me to live Him when all oppositions shall cease; and hence Paul can add, "The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." With the thief the assurance of a place

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with his Saviour in heaven properly occupied him, but with Saul it is not only safety in the time to come, but it is a new man in the power of the life of Christ. It is to live, and walk, and please God, in this very sphere, where he had done everything to dishonour Him. It is not only that I am saved for the future, but so saved that I walk in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ *here*, where once I rejected Him; and as I do, I have a deeper and fuller consciousness vouchsafed to me of my eternal safety and position. If the truth be received only as far as it was known to the thief, there may be great assurance as to the *future*, but there is not known power for the *present*: there is not a knowledge of the gospel that presents Christ as the Person before the soul, glorified out of the judgment which He has borne for me. In the grace to the thief, there is only set forth the perfect and assured way there is for the worst and most helpless into heaven. But in the gospel to Saul, Christ personally glorified out of the

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judgment which He has borne for us, is revealed in him, and in the place too where he was a sinner. The grace to the thief opens the way perfectly to heaven; the gospel to Saul sets him while here, and where he has been the chief of sinners, in the life and Spirit of his Saviour. Paul learns all the thief learned, but a great deal more. Paul knows Christ died for him, as he says, "Who loved me and gave himself for me." But the gospel in itself, as declared to Saul, did not deal with the one side and confine him to the great truth of perfect assurance of a place in heaven, but to the still greater thing, that the good tidings from God was to create man anew on earth in life in His Son through the power of the Holy Ghost. The matter is very simple. The gospel—*grace completed*—sets a sinner assured of glory through his Saviour while he is on earth, and hence in the nature and power of Him who saved him at this present time. If I am connected with my Saviour in glory, my assurance as to

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hereafter must surpass the thief's, great and distinct as his was; but this assurance is not the thing insisted on, as with the thief, but that the One who had achieved all this for the chief of sinners now lives in him down here through the Spirit of God, and thus the gospel accomplishes the perfect blessing of man, not only saving him from judgment, but placing him truly according to God's mind on earth, in spite of the soil and climate which are as opposed as ever.

THE ARK AND THE ALTAR.

It was an abnormal condition of things in Israel when the ark was separated from the sanctuary; and the people learnt from its capture by the Philistines what a grievous mistake had been committed by the elders at Ebenezer. (1 Samuel iv.)

The ark was the symbol of God's presence. It had preceded Israel's hosts three days' journey in the wilder-

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ness, to find out a resting place for them on their departure from Sinai. It had rested on the shoulders of the priests in the midst of the Jordan, when the river was stayed in its course, till all the people had passed over. It had been carried round the walls of Jericho, till its defences fell down at the sound of the trumpets of rams' horn and the shouts of the men of war. On these occasions it had moved in accordance with God's mind; on that disastrous day at Ebenezer it entered the camp in obedience to the will of the people, never again to be found in the sanctuary till Solomon should build the house on Mount Moriah, neglected during Saul's reign. (1 Chron. xiii. 3.) David desired God's presence in Zion after he had taken the stronghold from the Jebusites; so all Israel were assembled to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem. The breach upon Uzzah delayed the accomplishment of the king's desire, but did not finally turn him aside from his purpose. The ark was brought up and

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set in the tent which David had prepared for it, whilst the tabernacle, which had been at Shiloh in the days of Eli, and at Nob during the reign of Saul, now rested at Gibeon.

To some it might have seemed a small matter whether the ark was at Kirjath-jearim or Jerusalem, so long as it was separated from the sanctuary and the altar; but David viewed matters in a very different light; and his thoughts about it, evidenced by his actions, should have special interest for God's people in these days.

The Lord had entered Jerusalem when the ark was set in its place on Mount Zion. His throne having been set up in the person of David, His presence in the midst of His people and in connection with the kingdom was now symbolized by the ark in the tent of curtains. The Lord then entered the place in which He will dwell for ever, though his house had still to be erected. At Kirjath-jearim the ark had been carefully watched over in the house of Obed-edom; its presence had been pro-

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ductive of blessing to him and to his family; but all the time of its sojourn at Kirjath-jearim it ceased to be connected with the religious services of the people, nor did the nation share in the blessing, which descended so richly on the head and the house of the Gittite. Brought into Jerusalem, the metropolis of the kingdom, the seat of royalty in Israel, the Lord's presence thus publicly manifested in the midst of His redeemed people, the nation, and not the men of Kirjath-jearim alone, were concerned with the ark; the twelve tribes, and not the family only of Obed-edom could share in the results of the divine presence. Nothing therefore short of a suited and an abiding recognition of God's presence could henceforth be permitted at Jerusalem. But how, it might be asked, should this be done? The law had not provided for such a state of matters, nor could it have done so. For, placing man on the ground of earning blessing, if obedient to its commands, it could only teach a fallen creature that the way into God's presence must be by the

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altar of burnt-offering. But the Lord was here present in the midst of Israel, as His redeemed people, apart from the altar, the laver, and the incense. What then was the suited service, and by whom should it be carried on?

Under the law the priests ministered at the altar, and the Levites were given to wait upon them, "for the service of the house of the Lord in the courts, and in the chambers, and in the purifying of all holy things, and the work of the service of the house of God." Under David this was confirmed; but in addition to their work he, as the king, enjoined on them what no priest could take the chief part in, the work of the service of song. For "to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at even, and to offer [*rather, 'and at the offering of'*] all burnt sacrifices unto the Lord" (1 Chron. xxiii. 28—31) was their new duty in connection with the tabernacle and the temple ritual. But whilst this was henceforth to be their work, as long as the Mosaic ritual should be carried out,

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certain of the Levites had a special duty assigned them in connection with the ark on Mount Zion, distinct from what daily took place at the tabernacle in Gibeon. For we read (1 Chron. xvi. 37), David left there, before the ark of the covenant of the Lord on Mount Zion, Asaph and his brethren, to minister before the ark continually, as every day's work required; whilst Zadok the priest, and his brethren the priests, with others of the Levites under the leadership of Heman and Jeduthun, he sent to the tabernacle of the Lord in the high place that was at Gibeon. Thus all the priests were at Gibeon, but the Levites were divided, part being stationed at Jerusalem and part being ordered to Gibeon. At the altar the priests stood, before the ark Levites served.

Another point must be noticed ere we fully understand the significance of this arrangement. The proper place of the ark in connection with the Mosaic ritual was behind the veil; and, as it journeyed in the wilderness, it was covered by it. But where now was the

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veil? Was it not Gibeon dividing the holy from the most holy place? Yet the ark was in Jerusalem without that covering, in which, as it marched through the wilderness, it had been always enveloped. Without a veil between it and the Levites was the symbol of God's presence on Mount Zion. There then it was not a question of the way of approach to God, for He had come into the metropolis of the land, apart from the tabernacle of the congregation. It was not God behind the veil, but the symbol of His presence in their midst, that was shewn out by the ark in the tent of curtains. Hence the introduction of a new service, suited for the then state of things, in which priests had no part, for no sacrifice was needed. How clearly David discerned the difference between pointing out the way of approach to God, and the realization of His presence among the redeemed people, a distinction surely but little understood in this day of brighter light and fuller revelation.

At Gibeon there was daily set forth

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the road by which fallen man could approach his God, as the priests ministered at the altar, and the smoke of the sacrifice ascended up to heaven. At Jerusalem there was daily manifested the joy of having the Lord in the midst of His people, as Asaph and his brethren, skilled in the service of song, performed their appointed service before the ark, unscreened by the veil. Thus David, taught of God, discerned what suited the tabernacle, and what befitted the tent. Praise without sacrifice, at Gibeon, would have misled the people, for the altar told of the only way of entrance for sinners into God's presence. Sacrifice before the ark would have been out of character with the peculiar state of things at Jerusalem. God's presence being symbolized by the ark, what could they therefore do but praise Him? The altar and ritual proclaimed what God was, and of what fallen man was in need; the ark disclosed where God was. What both taught it was and is needful to remember, but it is needful to keep them, as David did, distinct. Praise, in

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connection with sacrifice, was comely at Gibeon, as God's gracious provision for sinners was spread out before their eyes; the service of song, and that alone, befitted Mount Zion, where in symbol was set forth God's presence, apart from the veil, in the midst of His redeemed people.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

NO STRENGTH WITHOUT HOLINESS.

THE nearer one is to God in Spirit, the more fully he is made conscious of what is unsuitable to Him, and that if he would walk in the mind of God, or receive from Him, he must keep clear of that which interferes and hinders. It is plain that if all my power and satisfaction proceed from God, then the more I am apart from everything from which He is apart, the more shall I enjoy that which strengthens and satisfies me. It is impossible to maintain that God is the known source and supply of power to me, if I am walking where

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He cannot come. My duty or advantage is to walk so apart that I may have His favour in every circumstance; but this I cannot have, if I mix with that which is against Him. In a general way this will be admitted, but there is a great difference of opinion as to the things which one might hold to and not forfeit the favour of God. Now a great deal of the misconception and consequent loss on this subject arises from being occupied with the things one wishes to retain, and not with Christ, then one would be formed as to the things approved of God. "With the pure thou shalt be pure." The better I know God, now fully manifested in Him, who was made flesh and dwelt among us, the more clearly can I distinguish what is not. It is light which discovers darkness. Darkness could not discover itself, and it is really according to the simplicity of one's eye in the light, that one can determine what is darkness. It is great gain to be convinced of the truth that there is no true strength but in holiness, and that every departure

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succour and favour is that of the strictest holiness. The work of Christ now (ministerially) is to sanctify the Church which He so loved, that He gave Himself for it; and He will not support us in power or in the knowledge of His mind but in proportion as there is separation the same as His own. And the worse the days, as we see in Jude, the more distinctly must there be maintained a separate and holy path which has been lost sight of by the "sensual, having not the Spirit."

May we practically keep our eye on Him, the refuge in the darkest hour, rallying us around Himself according to that word, "I am he that is holy and true, and I have the key of David, that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth."

God is seeking to build us up into the likeness of His Son. Conformity to Christ in however small a thing—likeness to Him in God's sight must be the joy of the believing heart, even as Paul rejoiced in conformity to His life of suffering here below.

AN OUTLINE OF LUKE.

PART I.

THE opening of this gospel is as remarkable for its glowing introduction to the incarnation of Christ as is the Gospel of John for its loving conclusion, after the Lord's resurrection. Indeed, Luke gives us the preface or prelude, and John the supplement or appendix, to the other Evangelists, as acquainting us with scenes which took place before and after the narratives of Matthew and Mark, and about which they are silent.

This Gospel of Luke divides itself into three parts. The first of which shews us the Spirit of God as beginning to move afresh upon the face of the mighty chaos, produced by the fall of man and the curse. God is now going to bring in His great reserve—"The Second man, the Lord from heaven"—into the midst of this *moral* darkness and ruin of mankind.

The history of creation, and the creature Adam, was more than met in purpose and counsel from everlasting, and

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now is to be superseded by this "last Adam, the quickening Spirit," and redemption. The earliest chapters tell out to us the secret thoughts about to be proclaimed to every creature under the heavens, between God, and the Son of man, and men, or Jehovah, and the Messiah, and Israel. We are thus introduced to the person, the promised Seed of the woman, in whom the glory of God, and the blessing of all creation, and of His creatures are wrapped up for the ages to come. This Jesus, Son of the Highest, Saviour, Son of God, Christ the Lord, is likewise He to whom "The Lord God shall give the throne of his father David—who shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever—and of whose kingdom there shall be no end." This is the communication to Mary by Gabriel, and it is according to these names and titles that the heavens introduce and publish Him to the earth.

The angel of Jehovah's presence—the priest in his office at Jerusalem, going into the temple to burn incense upon the altar—Elizabeth, the mother of

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John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Christ—and Mary, the mother of the Lord Himself — are the chosen individuals of the one living and true God, through whom this great mystery of “God manifest in the flesh” is to be fulfilled to the objects of His grace and love.

The Holy Ghost is the only One to whom such mysteries can be entrusted to be wrought out; and He fills the earthen vessels with His power, so that by prophesyings or by songs, Zacharias, Elizabeth, and Mary take their places and do their parts, as moved by the Holy Ghost.

The second chapter widens this circle of blessing to “the shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flock *by night*. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.” Mere flesh and blood fears to enter into such a scene as this, at the incarnation, just as the disciples did, when *with* their Lord, upon the mount of His transfiguration.

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Nothing but joy can suit such "glad tidings" as these; and if the country where the child is born be too slow, or unready, to respond to the mind of heaven, which has given forth to men this treasure, from the heart of God—angels will be the instructors of the human race and take the lead.

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." God had been shut out long enough from the habitable parts of this earth, and from men in whom is all His delight; and now that the fulness of the time is come for sending forth His Son, made of a woman, He comes back again into this world, in the "fashion of a man;" the likeness of that Adam who shut out God.

The gate of Eden had been long ago closed up by sin and death, as the judgment of God in righteousness; but He finds a path that the eagle's eye has never seen; and He whose way is in the deep, and whose footsteps are not known,

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makes a path for Himself in this "holy thing, the Son of the Highest," by which to come back into the world, IN GRACE. "The glory of the Lord shone round about," and it is at home again in this circle of joy and blessing. The glory in this chapter claims Him for itself to settle down with, just as the Holy Ghost possessed the chosen vessels of Jehovah's good pleasure (in the first chapter) for His own purposes of prophecy and song. God manifest *in the flesh* and the grieved glory come in again from above, in company with the child born. All this was according to Proverbs viii., which is large enough to embrace all the counsels of God, before ever the world was made. "The Lord possessed *me* in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old; I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths I was brought forth," &c.

Besides this, Simeon takes up the young child in his arms, and celebrates Him in His relation to Israel and the

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Gentiles (not according to counsels with “wisdom” *before* the world); but according to prophecies and promises made known to the patriarchs and the nation, when He called them out of *this* world.

Lastly, in this circle or group, the remnant with Anna, continue night and day in the temple, “speaking of him to all them that looked for *redemption* in Israel.” Jesus “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man,” closes up this beautiful introduction. All is perfect that God has given out from heaven to men.

The intervening chapters, from ii.—ix., shew the state and condition of the people; and their growing opposition to the Messiah, Son of man, and to His disciples in their testimony “to the kingdom of God.” In the last chapter (ix.) Jesus takes three of His disciples up the mountain of transfiguration, to see the kingdom of God come—to behold His glory, as king, and to be witnesses of His own righteous title to it. It is *there* He now leads the believing remnant. “And as he prayed, the fashion

of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening." He is thus personally accredited, and commissioned by "the voice" out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son: *hear him.*" He put on righteousness as a garment, and shone as the light—*man*, in His person, is gone up to the excellent glory; and in converse with Him who dwells there. Moses and Elias, two men, also appear in glory, to talk with Him of His *decease*, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem, as the only real foundation for the extended glories of the kingdom of God, and to bring back God Himself into the midst of His people. Moses from above further witnesses to the moral failure of man *under the law*, which *he* introduced at Sinai; and Elias the prophet is the witness that the line of prophets and their testimony has not availed for Israel's *recovery*; and these two, consequently, speak of the necessity of *His decease*, in order to meet the proved condition of the nation before God, and what God is. This wonderful scene is

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then folded up for another day, "And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen."

Jesus (upon whom *all* now hangs) comes down from the Mount to cast out the devil, and to make expiation in Jerusalem for the sins of the people, and to establish their relations in the kingdom with Himself and with Jehovah in His own Person, in resurrection glory. Moses had said in his day, "Blot me out of the book of life," and Elias had vindicated God as the only living and true God, in terrible righteousness against Baal—before the eyes of Israel. But a greater than Moses and Elias is here; and can prospectively bring in the *grace* of God (to be established through His decease) into the centre and city of the great King. This ministration of grace gathers out a second group of persons, and shews the altering character of their relations to Jehovah as His people; in chapters x., xv. the good Samaritan, and the prodigal son.

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The third and last division of Luke's Gospel is at the close, where He passes *through* His decease on the cross, and by His work in death and the grave, brings the people out upon the new ground of redemption. He Himself passing on before them a three days' journey (like the typical ark of the covenant) in *resurrection* life and power. The narrative of His reunion with this new company, when He led them as far as to Bethany, is well known to all; and now at last He was parted from them, and carried up to heaven, first of all stretching forth His hands upon them and blessing them. They "tarry in Jerusalem, for the promise of the Father," which they have heard of Him, and which they received at Pentecost for a new work. There is yet a further thing to be said upon the matters which have been thus grouped.

Moses and Elias who appeared in glory, on the transfiguration mount (as witnesses of the failure of their respective ministries as lawgiver and prophet, when they were in the midst of Israel)

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spoke to the Lord of the necessity of His *decease*, which He must accomplish at *Jerusalem*. The city is set aside at the centre of God's operations—can no longer be on earth, where Christ is refused; but in the heavens which are opened to Him. This royal city, which should have welcomed Him with “Hallelujahs” to the throne, is preparing for Him the cross, and a sepulchre. These He accepts as the appointed way by which to make good His own commission from “the voice” on the mount, or the counsels of God announced by the angels; and the promises by Simeon to the Jews and Gentiles in the latter day. The people consummate their hatred in His betrayal and crucifixion, and Christ lays the foundation of His and their everlasting blessing, upon the footing with Jehovah (God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) of *redemption* in His blood. This occupies chapters xx., xxi., and xxii. of this gospel; and upon His resurrection He joins His disciples, and presents Himself to their faith, and begins their future history on the ground

of *the peace* which He had made for them, by going into the place of judgment on their account and stead. On the way to Emmaus, He opens their understandings, and in this new relation to them, as alive from the dead, presents Himself afresh. *Now* HE *can* make use of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms, and connecting them no longer with themselves, and their past history, but with *His own Person*, in the light of His own sufferings and glory (of which they all spake), proves to them unmistakably (as He shews them His pierced feet and hands) that all is secured that they had forfeited: Moses and Elias and David, and the prophets, all spake of "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should *follow*." And Jesus makes all plain to their eyes, and hearts (as they burn within them) that as *their Christ*, He ought to have suffered these things, and enter by death and the sepulchre into the glory of the kingdom, as revealed to Him at the mount of transfiguration.

The glory at His birth *ushered* Him

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in—and upon the mount it *talked* with Him of His decease, as the point on which everything depended; but now by death and resurrection He has *entered* into it with His people, and brought God back again. The disciples no longer fear, as they pass under the uplifted hands of the Lord, who by His decease, has a title to bless them in resurrection. In Acts i. they accept the *new* assurance from the voice and the cloud, and its attendants, that “this *same* Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven.”

The divine glory has claimed Him for awhile and found a new place for the Son of man, at the right hand of God, crowned with glory and honour. The ministry and the work given out to Him from the mount, when the voice said, “*Hear him,*” and when His decease was the one subject between the heavens and the earth, have both been accomplished and witnessed to in His death and triumphant ascension. “If God be glorified in him, God shall also

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glorify him in himself and shall straight-way glorify him."

In the meanwhile, another ministry is opened out from the throne of the Father's glory, where the Lord now sits, and God, "who hath commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." *This* ministry is by the Holy Ghost in the fleshy tables of the heart, and "*we are changed* from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

(To be continued.)

The Holy Ghost is the earnest of the *glory*, but there is no earnest of the *love*, it is shed abroad in my heart *now*; and there I have the key to everything that happens to me all along the way. It is a love that gave the most blessed thing in heaven when I was the most wretched thing on earth. He loved me when I was His enemy; and He is not going to give me up now that He has made me His friend.

FAITH AND INDIVIDUALITY IN SERVICE.

“ WITHOUT faith it is impossible to please God;” if therefore we do not serve in faith, our service will not please God, whomever else it may please. It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and to do good and to communicate, whether towards all men or towards the household of faith in particular, is well-pleasing to God, as it is according to Him whose sun rises upon the evil and upon the good alike. But to discover what is good, in the true sense, needs often much exercise. There are many things good in a natural sense, with which a Christian walking by faith cannot meddle. There are many things really good in themselves from which a Christian walking by faith is compelled to abstain, on account of the associations connected with them, or the manner in which they may be suggested to him.

Nothing is of so much importance in connection with good works, as that

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they shall be done in faith. We know that faith without works is dead, being alone. But also works without faith are as filthy rags, and in some circumstances are an abomination in the sight of God.

Now, not every good work of a Christian is a work of faith. It is not enough that a man should be a true believer to render all his good deeds (so-called) acceptable. It is a common and wide-spread error of the present day, that what is good is necessarily of faith, and that the deeds of charity, &c., of a professing Christian are to be accepted as deeds of faith. But this is a delusion, and a mischievous one. It tends to sanctify acts by attributing them to a motive which was not their actual source.

It is however admitted that the profession of Christianity, and the habits of mind induced in those educated within its sphere, have a softening and beneficial effect upon man's natural character, but this result must not be confused with that active exercise of faith which the true Christian is entitled to,

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and called to in every circumstance and action of his life.

Faith is commonly limited to the maintenance of a certain set of doctrines and practices founded upon them. While it is true, that by faith we do hold doctrines which we find set forth in God's word, yet faith is much more than this. Faith is the believing God. Not merely believing that there is a God—the devils do this and tremble. If we believe doctrines, it is because those doctrines are enunciated by God. We do not believe in God because we find Him in the doctrines; but we believe Him as Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. By faith we believe God, as by natural belief we credit man. It is true, that our apprehension of God is formed by His word, for we cannot separate Him from His word; but we believe God as God, and His word because it is His word. Faith's primary object is the Person. It believes God.

As to the Christian's walk and service his is all-important. To walk by faith

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is to walk with reference alone to God. To act in faith is to act in reference to God. Each separate step or act is made solely with regard to the present mind and will of God. To say that because a man is a believer, therefore all he does is the result of christian faith, is false, and, if sincerely held, fanatical. Faith is a living energy, and the manner of its exercise is by the reference of our thoughts and wills towards God, and the measuring of all our actions by our relation to Him, and knowledge of who and what He is in whom we believe. When we act on any other principle, and surely we must all own to it—such is not the activity of faith.

It is wonderful how much, and what profitable exercise the mind and heart of a Christian will undergo if he seeks at all times to act upon this principle. For whilst to such God will surely open up sufficient channels in which may flow out the desires of his heart in doing good, and in ministering to the bodies and to the souls of men, yet surely will the Christian also find in the present

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state of things, that many of the channels in which his charity once flowed are closed to him. And it often needs a more broken will and exercised heart to withhold from action, than to act. What we once did when acting solely with reference to man and to human need, we can often no longer do when we are seeking to act towards man, solely with reference to and in the presence of God. But then how far better, and how far safer also, to act even towards man with God according to His own purposes and will. How far higher a line, and purer a motive, if we are as it were moving with God through this scene in communion with His heart, and in fellowship with His ways. Feeling, no doubt, may and does prompt and lead men to many and many a good work, but faith can never fail either as to motive or result. Far be it from our purpose to make light of right feelings, natural affections and sympathies, or not to respect them and their fruits. All we say is, let feelings be directed in their outflow and exercise by faith.

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Individuality is necessarily connected with faith in service. By individuality we mean that the suggestion towards and persuasion to carry out any action, must be between the person and God. We should follow God and not the mere example of men, or the suggestions of our own feelings. God may use the example of others to suggest to us activity, but we must take care how and whom we follow.

Faith will never lead us to act without definiteness of purpose and result. Feeling will. Feeling is moved by hearing of sorrow, suffering, or need. This is right. But let faith direct the actions. Let faith enquire and discover (as it surely will by patience) how to minister to the sorrow, or to the need in such a way as to satisfy the eye, the heart of God, though no other eye or heart be cognizant of the matter. Feeling is often a safe motive *to*, but not so safe a guide *in* action.

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their afflic-

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tion, *and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*" Faith alone can maintain this divine equilibrium in such a day as that we live in, and faith alone teach the Christian how to seek out and relieve the suffering and the sorrowful, and to minister to them in communion with God, but in separation from all carnal, sentimental, and worldly activity and support.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

DEAD TO SIN.

THE grace of God sets us in Christ, in whom the old man was crucified that the body of sin might be destroyed, that we should not serve sin; and yet if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. To preserve these two statements intact and inviolate is the truth. If I am not dead before God in Christ, I am still alive in that which is sinful, and I have no peace; and if I say I have no sin I do not admit that I am that being who needed

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the blood of Christ. In order to be at peace with God I must see myself connected with Christ out of judgment, and that judgment which exposed me to judgment. To every quickened soul, knowing through grace that Jesus is the propitiation for his sins, and having peace with God in the faith that God hath raised Jesus our Lord from the dead; the next thing is, that I reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. I am a new being, with a new life in righteousness. Thus the side with God is all complete. There is propitiation through the blood of Jesus, there is righteousness through His resurrection, there is life, the result of the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness, and now it only remains to be free from sin and to know that we are dead to it.

The apostle shews in Romans vi. that baptism expresses the death of Christ. It is declarative of the end of the first man in His death. And hence, it would be inconsistent to faith, to occupy any ground but that of resurrection, on which we walk in newness of life. There

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of Christ, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in the body. There is no clear apprehension of the grace of God unless on God's side, I am dead with Christ, and as I see this, I walk in the Spirit, in order to make true in the body here, what is true to me by faith in Christ. And as this progresses, there is more control over the old man, and sanctification increases. Nothing can be more marvellous than to see the life of Jesus manifested in the man here on earth through whom sin came in. That is, that the one through whom sin came in, should now through grace, not only in Christ be dead to sin, but by the power of God's Spirit, should be enabled to set forth the life of Jesus in that very body where sin entered, and thus to perfect holiness in the fear of God.

The day of difficulty dawned on Jacob with the name of *Israel* on him. God wrestles with him, touches him, leaves him crippled, and *then* crowns him with that name, so that he can walk out on the day of trial with the certainty that God Himself has set him in superiority over all.

OUR SIDE AND GOD'S SIDE.

WHEN David was sitting in his *own* house at rest from all his enemies, he then began to think of *God's* house. (1 Chron. xvii.) This is the divine order: First, I must know my own condition as perfectly satisfactory, one in which I shall never thirst; and next, my relationship to God is a perfect one; I worship the Father in spirit and in truth. (See John iv. 14, 23.) The reason why souls are not more truly and fully instructed in their relation to God, and know so little of His house, is that their own condition is not a satisfied one. You must, like David, be able to sit in your own house *made of cedar*, and be at rest from all your enemies, before you can simply and truly enter on the great circle of God's interests; and when you are, you will find your true place as with God, and in His thoughts. You hear from His word through Nathan (gift), how He thinks about you (and this is the effect reading the word of God ought always to have on us); and then you acquire confidence in Him, and you leave sitting in your own house, and go in and sit before the Lord, and rehearse to Him all His known thoughts about yourself in connection with Christ. And this talking over, or *prayer* (ver. 25),

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is of great value and gain to you, for in so doing you confirm your soul, not only in the truth of what has been said, but also in the heart of the one who has said it. Confidence depends on what I know another feels about me. It is presumption when I act on my own feelings or desires, or wants. Hence the word of God always draws me into nearness to God, that I may confirm to myself the reality of what I have received. I believe the account He gives me of His love, and then in spirit I draw near and sit before Him, and there I go over all His gracious purposes, making them sure to myself, in His presence, and in connection with the author of them. What a retreat! I cannot conceive anything more satisfying or cheering to the heart, than the consciousness that I draw near in answer to His thought and interest about me, to enjoy myself in His presence; and that there *my heart* goes out in acknowledgment to Him, in answer to His deep, gracious, and everlasting love.

Be occupied with the Person and you will be the subject of His power, a power which selects difficulties as the proper platform on which to display its superiority.

"MY JOY."

WONDROUS joy, thy joy, Lord Jesus,
Deep as full and pure as bright ;
Thou alone, the Man of sorrows,
Thus couldst tell of joy aright.

And we know that joy, that gladness,
Which in fulness He has given,
Sharing all that countless treasure
We on earth and He in heaven.

Even as He went before us
Through the wilderness below,
So in strength unworn, unfailing,
Onward also would we go.

All the earth a desert round Him,
All His springs in God alone ;
Every heart, save God's heart only,
Making discord with His own.

There to walk alone rejoicing
Through the ruin and the sin —
Darkness of the midnight round Him,
Glory of God's love within.

From no lower fountain flowing
Than the heart of God above,
All the gladness of that glory,
All the power of that love.

To the cross to walk rejoicing,
Where all powers of evil met ;
Giving thanks midst deepest darkness,
That God's love was deeper yet.

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Then ascended in the glory,
By that love's unfailing spring;
There to sing the song of triumph,
There the song of songs to sing.

Hearken to that hymn of praises,
Echoing through the courts above,
To that golden psalm of glory
Sung in presence of God's love.

To the voice of that rejoicing,
Joy unmingled, deep and clear,
Wonder to the listening heavens,
Music to the Father's ear.

Won in travail of His Spirit,
Agony, and shame, and blood,
That blest place beside the Father,
Nearest to the heart of God.

Won for me—my praises leading,
Jesus sings that song divine,
All His joy my own for ever,
And His glory ever mine.

What though drought be all around me,
Desert land on every side—
With that spring of love and gladness
Shall I not be satisfied?

Joining in that song eternal,
As I tread His path below;
Even here, as He in heaven,
All the Father's heart to know.

1870.

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PART II.

LASTLY, in the full completion of the prophetic outlines of this gospel, it yet remains for the Lord to take His predicted place in Israel, as the great antitype of the prophet Moses; who said unto the fathers, "a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren like unto me, him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you." Instead of this, the nation and the chief priests and rulers desired Pilate that Christ should be slain. But God raised Him from the dead, and said, "sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." His rejection and decease at Jerusalem put Him into this place by ascension, and so postponed the hopes of Israel to another day.

Promises were nevertheless preached, and presented to Israel by the Messiah, in His own Person, at His first coming, and became accomplished *facts*; and were made "yea and amen" between

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Jehovah and Himself, by His death and resurrection. At His second coming, the results in their full blessing are to be opened out in all the ranges of the angel's song, "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men." His people too shall be willing in the day of His power. The Lord will then take His place, as "the fulfiller of all righteousness," with the excellent glory, and the voice, and the cloud—as He was in Jordan, in the days of John the Baptist, with the repentant remnant, and the opened heavens, when the Spirit like a dove descended upon Him.

In His own life and ministry too, He vindicated Moses, and the law which was proclaimed on Sinai—"think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil; for I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." He cast the glory of His own perfect obedience

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upon the claims of Mount Sinai, and vindicated the law of God to every jot and tittle. *He* put Himself under it, who alone *could* magnify it, and make it honourable. To all else the law was a ministry of condemnation, and of death. Act in the midst of such a scene, He did: and when He went beyond the bounds of that dispensation, in His own personal title, as in chapter v., and healed the man full of leprosy, He charged him to tell no one, but go and shew himself to the priest, and offer for his cleansing according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. He links Himself thus with Moses and Elias in their ministries on earth, however much He went beyond them to gather all people round His own Person.

In these eight chapters, Jesus took a prophetic view of Israel, Jerusalem, and Galilee; and went through all the cities and villages, to test the hearts of the people in relation to God, and to Himself, and the promises. As the result of this, He went up His own mount of transfiguration, to speak with Moses

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and Elias, who appeared to Him; and to obey the voice out of the offended glory, upon the proved necessity, of His decease.

It is important to note, that the Messiah accepted from the mount, the Levitical line of sacrifice and propitiation (as introduced in type by Moses) for His pathway, on account of sin and transgression; and fulfilled it by His death on the cross. According to the counsels of God He thus postponed the magnificent kingdom-prophecies, between Himself and Israel as the king of Jerusalem, for the coming day of millennial-blessing—when He will establish their relations with Himself under the new covenant in His blood. *Then* the Lord will put His laws into their minds and write them in their hearts, and be to them a God, and they be to Him a people. The link of connection is striking between the two men in glory, who spake of the decease which He *should* accomplish at Jerusalem—and His intercourse with the two disciples, on their way to Emmaus, *after* His decease; when

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He talked with them of His sufferings as the path marked out for Him by the Spirit of God in Moses, and the Psalms, which would conduct Him and the people to the looked-for glory.

The antitypical Moses, their mediator, their coming prophet, will lead the nation in the future day of His kingdom, into the length and breadth of their inheritance; and settle the tribes each in their lot, as Joshua did of old. In that day, the seed of Jacob shall glory in their portion; and the beloved Joseph (so long forgotten and out of mind) make himself known to his brethren. "And Joseph said unto them, Fear not, for am I in the place of God? but as for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive."

The same links may be discovered, if we turn from Moses to Elias, and think of the illustrious line of Israelitish prophets, and their prophesyings, still in reserve for the millennial age, and its glory. At the mount of transfiguration,

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Jesus accepted the voice of the spirit of prophecy, which told of His rejection and *cutting off*, and used it as a "light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn." John the Baptist, accordingly, was present in the *spirit* and power of Elias, and when cast into prison, justified his Lord by accepting it. Jesus justified John, before the people, saying, "among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist, but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." In the same chapter, the woman of the city, who was a sinner, justified Jesus in the house of the Pharisee, as the true wisdom, "crying at the gates and in the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple let him turn in hither." All the prophets and the law, prophesied till John, and if ye will receive it this *is Elias*, which was for to come. Strange words! but plain to him that readeth and understandeth them, in the light of Christ's rejection.

The departing one in the person of Elijah, and the abiding one in the

person of Elisha, his successor, form the double type *to us* in our day of the ascended Lord at the right hand of God; and the descended Spirit, the promise of the Father, which, saith He, "ye have heard of me." The more than double portion of Elijah's spirit—that "hard thing" which Elisha demanded, and which he knew to be needed as the anointed one, to carry forward the work from which Elijah had retired—has more than fallen upon us. The Pentecostal Spirit put itself in correspondence with this "hidden wisdom," and has now taken the course of "the promise of *the* Father," by which to establish the mystery of the Church, and to gather out the members of the body of Christ, till the Lord comes to take His bride, the Lamb's wife to Himself. The prophetic course of the Spirit by Joel, and His outpouring on the young men and the handmaidens, and the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets, since the world began, are yet in reserve for the Messiah,

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and the nation's glory, at His second coming. How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!

Jehovah, who gathered the nation into Canaan, scattered this nation upon the face of the earth, as a public example and witness to all other nations, that there is a God, who judgeth in the earth. The Lord, who subsequently offered the kingdom in His own Person to Israel, dropped the prophetic kingdom of heaven into *mystery* (as in Matt. xiii.) when the kingdom was refused by their rejection of Him, as its King. The righteous God in heaven judicially put a veil upon Israel's heart, and broke them out of their olive tree. "Lo-ammi" is written upon the once beloved people, and wrath is come upon them to the uttermost. In a future day, Jerusalem shall arise and put on her beautiful garments; and Israel blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit. "Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." He putteth down one

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and setteth up another! He breaks off the Jews, from their olive tree, to graff in the Gentiles; and from the heavens (where the rejected Son of man now sits, crowned with glory and honour) God has opened out a new source and centre of life and blessing, for a people whom "He is calling out from the Gentiles," to Himself!

Prophetically, this gospel of Luke which *opens* with Zacharias in the Aaronic order of Israel's priesthood, going into the temple of the Lord to burn incense, while the whole multitude of the people were praying without; *closes* with the Melchisedec order after the resurrection of Jesus, when He lifted up His hands and blessed His disciples, and "while he *blessed* them, was parted from them and carried up into heaven." After this manner, He will come presently to this people, and make Himself known as the true Aaron, having made propitiation for them through His sacrifice and death. He will also present Himself as the true Moses, and in His mediatorial office put them under

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the new covenant in His blood. As the true Melchisedec also, He will confirm to them all their promises in blessing, "first being by interpretation king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is King of peace," the priest of the most high God. The Lord will then begin to roll away the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread upon all nations, and fulfil the words which He hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

Prophetically, too, "glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will to man," so early introduced by the multitude of the heavenly host, but so long postponed by the rejection of Christ, has been secured by His decease, and will be brought in when He comes back in His personal glory. The first things proposed to men by God have been always the last in accomplishment, because of what *man* is. The order of God's ways has therefore taken this course, and the "earnest expectation of the groaning creation waiteth for the

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manifestation of the sons of God." "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head" was affirmed at the fall, and began to be fulfilled in resurrection when the last Adam went out of the world. Nevertheless, "glory, peace, and goodwill" were brought in by another way, and established by other means in the wisdom of God. Christ made *peace* by the blood of His cross, and was raised from the dead by the *glory* of the Father!

In fact the intercourse upon the mount of transfiguration took all promised blessing out of the hands of men, to whom it had been committed, and transferred *all* to the beloved Son, in whom the Father was well pleased. The voice that said, "Hear him," supplanted every other person, and consigned the glory of God to *His* care. Man is in a *new* position. Glory to God, peace, and joy have been united in His decease, just as the Lord found the pathway to His own glory through the cross and the grave.

The order of the angel's song was

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transposed from the form of its rehearsal at Bethlehem. "At the descent of the mount of Olives," the disciples praised God, saying, "Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of the Lord, *peace in heaven*, and glory in the highest." God's beginning is no longer the Adam in the Adamic earth, but the Son of man in glory in heaven, the beginning of the new creation of God. Heaven has received the outcast of this earth, and all grace and blessing come down from above. Joy and peace in believing are our portion.

While Jerusalem which now is, is in bondage with her children, we are called out by grace to a place with Him as ascended Lord and Head, and "being justified by faith, have peace with God and rejoice in the hope of the glory." The Father's house is our home, with the Son who is already there. The Holy Ghost is where we are, and abides with us as the Comforter, till the Lord comes to take us to Himself. In the meanwhile, the Son manifests Himself to us, while hidden from Israel, and

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cast out by the world. "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. . . . Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE SERVANT IS A SUFFERER.

To serve in itself implies that there is need of service, and if there be ability, the greater the need the greater will be the demand on the servant; and the one who can meet a great demand will be a great sufferer. If there be charity, the very existence of the need imposes on him who is able to relieve it, an extent of toil or suffering equal to the demand. If there be only need, and a ready ability to meet it, there will be a reciprocity between the giver and receiver which renders them mutually interested in one another. One is ready to impart, and the other thankfully and heartily to receive as a child from its parent; but

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Nothing more helps a soul than the assured conviction that every blessing and grace must come from outside of himself—from Christ. He that *looked* lived (see Numb. xxi. 8) is the manner and beginning of new life; and it is as this *look* is continued that there is an increase of power and vigour of life to the soul. This seems simple, but simple as it is, we need to be so under the conviction of the truth of it, that in our conscience we cannot allow the eye of our soul to turn anywhere else. And because of this conscientious conviction, we grow into the *habit* of practically connecting ourselves with Christ. No saint would deny that he is of Christ, but it is quite another thing so to realize it, to be so used to it, that one would as soon expect light and heat by turning away from the sun, as expect light and strength in one's soul, if Christ be not the One ruling there. We expect the sun in the morning, and we connect, almost imperceptibly, everything

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with it. From habit and use we are entirely dependent on it. When it does not shine we seek substitutes, but they only make the sun much more desired, and by contrast teach us its superior value. Now spiritually, Christ is much more necessary to us than the sun is naturally; and if by *use* we had learned this, we should know His superiority over all substitutes. If I had to teach a child the use of the sun, I must first see that the child's eyes were all right and its feelings too; but next I should shew it how everything derives a gain from the sun, in fact that there would be nothing to admire, nor could there be health without the sun. The sun would not have improved while the child was learning its value; but the child has been discovering the good of the sun, which before was unknown to it. Now Christ is ever the same; but it is as we *use* Him, as we discover His value to us, that we apprehend what before was unknown to us; and this, as with the child's learning the good of the sun, must be by practice. The good is

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there, but it must be used to be discovered and known. The eye receives light, is made for light, and it *uses* it. There is the eye to take in the light, and there is the light for the eye to take in, but the light must be *appropriated*. Through grace I receive the eye—the capability of seeing Christ. The conviction that everything is in Christ is the faith or eye to apprehend Him. This is the first thing. He is the perfect light, the light of life. But having this faith, and knowing Him as my life, the next thing I need is so to practise myself by using Him, as to know all the good there is in Him for me; and this practice is the constant, habitual reference of the heart to Him. How sensibly dependent we are on the sun! Now if we were as sensibly dependent on Christ, our souls would not only be bright, but light would go forth from us. Hence, “if the eye be single, the whole body is full of light.” Light is appropriated, and the soul is made conscious of how much it possesses in Christ.

There is a double gain from the con-

viction that everything is in Christ; one, that it turns the eye in the right direction, and the other, that it diverts one from brooding over oneself, which is the wrong direction. If while you are engaged in any occupation, an eclipse occurs, you would never think that the want of light was in the sun; still less would you look to your own eye to supply the deficiency. You might indeed light a candle, but your chief thought would be to watch for the sun to come out again. Just so when faith in Christ as my life is simple, then the eye of the soul, even in temporary darkness, is turned to Him, knowing full well, that when the cloud passes, the light of life will shine forth again. And this very faith, the more it acts, the more it reduces clouds to nothing, and obtains light in spite of the workings of the flesh.

When Christ is known as the source and spring of everything, the heart looks to Him, receives from Him, and as the sense of what He is, is assured to the soul, so is there more continued

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engagement with Him, and a consciousness of how much we possess in Him. Simeon knew this when with the child Jesus in his arms, he said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." His heart is so enlightened, as to his portion in Christ, that he asks the Lord to let him depart. Stephen in a superior way knew it, when being full of the Holy Ghost he looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God and Jesus. His eye feeds on Jesus in *the scene in which He is*; and he is so satisfied and assured in heart, as to his portion outside *this* scene, that no power of evil, or no suffering can disturb him; but all tends to direct his eye more to the light of life where it finds eternal satisfaction and enjoyment. And it obtains power for him to walk as Jesus walked in the midst of violence and opposition.

The life of God in us must have something of God for its object—Christ is that object.

THE PERFECT SERVANT.

"THESE words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come," &c. (John xvii.) The Lord Jesus turns to communion with the Father, where there is no let or hindrance. There *was* hindrance when forcing grace home to souls. In the operations of His grace He was not understood, and He turns to the Father. One thing strikes one—He needed no time to change His vesture, as did the high priest. We see His readiness for service in the previous chapters, and He was never more the servant of the Father's love than in chapter xvii. He did nothing but in direct communion with the Father. He who knew that He was the firstborn among many brethren, who bore the impress of the Father's love upon Him, He must needs think in His perfection of His poor sheep, and lay them in the very place of rest where His own heart had found rest. It is a wonderful thing to trace Him as come from heaven, serving His

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Father every step; and now the whole volume of His thoughts flowing out about the people of His love down here, putting them in the very place He held down here, to hold no other relatively to the world. He, the Son of the Father down here, serving God in direct opposition to the course of this world, and letting them know the place He had in direct communion with the Father. This is the place He gives us.

“The hour is come!” He had nothing more to do here than to suffer death. The rock is smitten—He takes His place on high, and gives forth the streams of eternal life (ver. 2, 3), and makes the people of His love channels through which the streams of eternal life flow. He came down into the midst of man’s wickedness, as the champion of God. Who else could the Father thus launch forth but the Son of His love? By whom else could you and I have been laid down in the hand of the Father’s love?