

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. VI.

LONDON GOSPEL TRACT DEPOT,
WARWICK LANE,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Matthew's Gospel: part iii.	1
" " " iv.	33
" " " v.	65
" " " vi.	97
" " " vii.	129
" " " viii.	161
" " " ix.	193
" " " x.	225
" " " xi.	257
" " " xii.	289
" " " xiii.	321
" " " xiv.	353

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY—

Devotedness the test of grace and power	21
Your sin will surely find you out.	52
The preparation for receiving truth.	76
The hero and the servant	110
The effect of knowing Christ in glory	139
Glorify God in your body	214
The truth revived in late years and the oppo- sition to it	240
The first circle of interest; or, the right start	273
Add to knowledge, temperance	305
"He walked on the water to go to Jesus" ..	340
The proof of power to act for the Lord	366

MISCELLANEOUS—

Let thine eyes look right on	8
Our enemies and strength	43
Salvation	46
"Look on me and do likewise"	89
Peace with God and the peace of God with me	122
Perfection under pressure	125
To me to live is Christ	150

MISCELLANEOUS— <i>continued.</i>	PAGE
The twofold effect of the death of Christ	157
To-day—for me—the cross of the glorified	
One	172
Day drill	190
Christ in glory—evidence of it	202
Christ in glory—The Holy Ghost on earth ..	229
Reality	254
Devotedness	255
Ishmael “the wild man,” and Isaac	264
” ” ” 	296
” ” ” 	328
Light	335
” 	358
POETRY—	
Leaning on thy tender love	32
The night and the day	63
The everlasting kingdom of our Lord and	
Saviour Jesus Christ	95
“Come and see”	128
Repose	191
We shall be like Him	224
Jehovah Nissi	256
The prospect of Glory	287
The Golden Bowl	318
The Great Mystery—Christ and the Church..	378
Fragments .. 7, 75, 88, 94, 138, 160, 171, 192, 263, 286	
295, 304, 317, 320, 352, 377.	



A Voice to the Faithful.

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

PART III.*

WE find in chapter ix. the work of the Lord, its character in grace ; as His person, in chapter viii. (still more definitely in Israel), but rejected. The Lord returns to His own city (Caper-naum), but away from the scene which closed the last chapter, which is complete in itself: the world rejecting Him, and He leaving it. Now He is again seen in the midst of His service in Israel. Faith brings one smitten in his body. The Lord is still here as Emmanuel, but man in their midst, but declares Himself there with the promised blessing of Jehovah's presence in grace. It is not

* The paper called, "Jesus our Pattern," &c. (vol. v., page 225), is the first part of Matthew's Gospel.

here redemption, though indeed there could be no such forgiveness without it, but the application of forgiveness in grace in Israel as in Psalm ciii., and for present blessing Israel must be forgiven. The Lord comes with it and it is a direct testimony to forgiveness, or He might have simply healed as elsewhere. But when Jehovah came in grace, He forgave all their sins and healed all their infirmities. The Lord announces the presence of Jehovah to do the former. The scribes murmur within themselves, Who could forgive but Jehovah? but He who knows the thoughts was there and proves by the other part of the verse that the Lord was there in the power of grace. He heals his infirmity at once.

We may remark that in this, as in the last chapter, He takes the title of Son of man, His title of predilection in love to us, wider than Christ, which though He was, He did not come to take, and never takes in Israel. He is there as Emmanuel Jehovah, to save His people; but as Son of man, a title of all-importance: the one who takes

the kingdom in glory from heaven; yea, has all things under His feet. Christ never presents Himself as Christ. The Son of man was to be strong for God (Psalm lxxx. 17); but now He was to suffer. But God, though in the midst of His people, must, when down here, take, in His nature and work, His place in connection with men, beyond all relationship in law, the rejected one on earth. The Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins: so the crowd says, "such power to men." Forgiveness then was there. And grace to sinners. He was there in that character. He goes and eats with publicans, having called Matthew who was one. It was not the outside which governed His path. God was there and the work was to be the effect of His presence and grace, not dependent on what He found. And He knew the heart, and the vessels to choose to be under the effect of that grace as instruments of it. But the principle of the work was the principle of grace; He came not to find, but to bring what was needed, and the vessels to receive it for

service were vessels chosen, divinely known, and wrought by grace into new and fitting instruments. He is there then forgiving sins, and eating with sinners, but it is Jehovah who heals. (Psalm ciii.) But the revelation as to the work goes further. It could not be put into old Jewish forms and take up what was there as vessels to hold it. A publican was to be an apostle, a pharisee at best learn that he must be wholly born again. And none of the old forms of righteousness really connected with the flesh, and man in the flesh, could receive the new wine; the doctrine of grace in power came by Jesus Christ. All this belonged to flesh, but could not hold divine power. It had seemed to test man's flesh, but what was come now was divine power in grace, and what was wholly new must have its own vessels. Besides, the Bridegroom was there: it was not the time for the children of the bridechamber to fast. The time would come for that. It is striking how the Lord always holds out His own rejection as a part of His history. The

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

5

Son of man must suffer, the Bridegroom be taken away. It was Jehovah there in grace, could not adapt itself to the old vessels, and only drew out the hatred of man, and of Israel, who preferred its vessels as giving them importance, to God Himself, and that revealed in grace.

The following recital contains the true history of Israel coming to it as just dying,* He has to deal with it as dead, and can, but those who on the way with Him have faith in Him are fully healed when all help failed. The virtue and power of life was in Him, though in result He had to vivify a really dead Israel. Such is the history of the ministry of the Son of man—Jehovah in Israel. Two accessory effects of His power are added as to its special character as to Israel, appealed to under the name of Son of David. The general character, though manifested in Israel,

* ἄρτι ἐτελεύτησεν "is now at her end," "dead by this." We know that the father received the message that she was actually dead, on the way. ἄρτι is the point up to which time reached, νῦν the thing exists already.

yet in its nature goes beyond it—Jehovah and Son of man—and this it is which it is of such profound interest to trace; but He was the Son of David in Israel. And in verse 27 we enter exclusively on Israelitish ground, where the spirit of the leaders is fully manifested, and the patience of the Lord still goes on in grace. The blind in Israel receive sight by faith in the Son of David, and here He is in the house, and He opens then the mouth of the dumb there too: the attention of the multitude is attracted and owns it was never so seen; but if He casts out the devil's power, the leaders of the people call His power that of the devil. The spirit of unpardonable apostasy was already manifested, but Jesus had not finished His work of goodness in the midst of Israel, and He goes around cities and villages, teaching, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing. His heart moved for Israel, multitudes as sheep without a shepherd. For if Jehovah in goodness, His heart could be moved by what He saw as a man, and till that goodness

found no more room for its exercise. His time was not hindered by the wickedness of those who were enemies; the harvest was yet plenteous, the labourers few. Oh, how the heart may still feel this! still He will accomplish His work, have His sheep. Our part is to seek from the Lord of the harvest that He will send out labourers. In this chapter then we have the grace of His ministry, its true character, the ministry of Jehovah come in grace available to faith, but which must raise the dead; and as a present thing is refused and blasphemed. His person and His work have no place here save in grace. While that can work He still goes on caring for all that may be reached.

(To be continued.)

We often deceive ourselves by concluding that because we steer clear of certain evils we are preserved in capability and fitness for service in the field. But this is not enough: we must walk in the Spirit.

LET THINE EYES LOOK RIGHT ON.

PROVERBS IV. 25.

OF the importance of the direction of the eye no one, who in the light of scripture has given the matter any attention, can for a moment question. In all ages blessing on the one hand, and failure on the other, has been the result of watchfulness or the reverse in this particular ; and we do well to give earnest heed to what the Holy Ghost has written for our learning on the subject.

In the days when the earth was young and sin's polluted stream had not yet stained God's fair creation, it was through *the eye* that the woman failed to maintain her place of innocence and blessing in earth's paradise. All trees were hers but one. God's creatures owned her sway. Her husband's love was hers, and more than all, God's present favour smiled on her, and thus she had enough, one might suppose, to fill her every sense with joy, and objects plenty to engage her sight and turn her thoughts to Him from whom she had received

LET THINE EYES LOOK RIGHT ON. 9

them ; but, as we know, she *saw* the tree was good for food and pleasant to the *eyes*: and the righteous curse of God was the immediate answer to her act of disobedience and concession to that lust of the eyes which in a later day is manifested to be not of the Father but of the world, and like the world fast hastening to destruction. How solemn to think of the change to her and to us that one ill-timed look produced from want of singleness of eye to God !

But she is not without companions in this form of evil; for saints of God, although possessed of life and righteousness, have similarly failed and likewise brought upon themselves sure chastisement and trouble. The patriarchal days had come and Lot was found in Abram's company as they together left both country, kindred, and his father's house, and took their journey to the land of promise. Together they had viewed the plains of Canaan—together they had praised the One whose gift the land was to them—together they had

10 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

thanked Him for His mercy in delivering them from Egypt's snares; and surely there was thus enough to draw the righteous Lot's affections heavenward, and make him like his fellow seek a better country and a city *there*, and be content like him with tent and altar *here*. But Egypt's cattle, and Egypt's ways, had bound their cords too tightly around his heart; and lifting up his eyes in answer to his uncle's testing question, he saw the plains of Jordan in all their rich fertility, and chose for himself earthly scenes and earthly interests, in preference to the heavenly calling of the Lord Almighty. Shortsighted policy! Though all was then in peace and safety, too soon was sudden destruction to come upon those wicked cities, and a life of misery, a hairbreadth escape, and an ill trained family, was the fate of one whose eyes were downward and whose heart was in the world. Most solemn is it too to call to mind "Lot's wife." Professedly escaping, though still in heart in Sodom, God's instantaneous judgment reached her as

LET THINE EYES LOOK RIGHT ON. 11

she dared to slight His word; one backward look proved fatal to her soul. Genesis xix. 26; Luke ix. 62.

But not only does the book of Genesis bear witness thus to failures through the eye's temptations, but in later times has God recorded similar weakness; and in Exodus xxxii. unfolds his people's sin in Moses' absence. As we trace their history we may wonder how so soon they would yield to Satan's power, but the knowledge of ourselves will shew what treacherous hearts we have, and how soon prepared we are to turn the eye from Him who loves us. Of His love and power too they all had ample proof, for slavery and cruel treatment were displaced by liberty and blessing in the presence of Jehovah. What nation more privileged than they, what people less deserving! The cloud above, the manna daily falling as their fresh provision, the rock still constantly flowing, they surely had enough to fill their hearts with Him whose faithfulness was changeless as Himself. But while He, careful for their blessing, was unfolding

12 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

to His servant all His ways concerning them, they could not even wait for forty days; but when they saw that Moses came not from the mount, they sought, forgetful of the first great precept they had vowed to keep, gods to go before them, and changed His glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass. Swift judgment followed, and an altered covenant alone can bring the people to the land, whose eyes had turned away from Him who should have ever been the object set before them.

But ere the wilderness was left does the Holy Ghost record to us that the same sad principle of evil had its operation, and that judgment came in consequence; for as they neared the land their unbelief was seen in sending spies to search the land of promise, and try if God was true to His word and could be counted on. How grieving to His heart it must have been, and then to hear the verdict of the greater number so full of everything to bring discouragement and failure. From end to end *

* See map.

LET THINE EYES LOOK RIGHT ON. 13

these twelve had trod the land of Canaan, and brought back unharmed the amplest proofs of fruitfulness and blessing; and yet for all that, they did not believe their armies could, with God's assistance, overcome the enemy. "The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we *saw* in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." In vain did Joshua and Caleb plead that the Lord delighted in His people, and that He was with them. In vain did Moses and Aaron fall upon their faces; the panic-stricken people had despised the pleasant land, and the wilderness became once more the scene of wanderings, and death; and their children only, and the two faithful ones from among the spies, become the heirs according to the promise.

Would that the history of such failures ended here; but further on does God record that Reuben, Gad, and

14 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

half Manasseh were ensnared in similar ways and sought their rest this side the blessed portion that was theirs by right and title with their fellows. (Numb. xxxii.) Well might Moses dread discouragement—well might he term them “an increase of sinful men,” as he recalled the solemn instance of the failure of the spies, and though in the end he granted their request, yet both to himself and Joshua in later times this absence of a single eye to Jehovah’s glory was a source of trouble and annoyance. How sad to think of feet that had marched to victory round Jericho and passed dryshod through Jordan’s bed, because of little ones and sheepfolds, retrograding to a wilderness position. Defection such as this must bear its fruit, and Gilead first becomes the enemy’s stronghold, and Gadara in centuries later is renowned for devils and for swine. But Peter too may well find space in illustrations such as these, which are for our warning, lest we likewise follow their example. It was not now the baits and snares that Satan used to

LET THINE EYES LOOK RIGHT ON. 15

Eve, to Lot, and to the half-hearted tribes; but a danger like that which the Anakims had been to Israel's children. He had left the wooden walls that point to Judaism for the brighter path of faith and obedience to his Master's word, and for a time his walk was firm like His (Matt. xiv.); but a position such as this becomes at once the subject of the adversary's rage, and winds of boisterous character for a moment take his eye from off the object of his faith. Failure of course ensues, but only to set forth more fully the grace of Him who in the moment of our deepest need unfolds His fullest mercy.

But scenes like these, though useful, and to this end on record, to forewarn us of the wiles of Satan, are not so animating to the soul as those which speak of victory under similar circumstances.

How blessed thus to note Elisha's posture as God's chariots (Psalm lxviii. 17; Luke xvi. 22) take His faithful master to his heavenly home. He had left all for him. (1 Kings xix. 19—21.) And now each test applied (2 Kings ii.

16 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

2, 4, 6,) but binds his heart still closer to Elijah, as they passed together through the land to see if anywhere there was a voice for God in places where His gracious ways had often been manifested. But neither Gilgal, Jericho, nor Bethel, shewed now aught but wickedness, and therefore Jordan must be crossed in token that the land was given up to judgment for her sins. (Compare John x. 40.) And he who had so faithfully stood for God amongst them would no more be left to try and bring the people back to normal faithfulness and blessing. The whirlwind, fiery chariot, and the horses caught away Elijah, but Elisha, mindful of the parting promise, kept his eye upon him, and in consequence became the vessel of the Holy Ghost in double power. "If thou *see* me," said Elijah, "it shall be so unto thee." "Elisha *saw*," and presently with equal faith smote Jordan's waters, recrossed dryshod, and became the subject of the sons of the prophets' homage. "Right on" he had looked and earned the promised blessing.

LET THINE EYES LOOK RIGHT ON. 17

Not less does Stephen yield an instance of that singleness of eye that must result in bodies filled with light. (Luke xi. 33—36.) His privilege it was to give the final testimony to the Jewish nation and then become the first to follow in his Master's track to death and glory. The nation's guilt was consummated. The law was set at nought, the prophets killed, the Just One slain, and the Holy Ghost resisted, and the messenger about to follow Him whom earth now knew no more. But what a special place of blessedness was his! "Full of the Holy Ghost, he looked up stedfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." (Acts vii. 55.) How could he fear the men that killed the body? Death was, it is true, the devil's weapon, but the Lord had turned its venom into but a means of entrance into rest the sooner. In the full consciousness of life eternal he exclaimed, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." The glory filled his gaze, and Jesus, and

18 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

as a consequence he bore His likeness. It shall be so, as we know, when He is manifested (1 John iii. 2); with him it was so partly by anticipation.

And surely we do well as we recall thus instance after instance of this most important principle, to ask ourselves how far our eye is fixed and has been fixed on Jesus since we first became possessors of His love. Has His unfailing faithfulness been ours, who said through David, "I have set the Lord alway before me?" or have we to recall with shame and sorrow many a wavering glance that nature caused or spiritual sloth produced, unconscious as we were of Satan's crafty subtleties? The new man's eye knows no delight in things below, the Holy Ghost within would but desire to occupy the soul with Him whose absence He has come to compensate for. What has, from the moment of our first acquaintance with the Son of God, been the object of our hearts, the centre of attraction to our eye? Let us retrace our pathway a little, and with the light of heaven test our thoughts

LET THINE EYES LOOK RIGHT ON. 19

and ways, and ask ourselves how far we have looked to Jesus, or how far our days and years have been misspent through want of loyalty to Him. Let us return to Gilgal as it were, and there in judgment sit upon ourselves and try our ways; and where in fault, lay bare our hearts and own it to the very root; and then, self-judged and humbled, turn afresh to Him whose love has never altered though we have been but too untrue to Him. He will come in but a little while, and till that time let it be ours to return His gaze of deep affection, and thus requite Him in His absence by a walk like His, whose pathway like the shining light shone more and more unto the perfect day.

Of what our portion will be when He comes, Revelation xxi. tells us. It unfolds the heavenly glory of the bride, the wife of the Lamb. Satan no longer troubles there. The bottomless pit restrains him, and that which has been so long the object of his enmity is now in undisturbed possession of the heavenlies, and in full enjoyment of her blood-

20 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

bought portion—faith is lost in sight—hope in present enjoyment. The saints in heavenly bodies see Him face to face whose love they long have known, whose absence long has caused them sorrow. They *see His face*—and what a face it is! The visage more marred than any man's is now resplendent with a glory more than that of the sun when shining in its strength. That face is the face of the Lamb, their God, their Saviour. He is for ever with them; with Him for ever they are too (John xvii. 24); and rapt enjoyment—passive adoration is their lot whose eyes through grace are turned from self to Christ—whose souls with Him are satisfied.

Surely we may sing,

“Jesus, thou art enough
The mind and heart to fill;
Thy life to calm the anxious soul,
Thy love its fear dispel,”

and pray,

“O fix our earnest gaze
So wholly, Lord, on thee,
That, with thy beauty occupied,
We elsewhere none may see!”

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

DEVOTEDNESS THE TEST OF GRACE AND POWER.

MAN has ruined himself, and through grace his only help is in Jesus Christ the Son of God; and as he receives light and grace, he leaves the one and cleaves to the other. There is the sense of deficiency and need in himself, and the certainty of having found in another that which he requires; and as this double knowledge increases, so does his devotedness increase towards the One who has met his need and ruin; and without this double knowledge there can be no devotedness in man toward God, because man is a sinner and lost. The Son came into the world to seek and to save that which is lost. As I know that I am lost in my first estate, and that the Son of God has come, and is my Saviour, so am I drawn to Him. I could not be otherwise. Devotedness is more a necessity than a duty. A drowning man is devoted to the life-boat, which is his only means of safety.

I am devoted to Christ, as I learn, first, how He meets my need; and secondly, how He is superior to everything and every one. The heart likes to be devoted to the one who commands its affections. Thus there are two kinds of devotedness; both true, but the one greatly in advance of the other. The first, which for distinction I call the lesser devotedness, is produced by the conviction that I am in myself lost as to my state and nature, but that Christ is my Saviour. This is known in measure by every happy saint. The second, or the greater devotedness, is produced when, in addition to the knowledge that Jesus is my Saviour, I find that everything I need, or could value, is in Him—that He is superior to everything in myself, and that He imparts to me of Himself. As I seek Him, because of this, my devotedness is of the highest order. He is more to me personally than I could be to myself. It is not only that I delight to make little of myself in order to make much of Him, which is true where there is any real

devotedness, but I suffer in order to be with Him, losing myself for Him; my heart, glad of the exchange, enduring all things, counting all things but loss, that He may be my gain. It is mercy or the greatest favour—that of a Saviour to a lost sinner—which produces the lesser devotedness; but it is the knowledge of the Saviour Himself, in all His personal attractiveness, which produces the greater.

Now every happy saint is more or less characterized by the lesser devotedness. Where a soul is really assured that Christ is His Saviour—that He has given His life a ransom for him—that He has destroyed the power of the devil, then his heart is drawn to Him. The sense of rescue so fills the heart that the Saviour commands all one's attention and delight. The Saviour has the first place; the one thought is to distinguish Him by gifts; to expend one's possessions on Him. Like Jonathan, when he saw the head of Goliath in David's hand, his soul was knit to the soul of David; he felt David was his

24 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

saviour, and he forthwith, before all the army, stripped himself, and put all on David. We read, 1 Samuel xviii. 3, 4, "Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword and to his bow and to his girdle." Jonathan, then, had no personal acquaintance with David, and we find that though so very distinguished for the lesser devotedness, he never reached the greater devotedness: he could not suffer for and with him.

Now the woman in Luke vii. is a very remarkable example of this lesser devotedness, which she expresses in the strongest and most touching manner. She believes that Jesus is her Saviour, and cost her what it may as to her feelings, she determines to reach Him, and to express her love to Him. At personal sacrifice she makes much of Him, and this is the mark of true devotedness. Love likes to make much of its object at its own expense. As her Saviour

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 25

only she was drawn to Him, and the more she felt her sins, as with everyone, the more she thought of the Saviour, and delighted her heart in anointing His feet and making Him an object of consideration. This, as I have said, is only the lesser devotedness, though a most beautiful and striking instance of it. I do not say that she would not have reached on to the greater; but it is evident that her devotedness was produced by the sense of what Jesus was to her as a Saviour; as the Lord says of her, "He that is forgiven much the same loveth much;" and though there is much self-sacrifice in this (the lesser devotedness) it does not go beyond a certain point. It would, as we have seen, lead a Jonathan to strip himself for David, but it would not lead him to follow David in his rejection. It is produced by the gain and benefit which the sinner receives from the Saviour, and does not go beyond a surrender of what one possesses. It is real and beautiful as far as it goes, but the expression of the heart never goes beyond the nature of

the thing which has moved it; for if it did, it would not be true to itself. It is the immense unequalled service of the Saviour to the lost one, which has touched the heart of the lost one, and led it in delight to make much of Him who has from love done it such service; and the heart, in answer thereto, devotes the possessions it values to Him, who is now more to it than any possession. It has reached this point that He is better to it than anything it has hitherto owned, and therefore what it owns it devotes to Him. It is what Christ has done for us, as it was what David had done for Jonathan, which has won the heart, and the heart in return feels that He is before any other thing which it possesses, and therefore it passes the chief possession over to Him. This is the lesser devotedness and very few get up to it fully.

Now the greater devotedness is produced by a knowledge, not only of what Christ has *done*, but of what He *is*—a personal knowledge of Himself. And in proportion as one reaches to this,

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 27

there is perfect devotedness. As a sinner I could not know Him personally until I had first known Him as my Saviour, but having known Him as my Saviour, when the heart gets acquainted with Him personally, there is another kind of devotedness; not giving up of *possession* merely, but a giving up of *oneself*, the heart delighting to be with Him; and though it be only through suffering, it prefers the path of suffering *with Him* to any other. It is really fellowship with His sufferings, because there is no other path here. It is a widely different thing which produces this kind of devotedness.

Knowledge of the greatest *service* which could be rendered to me produces the first; knowledge of the heart and ways of the greatest Person, the One who has rendered the service, produces the other. There is nothing really satisfying to the heart, but the knowledge of a heart, full of the deepest and truest interest, while perfect and holy in all its tenderness and care, and this we find only in Christ. The Son of God

28 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

has walked here as a man, and made Himself familiar with every trial and difficulty which a godly one could encounter here; and as my heart gets acquainted with Him; as I see the perfection of His life, the depth of His interests and love in the holy manner of all His ways and the supreme beauty of His movements in everything, my heart turns with delight to Him, boasts in Him as the one perfect Man before God, hastens to refuse and repudiate everything of the man and the scene here where He was refused, and knows no joy, values no possessions but Himself. All else is dross. To have Him as the gain is the one only thought and interest of the devoted saint. In the lesser devotedness it is one's own possessions which are surrendered as the expression of devotedness; but in the greater devotedness, the one thought is to *possess Him*, and for this self with everything is surrendered. In the one case I have received the greatest and I return my greatest. In the other I abandon everything of time. I leave myself and the earth, to

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 29

possess Him, who in Himself captivates and commands the affections of my heart. The lesser looks to my own side to give to Him; the greater looks to His side to obtain from Him, and by Him to supplant everything on my own side. The greater is not produced by knowing only what Christ had done. It cannot be without knowing what He is. Nothing but association and intimacy with Him personally can lead into this. He comes to my side and walks with me in my sorrow, as He did with Mary; and until He does this, whatever one may hear of Him or read of Him, one can never know the tenderness or the nature of His heart. Unless one has been in the depth of sorrow and death-darkness, one cannot know the touching expression of His love, or what He is at a moment when no one else can come even near me. To know Him there, His step, His tears, His sympathy, the greatest, the companion of the weakest—His heart told out in my sorrow, binds mine to Him in a way that acquaintance with Him in joy never could. And hence, like

30 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

Mary, the social scene at Bethany (John xii. 1), though an unequalled one on earth, is overlooked by her, and she passes to what is before Him. She would bear Him company, she anoints His body for the burial. She connects everything with His tomb. The most beautiful and best things here detain her not. They have lost all interest for her. She, in act as well as in spirit, suffers with Him. The shadow of His death rests on everything and she follows Him to the tomb. "Against *the day of my burying* has she kept this." It is not surrendering of *things* merely, but all that makes life charming is waived, and with the thing most fragrant to her here, she would accompany Him to the tomb. It is with *Himself* she is interested, not merely with the benefit she has received from Him. True it was the assured and deepened knowledge of this which bound her heart to Him first, but then it is a greater thing when His own personal excellence binds and directs the heart and its actions. It was thus Ruth followed Naomi, not when

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 31

there was anything to gain by accompanying her, but when all was lost, to be a fellow-pilgrim of one who now exchanges the name Naomi for Marah. Ruth could gain nothing for herself, save the simple, peculiar satisfaction of being with the one she loved. This only satisfies the heart of the truly devoted one, and this is devotedness of the highest order. This is its mark—a readiness to suffer *any* thing in order to secure personal company. “Where thou goest I will go ; where thou lodgest I will lodge ; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried,” &c. In the lesser devotedness one does everything ostensibly to make Christ known as the one chief object of the heart. In the greater devotedness, the heart seeks nearness to Him and to be in His path, whatever it may be, no matter ; so that *He is there*. It is not in order that it may give to Him, but that it may sit under His shadow with great delight ; in a word, that He may be the “gain.” The one gives up

32 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

valued things to distinguish Him as the object; the other abandons everything, endures every sacrifice, to be in company with Him—to win Him. The first assuredly can grow into the other, but the measure of our grace is declared as we are in either.

LEANING on thy tender love,
Lord, we'd go from day to day;
Keep each heart with thee above,
By thy Spirit's wondrous sway.

Listening for the well-known voice,
Which shall bid the dead arise;
And with quickened saints rejoice
To behold thee in the skies.

Waiting for thee, Lord, we know
How to prove thy patient grace;
That like thee we still may grow
Till we see thee face to face.

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

PART IV.

In chapter x. He calls His twelve disciples and sends out labourers, giving them power, a new proof of the divine Person with whom they had to do. It is not merely that He works miracles, a testimony to divine clemency come into the world, but He can give power to others to work them; power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease.

I have remarked that Matthew gives an order in his recital which is the mind of the Spirit as to the bearing of the facts (that is after the birth and before the last scene at Jerusalem). The whole history, as such, between these epochs we have seen given in one verse at the end of chapter iv. We have here first the whole number of apostles chosen, as we see in Luke, after prayer, before the sermon on the mount. One finds at the outset of their commission how the testimony as a present service is, in this gospel, confined to Israel as

34 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

enjoying Emmanuel's presence, though it could not end there, closing at the same time by Israel's rejection of that Emmanuel. God's presence on earth could not be only for Jews, if he was the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God. The twelve are forbidden to go elsewhere. The way of the Gentiles they were not to tread, and no city of the Samaritans was to receive their visit. The lost sheep of the house of Israel were to be the objects of their care. They were to preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. All evil was to be subject to them—death itself, the power of the enemy, and the sorrows and human ills brought in by sin—Jehovah's power to use in their hands in grace—leprosy and all. And as they received it gratuitously, they were to use it in the same grace; and they were to trust His power and care equally and take no provision for the way. It was Jehovah who sent. They did His service, and the labourer was worthy of his hire. Jehovah's care was there, and they, as we read after-

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

35

wards in Luke, lacked nothing. Further, they were to seek out the godly remnant, inquire who was worthy in the city, and abide there, and the sons of peace were to receive a blessing. Those that refused this all but last testimony, and here treated as practically the last (there was only partially the seventy on his way to Jerusalem afterwards), were judged and rejected as worse than Sodom and Gomorrha. This verse closes the direct present commission. What follows from verse 16 continues indeed their service on the same mission, that is, exclusively to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but goes on beyond the Lord's rejection and on to His coming again. (Ver. 22.)

The full character of their mission as thus left to serve is gone into—persecution, death—but the Spirit of their Father speaking in them, and a care over them which counted the hairs of their head. But this part of the chapter shews how deeply the Lord felt His rejection in Israel, noticed as we have seen all through. The full power needed

36 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

would be given no doubt every moment, but the testimony would draw out the passions of men in a way that would break through every natural tie. Relations of nature divinely formed, would not resist the hatred of the human heart against the testimony of God, and they would be hated of all men for Christ's name sake; strange feeling, which only the hatred of man's heart against God can explain. They would be brought before kings and governors, for so the Lord would bring this testimony before the great and before the Gentiles, the hatred of the Jews would do it, a plain testimony that we are here still in Israel. But the hatred would be universal: they were to endure to the end. They were to go, when persecuted in one city, to another; nor would have gone through the cities of Israel till the Son of man came. It was Christ's portion. They had called the Master of the house Beelzebub: he looked at it fully; they must face it, if they were in the place of testimony; enough for them to be as He. But they were not to fear, all

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MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

37

would come out and they were to be out in open daylight in service; death might be there on the road, they were not to fear but Him, who could judge and deal with body and soul both. But it is remarkable how the Lord, as to Himself and them, takes the power of evil for granted, though God was with full care of His own above all, yet till judgment came as to the present manifestations of power, evil reigned (compare Rev. ii. 10); for He, the power of God, was about to be rejected, and all this power of evil pressed upon His spirit in sending them out. Now indeed as Emmanuel present He guarded them, but in this second part the presence of the Spirit marks Him gone, and already treated as Beelzebub. Such warning is not found (though the fire was already kindled) in the first fifteen verses: but He knew His portion, and warned them of theirs. But they were of value to God, and not to fear. He is to be confessed before men at all cost. But nature and the flesh, which, as to power, He could have restored, were over in His rejection.

38 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

What man broke through in hatred to God they must give up in devotedness to Christ.

The closing of the old creation is not here doctrinally taught, but the deep feelings of the Lord as to the practical effect of the coming in of what was divine into the scene of man, proved apostate by its effect, are wonderfully pourtrayed. It is not only the warning to the disciples (ver. 21, 22), when the enmity is spoken of, but the general effect of His coming. (Ver. 34—36.) Peace on earth was not the word now, but enmity in the closest relations. Owning the Lord is intolerable to man. The closer the relationship, the greater the hostility. But Christ came a test of everything, and as His presence and the true confession of Him awakened hostility, so the heart of His servant must take Him, the new divine thing, instead of everything. The world had proved the incompatibility of the old and the new, nature as it was and grace, and the servant and minister of grace must give up all. (Ver. 37.) Christ tests the

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

39

heart as well as the world. He was the rejected One. His servant must take up the cross and follow Him. Natural life was of course the track of nature, and that must be given up too in nature to find it new with God. But then they were thus associated with Christ, and he that received them received Him. The recognition of the testimony come into the world was the reception of Him of whom it spake, and the reception of Him was the reception of Him who sent Him, and whose Witness in the world He was. This was the turning-point, the owning Him, His name and word, if a cup of cold water only was given. The difference of verses 1—15, though the principle of testimony was the same, with verse 16 to the end, is very marked; the power of the then final testimony with judgment on him that did not receive it, while He was there present as Emmanuel, and the moral mark in the world of a rejected Saviour. His grace continued in patience, but the fact that He was called Beelzebub

40 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

had borne its witness in His soul. The present was a final testimony in Israel; the rest, the witness of a rejected Saviour; but all in Israel, save as it brought them as guilty before Gentiles.

This rejection and the entire change of dispensation and ground of relationship with God are fully brought out in the chapters which follow. When I say relationship, none could really be but on the new ground of grace, but I speak of God's ways. The Lord as yet continued His testimony in the midst of Israel. And thus the chapter gives us a full view of the true position of the witnesses God had sent, and the real place Christ held. His place as founded on His person and personal grace contrasted with His coming after John in His service. In the following chapter xii. we have the setting aside the old remnant on its principles and nature rest with it, with the full iniquity and judgment of the Jews on the other side. But in chapter xi. we have the open history and the secret history of all that was going on. Patience of good-

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

41

ness as yet continued, but all was now changing. The provisional service of John before Christ, and his favoured position in it, is fully recognized. The Lord delights to own His faithful servant in it: but it is over. He came after him, was before him, and it is in this character He is now coming out, though all the rest was true. John is in fact in prison, man's evil will and enmity already shewn as the unbelief of Israel towards the Lord (ver. 20—24); and John himself must believe Christ on the witness He gives of Himself. He gives testimony to John instead of receiving it from him. The chief point in John's message is to shew this change, for though in prison some uncertainty doubtless had arisen in his heart; for if Messiah, Jesus brought no deliverance—yet his heart was all right. He did not doubt the testimony of Him to whom he sent. The Lord throws the answer on the testimony all had, which His word and work rendered to Himself, yet as already the rejected one in whom the reasoners of the people were offended.

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42 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

Blessed he who was not. The Lord then proceeds to give testimony to John Baptist, but with witness of the coming change — change which His person brought in, for as a divine person he receives not testimony from men, but He gives it to His faithful servant. And he was only a forerunner of the thing itself that was to come: the least actually in it was greater than he. Of born of woman, of gifts to Adam's children, none were greater; but the kingdom set up by Emmanuel was on other ground, founded on the Second Adam. The law and the prophets dealing with men in flesh had reached up to John; since then the kingdom of heaven was preached (not come). And this was no matter of giving a law to an acquired people alive in the flesh, or recalling them to it, but set up with flesh opposed and trial brought in. The energy of faith alone could make its way into it. This, if faith could receive it, was the Elias to come—was he who had gone before Jehovah in his spirit and power, this special coming of Jehovah but in grace, not in judgment.

(To be continued.)

OUR ENEMIES AND STRENGTH.

THE Christian has three great enemies, namely, the world, the flesh, and the devil. The world attracts and ensnares; the devil seeks to ensnare, and if foiled opposes; as to the flesh, the Christian (though not in it) carries it with him. Now inasmuch as it is worse for a fortress to have a traitor at liberty *within* than strong enemies *without*, (especially where the fortress is provided with everything to make it thoroughly impregnable and sufficient to resist all attacks, however subtle or formidable they may be) so the Christian should be especially upon his guard against the least acting of the flesh. If the traitor, being bound, has no opportunity of acting, the fortress (notwithstanding the traitor remains inside) is in no danger of being taken, and the enemies without are powerless. (1 John v. 18.) Paul learnt that "in him, that is, in his flesh, there dwelt no good thing," and from Romans vii. 25, we learn that, even *after* deliverance, "with the flesh we serve the law of sin," i.e. that the flesh is ever the

44 · A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

same, utterly bad, and that whenever it is allowed to act, we serve sin; in fact we become slaves to the very enemies in whom the traitor delights. It is great gain when in an enemy's country, we know whom we can and whom we cannot trust. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" It is well then to have faith in God: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." So to follow Christ is well. The Spirit lusts against the flesh, so that we may not do the evil things' which otherwise we would do. (See Gal. v. 17, correct translation.) So not to grieve the Spirit is well. Other and more blessings undoubtedly are ours when God is for us, than simply being secured through the combat: but it is not our object in this present paper to enter into these. We must however always remember that there is no real fighting against the enemies apart from the word. Deut. viii. 3; Joshua i. 2—9; Psalm cxix. 98, 105; 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17; 1 John ii. 14, and numerous other passages shew this. The enemy we have most to fear is the

OUR ENEMIES AND STRENGTH. 45

flesh (the traitor within), therefore it is most important to discern the least action of this enemy whether in ourselves or in others. The flesh, or sin in it, is not discerned but in God's presence. No eye, nor good will, can ever find anything in the dark. Now God is light, and when in His presence sin (even what we know to be sin) appears quite another thing than when parleying with or giving any quarter to this traitor, the flesh. When walking according to the light we are spiritual, and "the spiritual man discerneth all things." Hence the path becomes plain, for "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird." At the same time there is need for the Christian to walk with all lowliness and meekness, otherwise he fails to discern, and the traitor at once deceives and betrays. Nevertheless (although a loss to the Christian) God oftentimes brings blessing to others out of the failure, as the subtlety, craft, and hatred, of these enemies become more apparent and their unchangeable nature more manifestly declared; and he who has been

46 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL

ensnared is the better able to warn others. The Lord give to those amongst His people who are, in an evil difficult day like the present, earnestly desiring to fight the good fight, to be aware, &c.

SALVATION.

SALVATION is presented to us in three aspects: first, deliverance from; secondly, the way to; thirdly, the place of blessing to which the salvation leads. There is first the Red Sea, then the wilderness, then the Jordan to lead into the inheritance.

God did not bring His people through the Red Sea to leave them in the wilderness, neither did He leave them to get into Canaan by themselves. First, God finds us just where we were, under guilt and condemnation, and He says, I must work a work to bring them out of this condition; and this He does through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ and His quickening power. Secondly, when He has taken us up thus and brought us into relationship

SALVATION.

47

with Himself, then He conducts us *through* the wilderness *into* the glory. No one can conduct a people through but Christ. If I want guidance, I must get perfectly clear in my own soul what my relationship to God is. I must take my stand before God and find in Christ risen a perfect answer in my conscience to every question. My faith and hope are in God, who raised Him from the dead, after He had put away sins, met the power of Satan, and cancelled the power of death. Then when I draw near to God there is Christ there as my righteousness, every question met; God has settled it for *Himself* by the resurrection, and that settles every question in my own bosom. We see how Christ undertook this in John xii., "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die," &c. We see then a glory in Christ in connection with such an undertaking; and now the more boldness we have in drawing nigh to God, the more honour do we put on Christ.

But in John xiii. I find another glory, in connection with Christ. He

48 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

says, I am now about to go to the Father, and I have a people that are in the world, and it is now the question of His shewing His care for me in the wilderness. How can I get from the Red Sea to Jordan—such a poor weak creature as I am? Let the things around be as smooth as they may, and if they were all that you had to meet, what hand would you make with getting through *one day* if left to yourself? You would be stopping to look at this flower, or to listen to that rivulet. What then is Christ doing for us now in the Father's presence? He is keeping the conscience bright for one thing; giving a word of rebuke when needed; making His word to be to us sharper than a two-edged sword; and keeping our souls so as to have communion with the Father, in the place where He has set us. He has made us clean every whit, and now He renews the cleansing; He removes the defilement as we contract it. He knows us thoroughly, He knows just what we are individually; and He is occupied

SALVATION.

49

with all the evil about His people. He says, I am the person whom God has set apart to keep you clean. I must *keep you*. I dare not *trust* you. He has to keep them from themselves. The strength of the flesh will not do to serve in the Spirit with. Christ is true to the charge which God has committed to Him, to bring us through the wilderness into the glory. Paul walked well because he had no confidence in the flesh. How is it that there are any Christians in the world now? It is because the Lord Jesus has been in heaven all the time since the beginning of Christianity. He has been pursuing the truth, and He is still mindful that it is the thought of the Father's heart that the Spirit and the bride should say "Come." All is attributable to the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is still in heaven, and who *will* have us to go on with Him to the glory. He says, in chapter xiv., "*If I go away I will come again and receive you unto myself.*" I do not forget that I have my belongings, as well as that you

have your belongings. My belongings are connected with the Father and His house; your belongings are poverty and weakness now. But it will not always be so—He cannot break His word—His love cannot. He will come and receive us unto Himself, that where He is we may be also. He undertakes to bring many sons unto glory; He is faithful to the love that He has taught me to rest in. There would be no home for me there if the Son had not returned there. He says, "*If I go,*" &c. It all depends on His faithfulness: He has got the key. I have got no claim or deservings to be there, but *He is worthy*; and I reach it by *His* faithfulness. In John xii. we have seen what was *required* to bring us to God. He looked thoroughly at this, and stooped low enough to undertake the whole matter, and then He says, I am going to the Father: all power is mine, I will use all the wilderness circumstances as an occasion to shew what a heart of love I have for them. You will find all the difference whether you receive the wilderness as an occasion

SALVATION.

51

of your sorrows, and therefore a disagreeable place, or whether you receive it as an occasion of His love and faithfulness. The Lord uses the state of His people as an occasion for the manifestation of His divine glory. He could have brought Israel into the land by a shorter way; but then they would not have proved His faithfulness as they did.

There will be full fruition of joy when He rises up. What will He do then? He will find the whole of the people that are going to glory. He will then put forth His double glory as the resurrection and the life. It is only His power that can raise them up. He must do it all. He has got a Father, and He loves Him, and He says, I must have you in my Father's house. Hath He spoken, and shall He not do it? Will He forget one of the weakest that are resting in His love? Oh no: He will be faithful to the love on which He has caused them to rest. It is a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that your faith and hope might be in God.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.
YOUR SIN WILL SURELY FIND YOU
OUT.

THE strength or reliability of a chain depends on its weakest link. If there be one weak link, though all the rest be good and strong, yet when the pull comes, the weak one is the measure of its strength. In everyone there is some tendency or passion stronger than another, and in it the force or wilfulness of one's nature is betrayed. Many do not know what it is, and in general without intention it is systematically concealed. In the transparency of childhood it is seen, but few in mature years candidly admit their ruling passion: of course it is selfishness in some form or another. In it lies the most of one's will, and the strength of nature; and hence, while it is there that it is most necessary there should be "suffering in the flesh," yet it is there, that naturally every effort is used to preserve it. Hence, there is on the one hand the purpose of God through grace to mortify it, and on the other hand the energy of the flesh to save it.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 53

Nay more, everything will often be attempted, or even suffered, in order to screen or excuse this idol, for idol it is, as is everything which commands the heart and energies more than God.

With everyone there is something that is as dear to him as his own life; it may be his reputation, his position, his money, some self gratification; and he strains every nerve to secure it.

Now the discipline to which every saint walking with the Lord is subjected, would best teach him what his ruling passion or idol is; for on that particular thing the Lord is always bringing death in one form or another. On the one side, there is the energy of the flesh, striving to preserve as it were its sovereign; as on the other hand there is the Lord, dealing in one way after another, in order to check, weaken, and suppress this strong hold of the flesh. Many a one might suppose that he had no particular wilfulness, and possibly from his nature and habits you might never discover it. But, if we observe the nature and character of God's dealings with

54 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

us, we shall surely find it out; and if we were truly to submit to the correction and what it aims to effect, there would be a happy sense of deliverance, or at least a sure conviction of why it was sent (which saints often know nothing of), and there would therefore be a guarding against it. If there be a desire in the corner of my heart which I have not ventured even to acknowledge to myself, the nearer I am to the Lord the sooner I shall find it out: but as we see with Paul on his return from the third heaven, he does not know the tendency or lurking desire in his own nature, until he is awakened to inquiry because of the thorn in the flesh. The ruling passion, though often suppressed and almost mortified in one set of circumstances, is sure to spring up in a new set, which in some way favours its recurrence. So that in every set of circumstances there must be mortification in order to preserve one from loss and damage. It is where the flesh is most active, that it is most necessary that death should first supervene; and to this, God's deal-

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

55

ings with the soul are always directed. Now if His dealings be resisted, and though there be, for years even, a disguising of the taste and will, yet if it has not been mortified, and the chastening of the Lord not bowed to, it will find its opportunity; and that man's sin finds him out. See Moses' warning to the two and a half tribes. (Numb. xxxii. 23.)

There is not a sufficient sense in souls of the present righteousness of God, and that by Him actions are weighed. There is too much the feeling that if they escape at the time with impunity, there is an end of it. Now if we observe our own histories, and know that of others well, we shall find that now He judgeth according to man's work. If I am screening my flesh, and despising the rebuking of the Lord, I shall suddenly be cast down, and that without remedy.

The first thing that a saint learns, though he may not always be able to define it, is, that there is in him that which lusts against the Spirit. He may not be able to discern the peculiar

56 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

form of the flesh as to desire; but the moment he is in any way sensible of a new nature, he is also made sensible that he has no power in himself to act according to its instincts. Good desires are not effectual, that is, they cannot subdue the flesh, nor can they make it yield to them. The Spirit of God is the only power to render good desires effectual. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. The resistance or inability which the saint first finds in himself to act as the new nature desires, shews him the strength of the flesh—its idol or ruling passion. It necessarily fears to be dislodged, and it at once, when a new mind is implanted, seeks to resist and to continue its own sway. The plague of one's own heart is the hardest to subdue and to be relieved from, and therefore it is the first and foremost in asserting its claim. As I have said, I do not think a saint can say at first what it is, but he is painfully aware that there is something which resists; and if this covetousness or idolatry were mortified, there would be relief.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 57

I do not say that he at once comes to this conclusion, but I say that when he does, he finds relief. Seeing then that on my own side there is the consciousness of opposition, though I may not be able to state definitely what particular form of selfishness it is, I find that God in His dealings and discipline with me is ever and anon checking me in some way that I feel very much. Of course I feel most where I have most flesh. Now there are two things which indicate what the ruling passion is. One is, the resistance in myself to the grace of God; and the other, the pain I suffer from the discipline to which I am subjected. Now the Spirit of God would always prove His power, and teach me how to walk under this twofold schooling. He first lusts against the flesh, that is, He would give it no tolerance, would act right in opposition to it, and would use the chastening to break down the flesh, so that His victory might be complete. A saint, walking in the Spirit, would set himself to resist that which was gratifying to his flesh. The fact of its being

58 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

self-gratification would be enough to make him refuse it, for that is evidence enough of its danger and of its nature. He would not seek occasions of self-suffering; but when selfish considerations were presented to him, this would be enough to shew that it was to be opposed, and that wherever any dealing of God was most felt, whether as to one's feelings, or in any other way, there one would lay it to heart, and see that the flesh was working there, and that the chastening was sent for this end. Now if the saint walks in the Spirit, he will be kept in this healthful exercise; but if, on the other hand, he, like Peter, refuses the counsel of the word, he at length will be exposed to circumstances for which he was unprepared; and then on warming himself at the fire (Mark xiv. 54, 67) his sin will find him out. Peter liked to lead and was called on to lead, but he must be broken down in nature before he is fit to be Christ's vessel.

It is only as we walk in the Spirit that we do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. The Spirit is the only power to

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 59

save us from the inroads of the flesh. In every step and in every new circumstance (and every day there is quite a new set of circumstances) I shall be unprepared unless I am walking in the Spirit, and my sin will find me out if I do not depend on God in my weakness. Abram finds out that he has no faith to stay in the land when there is a famine there; but in his weakness he learns to depend, and when he is restored and returns there, he gives Lot his choice of the whole land. Now Lot on the contrary has not judged himself for his weakness, and therefore he seeks what gratifies himself—the green fields—and though he was chastened, and affliction had come upon him from the very place where he settled, for he was taken captive and his goods carried away, yet he will not bow to the rebuke, but hardens his neck, and in the long run his sin finds him out.

We have little idea how we despise the chastening of the Lord, how we refuse to drop the idol that is set up in our hearts; and it is often years afterwards

60 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

that the exposure comes, and always to the penitent heart, with this conviction, "I was warned of this before, I have been rebuked and chastened with respect to this very thing long before." The word, as at the first in Eden, is always surrendered for self-gratification; and if in an innocent state, how much more when there is a will and an evil spirit to support one in an evil path. Peter disregarded the word, not intentionally, but he did not think of it. Lot was heedless of his calling, it was not before his heart and mind, but his present advantage.

There are three classes of saints. One class who never attempted or intended to give up the world; these really fall in the wilderness: another class, who, like Abram, have, though failing, persistently and faithfully pursued a path of separation, and a heavenly walk: and a third, those who began well, but, like Lot, were drawn away by some present gain. With this latter class I am chiefly concerned in this paper. As to the first, their whole ways declare what

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

61

they are. It is no excuse for a saint to say, I never gave up the world in its refinements, its dress, its arts, &c. Such an one's sin has found him out: he has not faith to enter the land, to walk as a heavenly man. The second class are kept by the power of God—"faint, yet pursuing:" and as to the third, however fair or promising their start, like a hunted hare they return to the field from which they were driven; they get back to the worldliness, the dress, or whatever it be, which they had never truly condemned, and which had always a shrine in their hearts, and their sin finds them out. Thus we can account for ill-assorted marriages, unsuitable companions, and all such things. The tendency of our nature is ministered to and countenanced. The link is formed through that which gratifies us selfishly, and not with that which would really aid us. Thus people find themselves in association and circumstances that at one time they had vehemently denounced. The fullest knowledge of our standing, and the deepest exercise of soul as to it,

will not preserve us if the word of our calling be overlooked. Jacob has returned to the land; he is right as to his standing; he has passed through the night of wrestling and received the name Israel; and yet, because he has not judged his ruling passion, to think and provide for himself contrary to his calling, he settles at Shalem, and sorrow and evil overtake him. (Gen. xxxiv.)

The real measure of a man's strength, that is of his dependence on God, comes out some day; and it often happens, sad though it be, that it is not brought to light till his death-bed, and then a controversy takes place, before the unclouded light of the Lord's presence fills and gladdens the soul.

The Lord teach us to watch unto prayer, quietly waiting on Him, assured in heart that His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men, and that in due season we shall reap if we faint not. But on the other hand, it will be manifested on every side, and with regard to every one, that he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.

THE NIGHT AND THE DAY.

Matthew xxvii. 50, 51.

THROUGH the long and dreary ages
Had the tide of sin rolled on;
Ever wider, deeper, darker,
Till the Father sent His Son.
He had chosen Him a people
From among rebellious men,
Loved them, ransomed them, and kept them,
But they loved Him not again.

He had sent them words of mercy
In the ages that were gone;
"Though," he said, "they scorned my servants,
They will reverence my Son."
Then against that Son beloved
Did they rise in bitterest wrath;
All the love of God outshining
Called but deadlier hatred forth.

They had hated Him, with hatred
Flowing on in deepest tide—
Now by wicked hands had slain Him,
Midst their scoffing Jesus died.
And behold! the veil was riven,
All that hid God's love is gone,
And the Father calls from heaven
To the murderers of His Son:

"Come, the doors of heaven are open,
Come and taste my perfect love;
For the precious blood is sprinkled
On the mercy-seat above;

64 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

Come, for all things now are ready.”
Sin can bar the way no more;
Into all that deepest glory
We may enter and adore.

Boldly entering the holiest,
Look upon the Father's face;
All the depth of sin outmeasured
By the endless depth of grace.
Enter there, no fear dismaying,
Stand amidst the cloudless light,
In the robes His blood has whitened,
Whitened as His own is white.

When by sin the sun was darkened,
With thy Son before thee dead—
All His wounds our hatred telling,
All our scorn His thorn-crowned Head—
Then, O God, thy hand was lifted,
Rending all that hid thy grace;
Then thy love beamed forth in fulness,
All unveiled thy glorious face.

Flowing down a mighty torrent,
That unhindered joy and love;
Now rejoicing, couldst thou bring us
Into those bright courts above:
Nearest to thy heart for ever,
We whose hands have slain thy Son;
Wondrous, O our God, the victory
Which thy matchless love has won.

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

PART V.

THE rejection of His testimony is now definitely entered on, and the true character of what was taking place. He shews the state of the people as to the reception of John and Himself. (Ver. 17—19.) Warnings and grace were alike rejected. But a remnant, wisdom's children, justified God's ways in both. Such was the state of things. Then the Lord comes especially to His own testimony and the mighty works by which it had been confirmed. It was not merely moral warning closing the old warning, the list of prophets owning Israel and doing no miracles, but the manifestation of power and one working miracles claiming attention by divine power, not reckoning on any present acknowledgment of Jehovah on which the word as of the prophets could be based. It was a person present Himself the subject, source, and power of testimony, its object, and that from which it flowed. But Israel would not repent. His works left them

VOL. VI.

D

without excuse, His grace made the sin the greater. It would be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah in their day of judgment than for these cities; such was the testimony they had rejected. But now we come to what was inside all this, the glory of His person known to none, and the revelation made by Him in that name of grace which in the rejection of the Son and servant, brought out for the soul of him that was weary in a Christ-rejecting world. The unbelief, justly rebuked by the Lord, found with it no gall nor bitterness in the spirit of the blessed Lord, so that He should not be pure with His Father, only it threw Him from man into the fulness of the mind of God; but first in lowliness and submission in the place of the servant, ascribing all to His Father, yet as Son, perfect submission, but entire confidence of love, thus intelligence clear, no delay in solving the mystery, seeing it on the side of God. At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father. Then He is owned as supreme in everything,

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

67

Lord of heaven and earth, and with the owning of this supremacy, the sense of the fitness of the dealing; human wisdom failed, it was fitting, necessary; how should it, base and earthly, understand divine ways? they were hidden and hidden by the Lord of all from the wise and prudent. He put man's wisdom in its place, its true moral place. But grace revealed them to the simple and unpretending, the unsuspecting confidingness of the babe. So it seemed good in the Father's sight; man, and old things with him, had passed away—Christ, the second man, the Son in grace, replaced them all.

No one knows Him but the Father. The Father in grace can be known through Him, but God come as man in the form of a servant, none could; and though He had presented works and words which left them without excuse in His service, yet His person none could know. But this submission and relinquishment of all as sent, brings into His own spirit what belongs to Him in the place He now was in His

person and service. All things were delivered to Him of the Father; the Son and faithful Servant had now all things in His hands, in this new place where He received them indeed, for He had made Himself servant, but as Son; for He could not cease to be that, whatever His service; and now rejected of all, none knew, nor, in this His personal glory, could know Him; but He knew, and in this place revealed the Father. In this place of grace He stands alone, unknown of all (being in His service and testimony to them in their place rejected) and alone in sovereign grace to reveal the Father—that is, He who sends the Son in grace, and in such a world wholly tested, and its history, i.e. man's and Israel's over in His rejection, to say, “Come to me.” If there were hearts weary of themselves and a world that thus rejected Him—perhaps could not well explain why, but weary of evil—though evil—let them come to Him. This solitary place of Christ, in grace revealing the Father, is very striking. Heir of all things, and the Son revealing the Father,

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

69

but the deposit—thus alone the beginning of all anew from the Father—of all grace and perfect grace, rest for the weary, not help, though help He does, but rest by the revelation of this grace. But there is another thing that then comes, but comes after this, though accompanying it. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me. The first point was He had brought the grace and rest for him who came to Him by it, but He had shewn in His rejection the lowliness and meekness which bowed to the Father's will and accepted His rejection, looking absolutely to His Father's will and good pleasure, and thus thanking, even in the midst of sorrow, not looking at the evil to be vexed, but to His Father out of it working in His wise and holy ways. Meek and lowly of heart and rest to the soul; as to its state, perfect rest, through the knowledge of grace, with God by coming to Christ, and rest of heart through lowliness and the absence of all working of will. His yoke is easy and His burden light, the one which He had borne. It is interesting to see how

70 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

what is stated doctrinally in John i. is here wrought out experimentally in the history of Christ, as heretofore remarked, that the first three gospels present Christ to men, and result in His rejection. John begins with His rejection and presents the person of Him who was rejected, and man must be born again, and then the Comforter when He was gone, and an elect remnant with others such, among the Gentiles, the Jew reprobate. Compare too chapter xvii.

Chapter xii. presents the setting aside the old system, first by the principles of the new, and then by the full judgment of the wickedness of the leaders of the old, and closes with the declaration that Christ's connection was not with those with whom He was naturally united according to the flesh; but with those who received His word. Judaism was over. Judah or Israel was neither the true servant nor the true vine, but Christ, and those who received His word the branches; for John still gives in doctrine what we learn here experimentally. The question as to the old and

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

71

new principles rested on the sabbath. Law and grace were connected immediately with it, for the sabbath was given as God's rest, and a seal of the covenant; but the old as the rest of the first creation. The new principle flowed from the person of the Lord, Jehovah, Son of man, withal present on earth, and the grace in which He came. But He is still viewed as the rejected Messiah; to this the Lord refers. His disciples rubbed and ate the ears of corn; the Pharisees object that it is the sabbath, and they put the question, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?" The rejection of God's Anointed dissolves the bond of legal enactment. All was common, there was no rest in nature possible. For a fugitive David the bread was in a manner common. And the priests in the temple itself profaned the sabbath to maintain the command of God, and circumcise sinful flesh and accomplish the due service of God. But One greater than the temple was there. The setting of mercy above sacrifice, moral intelligence of God's ways in grace, would

72 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

have saved them from their mistake from condemning even the Lord Himself. The Son of man was entirely above the ordinances of the law. The One who was to come in glory, set over all the works of God's hands, was above, not only in His person and place, for He was the Ancient of days, but as the new head of all things alone seal of the old covenant. He is, as Son of man, Lord of the sabbath too. Another principle was, that power was there in grace. These hypocrites would have done more for their own interests. It is lawful to do good on the sabbath day. Thus, with a rejected Messiah, old things were gone, the Son of man was Lord of the sabbath. Jehovah wrought in grace, and old things really had passed away. The animus of the leaders was shewn, and Jesus withdrew Himself according to the prophetic character given to Him. He sought no rumour, nor glory for Himself, still His power would burst forth and bring the Gentiles under His sway, and they would trust in Him. For the rejected Messiah the sabbath was gone,

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

73

and rest over for the world. Jehovah in grace wrought in mercy and had not rest in man's sorrow, and the Son of man, the glorious One, was above the ordinances of the sabbath, Lord of it, the head of the new creation. But the Lord continues His work of patient grace, destroying the power of the enemy, though seeking no present glory nor lifting up His voice in the streets. But the Pharisees, unable to deny the power with which He wrought, attribute it to Satan. This brought all to a crisis. To speak against Christ in blindness could be pardoned, but to own the power, and call the Holy Ghost Satan, was unpardonable. It was open antagonism to divine power undenied. The Lord shews the folly of it, Satan destroying Satan's kingdom. It was the fruit of the abundance of their heart, and that wilful enmity against God in goodness, and every word spoken shewed what was there, and men would be judged by such. They are given up. The only sign they would now have was Jonas, a rejected one in the tomb.

D 2

74 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

But men of Nineveh and a queen of the south would rise up in judgment with that generation, for a greater was there in testimony than Jonas or Solomon, a greater prophet, a greater and wiser king. And then their final judgment is pronounced. The old unclean spirit (of idolatry and rejection of Jehovah) would return with seven others worse, and Judah's state be worse than when they went to Babylon. Then judged for the former sin (see Isaiah xl.—xlviii.), now for rejecting the Son of man (Jehovah Emmanuel in grace) see Isaiah xlix.—lviii. (though their restoration is also taught) the end would be the giving up the nation to the worst power of the enemy. Here the deliverance is not spoken of, it is the state of the generation. And then the great result, present result, as to Christ, to which I have alluded; present ties by birth in flesh as Son of David and man on the earth, gives place to those formed by the word in the hearts of the sons of men—of the sons of grace, who did His Father's will. It is the close, not of goodness even here

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

75

below, but of the history of a Christ presented to Israel and man. The beginning of the going forth of the fulness of grace in a divine person. The Word that brought the blessing in grace with it, and sought no fruit on His vine nor reception from man in flesh. A sower went forth to sow; and all is formed on this footing. He leaves the house, for Israel had been Jehovah's habitation; but for the present, at least, it was left by Him, and He goes to the sea side—the moving multitude of the world—and there taught.

(To be continued.)

Are you constantly listening for His voice, which is to turn you away by His word from everything here which would separate you in heart and mind from Himself? How wondrously blessed to be kept ever under the action of His word, and thus to have part with Him, as He has part with us when we are walking according to His word.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE PREPARATION FOR RECEIVING TRUTH.

THE inability of many, even true-hearted saints, to see the truth of God—that which others see and regard with deep and reverent interest—is a painful anomaly, and the cause of it claims our earnest inquiry.

The first great truth for every learner is that there is no power in the natural mind to form *any* conception of the things of God; that the natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness unto him, and that it is only in His light that we see light. It is important to bear in mind that it is not enough for the truth to be communicated to us from without, but that the mind within must be first given for the reception of it, as we read “the renewing [that is, entire newness] of our mind.” The most beautiful truth would have as little effect on the natural mind, as the most beautiful music on a man without an ear

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 77

for it. The latter hears sounds, even pleasant sounds, but the charm of music, the real melody of it, is unknown to him; and so it is with the natural mind as to the truth of God. No persuasive description can enable the natural mind to see a divine beauty. There is no power in man to see that which is most beautiful, even though presented in the fairest colours, and reaching to all his need. The crucifixion of Christ proved that there is really no taste in man for what is divinely beautiful. To see it, there must be a taste, a capacity for it; and this is the new mind. Thus it is evident that the light must begin from within, and that if there be not the work of the Spirit there, no opening of the word however striking or impressive will be truly received or appreciated.

But then the question arises, Why do some *saints* see truths in scripture and delight in them, while others remain quite in darkness as to them? Now though every saint has the mind of Christ, and thus the *capacity* for receiving the truth of God, there is not in all

78 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

the mind *prepared* for it and susceptible of the beauty of it; and ~~there~~ must be this before he can really appreciate it. Of course the mind is increased by culture and exercise, but there must be a measure of taste or fitness of mind for the truth before it can be appreciated or comprehended. If in natural men it is necessary that they possess a quality or a taste before they can judge of it elsewhere, how much more needful is it that a saint should be prepared by newness of mind for truth entirely new to him. It is to him that hath that more is given. Every one receives only as he is prepared to receive. There is the budding of the desire for the truth, or the state fit for it, before it is communicated. One must be ready or waiting for it. Abraham was prepared for it, when in retirement at Mamre the Lord appeared unto him and told him, not only the time of Isaac's birth, but of the judgment of Sodom. (Gen. xviii.) He says, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? . . . For I know him that he will command his children

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 79

and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." The Lord here is confiding His mind to one previously fitted to receive it.

Jacob was prepared for it when he was reduced to a pillow of stone, friendless and alone. (Gen. xxviii.) The vision of the ladder reaching to heaven and the Lord standing above it, is presented to him when he is in a state to appreciate it. "The meek he will teach his way." There is a state of soul suited to the truth presented, and unless there is, there will be no appreciation of it.

Moses was prepared for it, when, after having been in the mount forty days, and having seen the perverseness and idolatry of Israel, he says, "Shew me thy glory." (Exodus xxxiii.) This is the preparation of heart, and the very circumstances call forth the appreciation and the sense of need.

Mary Magdalene was more fitted for the revelation of the new standing

80 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

(John xx.) than any of the disciples; not because she knew more, but her personal devotedness to the Lord prepared and fitted her for the communication. Peter and John were with her at the same place, but they were not so intent or fixed in heart on the Lord as she was; and therefore she receives more than they. She suffered most to find Him and she gained the most. "He that seeketh findeth." And this is the nature of the preparation. There is a drawing to it, or a taste for it; like Zaccheus desiring to see Jesus, he climbs up into a tree because Jesus was to pass that way. There was an earnest desire, ignorant indeed, but it attests its genuineness by the way it suffers, and this is always abundantly answered. The Lord says, "*Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house.*"

Now where there is this divine preparation, there is really no place for the natural mind: such an one has been reduced to self emptiness; all his own efforts in nature are at an end. In one

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 81

way or the other he is "meek;" he has reached the end of his own resources in seeking for the Lord, or the Lord has driven him into a position where he has no power or human resources, and therefore the mind of the Lord comes to him in its simplicity and power. Now, where there is not this preparation, the natural mind assumes to comprehend the things of God, and when permitted, the consequence is that the divine idea in the truth is reduced to a human level, and this is the real state of things! There is not the ear or the taste, but there is a self assumed one, which perverts the truth, and distorts it to the level of its own capacity, just as a child would judge of a great astronomical discovery; only with this difference, that in the mind of the child there might be some sense of the beauty of the novelty; whereas there can be no such sense as to the truth, in so far as the natural mind is acting. The state for receiving the truth is therefore when the natural mind is suppressed; when one is really "meek."

82 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

The light of God can be only seen in His own light, and hence, any one seeing, or desiring to see it, must either in his search for it come to the end of himself, or be placed in circumstances where the natural mind can have no voice. The diligent soul is made fat. "If thou criest after knowledge and liftest up thy voice for understanding. If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God." There is no possibility of learning God's mind but from God's point of view, and hence there must be a setting aside of everything on our side, in order that there should be no obstruction or impediment. In the present day the general impression is that every saint is in a state to receive any truth; that is, that the truth can be received without any preparation, that one can sit and hear, or read, and possess; that there is no need for much seeking or meditation; that truth is more easily learned than a problem in Euclid. There is little or no learning

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 83

for oneself; there is an acceptance of what comes to hand among one's fellows, of what every one admits, and there is more attention to subjects than to the state of the mind, or its ability to comprehend them. For example, almost every saint has formed his mind, or assumes that he has on the church question, that is, he has subscribed directly or indirectly to some accepted order of things. He has heard it all well spoken of, and he rests satisfied that it is as good as can be under the circumstances. He accepts the points for his adoption, because they are commendably presented, and if he comes to examine for himself he addresses himself to the examination, not as from God's side, and hence in accordance with the mind of Christ, but from his own side; he judges of it naturally, and hence reduces the divine idea of the church (or any other truth) to a human level. Now, when a truth has been reduced to the level of the natural mind, it has lost its power, and this is the greatest artifice of Satan in the present day.

84 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

The first lesson for the saint is, that as he has a new mind, he must clear away everything which would cloud or hinder it, in order that it may act freely and fully. "Be not conformed to this age, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." If you are conformed to this age in anything, in that thing you hinder a clear perception of the truth, and this accounts for the partial way in which saints receive truth. Very few complete the circle, and all because something of this age comes in to interfere with the light. There is a dark part. There must be the cultivation of the new mind as well as the clearing away of all obstacles. It is not merely to clear the land of weeds, but there is also the cultivation of the good plant which has been introduced into the soil. There is therefore the transforming, by the renewing of the mind: the mind is the kingdom; the taste is first secured, and then it is nurtured by presenting to it the endless

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

85

beauties set forth in the word of God. As an artist improves and perfects his taste by studying the best masters, so does the new mind grow and advance by studying the beauty of Christ, in all His ways. If there were none of this world in us, we should see alike about everything, as far as we had grown. (John xvii. 21.) The taller tree of course commands a wider circle than the shorter one; but then it only embraces more than the shorter one, not differently. The range of the taller includes all that of the shorter, but there is no difference, except in age, experience, and progress. It is easy to see how the influence of this world, especially in religious matters, warps the saints, even the most devoted. Paul, though otherwise advised by the Spirit, would go to Jerusalem. God in His mercy turned it all to blessing, because Paul was honest of heart and ready to suffer for Christ. Peter, fearing certain who came from James, declined to eat as he had hitherto done with the Gentiles. If the greatest fail, we do well to be on our guard.

In almost every place there are some saints who hold the great truths in the word and see great beauty in them, while others think them either imagination or fanaticism. How can we account for this discrepancy but by the fact that one has the divine idea in him, and that the word reaches him and instructs him, while the other is so hampered or clogged by this age, that he has not a prepared heart for the mind of God; he is not in a state to receive it. It is only near the Lord that the "good ground" (Matt. xiii. 23,) is acquired, and as it is acquired, there is an ear for more, as there is a sense that nothing will suit it but what is according to its own order. When I have seen anything in God's light I crave to see everything there as I enjoy it; and I learn to count all things loss, and to leave everything in order to acquire it. I shew that I value it by my zeal and suffering in order to acquire it. I give not sleep to mine eyes or slumber to my eyelids, until I have reached the desire awakened in my heart. In

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 87

the sanctuary, as we see with the psalmist (Psalm lxxiii.), everything takes quite a new colour; nay, the very opposite colour to that which it presented to him when regarded from man's sphere. If every one of our opinions were acquired and formed in the Lord's presence, in the sanctuary, apart from human colouring, we should have His mind about everything. There would indeed be many degrees of progress, but what each one had reached would only be part of what the most advanced had attained to; there cannot be two ways of singing the same tune.

In conclusion, two things are evident; one, that we cannot see a truth in scripture rightly but as we see it in God's light; and the other, that we must be in a state ourselves to receive it practically—that the latter is the preparation for receiving it, and hence, though one may sometimes hear a truth before he needs it, or possesses it practically; yet, if he is really to receive it, he will surely be placed in circumstances where he can truly understand it; for

88 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

he cannot rightly, or with power, speak of it till then; for it is not rightly his until it has controlled himself, and he cannot press it controllingly on others until he has been controlled by it himself.

FRAGMENTS.

Admiration for Christ's ways is not growth in His ways. Admiration will produce devotionism and self-condemnation, but it goes no further. "The sluggard desireth and hath nothing." Growth, transformation, takes place only as I am occupied with Christ where He is, and as I grow I walk here as He walked.

Prophecy *drives* us out of the world; Christ in glory *draws* us out of the world. I have the word of prophecy as a candle, a light shining in a dark place; God's candle to shew me what is going on around. But *I* have to do with the bright and heavenly side as my own heart's portion.

The two great activities of a saint are faith and love, both occupied outside myself: faith to count on One who loves me, and love to think of and serve those whom He loves.

"LOOK ON ME AND DO LIKE- WISE."

THE more I enter on the new path as possessing life in Christ, the more must I know that He has not only opened the way to it, but that also every step of this new existence is unknown to me, unless as He leads me into it—as I see Him in it. He has borne the judgment for sin which lay on me, and having done so, He, according to the Father's will, connects me with His life, a life entirely new to me, and yet now, through grace, my life. I know nothing of the position and power into which this life will lead me; I must learn *all* from Him who is my Head, as well as my life. If ever I lose sight of Him, I know not where to go, for it is not life in me apart from Him, but He is my life, and therefore I need always to see Him, a man, in the power of His own life; and as I see His position and power, I at once see the position and power to which, through Him, I reach. If I lose sight of Him, I lose sight of the

Man Christ Jesus in the power of life, and the witness of its power, and who is moreover Head to me. (Col. ii.) I have no independent place. The moment I lose the sense of my connection with Him, that moment I have lost my Head as to the power and position of life. I have still the instincts of life, because I have the new nature, but if I cannot see Him in any position or power which I may even desire to be in, I cannot reach it. I must first see Him there, for He is my Head as to power, and the assurance to my heart of my right to occupy and enjoy such a place. He is the beginning of the creation of God; and it is only as I see Him Head of this new race—firstborn among many brethren—that I am able to receive a clear sense of what I am through Him. “Look on me and do likewise,” was Gideon’s word to his companions and followers, and then, “As I do so shall ye do.” So it is with us with regard to Christ. We know nothing and can do nothing but as our eye is on Him. When He putteth forth His own sheep

“LOOK ON ME AND DO LIKEWISE.” 91

He goeth before them. This is the manner of His acting. I see Him before me, and as I do, I am made conscious that from Him—my Head who is there—springs my life. The Spirit connects me with Him as my Head, and the joints and bands having nourishment ministered, I increase with the increase of God. I shall always be anxious or doubtful about realizing any desired end until I see Him there, but from the moment that I do see Him there I get a sense, and power too, to realize that I am fit and entitled to be there also.

We are so much more occupied with reaching certain results than with the way of reaching them. We are thinking so much more of ourselves than of our Lord as Head and source of all blessing to us. If I, once a lost prodigal, want to know the measure of my acceptance with God, Christ alone defines it for me. It is only as I know what He is to God in glory, that I can in any degree truly estimate my own acceptance. Had He my sin laid on Him? How is He now accepted? As He who

bore my sin was judged for it, and as He is accepted, so am I accepted. Try for your own acceptance and it will always be an imperfect and a dubious thing. Get to understand His, and your soul will be enlarged unto all the fulness and blessedness of your own. If I want to "hold fast my profession" as a heavenly man, it is by knowing that He is passed through the heavens. I have not actually passed there myself, but I am in the joy of faith in the realities of it, when I see Him there, having surmounted everything. He is not merely Caleb-like, exhorting me to go up and possess; but from the utmost height of glory He assures my soul of His success and of mine in Him.

It is the same as to everything. Do I want to enter into or realize the disembodied state? By *faith* I must follow Him into paradise as the thief did in reality, and as I see Him there so do I understand it, and as a man in Christ, like the apostle I gather up in my soul the untold blessedness of paradise. Do I want to know the resurrec-

“LOOK ON ME AND DO LIKEWISE.” 93

tion? It is as I see Him raised up that I understand or realize myself as in it. If I would pursue my race in patience, doing the will of God, I must be “looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith. When the Holy Ghost would fill Stephen’s soul with glory, He shews him Jesus in the opened heavens. It is ever the same whenever the soul gets a glimpse of Him; in proportion as I see Him, difficulty vanishes, because I know that He is my Lord and my life; and the sense of my connection and identity with Him transplants me over all obstacles whatever they may have been. They are not seen, because my eye is occupied with Him who is above them all.

May we know more abundantly, through the Spirit, our Lord’s place and power respecting every difficulty, trial, or emergency down here, and may we so carefully and constantly watch for Him when in any way pressed, that we may see where He is, and be assured that in proportion as we see Him, our own deliverance in Him will be realized.

94 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

FRAGMENT.

Peter preaches a glorified Christ. Then you get Paul, he is a "pattern" of how God could act in sovereign grace to the chief of sinners. It is not man glorified, but a man in glory, this gives the gospel a character, Paul calls it the gospel of glory. He, himself, is taken away from Jews, away from Gentiles, and connected with Christ in glory. God has glorified His servant Jesus, the glory shining back upon the cross shews what it meant.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, Christ is the apostle to the Jews, not the twelve. "It is confirmed unto us by them that heard him." They must take the rejected, glorified Christ, and have nothing else. Paul started from the place where the breach came in—Jerusalem gave place to Bethany.

Paul is the minister of the Church, the minister of the gospel. It is a terrible thing when power operates outside its centre. Christ in heaven is the new centre, and a gospel that falls short of that jostles with all the truth committed to Paul. If you take Paul's ministry you cannot be of the world at all! "Why as though alive in the world," &c. He does not allow you to be *alive*; as to moral condition you are crucified with Christ.

THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

2 Peter i. 11.

HE reigns—His blessed kingdom spreads
From sea to sea, from shore to shore;
He who for us, on Calvary bruised,
God's righteous wrath unwavering bore.

O wondrous grace! that lowly man,
Who in our nature felt the rod;
Hear it, ye heavens! give ear, O earth!
That sufferer was the Son of God!

Yea, God Himself, the great God-man,
Messiah, Christ, the eternal Lord;
Predestined to receive at length
This kingdom as His bright reward.

And now 'tis come—on David's throne,
The false one into darkness hurl'd:
The Holy One shines forth at last,
The light, the sovereign of the world.

But O, a joy, a higher joy,
A glory far transcending this
Is His—His portion here above,
His guerdon in these realms of bliss.

96 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

That guerdon is His royal bride,
His loved, His ransomed, and His own;
Chief object of His heart's deep joy,
Beside Him here upon the throne.

Chosen in Him, beloved of God,
Ere Adam sinned, ere time began;
For her He gave His life away,
A weary, suffering, martyred man.

O matchless love! what wonder now
That thus these ransomed hosts should raise,
In memory of His dying love,
Their anthems of unwearied praise.

What marvel that yon peopled earth,
And choral heavens above should sing
Of Him the Church's glorious Head,
Of Israel's offspring, Israel's king?

O 'tis His due—that worthy One
Tastes now the fruit of love's blest ways;
Eternal is His joy in us,
Eternal is our song of praise.

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

PART VI.

THE first parable then gives the general character of the Lord's work. He is a sower sowing the seed of the word to bear fruit. And this parable is individual, not a likeness of the kingdom of heaven. The great principle is that the Lord brings with Him what is to produce fruit—does not seek it in the field. It stands alone thus in the seven. The other six are similitudes of the kingdom of heaven. It is not on the other hand the teaching as to the effects of grace but of sowing, as manifested in result as to the fruit produced, one only of four produced any. Satan took away at once what was sown in the first. Conscience not being reached, the profession sprang up at once in the second, and when trouble came, because of it it was given up as lightly, and withered. In the third case there seemed more hope, but the cares of this world and lusts of other things choked it, and the

98 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

man is unfruitful. In one the word of the Blessed was understood, the conscience and heart, the need of the soul awakened, received it, and various degrees of fruitfulness followed. The first did not understand—nothing was awakened, it rested on the surface. The two others seemed to receive, but it came to nothing. All, I repeat, is individual here, a constant truth, but an immense change from seeking fruit in the nation. It is put thus to him who has ears to hear, urgent and individual.

The disciples ask why He speaks in parables, and in His answer He makes at once the solemn difference of the position of the disciples. To them who had received His word it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, but to the mass of the people it was not given. They saw, and saw not; heard and heard not, nor understood; and the judgment pronounced in Isaiah was fulfilled in them, and they were not to be treated as a nation then; all was over with them. To him that had more would be given, and he would have

abundance. From him that had not would be taken even what he had. So with that people. But the eyes of the disciples were blessed, for they saw; their ears, for they heard; and saw and heard what many favoured of God had desired to see and hear, and had not. Here we see clearly the people held as rejected and blind, and the remnant separated to Christ for the knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom. But for this very reason a kingdom with a rejected king and which took a form that was the consequence of this.

These similitudes of the kingdom of heaven begin with verse 31. There are six: three addressed to the multitude, and three, with the explanation of one of the first three, to the disciples. I will not here enlarge because these parables have been so often explained, but give some general remarks connected with the point we are at in the gospel.

By this rejection of the king, and His going on high, and not taking the direct power of the kingdom till His return (compare Mark iv. 26—29), the king-

100 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

dom of the heavens had become like a man who sowed good seed in the field, &c. We have only had the fact of His rejection on earth and breach with Israel and the world, and the fact of what the kingdom was made like. The further truth of His exaltation and what flows from it are here; it is the kingdom such as it had become by His rejection, and I may add the kingdom on the earth, only that in the last three we have the thoughts of God as to it. The only allusion to what is out of this world is the gathering the wheat into His garner. But this is not explained. In the explanation the Lord returns to the earth again.

On the earth the crop should be spoiled. This would not hinder the wheat from being brought into the garner. Note, here only we have the Son of man sowing, formally affirmed. It may be supposed in a general way in the mustard seed, but it is merely the fact of a small seed sown and a great tree produced, but here we have good distinctively sown by the Son of man,

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL. 101

and another sowing by the enemy; and the effect of each, though in the same field, has its own distinctive character, and even manifestly so to the servants though they could not remedy it. If they meddled with the evil plants they would pull up the wheat with them, and so did those who attempted it. But this was not in the Church, but in the field, the world; for our individual conduct we have other directions in the epistles, and in our church conduct. This was a question of service towards others, of the servants personally in their place of servants, and plucking up evil ones out of the field, which was the world, and of nothing else. Satan's work in spoiling Christianity as a result here below, called Christendom, cannot be remedied by Christ's servants; it is a matter of judgment and divine power carried on by the instrument of that power, and in part providentially. We do not reap, cut down out of this world, either to lodge fruit in heaven, or to arrange evil in itself on earth. God will do that otherwise by His power, indeed in this

102 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

parable the servants do nothing at all. They have the intelligence of Christ as to what is going on, and what the crop is, and how it came about. This parable is the full and explained account of the whole scene in its sources, their effects, the general result here, and the intervention of God to close the scene and the effect and manner of that. But the explanation belongs to the disciples not to the multitude. For them, the whole scene on earth is unfolded, but not manifested judgment and its effects; that belongs too to the disciples, to the communications of Jesus to them in the house. The providential gathering of tares, God's judicial acts in the world (for it is part of the course of the history of the kingdom here), and then the single heavenly fact in the whole series—gather the wheat into my garner; both which are left unexplained—that is, the bundles of tares and the garner. It was necessary to introduce them, or the after public effects on earth would not have had their place, but they are no part of the parabolic instruction in itself: that is the

kingdom on earth. The end of the present scene is the providential gathering the wicked in corporate bodies, and the taking of the saints into heaven. The judgment exercised on earth will have other effects. How the evil came in is stated to the multitude, a needed instruction for all. While men slept Satan was active. The irremediable consequence has been often noticed, and I do not go further into it here though of all importance.

All this belonged to the public history of the kingdom of heaven. The explanation of the next two has to be rather limited than extended. It is the fact—not directly by the sowing of the Son of man—that the planting of Christianity would result in a great political power, and would fill a limited sphere with a system of professed doctrine. I recognize fully that leaven is always used in a bad sense; there is no sowing of the word here that produces plants which grow up from it; not a leavened mass; and it is intended, I doubt not, to shew it was not this. But the *object* was not

104 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

to shew it was bad, but a mere filling a mass with a system, not the word of life to souls. Moreover, when individuals are spoken of, we have plants in the kingdom or fishes out of the sea. Care is taken to shew it is not the word which works effectually in those that believe, but a general effect, and for this a word always used elsewhere for evil.

We have then the general effect of Christ's work spoiled, as a whole, in this world by the enemy, and irremediably spoiled here; a great political power in the world, and a general profession spread through a limited sphere. I do not take the birds in verse 32 for evil spirits, but as used to shew the power to protect and shelter found in the tree, just as in Nebuchadnezzar's case in Daniel.

Having gone into the house the Lord explains the parable of tares and wheat, and gives three more parables. Besides what I have said, there is only to remark that we have the actual judgment in this world at the end of the age. The Son of man gathers out of His kingdom,

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

105

here on earth, all things that offend—no evil things allowed there—and those that do iniquity, and they are cast into a furnace of fire. Then the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father: I doubt not the heavenly part of the scene, but manifested in glory, not the joy within, but the glory without, still the Father's kingdom; and men are warned and encouraged to give heed. Then the Lord gives further parables, shewing His true intent and the divine mind in what was doing, however He might be rejected. The kingdom of heaven was carrying the mind of God, however the Christ might be rejected, or its development on earth spoiled. The Lord had found a treasure hid in the field of this world. This was not Israel; Israel would none of Him. It was Israel's responsibility, and was over. Here He was seeking, He was acting, and takes the world because of what was there to be found in it, His heavenly people; and had given up all His earthly title and place to take this. It was worth while. Surely He

E 2

106 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

shall have it more gloriously as Son of man, but He gave all up then and took the world, for all things are now His. But it was not only the value of His people in His sight, but He knew and judged of the moral beauty the nature and heart of God desired. He was it; and the heavenly saints alone, formed into His likeness, answered to this delight. He sought goodly pearls—understood what was beautiful, found *one* very precious one, and gave up all and bought it. Think what a privilege, what an unspeakable privilege, to be the express and singular object of divine delight. For the treasure and the value He had for it, He bought the whole world, has a title to all, but with the treasure as His object; but here He seeks what can be the divine delight, and has one thing which can be the satisfying object of it. It is wonderful. We can understand why we are taught to be imitators of God; why the beatitudes express Christ's character; why the exhortation in Philippians ii. is the exact portrait of what Christ was. To

have this object of His moral delight, Christ gave up all He was entitled to as Son of David then. The wickedness of man may reject and shew what he is, and this we have learned in Matthew, but God always pursues meanwhile His own counsels.

There remains the parable of the fishes, also connected with the counsels of God, but carried out with intelligence by men who serve Him. Here only we have the activity of men other than the Lord, introduced. Before, it was the Lord who sowed, and the servants were only told they could do nothing. In the treasure *we* clearly buy no field to have Christ, nor do men naturally seek goodly pearls and so find Christ. Here, though the comparison be the net itself first, yet the fishermen have their part and their object and work when the net is full. The net has not gathered all fishes nor embraced all the sea, but gathered a net full out of it, and of every kind; and then when full they sit down and select the fish that are proper and put them in vessels. The service in the beginning

108 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

was of a different kind. Either the Lord added such as should be saved, or the word acting individually. All that came were received into the flock, though soon false brethren found their way in. They were put into vessels but not out of a net full of every kind. This is at the end, when as a fact there is a net full; then comes quiet and deliberate selection; they sat down, when it was drawn to shore, when the gathering work had taken place and took out the good ones and put them into vessels. Their business was with the good ones, they were their object, and as intelligent fishermen they selected them and put them into vessels. With the bad fishes they had nothing to do, they cast them away and put them into no vessels. It was sufficient to reject them and leave them cast away on the shore. They were not left in the net. By the selection the net full was done with, and the bad fish rejected, but left on the shore as they were. But their object and their occupation was about the good fish, they put them with deliberate care out

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

109

of the net into vessels. Net-full there was no more, a solemn thought in itself. So, when the servants came to the householder to have his mind, there was nothing for them to do with the tares, only there, in the public field, as at the beginning, the Lord having sowed, the crop was spoiled and remained so. The Lord's servants had nothing to do with tares as to their service. Angels would make the separation in judgment. So here, the servants have to do with the good and gather them out of the net. Afterwards at the end of the age the angels have to do with the wicked. *They* gather the wicked from among the just and cast them into a furnace of fire. They leave the just here where they were: with this judgment the fishermen had nothing to do; their business was with the good fish, to put them into vessels; with the bad they had only to reject and have done with them. The disciples had thus the old things of prophecy, the earthly things of the kingdom, and the new of the kingdom which they now learnt. But He who could

110 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

with divine wisdom teach them these things, was in His own country only the carpenter's son. There He could do but little.

(To be continued.)

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE HERO AND THE SERVANT.

IN a world of evil, man, when naturally susceptible to it, is continually under it, and therefore anyone who would help him, can only do so by delivering him from its pressure. Now we find that there is a certain sense of need, and a desire for deliverance in many before it comes. God in His unchanging mercy raises up labourers here and there, to render the desired help, and it is well for us to ascertain on what their usefulness and real service depends. Is it on human energy or on the simplicity of their obedience to Christ? It is not because the labourer has not a true purpose and heart for the Lord, that he drops into the natural or heroic line, but because he is not simply subject to the

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 111

word of God, and the control of the Spirit. The pressure exists, the deliverance is needed, the earnest labourer tries to effect it, either by human means or simply by the Spirit of God. The point for us to consider is the difference between a service done in a human way, and the same done in the leading of the Spirit. In a scene of evil there must be pressure, though at times from carelessness, as with Israel in the times of the Judges, it reaches a greater height, and thus it is more manifest the way in which every labourer seeks to help. The greater the pressure, the deeper the darkness into which the people of God have fallen; the more distinct and palpable are the lines of action of every leader who is set on delivering them. There never has been a revival of truth, an awakening of souls for the pure word of God, that the leaders in the movement have not more or less been drawn away from the path of Christ unto the human line. There is a true energy of the Spirit abroad. "The Lord gives the word, and great is the company of those

112 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

who publish it," but the wile of the devil is to induce the labourer to consider for the people more than for the Lord. Aaron, when he had made a golden calf in consideration for the people, is an extreme and fearful example of how one in the greatest eminence can be deluded when he turns his eye from God. A wile or by-path is very specious; it runs so near and so like the right one, that its real snare lies in the difficulty to discover it. Now the servant of Christ, while always for the Lord, devotes all his energies to the good of man; he is really set entirely for man's blessing; but he begins with Christ and knows no blessing for man outside of or apart from Christ. This is a servant of Christ.

Yet a labourer, though really gifted of God with the truth in his heart, is ensnared and diverted from the path of Christ when he, regarding the state of the people, allows himself to act with respect to it merely, and not simply according to the word of the Lord. Thus it was with king Saul when he offered the

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 113

burnt offering because he saw that the people were scattered from him. (1 Sam. xiii. 12, 13.)

A leader among men does not originate the state of things in which he is foremost, he merely gives it a head in himself. It is not possible for man to introduce any thing entirely new; he may discover things hitherto unknown, and he may introduce new combinations of known things; it is only the Spirit of the Lord that can set forth or propound what is entirely new and divinely appropriate in any given crisis. This is really Christ's path, the path of wisdom—an invisible one; and if the servant be not kept in this path, he descends to the human one, which man commends; and as he is useful therein, he makes a mark on society in improving it, and obtains a name among men—he is a hero or benefactor. First it is admitted that the Lord gives the word, and that great is the company of those who publish it. So far there are many true labourers, but then comes the necessity for caution and waiting on the Lord, lest, though a true

114 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

labourer in heart, one should be turned to man for the line of action, and not to the Lord simply; that is, man's prudence dictates and defines the manner of serving, and not the Holy Ghost, who is the source of the service itself.

Now the first mark that it is the object of my service which forms my line of action is, that I trust to or use human means to effect or accomplish the service. Unless a labourer walks in faith, has an invisible path, and can introduce something entirely new, he must resort to what is at hand, and like a hero he gives force and prominence to feelings or wants which he has himself, so that others can co-operate with him. A labourer, with the purest intention, given of God, may resort to human means to accomplish it, for he knows no better; but then it is man that is before his mind and not simply the Lord. His thought is from man upward, instead of from the Lord coming down to man; and this was the case with Moses when he first attempted to deliver Israel. He had a true purpose of heart to deliver

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 115

the people of Israel from the thralldom of Egypt; but not knowing the Lord's mind, and having the people pre-eminently before his mind, he resorts to the only means at his command; and, hero-like, with his own hand slays the Egyptian. Forty years afterwards, when Moses, having learned that the Lord is the source of true service, entered on the purpose of his heart in quite a different way, one entirely new and incomprehensible to man—one of faith, and thus distinctly of God. In the times of the judges, many human expedients were resorted to in order to effect deliverance, and the Lord favoured each with success, and men were greatly signalized. But when Samuel (the answer to the cry of faith) serves, it is by turning to the Lord in prayer; then a new mode of action with a new form of power is introduced; God and His way of working command one's whole attention: "The Lord thundered on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them." (1 Samuel vii. 10.) The nearer we are to God, the more our work is in

116 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

divine power, and the less it is in human effort. If one has the heart and purpose to serve, it is plain enough that if he does not know the divine way, he must resort to the human way, and it is not his purpose or his ability which I impugn, but the line of action in which he seeks to effect his true and good intention; and when such an one turns to human means, in any measure, he drinks of the old wine and spoils his taste; that is, he interferes with his taste for the new; he has stooped to human effort, natural energy, and is unable to understand or see the invisible path of the Spirit of God. And hence the labourer, using human means in any way, persuasive words, sensational appeals, or thrilling anecdotes, either does not know the Lord's mode of action; or having drunk of the old wine, he does not straightway desire the new, for he saith the old is better.

The second mark that the labourer has man pre-eminently before him for his service is, that he is occupied with results. It is his success which cheers

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 117

and approves him, and not the simple fact that he has done the work and will of the Lord, and has His approval irrespective of result: he rejoices when, like the disciples of old, he can say, The devils are subject to us through thy word; he knows nothing of the patient toil of the one who can say "I have laboured in vain and spent my strength for nought." He is like an Elijah in one day—a John Baptist in another; well nigh confounded when success or open acknowledgment does not accompany his labours. He knows nothing of the service of Paul at Philippi; baffled, hindered, and suffering every way, and yet when, as it were, all hope was gone of service in that place—when he is a prisoner—and human energies are at an end, the jailer, broken down by the power of God, fell down before him, crying, What must I do to be saved? The brightest time in a servant's career is when, to human eyes, he has no results to shew; even as it was with Paul in prison at Rome, or with John in Patmos, for the word of the Lord and the testi-

118 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

mony of Jesus Christ. It is only the thoroughly dependent servant that can be entrusted with the arduous service of maintaining for God, single handed, against all comers; like an Isaiah, who, having found a holy rest in the glory of God, is prepared to descend to the worst state of things in Israel; or like a Daniel in Babylon, or a Paul before the Roman tribunal. There are Jonahs now-a-days pining because their service is not successful; and they must learn, as he did, that their only resource is in God.

The third mark is that labourers who do not rise above man as the object of their service, never lead souls beyond the benefit of salvation. They are occupied with the need of souls, which is right in itself, but there is a great difference whether my service is measured or defined by the need of souls, or by the purpose of God in His love. True, if I could not feel for man as man feels it, I could not meet his need; but on the other hand, if I do not see God's purpose in grace, I cannot present the remedy according to the divine measure; I must

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 119

present the gospel only to meet man's need; I cannot lead the heart of the needy one into the fulness of God's grace, for this I do not see or apprehend for myself. Consequently the fruits of such labour—the converts—are not devoted in self-surrender or world-surrender, though they be true and happy in the assurance of salvation; and simply because it is not Christ personally who is the joy and object of their hearts, but their own forgiveness. Whereas if the gospel were presented as it is in God's heart and purpose, to meet the need of a lost prodigal, it would lead him, not only from the far country to taste of his father's forgiving love, but to enter on a new and unknown sphere of eternal blessedness, within the sacred precincts of His presence; and this can be done by no impressiveness of human effort, but by the Holy Ghost's power alone. The gospel which conducts the soul into the greatest height, is the gospel which must have reached the sinner's greatest depth. For nowhere else is seen as in the height of glory, how every speck

120 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

of sin, and every taint of unholiness is swept away in the cross, and there there is an end to human things, to man himself; and the new divine path of life is opened out to the soul; and in this the servant of Christ treads, and to this he leads the soul he serves, and a soul once upon it cannot depart from it or bring in the smallest part of human effort without proportionate loss and defeat.

The fourth mark is that the labourer who employs the human element is always attractive to men. Man is his object, and he becomes a hero to men. I do not say that at no time great numbers are not led together to hear the word of God, but, as at Antioch, it will soon arouse opposition and persecution. (Acts xiii. 50.) I merely present the fact that the more popularly the gospel is presented, the larger the attendance and the natural assent to it. A man of eloquence, or a man of position, preaching the gospel will command a congregation, which a man walking in simple dependence, with neither of those adjuncts, seldom will. The human element suits

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 121

the human mind, and really there are but the two ways — man's or God's. Now though God uses the human vessel, body and mind, to convey His mind to man, yet it is always by His Spirit; while even a truly gifted labourer, who uses human means to influence man, can necessarily never go beyond man, for man cannot advance a man beyond a man. What is of the flesh is flesh: what is of the Spirit is spirit. No one ever served man as the blessed Lord, and no one was ever left so alone and so unacknowledged here. Where the apostle laboured most there all were turned away from him. (2 Tim. i. 15.) The master builder of the church was reduced in his own person to the experience of a solitaire in chains.

May every worker be a servant of Christ, and then he will be the true benefactor, and well pleasing unto the Lord; and may we keep, and encourage one another, in the one only divine path of service.

PEACE WITH GOD AND THE PEACE OF GOD WITH ME.

THERE are two states which must exist at one and the same time in order to ensure happy and steady walk. The one is peace with God, the other the peace of God with me. In the first my heart so rests in God's satisfaction in the work of His Son on the cross, that it is of His satisfaction which I share. I cannot reach up to or measure the satisfaction of God, or know *fully* how He was glorified in the answer of Christ to all the holiness of God; but as I taste of His satisfaction, I know why He can kiss me in rags and receive me into His house and home; so that my conscience is not only satisfied about my sins, but I am lost in the satisfaction of God, who can and does receive me according to His love in righteousness. It is then that I have peace with God: there is not an element to disturb; God has freed me through Christ from every atom of the

offending thing; he has done it according to His own nature, that He might receive me to Himself according to His love. His satisfaction is proved in the resurrection of Christ, and I trust in it, and not in the satisfying of my own conscience about my sins, and then and there I have peace with God. This is one state, and if this state be not preserved, there will be no surmounting the general pressure of nature, or atmosphere around. In this state you are like the cedar tree, with nature and purpose to rise in height above everything: its course always upward, for in that direction is its growth. The heart at peace with God always finds that upward and above is its retreat and home, and to this end all its strength and energy tend; and unless you are strong and matured in peace with God, you will not be able to seek His peace in your circumstances, which is the other state.

Now this additional state, God's peace keeping my heart and mind through Christ Jesus, is not enjoyed unless I

124 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

have learnt confidence in God, to open all my heart to Him, and let Him see in detail the good and the sorrowful in my heart. It requires much confidence to do this; to empty out all the furniture of the heart to God, praising Him for the good parts, and calling His attention to the broken ones. It is then the peace of God keeps the heart and mind through Christ Jesus. The greatest favour that God could confer on any one on earth is, that one like you or me should be kept, in the midst of the most vexing elements, in the same state as the blessed God is on His throne. Surely it passeth all understanding; and then it is that you are not only a cedar tree, but every thing you do or touch, every bit of furniture in your heart is made of cedar wood, and bears its fragrance. In peace with God as an evergreen, you soar to the heavens, and having made known all your requests to God you have His peace imparting its wondrous value to you in everything here.

PERFECTION UNDER PRESSURE.

I HAVE been much struck lately with St. Luke's account of the Lord's sorrow. In Gethsemane His sorrow, as man, is more brought out there. "Being in an agony he prayed more earnestly." On the cross itself, Luke gives us no expression of sorrow. Matthew and Mark give us His drinking the cup, His expressions when doing so. But in Luke it is prayer for enemies, assuring the thief of present joy, and commending His own spirit to His Father. Why is this? It is human perfectness. He goes, as a man, through all His sorrows with God His Father, and when in them He is free (save atonement) to think of others. He was to feel it perfectly. He did so, as human pressure with God; and then, in it, He could feel perfectly for others, and be above the circumstance. Now this is perfect, human perfectness, divine in its source. God's ascertained will was there: that will was most painful; but conflict of heart, as to it, only drew Him nearer to God.

126 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

I mean, made Him more instant in prayer; but when the sorrow was there, He was above all that was on Him. (I do not speak of atonement.) We are often far from this. Alas! we are not always clear as to God's will. We do not leave all with God in our hearts; and when the sorrow comes it finds us accessible to it as that which tries and perplexes the heart. But even so, we have only to look up to Him who knows the counsels of His own will. All is ordered of Him, even if we know not how or why, or even if our ignorance may have a part in it. An apostle was not exempt from this. Paul regrets having written an inspired letter, though he is all happy again when he finds it had wrought its full effect. He cannot stay at Troas, though an open door is there. He was evidently distressed, and at a loss, for he says, "Thanks be to God who maketh us to triumph," &c. I have been exceedingly struck how in a very perfect instance the process is exposed to us in the Epistle to the Corinthians, which results in effect in the experience of

PERFECTION UNDER PRESSURE. 127

Philippians, where all is walking in the Spirit, the perfect result practically, where sin and the flesh of sin are never in view.

See 2 Corinthians iv., the perfect service in the beginning, the vessel as he goes on; the cross applied to it in verse 10; God helping him by trying circumstances in verse 11. In verse 18 we get Philippian ground. The secret of strength is in verse 10. Still, there was all the needed exercise that the excellency of the power should be of God and not of man. "Troubled but not distressed:" there was the vessel, but not in despair, because of the power, because God was there. All are not Pauls, but all have the vessel, and all have the treasure, and all the need, and source of consolation in a present God of all grace; and when exercises are needed, God also comforteth and makes it worth while we should have the trouble. There are times when God will have us to say, "O my God, my soul is cast down within me," and we have to give Him thanks for the help of His countenance, and He becomes the health of ours. Ps. xlii. 5, 11.

“COME AND SEE.”

SOFT words still echo through the spheres,
On earth once uttered, “Come and see;”
Not lost, though hushed to many ears,
The key is changed, and changed to me.
When spoken here, their minor tones
Attracted hearts to “Come and see;”
But now they sound from heaven’s blest realms,
The minor’s gone, the voice is free.
Free to proclaim in swelling chords,
With living waters from the throne;
To hearts set free from earthly joys,
I live, but not to dwell alone.
‘To heaven I passed, alone from death,
‘That others now might live with me;
‘Not for a while, as when on earth,
‘But now for ever, “Come and see.”’
We come, O Lord! we see thy place,
With thee e’en now we would abide;
The glories that surround thee there
Have dimmed our eyes to all beside.
Yes, thou art there! and we with thee,
In spirit see, though still in part,
And still we wait thy voice to hear,
Still wait to see thee as thou art.
As “many waters” from on high,
Sounding, to call us home to thee;
That voice shall wake our last reply,
“For ever with the Lord we’ll be.”

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

PART VII.

CHAPTERS xiv., xv. seem to me of considerable importance. In this respect, that they introduce the abiding patience and grace of Christ as Jehovah. When Israel is already judged, and the kingdom announced as coming in in mystery, so that His person and personal grace, and that even towards Israel, remain unchanged, only must go out beyond in the nature of things. We have now not Israelitish dealings, but the abiding character of the divine person as in the end of chapter xi., when, I repeat, the kingdom as set up in His absence had been fully announced, as after these chapters we have the Church and the kingdom in glory fully announced; but here Himself, John had been beheaded by the Idumean and Roman king in Israel, but He that satisfieth the poor with bread in Israel is there. He felt the blow of John's death and retired, but when the need of the people came, Jehovah was there. He satisfies the poor

130 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

with bread, Psalm cxxxii. Here, with a character connecting itself with the full establishment of governmental order* in Israel in man, though man would not have Him. Then Jesus goes up in His human character on high to pray, and the disciples are sent away alone on the stormy sea first, and He dismisses the multitude of Israel, taking the other place of intercession on high. When going to rejoin the disciples He walks on the sea; I apprehend the Church's or Christian's place, the path of pure faith or of power, and faith in power with no ship, no boat, as a refuge: nothing external or human, as Israel was. The question then and particularly at the close, as a fact, is faith, personal faith in the Lord Himself. "If it be thou." Then if the eye is off Jesus we are in no place at all for man to walk in. Peter began to sink. We can easily understand this but it was really

* In the number twelve, the loaves, the tribes, and all connected with this, the twelve apostles as connected with the kingdom, the twelve stars on the woman's head in Revelation xii.

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

131

folly. He saw the wind boisterous, but He could no more have walked on a smooth sea than on a rough, and if the Lord was there on a rough as well as on a smooth. It was a question of faith and looking on the Lord, not on the sea, and so of himself. But Jesus will enter into the ship, again the earthly and human order, though glorified not humbled, then the wind will cease and all in that ship will own Him Son of God and the world that once rejected Him will own His power and presence, and gladly. Such is the scheme, if I may so speak, connected with the Lord's unchangeable faithfulness and love to Israel as Jehovah, though leaving the remnant that had owned Him to themselves for a time. We have now the moral and simply divine character which cannot be hid or confine itself to Israel. First we have Jewish, or formal religion judged, God's commandments hypocritically set aside, and especially by the clergy and religious doctors for their traditions. Superstitious gifts to the clergy are specially noticed and outward

132 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

forms; but the whole result of this teaching was, the people in general drawing near with their lips but their hearts far from God; where human commandments are introduced men worship God in vain. If man's tool passed on the altar, said the law, the altar was defiled. But human nakedness was equally defiling. Man's religion was condemned, but man's heart was condemned with it, man was set aside as well as Israel. Not what went into the mouth defiled a man, but what came out. Soon is stated what did, but first the leaders of the Jews, as the leaders of fleshly religion always are and must be, were offended at the rejection of a religion which heartless flesh and hypocrisy could fulfil, and the judging of all that came out of the heart. But all was over, though grace went on with flesh and the Jewish system. The Lord dismisses them with the short judgment they were not plants of His heavenly Father's planting. Now every plant which His heavenly Father had not planted would be rooted up. The fallen earthly system was over, only

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

133

what He planted He would own. All else would be rooted up.

Such was the public judgment. It was not now Israel or their hypocritical and self-righteous leaders who could pass. Judgment was on all not planted of the Father of Christ, characterized here as heavenly. But to His disciples He goes farther, and shews not formal hypocrisy judged, but what does come from the human heart, and that was evil of every kind. Has He, full of love and goodness, nothing to say of good that would come from it? not a word. These are the things which defile a man. Thus the moral judgment was complete. First of the formal systems, which Judaism now was, the reality of heavenly planting, the only thing owned, all human religion vain and interiorly and spiritually the human heart judged. All was said as to man. But only to bring in sovereign grace. And now Jehovah's grace above all this appears, but as still owning Israel—for that is a main point in these two chapters when just going to set it aside (chap. xvi., xvii.) for the

134 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

Church, the kingdom, and the heavenly kingdom and glory. He is giving Israel up. Grace is going out in grace fully according to divine fulness and prerogative; He is giving up His present place of Messiah there, God must be greater than that, still Israel's place is owned, though not set up in strength now. He goes where the cities noted for hardness of heart had their coasts, and a woman of the accursed race of Canaan meets Him. She takes Him on the ground of His place in Israel, "Thou Son of David." What had a Canaanite to do with that? He has no answer as such. The disciples put self first: Get rid of her (by granting her request), for she cries after us. The Lord in reply formally takes His place in Israel. I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then she comes up and pleads with Him, and meets with what seems the hardest answer. It was not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to (Gentile) dogs. The woman takes this place too. She owns the promises to Israel, Israel's rights;

she owns them to be the children, but the felt want (through grace) drives her right to the heart and goodness of God Himself. It was so, she had no right, she was only a dog; Israel was in the place of the children, but there were resources in God for even the dogs, they might eat of the crumbs from their masters' table. God's appointment and purposes (the true divine place of Israel) were owned, but the heart and goodness of God reached; masters they might be in God's plans, she owned it (that is Him), but He who gave children's bread to children, could supply the need of those who were not, and had but the crumbs around to look to. Christ could not deny the goodness of God, or limit it to Israel, however as sent He might own their exclusive title, but the sent one was Jehovah in Israel and could not be less than Himself, or other than God in His nature and goodness.

And now see how faith and God's character meet. I have thus spoken of the dispensational character of this history. Recognizing Israel fully, the

136 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

divine person there necessarily over-passes its limits, but the moral character of the circumstances are of the deepest interest. Great faith produces great humility. There is the full recognition not only of entire unworthiness, accepting the place of a dog, but that there is no right, no claim, no promise, but then through grace: by reason of this she goes right through to the goodness of God in Himself. That is true faith; she, as Christ, owned the dispensations of God, His right to have a people of His own, but saw Him revealed, Himself in Christ, and her need met the riches of the grace and love which were in Him. It is thus need by faith meets God, God Himself in goodness, but revealed in Christ, as part of the goodness was so to present Himself. We may learn afterwards to joy in God when we know Him, but here we meet Him and as He is, as He puts Himself forth in Christ to be met. Hence Christ, to manifest this faith, puts forth the dispensational side in the strongest way, that faith, going on the ground of

need, might pierce through all this up to God Himself, as the divine nature and goodness pierced through in Christ the place of service He had taken in Israel. And thus the simplicity of need meets the riches of God's goodness by means of grace in Christ on one side, and through grace, faith on the other. In this respect it is a beautiful scene. And this is, I think, progress.

First it is Son of David, and this was right and true recognition of the promise and Christ's title to it. But then there is no answer. Then she comes more simply in her need, and, doing Him homage, says, Lord, help us. This brought an answer, but that He was sent to Israel, not to Canaanites; it was not meet to give the children's meat to dogs. And then she takes her full place of a dog with no title, but there was goodness enough in God, riches and plenty enough for such. The blessed Lord could not say there was not. He was it there, and then He recognizes the woman's faith. Her desire was to be met according to itself—as *thou wilt*.

138 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

But the woman has all the great principles of Paul's gospel in the world. Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles should glorify God for His mercy.

In what follows in the chapter we have the great general truth of the position of Christ brought out. He returns to His place in Israel where the light was to spring up; manifests His divine power and goodness in delivering from every evil, and the multitude glorify the God of Israel, but it is not now the twelve baskets full. It is not in the character of perfect ordained human power. The baskets are seven. The perfection remains, but it is purely divine in its spiritual character, not developed in human government. It remains but it remains divine.

The word is the chisel by which the lines of Christ are formed in me.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE EFFECT OF KNOWING CHRIST IN GLORY.

EVERY truth has its own peculiar effect, one which no other truth could produce, no more than one kind of tree could produce the fruit of another. In practice the lack of any truth can be discovered, and even where it has been learned, the measure of its acceptance is tested and disclosed by the way in which it is practised.

The glory of Christ is an admitted truth with every believer, but if we really knew Him in glory, it would impart to us its own mark. We are conversant with man in death and sin, and distance from God; for that is our own state by nature; but to know a man in glory, one in acceptance with God according to all His moral greatness, is new to us and magnificent, and according as we know Him there we become, not only superior to, or distanced from, our own state as men, but morally suited to the glory with which we are associated.

140 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

It is plain that the Son of God came to earth, born of a woman, born under the law; and lived here a life of perfect obedience, in every detail well-pleasing to God, fully setting forth in His own walk what man should be before God, from His birth to the holy mount, and until He descended to death to bear in Himself the judgment which lay on man, because he had sinned and was not what he ought to be. Thus He suffered the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God; and under the weight of everything which was upon us and against us, He glorified God. The Son of man was glorified at the very moment when our substitute: the moment of His greatest agony only disclosed the entire and perfect subjection of His heart to God, so that then the Son of man was glorified; God was glorified in Him, and God straightway glorified Him. He claims glory on the ground that He had glorified the Father on the earth. "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John xvii.); and

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 141

He has been received up into glory.
The cross is the pedestal of the glory.

Now if I do not see that Christ has glorified God under the judgment due to me, I cannot look after Him into the glory of God. I must first see that He encountered all on my side, as we see in Psalm xxii., where every obstacle, every form of it, from sin to personal weakness, is encountered by Him; and subsequent to that, or rather following on that, He declares the Father, as He says, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren." (Ver. 22.) If He has in His own person perfectly removed all that man was exposed to, and is now declaring the Father, then, as I know Him in the latter, I know Him as not only my Saviour and Deliverer from all my sin and ruin, but I know Him in new and divine associations, even in relationship with His God and Father, and on the same ground as Himself; as He says to Mary Magdalene, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, my God and your God." Hence the effect of knowing Christ in glory is the consciousness, not only of

142 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

full deliverance from every shade of evil, but of an introduction into a new scene altogether, in company with Him, who, having saved me from my own sad order of things, has not stopped there, but has conducted me into His own. Saul of Tarsus passes from being the chief of sinners to the knowledge of a Saviour in the glory of God, who ignores everything of man and presents Himself as the only one to engage his heart. He had through His death on the cross placed Saul's sins in the land of forgetfulness, and now He can present Himself to the chief of sinners as his Saviour in full acceptance in the glory of God.

There is not clear and full deliverance from man's ruin, or conscious admission into the divine order, until one knows Christ in glory. A soul who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; one who by faith sees Him bearing judgment on the cross obtains relief for his sins; and when he sees Him raised from the dead, he is assured of his forgiveness; but until he knows Him in glory, which is the expression of God's

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 143

satisfaction according to His own attributes, he has not the distinct sense of belonging to a man in the glory, and thus separated from the man on earth, though still in the body. A man might feel himself thoroughly rescued from ruin, and yet if his surroundings were not altered, he would still connect himself with an order of things in which his ruin occurred; but if he were transferred to the position of his deliverer he would be in an order of things in which no trace of his ruin could appear. One may be fully assured of peace, and yet connect it with earth and the things here; he is rescued from judgment and he knows it, but he rises no further than the completeness of the Saviour's *work* through death and resurrection, and he still connects all this mercy with the place in which it found him; but if he knows his Saviour in the glory of God, he is not only assured of his own safety, but of his personal acceptance because of God's satisfaction, of which the glory testifies. In order to enjoy God's satisfaction in the Saviour, in the Person who

144 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

wrought the work, I must be connected with the glory. I may through faith see God's satisfaction about my debt, my sins; but this, though known, requires to be repeated in order to ensure enjoyment and assurance. Whereas when I am connected with the Person who paid my debt, where God's satisfaction is expressed, I am at home and established there. Both speak of satisfaction, but in a very different way. I am assured of my safety, but I connect it with the state of things in which I required it, if I know no other. If I were rescued out of a deep pit, I should be perfectly safe, but I should still be in the place of the pit. If I were in prison for debt and were released because all my debts were paid off by another, I should owe nothing, but I should still be in the place in which I had been imprisoned, and withal poor; but if I were transferred to the home and affluence of my deliverer, a very different state would be given to me. No matter what has been done for me as long as I remain in the place where I needed the mercy, I must con-

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 145

nect everything done for me with the place of my need; but if I were transferred to the place and greatness of my Saviour, I should not only rejoice in my salvation, but I should enjoy it in a scene where there could be no check or abatement of it. Then I know what it is to be accepted in the Beloved where I am supremely apart from the scene of my ruin. Hence there cannot be a full sense of divine deliverance or of personal acceptance but as I see Christ in glory.

Again, I never become dissociated from earth until I see a Saviour in glory. I may look to God for favour or mercy, but I look for expressions of it in my surroundings instead of in the glory with Christ. Now when I know Christ in the glory I have the consciousness of association with Him, where all is of God, and according to His holiness; I am in a scene where I am not only separated from all evil and sin, but where sin never was, and where the scene of my ruin is morally distanced.

Again, it is as Christ is known in glory that I am His epistle here. As

146 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

the law was written on stones in the glory, so is Christ now written on the fleshy tables of the heart. It is only there the transforming power is experienced. It is there we are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. Again, there is no true sense of union, or of the practical expression of it here, unless I am, through the Spirit, where He is; and hence I cannot walk as He walked, for without Him I can do nothing. Christ could not be formed in us anywhere but in the glory, for otherwise union would refer to where He *was*, and not where He *is*, which would have no sense. It is as I see Him by faith where He is, and realize my union with Him through the Spirit, that I am empowered by Him to be like Him as He was here, where I am still. I draw from Him in His exaltation, and as I do, I act and walk as He acted and walked when He was here, in humiliation, when His heart is made known to me. The thought that one can be like Christ by observing Him in the Gospels is at the root an assump-

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 147

tion that there is power in oneself to appropriate His perfections without union. The gospel narrative tells me how He walked and loved me, but I am only empowered to follow His steps and understand Him as I am in union with Him. Then I walk as He walked, and His life will be expressed in me in a similar way as it was in Himself on earth.

Again: if Christ be not known in glory there is no ability to rise superior to all that affects one personally, whether it be attraction or suffering. It is "the glory of that light" which alone can eclipse all the light here. It is above the brightness of the sun, and in the light of it I can happily and fully surrender everything of my own. Like the queen of Sheba, I am not only relieved of my own heart-troubles by the wisdom of the greater than Solomon; but when His concerns and glory fill my heart, there is no more spirit in me; I am really devout and I can travel on here with joy unspeakable and full of glory. So also with regard to

148 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

affliction. When I know Christ in glory, I know that it is but for a moment, and that it worketh for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, *while* I look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen and eternal. Hence, the way Stephen was prepared for the greatest personal suffering, whether we think of those who perpetrated it, or of the pain they inflicted, is by the Spirit of God leading him into heaven and shewing him the glory of God and Jesus there. In Colossians the apostle prays that they may be "strengthened with all might according to the power of his glory, unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness." Again, Christ in us is the hope of glory, and hence our presentation before God depends on our continuing in the faith and not being moved away from the hope of the gospel.

Again: there is not courage or qualification for service unless I am so at home and at rest in the glory of God that I can face the worst and lowest state of

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 149

things here. Isaiah is not fitted either by the word or the vision (see Isaiah vi.) for encountering the ruin of Israel, until he had seen the glory of Christ and learnt his acceptance there. When Israel had failed in the wilderness, and Moses was hopeless about everything here, he turned to the Lord with the prayer: "Shew me thy glory." And thus too was it that Saul of Tarsus was prepared to go to the people and to the Gentiles from whom he was separated. (Acts xxvi. 17.)

Again: if Christ be not known in glory how can He be the object of my heart? how can I count all things but loss for the excellency of Christ? for as I have no union with Him but in His ascension, I cannot make Him my object but where He is; and there also He is my "mark" too; the goal to which I am hastening, where I receive the prize of my calling of God on high.

Lastly, the greatest ornament of the Bride descending from heaven (Rev. xxii.) is that she has the glory of God; but I have touched on enough to shew the immense gain of knowing Christ in

150 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

glory. I trust the Lord may awaken us all to the sense of how little we seek to enjoy Him where He is; while the truth in terms is so generally accepted or admitted.

TO ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST.

WHEN one looks around at the present time to find in any people that which corresponds to the word, "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come," where do we see it? The desire to see it is according to God, according to Christ, and according to the Spirit of Christ; because it would be for the praise and glory of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ; but if one does not see it in the church as a company of believers, one wants to see individual members of that company called the Bride, standing out as part of that Bride, saying, "This one thing I do," and "To me to live is Christ." There are plenty of the children of God, but O how few are standing in the liberty into which they are brought by the work of Christ! and if they are not,

TO ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST. 151

they cannot say, "To me to live is Christ" because they could not carry it out. Where are those, in this time of confusion, who are really walking in this way—quitting themselves like men? What I see impeding all is the want of reality. The mind is carried away by its own thoughts, and the form of truth, and not the reality of it. It is not a question whether we are sons, but whether you and I live like those who could say, "To me to live is Christ;" whether we are in reality before Him, walking as those having His mind. It is not the reality of what you have in Christ that I call in question, or the reality of what His work has done; the believer has not a single cloud before God in virtue of it, but the reality that is the mark of the power of the Spirit in the walk of a believer, the reality of faith that sees things, not according to my own thoughts, or other people's thoughts, but as *they are* as God sees them, and that acts simply for God. There is a reality in Paul's statement "To me to live is Christ." That was

152 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

not a confession of the life of Paul in the (according to *our* thoughts) brilliant part of it, but at the fag end of it, when locked up in a prison. He was shut up a prisoner in Cæsar's house, he looks at all his circumstances just as they are, and *writes* as they are. When the flesh gets to work, it is death, not life; but here was the life of one with Christ's life, Christ the object before him, brought to God with one single thing before him, and that was to live to God. There is where I see the want of reality in believers now. You have life, and you have the Spirit of Christ, and what you have to do is, just where you are to live to God. Paul did not say, "I have built up the Ephesians, or I have done this or that;" but *just there*, in prison, chained to a soldier, he could say, "To me to live is Christ." If a life of suffering is the only thing before me, what I have to do is to live to Christ in it. As my Master suffered at man's hand, so do I too: all is failing; but I have the very life of Christ, enabling me to live Him where I am.

TO ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST. 153

This is the point where reality comes in. You say you want to live Christ; well, begin where you are—why not? *This* is the place to do it. You are not brought to Christ's place in glory yet, but why not say *now*, "To me to live is Christ." People do not see that it is in this life down here that God wants us to be exercised, in every way, by the circumstances He passes us through. There was a Phebe and there was a Paul; their circumstances different, but the same life in both of them, to be manifested in all possible circumstances. God has put us in a place of perfect freedom. We do not wait for Christ to give life; we wait for the glory; but He who will take us there is looking down to see what we are doing here, whether it is just that very thing which was ever before Paul—to live—to die—to suffer for Christ. That is where He sees in you the want of reality. God says, My claim on you is that where you are you are to live Christ; doing that shews reality. It would not be the reality of faith to call in ques-

154 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

tion any part of the work of Christ, but is there that reality of faith which enables you to say, I have the life of Christ, and I am going to live Christ *to-day*? Do you say, How am I to get out of these sorrows, or out of this pit? The claim of Christ comes right in there, not allowing you to say, you cannot live Christ there: *you can*, just where Christ has put you; there you can meet God's claim over you. It is just where is shewn out the pitifulness of the vessel, just there that I can meet God's claims to live out Christ's life; and so you are to live it out just where you find yourself. The most pointed part of the character and mind of Christ was obedience, obedience even to the death of the cross. He ran on to the goal of all that God wanted Him to do. In obedience unto death that mind shined out, but what perfections in His life! raising the dead, opening the eyes of the blind, but there was a part in which He was all alone. In that death on the cross no one could be with Him, and just where everything was shut up, the in-

TO ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST. 155

tensity of suffering all resting on Him, just there that mind shone out.

Can you say individually that you are living like those who have the springs of Christ filling your souls? like those to whom it is not a mere theory that Christ should have come down to this earth and have died, and is risen and in glory? Are you doing what such a people ought to be doing, walking in all the simplicity of faith, as living channels digged by God for the life of Christ to flow out through; and having only one single thing to do, to meet the mind of Christ in everything, able to say, "To me to live is Christ, to die is gain." If it were so one would not be so astounded and alarmed to find how great is the power of the world over people, and how little there is of the power of the cross to break it. "But," say many, "never mind that, I am a saved soul." What! a saved soul and not a partaker too of the divine nature. If the believer is in the light of God in Christ, and he is, ought he not to be able to say that Christ in glory and I are one. He met

156 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

the Father's mind when down here in everything; His life in me gives me the certainty of what is His mind; He met the mind of the Father, and I am to meet His mind all day long.

There is not one of us but what might do so. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come;" and you and I might be saying so as members of that Christ, letting it be seen what that hope is to one soul.

To me to live is Christ,
 And to die is gain,
 Be this my song and joy,
 In spite of ev'ry pain.
 Of brook of life on earth,
 Till it reach its sea,
 As source, and stream, and end,
 Christ alone for me.
 'Tis worth my while to bear
 Din and battle strife,
 Service and toil to seek
 Christ alone for life.
 If body die! 'twere gain,
 Blessed Lord! to me,
 Ended toil, I'd come
 With thyself to be.
 I know not which to choose,
 Jesus, Lord! nor see:
 Then let the Father do
 What is best for Thee.

THE TWOFOLD EFFECT, ETC. 157

Since thine alone I am,
In spirit one with thee,
Whate'er for Thee is best
Must be best for me.

THE TWOFOLD EFFECT OF THE
DEATH OF CHRIST.

JESUS, "when he had cried with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent." &c. (Matt. xxvii. 50.)

There are two effects of the death of Christ; one is that all on God's side is opened to me, and the other that all on man's side is judged.

The veil of the temple is rent in twain. This rending synchronized with the death of Christ, and it indicated that there was liberty for God in righteousness now to disclose His heart and the treasures of His presence to us. The moment He could do it, He did it. When His Son who came to do His will bowed His head in death, having borne the judgment which rested on man, God

158 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

was able in righteousness to do so, and He did! Most wondrous and gracious! The Father's circle of joys is now thrown open to us, and His heart is made known as seeking for such as we are to worship Him. This is what the death of Christ has effected on God's side.

But secondly, it has effected the end of everything here, which is contrary to God. His death has altered the aspect of everything; all that is not of God is judged there, this whole scene gives way. The earth quaked, and the rocks were rent, and the sun was darkened. All is to be reconciled in the cross; all connected with man is set aside, while all of God is opened out; and His joy is, that I, a poor prodigal, do now participate with Him in the circle of His delights. I occupy myself with the death of Christ here, for there His love is expressed for me and to me. I do not regret being shut out of everything here, because through His death I am introduced into the sphere and range of God's eternal counsels and love. His death places me outside of everything

THE TWOFOLD EFFECT, ETC. 159

here, and yet in it I learn the depth of His love for me. I am glad to connect myself with it. I expect nothing but death where my heart is reminded of the love unto death of my Lord for me, and when I can trace and feel it I am not desolate, because I have been introduced by His death into the bright circle of the Father's love. I am in no want of resources, for I am led into my Father's presence to enjoy His own festivities. I cannot revert to anything that was set aside in the death of my Lord. He is a bright beam on my path, teaching me His path: I am separated from everything else. What wonderful emancipation! One's practical entrance into it is small indeed. I have learned His love on earth, and His death makes me a widow here, for He is my Lord; but by it I am in the brightest joys of heaven in spirit; owning Him as my Lord, I shew forth His death till He comes. Deepening my heart in His love, I disconnect myself from everything that is judged in His death, and I seek to enter into and realize all the love and the won-

160 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

drous portion which He by His death, according to the love of the Father, has unfolded.

FRAGMENTS.

In order to be careful for nothing you must have a bosom open to God, pouring out (in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving) all your requests to Him. The effect of this will be that the very peace which dwells in God, and in which God dwells (*as with a military guard or watch*), will keep your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

Identify yourself fully with those suffering for the testimony, and whatever your doing so may cost you, it will be *an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God*; and Paul's God (see Phil. iv. 19) will fully fill up your every need, according to His wealth in glory, in Christ Jesus.

The moment the Christian looks at himself as in Christ there is no "if;" but when the Christian is looked at as in the wilderness, there are "ifs;" not that there is the smallest doubt, but to bring in dependence.

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

PART VIII.

IN that which follows we have the positive preparation for that which was going to take place before we come to the history of the event itself. That which was to take the place of Christ owned on earth is given, and in giving this, the inapprehensiveness of the disciples themselves, both as to intelligence and power, not that of Israel. Testimony to them as under their present leaders and in their present state for the then mission of Christ was closed. But with all the incapacity of the disciples to avail themselves of the grace of Christ then present, the revelation of what was to be the foundation of that which was to take the place of it, and of the coming glory, as well as what was the path to this was made to some or all of them. But of the whole present position of Christ they were wholly unable to seize the true character, or use the power which belonged to it. This incapacity of the dis-

162 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

ciples is somewhat prominently brought forward in these chapters (xvi., xvii.). Still the revelation of what was needed for the new state of things coming is made to them. The Pharisees come with their unbelieving request of a sign; but the answer now is short—no sign but Jonas, Christ lost to Israel in the grave—and He left them and departed: only warns the disciples against their doctrine. But the testimony to the divine power and presence of Christ had left the disciples still without any intelligence which recognized who He was so as to own Him as testified of down here. But here the patience of the Lord waits upon them and recalls the testimony so that they at length understand His warnings, but present understanding of His actual position there was none as then come. Nothing in their state available in divine service for Him as then revealed or even available for their own souls. They were attached to His person and this was real, but no intelligence, and, as we shall see, no power by faith in what He was, but

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

163

here the want of intelligence was marked. Still the Lord's works had drawn attention everywhere, and the Lord asks them the effect of this on the people. It was various: opinions were formed, and there it ended. Some said one thing and some another. But unable as the disciples might be to appreciate Christ as then there, God revealed to Simon Peter in an especial way that which was to be the foundation of the new blessing. That is, we find here, as all through, the two things, Christ presented to Israel then, and His person behind all that. Only here we find besides the disciples unable to seize the former, and God revealing to one at least the latter. We know that all confessed Him such. "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God." The Christ of course they owned Him, but here was a special revelation: His divine person as Son, Son of Him in whom was the divine and eternal power of life. This was demonstrated in the resurrection, but was there in His Person, that He was the Christ they were

164 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

not to say He was any more. That was over in Israel, His true name there; but on the name, being the Christ, of the Son of the living God, He was going to build His Church. Here was the new thing. The Son of the living God revealed, and the Church built by Christ on this great truth. The first full grand revelation of the new thing, ever in the counsels of God, but set up in Israel's place during their rejection, here, but for ever in heaven. Against this the gates of hades, the power of Satan, should not prevail. Based on the person of Christ, Son of the living God, Satan could not succeed against it. This power of life proved and exercised in resurrection victorious over death and hades, the power of death which had prevailed against the first Adam could not against this. That was the great truth, but many things require notice here.

Jesus recognizes it as a new and special revelation; not flesh and blood, *His* Father who was in heaven had revealed it to Him. It was a positively

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

165

heavenly and personal revelation, not drawn, however justly, even from prophets and teachers; not merely that there was a Christ or even a Son, but a direct revelation of His Father in heaven that Jesus was that Son of the living God made to Peter. The prophets no doubt spoke of Him to come, and there was sufficient evidence that Jesus was He, but here was a personal revelation, the foundation of the new thing, the Church.

Next, it was personal to Simon. The whole ground of the blessedness was that it was a personal revelation: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jonas, for—" This was the ground, though prophetically given before, why he was called Peter, but a particular special new revelation was the ground of the whole matter. A successor to a revelation to Simon Bar-jonas is nonsense, because he only has it. He only who has the revelation can have the place the revelation and it only gives. He was blessed and called Peter because he had it. On this immovable rock, the Son of the living God revealed and

166 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

known, the Lord's Church was to be built.

But, further, who is the builder? The Lord only. "I will build." Not "I am building." He was going to build it. But He only was the builder and it is not finished yet. But *His* work no power of hell can prevail against. But it is only His work, what He builds. Hence, when Peter alludes to it in his epistle, he has no idea of being a builder, any more than a foundation. "Unto whom coming [the Lord], as unto a living stone ye also as living stones are built up." (1 Pet. ii. 4.) They come and are built up as living stones are built up. They are built on the Lord, as living stones they come. There is no human builder, and Christ is that on which they are built. Whatever fathers did, I suppose Peter understood as taught of God what his Master said. But Paul, speaking of the Church in the same way at the end of Ephesians ii., says the same thing: "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in

the Lord." There is no human builder, and Christ is the chief corner stone. There is a house of God where there are builders. (1 Cor. iii.) Paul was a wise master builder. Others might build wood, hay, and stubble, which Christ never does: corrupters might corrupt it. Here man was builder and his work might all be burned up.

I only notice this that by the contrast we may see the more clearly what is spoken of here: not a corporation subsisting at any one given time upon earth, of which scripture does speak, but of a working going on and wrought by Christ Himself, and as yet, of course, unfinished. Further, there are no keys to the Church; neither Peter, nor any body else, had any keys for the Church. It was a building going on of which the Lord was the builder, and that does not want keys, nor are keys things to build with. The keys of the kingdom of heaven were given to him, and no doubt he used them, and to good purpose too. It is a very serious mistake to confound the

168 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

kingdom of heaven and the Church. They are distinguished here and never confounded anywhere. Chapter xiv. has given us the kingdom of heaven, chapter xvi. tells us of the Church, and then adds a distinct commission as to the kingdom: one is founded on the Father's revelation to Peter, and Christ is the builder, not Peter: the other is Christ's commission especially given as a distinct thing. And I say also, or more clearly, and I also say to thee, *Καλω δεσσιλεγω*, which can have no other sense. The Father's revelation had laid the foundation of the Church, and Christ was going to build it. Christ names His servant, an act of authority, and entrusts him with the keys of the kingdom. If we must have a wise master builder of the Church on earth it was Paul, if we are to believe him, not Peter. The keys of the kingdom were surely given to Peter, and he used them, and administered it for Jews and Gentiles. Every Christian owns that whatever in his apostolic ministry he did, as sent by Christ, heaven sanc-

tioned. Remark, he bound nothing in heaven, but what he bound and loosed on earth heaven held for good, and it was sanctioned as bound or loosed there, but the things bound or loosed were only on earth.

Having thus fully declared the new thing founded on His person, He forbids the disciples to say any more that He was the Christ. That was the old place now done with as presented to Israel in promise. And He begins from this time to teach them His sufferings and death at Jerusalem, and His new place in resurrection. But this they did not understand any more than the rest. God had revealed to Peter the person of Christ as Son, but his state met in no way the necessary effect and meaning of this in the world. In their state, even with true affection they might rejoice, their master was the Son of God; but that He should suffer and be rejected had no charm for them. Remark this for us all. There may be true divinely-given faith in a truth, without the flesh being subdued, so

170 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

as to receive or estimate divinely the results of this truth in the world. Still it was just man, what man savours and the world, and Peter is treated as acting under the influence of the enemy of souls and the blessed Lord's work in resisting the cross. If he had had his way he would have hindered Christ completing His work. But the faithful Lord treats it as Satan; to savour of the things that be of man is so, is not of God. The Lord then openly warns the disciples that if they follow Him they must take up their cross and follow Him: that was His path. He then gives two reasons: gaining the world and losing one's soul was little profit; and, secondly, the Son of man was coming in the glory of the Father, though now humbled, and then would reward every man according to his works. The world was a passing and vain thing, but our path in it would meet its consequence in another. God and man were really opposed in their thoughts, the rejection of Christ proved it. The path of the Lord was to suffer in it, and His followers

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

171

to follow Him, but He would come in His Father's glory and then the fruits would be judged according to the estimate of that new world to which He was hastening; and so sure was this, that some would be given to see it before they died. All this is the new thing taking the place of the old, but in the proof of man's opposition to God, and that as still in their moral thoughts in the flesh, even the disciples were unable to enter into the mind of God. They are really as far from apprehending it in the revelation of the glory; are not out of the old things, nor able to see even the power Christ had brought into the world. They were really in the flesh as to their minds. All in every way must be wholly new.

"Go in peace." How differently we should go about the world! What could ever disturb a heart that could fall back and say, I know the One my heart is bound to, I know His love, and the sort of person He is; and I can *go in peace* in a world where there is *no* peace.

TO-DAY—FOR ME—
THE CROSS OF THE GLORIFIED ONE.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

You ask me for a few lines from (what you call) my "Patmos." When John was in Patmos, he seemed to have been rudely pushed thither by the persecutor; but if so, and if Satan was the instigator of that piece of wickedness, our God had His counsel and His plan to accomplish therein. The wickedness of enemies to the truth cast the servant out of intercourse with man and saint into solitude: and God took occasion thereof to pour contempt on His enemies and to give to His servant a revelation and a service quite peculiar. What would you and I have done without that fruit of wisdom, grace, and love divine which comes down to us from John in Patmos? Moreover without it the testimony of grace and the word would not have been complete.

It behoves me to consider well what

THE CROSS OF THE GLORIFIED ONE. 173

I pen after such an introduction, and it behoves you too to judge what I write. But the God of John not only divinely inspired him to write what he wrote, and guarded him in doing so, but He wills also that His children should, in brotherly love one toward another, for His name sake, and in humbleness of soul, watch the one for the other and be one another's keepers—first by prayer and then by ensample, but also by exhortation. So I feel free to write, and do you discern how far what I suggest is according to Him and the word of His grace.

We grow in capacity to understand the difficulties of the days we live in, but (I will not finish the sentence which I seemed about to write, but) I will make a few practical remarks. It seems to me that we have now one want in common. I think, too, that God is bringing it up before our minds, and, by various circumstances in various places, is teaching us that there is *to His eye* something wanting in us; and, by the film that many an eye finds over it

174 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

when looking forth and forward, is pressing upon us the importance of the deficit: and often, because of the film and mist, many of us cannot see whereabouts God is above in these things.

The cross of the Lord Jesus Christ: has it its due place in the souls of the saints now? Has it had its due place in *my* soul? I judge that "No" is the only truthful answer which conscience, or spiritual instinct, can give, and so I give it. Has it had its due place in *your* soul? Answer for your own self: and then point out to me those in whom, theoretically and practically, it seems to you to have its due place. I write not as a mystic who supposes that the Spirit of God will ever cease to give to the believer, while down here, larger and larger perception of the import and meaning of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ; but I write as one that has his all in Christ as one of the faithful among the heaven-called people, one who has past Pentecostal blessing before his mind, and the faith and life down here of a man of like passions with himself

THE CROSS OF THE GLORIFIED ONE. 175

in Paul, and that blessed hour too, when the Spirit and the Bride having said "Come" will be ready for her Lord.

It is not mysticism that God has said of us in Romans vi., "Crucified together with Christ," "dead together with Christ," "buried together with Christ." All that is of the first Adam thus separated from the believer, through the humiliation and death of Him who is the last Adam. Well, as it seems to me, it is only when faith *acts* on these things and that a man *reckons* himself to be dead—dead as to guilt and dead as to sin—that that side of the cross is duly held by any of us. Nor is it mysticism, again, as to the new man, that it is written we have been "quickened together with Christ," "raised up together with him," and "made to sit within him in heavenly places." (Eph. ii.) Who of us are so one with Him as to be walking down here as He walked? Surely such only wear, *duly*, the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I do not say, nor do I mean, that the benefits of the cross and of the resur-

176 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

rection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ for eternity belong only to the believer who understands and is consistent with his principles. Not so. But what I *do* say and press is that all they that are sons of God and heirs of God, quickened, sealed, and dwelt in by the Holy Spirit, are the objects on whom Christ's heart and eyes are fixed continually; and that, if they live, He says they "should live unto him who died for them and rose again." Ponder the principles of Paul (Gal. ii. 20), "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me"—and you will see what I mean.

By the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ I do not mean the cross of One a-dying, but not yet dead (as many a modern thinks of it); nor of one hanging dead on the cross, nor of Him taken down and carried and laid in a grave (as a Jew or a Romanist may think of Him), but of the old scriptural doctrine of God,

THE CROSS OF THE GLORIFIED ONE. 177

where His determinate foreknowledge and counsel were made good, when Jew and Gentile crucified the Nazarene who died and rose again. The cross of the Lamb of God seen in the light of the glorious presence of Him who, though once laid low in death, is gone up out of the grave in the power of being Himself the resurrection and the life—in the light of whose presence as He now sits at the right hand of God, the awful, solemn, and yet blessed doctrine of the true cross is seen. So seen by faith, it has power over the heart and conscience of the believer and must have, for it is *taught of God*; and it is the grand subject of the Spirit of God's teaching.

If they in the North and they in the South West have not as individuals honoured the cross, how can they (not moulded individually by the cross) be built up together aright according to the heavenly calling, or the mystery; the coming of the Lord or the patience and hope of the kingdom.

The stolidity of the Northern races and the imaginative liveliness or dreamy

178 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

musings of other races find, each for itself, the remedy and the death-sentence in the cross alone. It is God's test of everything and of everybody. It sentences and would check flesh and its worldly energy drawn from within and not working from and through resurrection from the dead, amid things, in appearance, good. And it would detect and condemn, and stop flesh and selfish indulgence in acknowledged evil too. The adversary can hold his own against everything down here, except the cross and the blood of the ascended Christ; and the Holy Spirit knows no power over man as man apart from the same. He forms the soul by it for good, and He detects what is not of Christ; whether it be of the adversary, the world, or the flesh, by the application of the cross to it—the cross down here, the mind when down here of Him who now is glorified.

A company or an assembly must be affected by the individual state of each component part of the whole. This, true in nature is true also in grace. The

THE CROSS OF THE GLORIFIED ONE. 179

building of God is of living stones; the body of the Christ is of quickened members; the family of God have all eternal life. I do not, in urging this, forget for a moment, but I now refer to it as giving additional weight to what I have said, that whatever the converts at Pentecost had been, they were converted then and had received forgiveness of sins as well as faith and repentance and the gift of the Holy Ghost; and this fitted them to be parts of that edifice in which the Holy Spirit dwelt. Paul and each of his beloved Ephesians was a member in particular of that body, the glorified Head of which was and is the Lord Jesus Christ seated in heaven. And the eternal life which was with the Father before the world was, is the portion of each child of God, individually, a member of that family which the Lord God Almighty is not ashamed to own as His; nor does the Lord Jesus Christ hesitate to declare Himself as the first-born among many brethren in it. We are all, and we know it, through faith, blood-bought, and the congregating

180 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

and centralizing power is the Holy Spirit dwelling among us—but then He is here as sent down from God and the Lord Jesus Christ as a witness, according to the thoughts of God, of the personal worth and the value of the work of the once crucified but now risen and ascended Son of man. That the Spirit, in the power of His own gracious presence, does keep evil in check—and may Himself be grieved and quenched and resisted is also true; but His standard of truth is not Himself, but the import, worth, and value of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The cross of the Lord Jesus Christ is a great leveller of *self* in the flesh of man in the system of the world which man and Satan have formed for human self when out of God's presence; and the same cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, when seen in the presence of God as of His providing, gives shelter to the conscience and salvation from the world, self, and Satan, and God's wrath to come to every one that finds grace to receive it and God's instruction about it.

THE CROSS OF THE GLORIFIED ONE. 181

Let us see it in its detective power. Human mentality of the highest sort is as much part of fallen flesh as is the senseless creating and pampering the cravings of the human body. Not so offensive, but as much of it. Pathos is to the natural mind admirable; what would fallen human nature be without pathos? When a man does well for himself, all men speak well of him. Men's praise would hardly now be openly expressed of the course of the drunkard, adulterer, fornicator. Yet all these have their root in the self-willed independency of fallen human nature. But everything that is in it is judged and condemned (as well as the man who stands before God upon it) which is inconsistent with Him who willingly was obedient unto death, the death of the cross.

If the Lord were to go through with you, or with me, whatever scenes we may severally have passed through since we were together, I judge that He would let out many thoughts that would astonish us as to the origin of troubles being want of honouring the cross in

182 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

this one or that one; and also as to our realized weakness at such and such an hour, resulting from a want in us as to the cross. He measures out trial and He is present with us in it (for destruction is not His object but) that everything should turn to our salvation through the supply of the Spirit and prayer. There is often a surprise in the mind in finding we have been unexpectedly at wit's end. It should not be so, for it is there faith lives and the believer should live; for what we know not now we shall know hereafter.

Note it. There is a connection in the very nature of things between the presence of God and self-judgment in man. Without knowing God as He is (that is in Christ) no sinner can judge himself truthfully. Without abiding near God no believer, seeing what Christ was and how He walked and what He has done, will know how to use this knowledge for his own rest and walk and the discovery of shortcoming in himself. If any have got away from God let them return to Him.

THE CROSS OF THE GLORIFIED ONE. 183

One effect of want of self-judgment in a Christian and watching unto prayer against self or anything else (for its sake) having a place allowed to it in what should be and is (or professes to be) Christ's alone—is dimness of sight as to God and His actings. Consequently discouragement is the present portion of such. They are dimsighted and cannot see what God's mind is, nor the cause nor the end of a wilderness, a Patmos, or a storm. Faith in a believer can hardly be lively as to details of the pathway or any part of it (past, present, or to come) save where self-judgment is maintained.

I believe that God allows many a storm to rise, forms many a wilderness and Patmos too, for the blessing of His people. He will have *reality*. We must have it too. The purging out of chaff, the picking out of defective grain is solemn work, but needful if the merchant will have his ingathering worth much. Better for us to do it ourselves than to challenge Him, by our neglect, to do it. The moral glory of the cross is only

184 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

fully known to God Himself: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is better known in heaven than on earth; in eternity than in time. To us while here most precious, it will yet be better known and more precious in heaven, and eternity, and the presence of God, than here.

A few words upon it ere I close.

My Lord! thou knowest all about thy cross and the revelation of God by it, and thou by thy Spirit canst guide and guard my pen.

Wonders seem to me brought to light by means of it; and brought to light too in such a way as to teach me, even me, the truth of God and the lie of Satan misleading man through the world and the flesh to destruction. I look back to the first creation, it was all very good. Invested in Adam's hand I see it all given up to a murderous rebel, Satan—and man losing himself and all. But then came out to light the mind of God against Satan that there should be One, the woman's seed, whose heel first the serpent should bruise,

THE CROSS OF THE GLORIFIED ONE. 85

but whose bruised heel should finally bruise the serpent's head. And there above, that seed of the woman, Mary's Child, now sits enthroned on the majesty of the Highest, waiting till God shall have made His foes to be His footstool. How unsearchable are God's ways and His judgments past finding out !

No creature (according to its very creation) expression of the eternal power and Godhead ever could have devised such a thing. It is the expression of a mind infinitely greater than man's. He as a creature never could rise higher than that which may be involved in His original relationship with His Creator. Who, according to the thoughts of a mere creature, could have said *how* or *why* God should make One who knew no sin to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him? How could it be? Alas ! man's heart now that he has heard all about it is opposed to it. What ! not *I* work, but God ! Not my merits honoured, but all my vileness measured out in sore judgment upon One who knew no sin !

186 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

What, I to be blessed according to God's delight in the only obedient One! I am conscious that man likes not God to have been before him and to be altogether above him; that God's thoughts and ways stain too deeply the pride of fallen man, even in blessing him, for the heart and mind of man unreconciled to welcome it, or the truth that it is not God that wants reconciling to man, but man that wants reconciling to God. I know it all. But I must bow or be lost; must bow to the most perfect expression of the divine character, told out too just where my present ruin and lost condition are discovered. And shall I turn from the God who in pity and mercy and compassion has taken occasion of my lost estate to make it a field for the revelation of the character and ways of God, and for giving a new glory to the Son of His love, and to me a better portion than Adam lost, a share of the blessedness of His own family and glory? And see the glory that morally rests upon us when we bow to His grace. I then can say, "What has been, what is, what

THE CROSS OF THE GLORIFIED ONE. 187

ever will be most for thy glory, O God, has been and is and ever will be most for mine too. Thine own character, thy being love, and light, full of mercy and compassion, Father, too, of an only-begotten Son, thy wisdom and thy power, the Lamb that was slain alive again for evermore—it is through His cross that thou canst be just while justifying me a sinner. The blood that makes thy throne on high to be a mercy seat, makes my conscience perfect in the light. We understand one another now: I have been raised through faith in Christ crucified and risen, by the intelligence given by the Holy Spirit, and can say, Thy perfect way of calling me, O God! is through grace—my divinely perfect way of coming to thee, of standing in thy presence, and of delighting in thee. A ruined sinner in myself, yet can I trust thee and hope in thee, as Adam could not in Eden.

At all events, the fall has subserved, through the cross, the manifestation of the glory of God. Without it there never could have been the new revela-

188 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

tion of the character of God, which salvation and redemption give. To taste mercy in its reality one must be either the one that shews it or one that receives it. No channel for mercy but God manifest in flesh, slain on the cross as Son of man.

Individuality, if not selfishness in its higher and better connections, finds its gains here, and here alone. The cross has broken all my bondage, baffled Satan of his prey, slain the *me* that was, and, in Christ, crucified the world to me and me to the world, and He who bore it has become my life and my portion. Besides this, there is the moral glory and attractive beauty of the truth. And both of these presented to the conscience and heart of man to lure and draw him. Still, and it is that which goes beyond all, He that bore the cross gained by it for Himself as Son of man the glory where he is, and He has made us partakers of the divine nature, and put of His own Spirit in us. That Spirit rules and reigns in us, even the Spirit which He that was crucified gave to us: it

THE CROSS OF THE GLORIFIED ONE. 189

needs be then that (if for privilege as He *is* so are we in this world so) our walk down here should be the fruit of our position, and as His *was*; and so, "For me, to-day — the cross of the glorified One." What can I suffer, what do for Him and His?

Yes, the cross of the Christ now ascended has broken my heart, broken Satan's power, stained the world that was guilty of it, shewn out the contrast between His flesh who was holy, harmless, undefiled, spotless, who knew no sin and was therefore fit to be a sin-offering and mine—all, all, all within and all about me has become as dung and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Him and His righteousness. May I live here below in the fellowship of His sufferings being made conformable unto His death until I am in His very presence and Himself as the prize. Amen and Amen.

PAREPIDDEEMOS.

Off the Azores.

7. 2. 72.

DAY DRILL.

HOME is day drill. If you are not up to day drill, how can you expect to go through your evolutions on a field-day? "Prepare thy work, and make it fit for thyself in *the* field." There is a tone and a ring about one who has controlled himself at home, which must tell on others when he is abroad. If I have practised restraint when I am free to do as I like, surely I can submit to it with ease and truthfulness when it is required of me. To be always in buckle and armour is very irksome, but the sorest part of the exercise is getting inured to it. When used to accoutrements your trouble is all but over, but it will not do to dispense with them at home, and to have to run for them when you have an enemy at the door. You must be a soldier of the line on the parade ground every morning. Habit is second nature. When you are well up to drill at home, you will be ready for all that is required in open battle.

REPOSE.

In thy keeping, gracious Saviour,
Oh what rest my spirit knows,
Who can touch me—what can harm me—
What can break my heart's repose ?

Though the pestilence sweep o'er me,
Far beyond its reach I rest ;
If it seize me at thy bidding
'Twill but waft me to thy breast.

Though the tempest rage around me,
Evil forces ever near,
Hidden safe in thy pavilion,
Not a breath can reach me here.

Could I leave thy love's enclosure,
Could'st thou drop me from thy hand,
Frail, as leaf beneath the tempest,
Not one moment could I stand.

Oh how blessed is the weakness
That finds all its strength in thee ;
While I draw from out thy fulness,
Oh how rich my poverty.

Precious lesson of dependence,
In the desert only known,
Where I learn thy love's deep meaning,
While I lean on thee alone.

192 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

What a wilful child and wayward,
Gracious Father, I have been,
While thy heart resolved to lead me
To these pastures rich and green,—
Where my heart has found its resting
In thyself for evermore,
And its full unchanging portion—
To be with thee and adore.

Not a question now disturbs me,
While with thee the past I see ;
'Tis a page of blotted history,
But 'tis all read out to thee.

And to thee I'd cleave the closer,
Till the journey shall be o'er,
Then be thine the praise, Lord Jesus,
And the glory evermore.

The moment I am little enough to pick up
the crumb, I have the power of God, and what-
ever the hindrance is, is made manifest. When
I come to the extreme of my own littleness, I
come to the extreme of God's greatness.

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

PART IX.

THE Church as built by Christ we have had in chapter xvi., and the keys of the kingdom of heaven confided by Christ to Peter. We have now (chap. xvii.), the kingdom in glory, which in its time is also to replace Christ as He then was on earth. The Lord displays it to the three who were to be pillars: Christ formally standing alone by the authority of the Father's voice, the law and the prophets disappearing. This is the great point here. We have more in Luke of the intimacy of glorified saints with Christ, and especially more of the heavenly part, they (I suppose Moses and Elias) enter into the cloud, but here it is more the personal glory, and the kingdom as Peter himself expresses it, the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The manifested glory of His person is more fully put here. His countenance shone as the sun and His raiment is white as the light. So it is said, "Till ye see the Son of man com-

VOL. VI.

H

194 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

ing in his kingdom;" in Mark and Luke, the kingdom come, or come in power. It is a bright cloud which overshadows them. In all, Peter would have joined the lawgiver and the great prophet with the Son of man, but this foolish proposal, nor is Peter alone in it, brings in the glory of the Father, the excellent glory, the cloud of God's presence, and the Son of man is owned Son of God Himself, and Moses and Elias are gone, a testimony most distinct and express.

It has been said, that the risen and changed are seen here. I have nothing against it, but I do not think here it is the object of the vision, but the personal glory of Christ, and the disappearing of law and prophets (surely all fulfilled) in the glory of the kingdom where the Son of man has His place alone, because the others are fulfilled, and disappear in their service, and Christ is alone; and further, He, God's beloved Son, the kingdom and glory being revealed, is now alone to be heard. Not, of course, that we do not believe all the law and prophets have revealed, but they are what testify of

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

195

Christ; and now the thing is come, the person they spoke of; and further, not as the Messiah, and Christ of promise, as such He had been rejected, and He was speaking of this (chap. xvi. 20—28), and it is what introduces this vision, but as Son of man and Son of the Father, testified of immediately, personally, out of the excellent glory, as the object of delight and alone in it. It is not that He had left, or would leave, His people in the glory, He was talking with them in it, but as the One who appeared, the object testified of, He was *all alone*, the Father only and we may necessarily and in His delight testifying of Him as He could and did reveal the Father. It is a wonderful scene. But resurrection was needed to bring it out, a living Christ on earth could not be revealed in this place. It was the counterpart from it from heaven when rejected here below. The Messiah's place was gone, and beside the Christ, it was the cross and the Son of man in glory, Son of God alone the object of the Father's delight. I say the Father's,

196 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

for when He says Son, He reveals the Father; not Christ reveals the Father to us, but Himself in what He could not but be with the Son. It is a great thing to know, besides His person, that the Father's delight is in Christ, *εὐδόκησα*, I have found my delight, such as He had been on earth, though in itself eternal. He can tell us the Father's mind perfectly. The Lord refers to this and similar testimonies in John v. But it is not as in John iii.: He speaks that He knows and testifies that He had seen heavenly things as Son of man who is in heaven, nor what John Baptist declares, and what he has seen and heard that he testifies. There Christ is revealing from heaven. Here the Father is testifying and shews His delight, that He has found His satisfying delight in that which Christ was on earth, and owns Him Son. And now we find, as I have remarked, the incapacity of the disciples not merely to understand the new position Christ was taking but even to make use of the old. Peter, with a forwardness which the Lord constantly

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

197

used to bring out some truth, did not go beyond the similar glory of Moses and Elias to Christ to recognise the person of Christ. At this, though he had owned Him Son of the living God so that he ought to have known better, we can hardly be surprised; but difficulties when they did know, and incapacity to use the power already come in with Christ is all that marks their state. Only the Lord pursues His own grace and His own thoughts, as we shall see.

Some other important points arise out of this chapter. As regards this world the coming of the Lord was a kind of provisional or tentative coming, though for far more important purposes. Just as He could say, till the Son of man comes, though He was there; and this double purpose is morally evident, because He came completing the trial and testing of man (compare John xv. 22, 24), and also to accomplish His Father's will, and give His life a ransom for many. And it was His rejection in the first form which brought about the accomplishment of

198 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

the second, so that responsibility and grace in atonement met in the cross. Thus if they could receive it, John was Elias who was to come. The scribes were right in expecting him, but John was come in the spirit and power of Elias. To him they had done what they listed. Only if Elias came personally he must be another, when the Son of man comes it will be the same, only risen and glorified. The Lord allowed the difficulty to be presented that the whole scene that was going on might be brought out.

We then come to the incapacity of the disciples to use by faith the power which was then present. The poor man with the demoniac son had brought him to the disciples, and they could not cast him out. This draws out from Jesus the expression of the uselessness of His stay with them, when even His disciples could not make use of His power. This it is which finally leads, not to the prophecy and declaration that He would suffer, and depart, and rise again, but to the immediate expression of what drove Him away. Oh, faithless and perverse

generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? The unbelief even of His disciples, hindering the efficacious testimony to His power, led to His going away. His person remained the same, and His personal grace, but His work was hindered by the faithlessness even of His own. How long was He to stay and bear with them? Thus we learn what closes a dispensation and the Lord's dealings in goodness, not the power of evil that brought Him here, but the powerlessness of those who follow Him, in making good the testimony He has given of His power and goodness. This does not cease, but in the same sentence in which He says, How long? He says, Bring thy son hither. It is what we have seen, the closing of His service here, but His person and grace only shining out the more brightly; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and exercised wherever there was a want that came to Him, the actual meeting-place between man and God—a want, and grace in a Saviour. Two things are then brought out as regards the exercise

200 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

of this power of God by faith. First faith, unclouded confidence in Christ to do it, but secondly, that there was a real adverse power of Satan, and that in cases where that power was in its full exercise, as here, it could not be met and overcome but by nearness to God, bringing in His power by prayer, and that self-restraint in which the heart was separated from nature to God. I expect no miracles in these last days, save false ones on the part of the enemy, though many things are counted miracles which in connection with God's government faith ought always to do; but for that to which faith now applies, according to the will of God, these directions are of the last importance. Faith in God's power, and that in exercise in grace towards us, and this sought in prayer and separation of heart to God. Elias, we read, was a man of like passions with us, and he prayed, which I notice, because all we read of in the Old Testament, is his declaration, "As the Lord liveth," &c. (1 Kings xvii. 1.) In spite of all this practical unbelief

in the disciples, the personal glory and grace of the Lord, and the association of the disciples with Himself in grace, is no way hidden or diminished. The close of the chapter is a remarkable witness of this in connection with what we have been seeing.

The Jews come to collect the tribute for the temple, and come to Peter with the question if the Lord paid it, tantamount to the question if He was a good Jew. The Lord anticipates Peter, shewing divine knowledge and divine power. He asks him of whom the kings of the earth take custom, or tribute—of their own children or of strangers. Of strangers, replies Peter. Then, says the Lord, are the children free. Christ that is, *was* Son of the great King of the temple, but in this character associates poor Peter with Himself. “Then are the *children* free, nevertheless that *we* offend not,” &c. He then shews His divine power and in the way of Peter's natural calling disposes of the creation, of the fish of the sea to bring him the needed money. Son of the most high God, knowing all

202 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

things and disposing of creation, He nevertheless subjects Himself in grace to Jewish order; but in the title of His low place, in infinite grace He puts Peter in the same place with Himself: "that give for me and thee." The lowliness of Him who came in by the door: the divine person and the perfect grace all shewn out together.

CHRIST IN GLORY.

I.—EVIDENCE OF IT.

THE ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ to God's right hand in heaven is one of the cardinal truths of Christianity as distinguished from Judaism. The incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus concerns Christians, as they will be found by-and-by to concern Israel and the Gentiles; but the Christ, absent from earth, and present in glory, is a marked feature of Christianity. The Old Testament saints look forward to the Christ who was to come. The saints in the millennium will know Him as present in person at Jerusalem. We know Him

CHRIST IN GLORY.

203

as having come, but as absent from earth, and at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens. (Heb. viii. 1.)

Is this a mere fact to the truth of which we must subscribe, or is it a matter of importance fruitful in results? Spoken of frequently in scripture, and consequences adduced from it, we learn thereby the importance which God attaches to it, and, from the efforts of the enemy to blind men's eyes to it, we see in what light he regards it. (1 Cor. iv. 4.) "The god of this world," we read, "hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ [for so we should translate the words] who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Christ, God's image or representative, is in heavenly glory, a statement which should be good news to men, casting a light, as it does, on this world, and on the future. This truth the enemy attempts to veil from men. The antagonism of Satan to man's best interests many will be willing to believe; but have they considered it in the light it is

204 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

here presented? Have they taken up the importance of the truth which he is at such pains to conceal? The term used of it "the gospel of the glory of Christ" shews what it is to men, and the "light" of it intimates that it can illumine the darkness. God wants man to understand about it. Satan wants to keep him in the dark about it. A real antagonism then there is between God and the old serpent in this matter, man little thinking about it, though most deeply concerned in the knowledge of that, which the devil would keep from him if he could, for it is emphatically truth for this day.

But some may reply, Do we not keep Ascension-tide year by year? Granted, but that fact, and this reply, only testify of ignorance about the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ being in heavenly glory. It is not the fact only that He could return to glory that we have to grasp, but the truth that He remains there, that we are exhorted to lay hold of; and, if the devil cannot shut out from the world the knowledge of Christ's

ascension, he has done his best to neutralize its power, lest men should discern its value and importance. Take the church of Rome, or any church doctrinally corrupt as an illustration of this. The incarnation and death of Christ are made much of, His ascension too is celebrated every year; but, celebrating likewise each year His birth and His death, some do not get a settled thought of the Lord's continuance in glory. Little as it appears to be understood, we believe that what is called the christian year, i. e., the annual round of festivals, in connection with the Lord's walk on earth from His birth to His ascension, is a device to rob souls of what they should understand, and enjoy, viz., characteristics distinctive of Christianity.

Let us look into this, and first, on what authority do we rest for the article of our creed, that Christ ascended into heaven. To the word must we turn for the answer.

For man to be in heavenly glory was a new thing when the Lord ascended, though not a new thought as regards

206 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

God's word. It had been predicted by David, and announced beforehand by Christ Himself. Twice had David, by the Spirit, written of it (Ps. lxxviii. 18; cx. 1), and both these scriptures are quoted in the New Testament with reference to it (Eph. iv. 8; Heb. i. 13; x. 13). Often did the Lord speak of it as the gospel by John bears witness. (Chap. vi., vii., viii., xiii., xiv., xvi., xvii.) To disciples, stumbled at His discourse in Galilee He intimated it (chap. vi. 62), as returning to where He was before, who was the living bread, which had come down from heaven; words of importance, testifying to His pre-existence before born into this world as the woman's Seed. To the Jews at Jerusalem He mentioned it, as going to Him that sent Him (chap. vii. 33), and whither they could not follow Him. (Chap. viii. 20.) They, unable to comprehend His meaning, questioned whether He meant to go amongst the dispersed of the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles, or whether He meditated self-destruction. Stupid people, we must say, for

the earth was as open to them as to Him. To visit the dispersion, and teach the Greeks, Jesus afterwards proved was a feasible thing. If on the other hand they would interpret His words of suicide, were they specially preserved from that sin? No, these suggested interpretations do not suit His word. He spoke of going where they could not come, who refused to believe on Him, and by that excluded them from but one place in the whole creation to which man can enter; and that, terrible to think of it, was heaven. Thither He was going, and they—where? Again, speaking to His disciples he held similar language, in chapter xiii. 33, to that He had held with the Jews in chapter vii.; but to His own He intimated that they should afterwards follow Him; for the Father's house, to which He was returning, was, and is to be, the house of His disciples for ever and ever, who are whilst on earth witnesses to an absent Christ. Thus, whilst in chapter vii., viii. He predicted a separation for ever between Himself and His audience;

208 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

if they would not receive Him, He acquaints His own with the fact that His separation from them in person could only be for a time, for they should be with Him where He is for ever. (Chap. xiv. 3.) The expediency on their account of His departure He then tells them (chap. xiv. 12, 13, xvi. 7), and at last they understand His word (chap. xvi. 28), and then hear Him praying about it. (Chap. xvii. 1—5.)

At length the day arrived for the fulfilment of the prophetic word, and two accounts we have relative to the Lord's going to the Father, but both of them are from the pen of the same writer. The act was witnessed by the eleven, but none of them have described it, though Peter, one of them, taught it (Acts ii. 34, iii. 21; 1 Peter iii. 22), Jude infers it (ver. 14), and John speaks of it. (Chap. vii. 39.) Of the four evangelists, Mark and Luke, who were not apostles, declare it, and Luke it is who has given us two accounts of it, the one at the close of his gospel, the other at the opening of the Acts. Reading

these two accounts one marks the difference, whilst noting the suitability of each for the place in which we meet with it. In the gospel, which had already related His birth and where that took place, we read of His ascension and from whence He went up. At Bethlehem was He born, from near Bethany did He ascend. His action too at the moment the evangelist is careful to state, an action apparently never completed, as if the blessing He was bestowing would continue to descend. The fulness of it, the extent of it, it would appear, was not made known. They heard His words as they fell from His lips, but the blessing was not concluded when He commenced His ascent heavenward. Jacob and Esau knew the extent of their blessing. They heard their father Isaac begin, and knew when he had done. Of the eleven none really could say they had heard from Christ's lips all that He meant to bestow. In the Acts, on the other hand, which tells us how the work spread, we read not of the place from whence He ascended, nor of the blessing

210 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

He was in the act of bestowing; but we have the subject stated of the disciples' last conversation with the Lord Jesus Christ. They were to be witnesses unto Him in Judea, Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth—a fitting beginning this to the book of the Acts which tells in part of its fulfilment. In character too with the different accounts are the different attitudes in which His disciples are reported as being found. In Luke, receiving the blessing which never was finished, they are represented as worshipping. In Acts which speaks of their service for an absent, and at that moment, departing Master, they are described as gazing upwards, to have, as far as the eye could, the upward path of the Lord of glory. One can fancy in some degree what their thoughts must have been as they saw Him ascend, and can understand how they might remain with uplifted faces gazing into heaven, endeavouring, but in vain, to pierce the cloud which received Him out of their sight. That He had left the earth

they were witnesses, but none of them could say they saw Him enter heaven. On what ground then did they know of it? Grounds, we reply, similar to those on which we know about it—the testimony of others. For two men stood by them in shining apparel, denizens of heaven, and announced what the eleven had not seen, His arrival in heaven. What they saw not they believed, as their behaviour when they re-entered Jerusalem proclaimed; for, though they had parted with their Teacher and Friend, they could re-enter the city, where He had been so lately crucified, with great joy. (Luke xxiv. 52.) As they believed what they had not seen, so must we; faith about this is with us, as it was with them, to be in exercise. We know He is there.

What, some may ask, are the grounds for this confident assertion? Ocular testimony, written testimony, and circumstantial evidence, we can reply.

1. Ocular testimony. Stephen saw Him there, Paul also a short time afterwards; the one the first martyr, the

212 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

other the persecutor of God's Church. The first martyr saw the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God. (Acts vii. 56.) It was a vision vouchsafed to him, which no one else could see. Saul the persecutor was favoured like Stephen to see Him, but he heard also His voice, he talked with Him, received a message from Him about himself and his work. (Acts ix. 4, 6; xxvi. 14—18; xxii. 14; 1 Cor. ix. 1.)

2. Written testimony. Peter (1 Pet. iii. 22) tells us of it, acquainting us with the Lord's position there with reference to God, and of the subjection of all heavenly powers to Him. Ephesians i. 20, 21 confirms this; and whilst telling out the full extent of His supremacy, declares that, what is true of Him now, will be true also in the coming or millennial age. Turning to Hebrews we learn about His posture in heaven (chap. i. 3; viii. 1; x. 12; xii. 2), which the closing verses of Mark's gospel confirm (chap. xvi. 19); and, besides these particulars about the Lord in glory with

which we are furnished, we read in Rom. viii. 34; Eph. ii. 6; iv. 10; Phil. ii. 9; iii. 20; Col. ii. 1; 1 Thess. i. 10; iv. 16; 2 Thess. i. 7, that He is in heaven, who was once on earth in humiliation.

3. Circumstantial evidence. Till the Lord should be glorified, the Holy Ghost was not, John states. (Chap. vii. 39.) If the Lord did not depart to the Father the Comforter would not come. (Chap. xvi. 7.) The Lord did depart, and the Comforter did come, a witness to Christ, and of where He is. (Chap. xvi. 10.) Again, the Lord told His disciples that they should do greater works than He did, because He would go to the Father. (Chap. xiv. 12.) Peter's sermon at Pentecost, and Peter's shadow healing the sick in Jerusalem, are examples of greater works, are witnesses to us of the Lord's return to heaven. Besides this, prayer in His name would henceforth be effectual. (Chap. xiv. 13.) Cannot saints testify of the fulfilment of this promise? The works which apostles could do we cannot, but we read of them, and understand of what they bear witness. Prayer, how-

214 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

ever, in Christ's name many can testify, is a real thing, bringing down the blessing desired; and, whilst proving that God hears and answers prayer, the very answers are silent witnesses that the Lord Jesus Christ is now in heavenly glory.

Thus what may be predicted, and what He taught, we know has taken place. His disciples saw Him ascend heavenward. Witnesses descend who depose to having seen Him in heaven. The word too affirms it, and circumstantial evidence, which He appointed before He left earth, confirms it. Christ Jesus is in heaven.

In other papers we may trace out some of the results which flow from this great and joyful fact.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY.

FROM the beginning of man's history on earth, the body was the principal thing, as to his relation with this scene. In the garden of Eden, while there was innocence, it was undying and uncovered,

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 215

when sin entered, then came death on the body; the body thus doomed, God clothed with skins and man was driven out of the garden. Now as there was faith, as divine power worked in anyone, there was an action of the body expressive of faith. "By faith Abel offered," &c. He did a certain act; his body was the agent by which he expressed the power which governed him. Where there was *not* faith there was no new power. Man used his body as the medium for gratifying his own desires and tastes. Where there *was* faith there were works; deeds done in the body; otherwise faith would be dead, as the apostle James shews.

It is evident that faith produced works. It compelled the body to act in keeping with its view or sentiment; and hence the work was only an expression or counterpart in act, of the power or idea which produced it. Every faith had its own work. But it was the subjection and submission of the body to this power which was the work, and the body was thus the display and the evidence of

216 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

the faith as James says, "Shew me thy faith without works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." The faith was proved by the work which it produced; and thus Abraham was justified when he offered up his son, though forty years *before*, he had the faith for which he was accounted righteous (Gen. xv.) and on which Paul insists. (Rom. iv.) The body was safe in innocence, but when sin entered, it was not only subject to death, but led away by divers lusts and passions, except where faith worked; and then according as the faith ruled, the body became the evidence of it, and this proved its power; otherwise faith was dead. Hence though the body was, after the fall, the theatre of all the desires of the flesh and of the mind, yet when there was faith, there was palpable proof that the body was under a greater power than the will of the flesh, and that very thing on which sin had entailed death, was made to express the efficacy of divine control.

In innocence the body was according to God's will, but after the fall the will

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 217

of man became the rule, and it was only as there was faith that the body in which sin dwelt, and under the penalty of death, became the expression or exponent of divine power working in it according to the requirement of faith. Thus the body was, like one on horseback, borne along by a power outside itself to a given point; but when again on foot—when the power ceased to act, occupying itself with its own pleasure. A certain thing had been done, a great deed performed which proved the mettle of the power which carried it, but the body generally remained unaltered in all its tastes and habits; for the Spirit did not yet dwell in it to control or order it in everything; the body was not then the temple of the Holy Ghost.

Now under the law there was action required also. The body was required to express the demands of the law, but as there was no new power conferred, the demand only disclosed that there was no power in a body of sin, to meet God's law. The law was added because of transgression to expose how entirely in-

218 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

competent man was to meet what was righteously required. It was as if one were to sow garden seed in the wild sand in order to shew that it could not grow there. The law was holy, just, and good; but there was no power in man to personify the requirements of it. It was not sufficient to accept the terms of it, and to admit they were all right. Man under the law was called to express in his walk and ways the demands of it. It conferred nothing on him. It only required of him, and thus disclosed the weakness that was in him, as if one were required to walk a mile when not able to move one step.

But *now* the body is the Lord's, and it is the temple of the Holy Ghost. It is neither as it was in innocence, nor as under law, nor is it merely led and controlled by some particular or special faith, but now in *everything* it is empowered by the Spirit of God, who dwells in it, to act according to the word of God which is for the guidance of faith in everything.

While saints universally admit that

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 219

their conduct and walk should be exemplary, they are confused in their minds as to the scope of their responsibility; instead of adopting the new order they are apt to adopt and pursue a mixture of what came before it—faith and law; they own and rejoice that faith leads them to do a certain thing, but then they exact from themselves other things; that is to say, if one may use a metaphor, they ride part of the way, and try to walk another part, and this leads to weariness, and lameness, and an imperfect testimony. It is a compound of the definite action of faith, and of the inability of mere nature. Thus there is an excuse for weakness, while grounding their hope and acceptance on faith and divine power. It is this mixture of faith and law which has produced and tolerated so much worldliness in real believers. The conscience is quieted because grace is known through faith, but for the rest of their course and ways, the law is the standard, and the idea is, that one must seek only to do the best one can and with as little reproach as possible.

220 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

Our blessed Lord set forth, for the first time on this earth, in His own body, a man suiting and answering to the divine mind in every movement. There had been seen previously, man under the control of faith, the action of faith giving him a distinct line for an occasion, in keeping with itself; and there had also been seen man under the law which only exposed his inability; but now in the person of the Lord Jesus there was a man in his own body, expressing in every detail of life, what was well pleasing unto God. He always did the things that pleased Him; and hence the Lord in Luke xi. announces the new order, where He says, "The candle of the body is the eye. If the eye be single the whole body is light." It is not merely that one has bright thoughts or happy feelings, which are quite right in themselves, but that this body, which was doomed to death in paradise, is now, through grace, to be light. The whole is to be light, having no part dark, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give light. The thing doomed

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 221

because of man's sin, is now through grace to be an expression of Christ, as the apostle says, "I bear about in my body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be *manifested* in my body." While the Lord spake (see Luke xi. 37) a Pharisee asked Him to dine with him, evidently connecting His remarks with the doctrine of the Pharisees. The Lord takes a place at his table in order to explain the error of the Pharisees' doctrine. They were occupied with the outside, and with the effort to obtain something for the body, instead of first receiving the light and then shewing it forth. Now in chapter xii. He sets forth to us how the body would express the light, and this expression of the light is comprised in two marks, namely, that there is no fear from without, and no care within. If it were thus with them their loins would be girded, there would be an activity in their manner, and their lights would be burning. The body would be brilliant with light, waiting in the dark night for the morning star.

We hardly estimate the privilege con-

222 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

ferred upon us, with its consequent responsibility; even that our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost as well as a member of Christ. If the gravity and greatness of this privilege were before us, everything we did, every appearance we presented would be judged and scrutinized. A manner or an attitude would not be regarded as too small a matter to attend to, or to correct; even one's dress would be determined by its suitability for Christ's member, or whether it became the temple of the Holy Ghost.

In our desire and effort to maintain the doctrine so long unknown or unseen that the believer is perfect in Christ, we have overlooked too much the place which the body of the saint holds, or is required to hold on earth. It is necessary, first, that his heart should enjoy Christ, but besides this, his body is to be the channel or medium of his walk on earth, and hence we see in 1 Cor. xi. 30-32 that if a man did not judge himself, the Lord touched his body. When once we admit the Lord's claim over the body, and see that we are called to the privi-

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 223

lege of glorifying God in it, we then begin to grow in intelligence as to how everything connected with the body must be done according to His will; whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do, we do all to the glory of God; and there will be a sense of our responsibility which will not only order us in the care of the body, deprecating all neglect of it, but will also refuse to make it too much an object, while seeking to make it in dress and manner an expression worthy of Christ. Saints who had this sense would not be worldly in their dress, for they would not wear anything which Christ would not approve for His own member; and there would not be the undevotional position, which is not uncommon now in our meetings. If the truth that the body of the believer is a temple of the Holy Ghost, as well as a member of Christ, laid hold of the heart, the exhortation to "glorify God in the body" would deeply exercise it. The Lord grant that it may, for His own glory.

WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM.

And is it so! I shall be like thy Son,
Is this the grace, which He for me has won?
Father of glory, thought beyond all thought,
In glory, to His own blest likeness brought.

Oh Jesus, Lord, who loved me like to thee?
Fruit of thy work, with thee too, there to see—
Thy glory, Lord, while endless ages roll,
Myself the prize and travail of thy soul.

Yet it must be, thy love had not its rest,
Were thy redeemed not with thee fully blest.
That love that gives not as the world, but shares
All it possesses with its loved co-heirs.

Nor I alone, thy loved ones all, complete
In glory around thee with joy shall meet.
All like thee, for thy glory like thee Lord
Object supreme of all, by all adored.

And yet it must be so, a perfect state
To meet Christ's perfect love, what we await.
The Spirit's hopes, desires, in us inwrought,
Hopes by the Spirit formed, with living blessings
fraught.

The heart is satisfied, can ask no more,
All thought of self is now for ever o'er.
Christ, its unmingled object, fills the heart,
In blest adoring love, its endless part.

Father of mercies, in thy presence bright,
All this shall be unfolded in the light.
Thy children all with joy thy counsels know,
Fulfilled, patient in hope while here below.

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

PART X.

THE true position at this moment too is clearly seen. In chapters xviii. and xix. to the end of verse 28 are presented to us in a general way the principles in which they were to walk in the new order of things, and in general what characterized this new order in contrast with nature and Judaism, while God's creation is fully owned. The Lord begins with the abnegation of self, and self-importance. We are to be as little children; one who was not such in principle could not enter into it, and he who was most so would be greatest in it. The Christian received Christ in receiving such in Christ's name. But opposition and difficulties were to be expected. Woe to the world because of them! If they put a stumbling-block in the way of these little ones who did believe, for weakness might accompany simplicity, they had better have been hopelessly drowned in the sea. As to oneself, if one

226 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

found anything in oneself that led one to stumble, no self-sparing; better lose the best member one has than one's soul. The Lord always maintains in the strongest way the solemnity of God's judgment of evil. The fullest, freest grace is taught us, blessed be God, but nothing to weaken the horror of evil, but the contrary. There is comfort in what follows, if not professed doctrine, as to infants, and their salvation if going out of the world as such. The Lord's disciples were not to despise them, they were always present before Jesus' Father in heaven. I take 'angel' in the common use of it in scripture, of one who represented another, without his being personally there. Thus we have the Angel of the Lord; the Malak-Jehovah. They said of Peter, It is his angel. It may be an angel who does the service, but the object of the passage is not to shew who does it but what is done, and for this purpose popular language is used. But this blessing is not founded on sentimentality, or vague notions. It is founded on the parable used for sinners

in general of the lost sheep, and that the Son of man was come to save what was lost; only here, with infants, it is not said to *seek*. But it is not the will of our Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish : of such is the kingdom of heaven. It is not, I judge, to be thought that the Lord speaks of the poor and humble in spirit; they are the greatest in the kingdom: it would be a small and insignificant thing to say of them that it was not the Father's will that they should perish.

We have then the case of a brother offending another, not the world; and this introduces the assembly in practice here below in the coming period. The injured person was to tell his offending brother, and win him if he could; if not, take one or two more, and if that failed, it would not be merely, You say, and I say, but the whole matter before the whole assembly with clear evidence. If he refused the judgment of the assembly, he was to be as a heathen man and as a publican. The assembly takes the place

228 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

in this of the synagogue. It is remarkable here that the successors to the power given to Peter to loose and to bind so as to have Heaven's sanction upon it, are the two or three gathered as an assembly. What the assembly decided, as such, was sanctioned in heaven. The Lord adds the promise of granting what was asked by two or three so assembled, for He Himself would be there. But what should characterize the disciple was grace, and if personal forgiveness answered the end, it was to be given constantly. Church discipline is another thing, it comes to be judicial and needed for clearing conscience. The spirit of forgiveness belonged essentially to the Christian. By being forgiven he was one, and he was not partaker of it if he had not the spirit of it. I apprehend, in the form of the parable, that there is an allusion to the Lord's forgiveness of the nation, even after killing Him if they repented (Acts iii.), and their refusal of grace, as shewn towards the Gentiles, involving them in all the consequences of their first guilt against Christ.

CHRIST IN GLORY.

II.—THE HOLY GHOST ON EARTH.

“THE Holy Ghost was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified” (John vii. 39), is the statement of the Apostle John by the Spirit explanatory of the Lord’s words, that believers should be channels for the outflow of living waters. Very important is this, marking, as it does, a difference between the time before the Lord was glorified, and the present period, which commenced with the day of Pentecost, and thus brings out one special characteristic of the time in which we live.

But what, it may be asked, did John mean by the words, “The Holy Ghost was not?” Had He not acted on earth before the Lord’s ascension? Unquestionably He had. Before man was created God’s Spirit moved upon the face of the waters (Gen. i. 2), and before the flood He had striven with God’s sinful creatures on earth. (Chap. vi. 3.) Joseph was seen by Pharaoh to be animated by the Spirit, when he first

230 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

stood before his face (chap. xli. 38); and the Holy Ghost remained with Israel, teaching them in spite of all their failures, as Haggai declared (chap. ii. 5), and Nehemiah acknowledged. (Chap. ix. 20.) Resting upon Moses, shared in by the elders (Numb. xi. 17, 25, 29,) acting by the judges (chap. iii. 10; vi. 34; xi. 29; xiv. 6; xv. 14), He inspired the prophets, and made even wicked men, as Saul, bend to His will. (1 Sam. x. 10; xix. 23.) By Him too all God's saints from the days of Abel downwards were born again. Clearly therefore His first action on earth was not delayed till after Pentecost. What then did John mean? He was speaking of the Spirit's coming to earth to dwell, consequent on the ascension of the Lord to glory, and as a witness of it. This is a distinctive feature of Christianity, and concerns both the world and God's saints.

Acting on man in different ages of the world, He was not to come to dwell on earth, till after the Lord had gone to the Father. The Lord therefore spoke

of this event as future, but Peter, who shared in the outpouring of the Spirit, could speak of the Holy Ghost as present (Acts v. 32), a fact attested by the whole company of the apostles, as they stood up with him, when he addressed the multitude on the day of Pentecost; and as souls bowed to the testimony concerning Christ (chap. x. 44), or were obedient to what they were told (chap. ii. 38), they shared in the new and wonderful blessing bestowed on the Church of God. Jews who had worshipped Jehovah, Gentiles who had worshipped devils, when once they received the witness to Christ's work and its results, were dwelt in by the Holy Ghost. The change which thereby took place was immense. The tide of God's goodness was no longer bounded by the narrow confines of the land of Canaan. God's grace no longer ran in the one channel of Jacob's descendants. Wherever there was a heart acted upon by the Spirit to receive His witness to the work of Christ, there was a new outflow provided for the rushing stream of God's

232 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

grace, now embracing all who would accept it, irrespective of nationality, locality, or condition. The ignorant heathen of Lycaonia, the educated Greeks, and the dominant Latin race, could share in common with Israel in this wonderful gift, received directly in Jerusalem and Cæsarea, conferred by apostolic hands in Samaria and Ephesus, and bestowed on many a soul in the distant regions of Galatia. Slaves as Onesimus, freedmen as Luke, if we may draw this conclusion from his name, men of wealth as Philemon, those free-born as Paul, with the humble and unlearned fishermen of Galilee, were in themselves witnesses that the Spirit had come because that Jesus was glorified, being united by Him to the living and glorified Head of the body in heaven. Leaving aside for the present the truth concerning the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in believers, we would direct the reader's attention to the truths connected with the Holy Spirit's presence on earth; of this, Peter speaks in his epistles. "Holy men of God," he tells

us, "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter i. 21), the Spirit of Christ being in them (1 Peter i. 11); but, though this was true of prophets in all ages, the apostle marked the change which had taken place, when he wrote, that the gospel had been preached to those to whom he was writing with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. (1 Peter i. 12.) Of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on Israel, and on all flesh, the prophets had written (Isaiah xxxii. 15; xliv. 3; Ezek. xxxix. 29; Joel ii. 28, 29); but this, though a blessing enjoyed by Christians, and never known till Pentecost, will not be a blessing peculiar to them; whereas the dwelling of the Holy Ghost on earth, consequent on the Lord being in heaven, is, and will be, a feature peculiar to Christianity only. Of this we have no direct prediction in the Old Testament, though the terms in which God's promise to Israel to dwell among them is couched, admits of its application to the present condition of things. (2 Cor. vi. 16.)

But how, it may be asked, does the

234 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

truth of the Holy Ghost's presence on earth as dwelling here concern the world, and concern God's saints? The Lord beforehand explained this. "When he is come," He said, speaking of the Spirit — observe the language. He speaks, not of an influence, but of a person — "when he is come he will reprove [or bring demonstration to] the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." (John xvi. 8—11.) How little surely is it understood that the presence of One unseen on earth is fraught with such solemn consequences for the world! for, as He could not come till the Lord had gone away, He came as sent by Christ from the Father, (chap. xv. 26) a witness as to where Christ is, and who He is. The Spirit's presence therefore now, as the One who abides on earth, bears witness of an absent Christ as regards this world, but an accepted Christ as regards

heaven. Exalted by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, Christ has, says Peter, shed forth this which ye now see and hear. (Acts ii. 33.) Thus the Spirit's presence now on earth is a standing witness of Christ's acceptance in heaven. And in each place, where He is mentioned in John's gospel, as having to do with the world, the Lord describes Him as the One whom He will send (John xv. 26, xvi. 7); whereas, when He is telling the disciples what the Comforter will be to them, apart from His action toward the world, He speaks of Him as sent by the Father. (Chap. xiv. 16, 26.) The Comforter would come to them as the Father's gift: He would be on earth a witness to the world, as sent down to it by the ascended Christ, who is God's Son. The world's sin is thus brought out, though not of necessity brought home to it. The Spirit's presence attests its sin, without reference to any work on consciences to confess it; for we have not here (chap. xvi. 8—11) the Spirit's

236 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

work by instruments of His choice, but the effect of His presence apart from any labours evangelistic or didactic. The Spirit's presence, sent by Christ, proclaims whether righteousness was found in the crucified One, or in the world which crucified Him. The Spirit's presence announces as certain the judgment of this world, because God, by placing Christ in glory, has judged the action of the prince of this world, who excited men to kill Him. Thus the world is deeply concerned in the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth.

Besides this, His presence here concerns God's saints. The Lord's departure, an event which, when in prospect, filled the hearts of the apostles with sorrow, has proved to all God's people an immense gain. The other Comforter has come, who could not come till the Lord had gone. Henceforth they were to know the blessing of having two Comforters or Paracletes—the Lord in heaven (1 John ii. 1), and the Holy Ghost on earth; for the Greek word translated Comforter in the gospel is the

same as that translated Advocate in the epistle. Another Comforter He is called, not a substitute for the Lord, but an additional one. Of this One they were told that He would abide with them for ever, not like the Lord, whose short sojourn with them as a man on earth was about to cease. The Holy Ghost would abide with them, and be in them, a divine Person to teach them all things, Himself all the while unseen, though known to them. Moreover, what they had often heard from Christ, but had not remembered, the Spirit would bring back to their mind. Thus nothing of that which they had heard would they lose, and all that they could learn He would teach them. He was likewise to be the director of the work on earth, as we see from the Acts was the case, (chap. viii. 29; xiii. 2, 4; xv. 28; xvi. 6, 7; xx. 28,) and the leading witness for Christ in the midst of the opposition to truth, and the hatred of all that is of God among men. (John xv. 26, 27.) Many things had Christ to say to the disciples, but they could not bear them then : of

238 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

these they would not be deprived, for the Holy Ghost would guide them into all the truth, being the Spirit of truth. (Chap. xvi. 13.) All then that God would declare about Christ, who is the truth, they would learn from the Holy Ghost.

This helps us to understand a remarkable statement in Colossians, that to Paul was it given to fulfil the word of God, that is, to complete the range of subjects concerning Christ, which God has been pleased to reveal, by unfolding the mystery of the Church. (Chap. i. 25, 26.) For, though Peter and John tell us of things on which Paul is silent, the apostle to the Gentiles fills up the gap in the revelation of God's counsels hitherto a blank. A reference to Leviticus xxiii. illustrates this. There we have set forth the ecclesiastical year of the Jews, typical of God's dealings with them. But in the middle of it, between the feast of Pentecost and the feast of trumpets, the latter as yet wholly unfulfilled, a long blank comes in of some months, during which God en-

joined not on Israel the observance of any times, the sabbaths and the new moons excepted. This interval, a blank in their ecclesiastical year, Paul shews us as filled up by that which God is doing now, between the feast of Pentecost, and the taking up of Israel as a nation in blessing, preparatory to their observance of the day of atonement, and the world's celebration with them of the feast of tabernacles, then to be fulfilled in millennial rest. Thus the whole outline of God's dealings with His people, since He brought Israel out of Egypt, till the Lord shall reign, is now unfolded to us. What concerned Israel directly, their annual round of festivals pre-figured; but the long blank in the middle of their year, never explained to them, is now filled up to us, since the Holy Ghost has come, sent by the Father and the Son, to dwell on earth in the habitation of God. (Ephesians ii. 22.)

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. THE TRUTH REVIVED IN LATE YEARS AND THE OPPOSITION TO IT.

THE doctrine of justification by faith was revived to the Church in Luther's day, and in late years two great truths have also been revived: one, that the Holy Ghost dwells on earth, the other, that the saints are the body of Christ here, baptized by one Spirit into one body, of which He is the Head in heaven.

As each of these truths has been maintained, a direct opposition has been raised against it. The violence and malice of Rome was, and is, arrayed against the first, whilst against the other two, there are special adversaries which are only unmasked in proportion as there is persistent faithfulness to the truth.

The first thing for the saint to accept is, that distinct and important truths have been revived. No saint now-a-days will deny that justification by faith is an all-important truth, though many in Luther's day, and even subsequently, have conscientiously opposed it. Many

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 241

saints in the present day do not see the immense importance of the truth of the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, and that the body of Christ is here formed by the baptism of the Holy Ghost; and inasmuch as they do not receive these truths, they do not enjoy the grace conferred by them, nor are they competent to be witnesses of Christ on earth. Without the doctrine of justification by faith, there could be no assurance to the soul of escape from divine judgment. No one could have a sense of pardon without accepting it. But many who have a sense of pardon, have no guarantee or seal of the divine work in their souls. They do not believe that the Spirit of God dwells in them, or that the Holy Ghost forms the saints into one body, and that He dwells here to testify for Christ; so that they cannot, though assured of safety because of justification by faith, be happy individually, nor can they understand their privileges and responsibilities corporately, nor the nature or manner of testimony for Christ here. Thus there must be igno-

242 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

rance on these most important subjects, unless the truths brought out in these late years be accepted and maintained.

Now these truths are united and yet quite distinct. We see in John's Gospel that the Comforter would be sent by the Father, for the comfort of the individual saint (see John xiv. 26), while for testimony it is the Lord who sends Him. (Chap. xv. 26.) "The Comforter whom I will send to you from the Father, he shall testify of me." Paul alone speaks of the body: "we are all baptized by one Spirit into one body." Now these truths are in advance of the doctrine of justification by faith without works; no exercised heart can deny that they offer and propose a progress far beyond that of justification by faith. A sinner is lost unless he be justified; this is the beginning; but what advance can there be if there be no unqualified known certainty of it by the indwelling Spirit, and if there be no apprehension of our corporate privileges, nor of the testimony for Christ here? Yet these truths which confer so much are as little

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 243

known in this day as was justification by faith in a former day, and the ignorance and opposition of heart to them are as great; otherwise, why are not saints ready and eager to receive them?

Now let us see what these truths involve. First, individually there is no seal nor earnest of the inheritance unless the Holy Ghost dwells in the saint. When the saint knows himself to be the temple of the Holy Ghost, he is assured both of a present salvation, and of a future inheritance. Surely very few believe this, and fewer still enjoy it; but that this truth, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, should have been brought to light in this day, is a momentous fact and involves great responsibility to all who hear of it. For if the doctrine of justification was great, this must be still greater, inasmuch as it confirms and establishes, perfectly and eternally, what the former commenced. The knowledge of forgiveness of sins does not preserve from the flesh. It is only as we walk in the Spirit, that we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. It is Christ

244 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

living in us and setting us free from everything of the old man. Many a one who fully believes in justification by faith, finds to the pain and sorrow of his conscience that he has no control over the flesh, and that he is continually led by it; and this is because he does not believe that the Holy Ghost is the One who would now dwell in his body, to rule and order it for Christ. If one did not know how the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, one would be surprised at the hesitation of any saint to bow to this truth, or to raise any question as to it. But surely many a pious one, in an earlier day, raised questions as to the genuineness of justification by faith, and we ought not to be surprised at finding still greater and more subtle opposition to this. Alas! the flesh is the great opposer to this truth. All that the flesh likes is opposed to it. There is a personal opposition to it, because it sets aside man in his own will completely, and therefore, though the deliverance be desired by the conscience, there is an unwillingness to give up

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 245

oneself, and to acknowledge the Holy Ghost as the guest who is to rule and order instead. Besides, unless a saint in himself is a temple of the Holy Ghost, unless he has drunk of the self-same Spirit, he cannot see how we are all baptized by one Spirit into one body. But when he enjoys the privileges which are his, through the indwelling Spirit, he enters also into the responsibilities of the great calling of the Church as committed to the apostle Paul, and taught in the epistle to the Ephesians.

If saints are the members of the body of Christ, formed into one body by the Spirit of God, they are bound to preserve this unity in the bond of peace. They have to refuse everything which would grieve or hinder the Spirit. I cannot confine myself to my own conscience, or to the consciences of those immediately in fellowship with me. Whatever is necessarily incumbent on me as of the one body, is equally necessary and incumbent on any other member of it as a member. I am not speaking of matters of mere conscience,

246 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

but whatever would defile me as a member of Christ's body, I must regard as defiling to any other member; otherwise I do not understand the unity of the body, and that it is formed by the Spirit of God. If I understand that I am a member of the body of Christ on earth, I feel that I have a claim on every saint on the earth, and every one of them has a claim on me; and we are bound, in a common responsibility, to meet together and to avow ourselves as of this oneness—"one loaf"—at the Lord's table, thus expressing our unity. Hence the table must be one, however extended: it is only one, as the Holy Ghost is one, and any one member received or excluded at one place must be received or excluded at every place. If there be but one table (and there is but one), anything done, or maintained by any one which disqualifies him from the table, is binding on every one forming the table. The length of the table does not make that right or allowable at one end, which is wrong, contrary to the Lord, at the other. The whole is

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 247

answerable for a part, for it is an expression of the body. It must be so, otherwise there would be a denial of the unity of the Spirit.

Now the maintenance of this truth would impose on us an order of union and service to one another, unknown and unpractised in the Church generally, and would expose every one maintaining it to painful separation from, and exclusiveness with regard to, every saint refusing to bow to the great responsibility belonging to this high position; for a member, who will not be a true member, is like a dislocated one, causing suffering rather than being of use. There is no truth that the art and malice of Satan so assails as the truth of the mystery of Christ. It connects the saints so distinctly with Christ in heaven, and with one another by the Spirit of God, that one who realizes it is superior to everything of man, although a man himself, and living among men; and hence there is no truth so little known or enjoyed, nor any which so many have in a sense received, but have

248 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

afterwards surrendered as untenable. There is no truth so difficult to hold in any measure along with what is ordinarily received. Let any one ask himself how much he enters into being united to Christ as Head, and to the saints in one body here on earth, by the Holy Ghost, and he will see, if he judges truly, that he knows little of this wondrous truth. And it is because it is the greatest and the most blessed truth that Satan, the spirit of evil, is more opposed to it than to any other; and this accounts for the laxity, so deadly and terrible in its character, which has sprung up, and will ever spring up, fiercely, as the truth is maintained fully in order to neutralize it.

Now the great opposition to this truth does not come from the saints who are utterly ignorant of it, but from those who in word avow that they hold it. New as it is, and long as it was lost to the Church, they profess to be enlightened in it and assume that they are all but martyrs for this truth of the unity of the saints, and yet from not

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 249

understanding the nature and the susceptibilities of this divine union and what it claims, they really undermine the truth by their hollow and partial imitation of it. The greatest wile or bye-path is that which comes nearest the true thing, and the curious strategic way in which they defend and propagate their laxity, while avowing this truth in word, is astounding. Brotherly love and social intercourse are in their mind the two great evidences or results of this truth, and thus they are deceived; but however satisfied they may be with themselves, they never come to the knowledge of it divinely, but subvert in principle what they profess to know, and therefore they are, as Sanballat and Geshem (Neh. vi. 2) in a former day, and to be especially resisted and avoided. The great thing for the faithful to note is the form in which Satan seeks to undermine this truth. Each corps of adversaries is to be known by its facings. But I press that nothing shews the importance of this truth more than the peculiarity of

250 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

the weapons which have been used to neutralize it, and by those too who in conscience considered they were upholding it. The more one has the anointed eye, the more one is astonished at the art and subtlety in which this strange warfare has been carried on. It is not an open enemy, but mine own familiar friend, he that supped with me, hath lifted up his heel against me. Since the days of Judas down, I suppose there never was a more fearful trespass committed in the Church against Christ than the opposition of those who in word accept the truth of the unity of the body, and yet are lax in their separation from those who are in association with unsound teaching. I speak not now of individuals, I only call attention to the fact of the character and nature of the adversary, which by assuming the truth can come near enough to strike the deadliest blow.

But besides the Holy Ghost being here to comfort and establish the individual saint, and to unite each to the other, in one body with the Head in heaven, He is dwelling here to witness

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 251

for Christ; He is the power of testimony for the absent Christ. The Jew, to whom God had committed the lively oracles, has rejected the Son of God; and the Gentile has used the sword of power, which God had placed in man's hands, against the Lord of glory. Man had in a twofold way proved his unfitness to be the agent for Christ in His absence. Hence the Holy Ghost is sent down to dwell here, not only to comfort the hearts of the saints, but to testify of Christ, convicting the world, giving evidence of its guilt, and of God's judgment. So distinctly and altogether is the Holy Ghost the instrument of all power that He does not, and could not, accept co-operation or countenance from man as man or from the world, seeing that He is evidence of the world's position before God, and also that He is able to effect everything by Himself according to the mind of God. No human means of any kind, whatsoever, can impart or secure divine comfort to our hearts, and neither can any other than the Holy Ghost testify for Christ. If

252 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

through faith I accept Him for the one, I must accept Him for the other; for I am really weak in my apprehension of the first, which I need for my own individual blessing, when I do not see Him in the second. He is neither the Comforter in power for my own heart nor for service. The maintenance of this truth imposes on us a very peculiar path, for everything has been carried on in the professing church in quite a different principle; and as no sect in Christendom accepts this truth in this simple way, I must, if I hold it, run counter in testimony and service to every known denomination. Although that the Holy Ghost as the sole agent of testimony for Christ here is plainly revealed, yet men's minds are so warped by habit and theological tradition, that they do not see how they are diverted and debarred from the true path of a servant on the earth. Now as soon as any one seeks and by faith enters on this new path, a path lost sight of until late years, so soon will he be assailed in every conceivable way, according to his earnest-

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 253

ness of heart, to go back, in measure, to the things he has left. It makes Satan desperate to see even one able to stand forth and express entire confidence in the Spirit of God on earth, and to work on, patiently, without having recourse to any of the expedients which even the godly use for the dissemination of the gospel. But seeing that this is one of the great truths revived in this day, shall we not boldly insist on it, and maintain it, as in their day the martyrs insisted on justification by faith? Let us not confuse our minds by asking, How can we do without this or that? How can the ark be carried without a cart? We should simply accept the truth of God as set forth in His word. The worst opposition comes from within, and from the true-hearted, who cannot understand how they can carry on the testimony without the means and appliances to which they have been, from time immemorial, accustomed. This is the great trial of this day! but God will vindicate the faithful. May our eyes be more simply turned to Him!

REALITY.

WHEN waves roll over us and especially when they come, so to speak, unexpectedly, there is no hiding oneself from God, without whom they could not have come, and who makes both Himself and His voice known to us in the midst of them, and tests and tries ourselves and our standing. Nature in us may throw up a thousand things, get the upper hand, and occupy our minds and souls, and we only discover to ourselves, and to others thereby, that not God but self and circumstances were in our hearts when the wave struck us. If such be the case with us the lesson is good and from the hand of God, though the discovery to us is how much we needed the purging; how little He was the centre of our thoughts. If, however, the Lord is at home in our hearts when the sorrow comes, then, however weak we may be, we find rest. "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good," is our language, even though we may not understand the Lord's *why* in the trial. The great thing I would

REALITY.

255

aim at is *reality*. To be before God just as I am; and to take care that my practical walk and life as He sees it, be owned by Him, and be in conformity with His word. Experience and feeling and profession are beautiful things when they are the result of reality before God, in one's secret hidden walk with Him. But at all times, and especially in an hour of visitation, I should be more anxious to be real before Him than full of feelings. It is but a very little while, and the summit of the hill will be reached, and then the Lord Himself will be our fully satisfying portion.

DEVOTEDNESS.

A GREAT many think, Martha-like, that Christ must want this or that and are missing His mind all the time, missing the one thing which, of all others, is the most cheering to the heart, namely, getting acquainted with His mind. If I am thoroughly devoted I *study* His mind, and say, "Teach me thy way." If I am taken up with the world or with

256 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

things here, He cannot do so. He likes to teach us, but we must not be indifferent to it. We must value it; "watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors." Increased communion with Him is the greatest reward and desire of the devoted heart. Hence the most devoted is the most useful, and no one is so completely above the difficulties in this scene as the one wholly devoted, like a Ruth, or a Caleb, to Christ in it.

 JEHOVAH NISSI.

THROUGH scenes of sorrow, sin, and shame,
 We're kept, Lord Jesus, in thy name,
 Thy name, our banner, tower, and stay,
 To keep us through this dark'ning day.

Reveal to each, O Lord, we pray
 The love that guards the rugged way;
 Reveal to each, in power of prayer,
 The cloven rock—the secret stair!

Reveal to each thy Spirit here,
 To guard, to guide, to feed, to cheer;
 Reveal to each thy Spirit's power,
 To keep us through this dark'ning hour!

Reveal, that thus thy name may be
 God's psalm, God's song, God's melody!
 To cheer each heart, each soul sustain,
 Till thou, Lord Jesus, com'st again!

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

PART XI.

THE next chapter (xix.) furnishes us, I think, with some very important principles. Nature, brought up, and as God formed it, was fully recognized, but a principle and power brought in which is wholly above it, and in its actual moral state it is fully detected and judged; while the following of Christ out of nature's power has blessing in this world and in that to come. This—setting every thing in its place on the rejection of Christ, which did reveal every thing, and brought in a new power—is full, it seems to me, of the deepest instruction. It has its occasion first as a question debated in the Jewish school, to which the Lord gives the divine answer which unfolds the whole state of things: “Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?” The Lord goes back behind the law to God's original institution: “He which made them at the beginning from the beginning it was not so.” Thus God's natural order, the relationship He

VOL. VI.

K

258 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

had formed, origin of all other human relationship, is restored by Christ's authority. He returns to God and God's institution of man. It is not Jehovah, it is not "my Father," but God made them—a very important principle. The law takes its place as a provisional thing by the bye. Looked at as a Jewish law, a law of ordinances, God had made allowance for the hardness of the human heart, and now returned to His own thoughts and institutions. God's order created order. But besides this, another power is come in, which is not nature but divine, as in the power of the Spirit of God, because nature is all ruined, the power of evil is in the world to which nature is no answer, because it is what is ruined; power therefore comes in, which is above nature as being of God, but which consequently owns nature as He made it, and His institutions. To break them is sin, to live above them is the gift of God. "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." Hence also the Lord receives little children and blesses them. This

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

259

was in God's order and of God's creation, in a certain sense unspoiled. I speak not of the root of sin, but of the manifestation of evil in the world. In themselves they were the fruit of God's natural order as yet in a state unspoiled and natural. And so they are. The kingdom of heaven set up this order again in natural relationships and nature as God made it. We are not talking of the Church here, that has its relationships spoken of in chapter xviii. But nature, however amiable and good in this sense, has the deep root of evil in it. This we see in the young man who runs up to the Lord. A beautiful character,—his shewing desire of learning of Him, whom he saw to be the most perfect master of good, would inherit eternal life, had kept all those commandments which were the maintenance of the relationships we have spoken of. But the Lord cuts down the whole seed of man (for the young man came to Him as a man, a Rabbi). There was none good but one,—God; still for man the commandments were His will, and for

260 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

man to enter into life, he was to keep them in the system of the law. Relationship to God, the Lord does not speak of, and He says *life*, dropping the word eternal, which the young man had used. But the way of life for man in this world was keeping the commandments. The young man, like Paul, was irreproachable in conduct. The Lord puts the test of lust and of his heart, and all was wrong. Instead of lust judged, and all counted dung for Christ, Christ is left for the riches which his lust clung to. This tale was told of man's heart; even where irreproachable, lust possessed it, and earth, not heaven, was its desire. The new and heavenly thing had come in which detected its state, and the fairest remains of creation; character and qualities were nothing; the heart was away from God. Riches—which to a Jew were a sign of divine favour according to the government of this earth, now that God was revealed and man's state made manifest, that it was a question of man's heart with God—were the greatest hindrance. The reason was simple, they

held the desires of the natural heart. But if one with the best qualities, and the desire of doing good, and such an opportunity, were not saved, who was to be? The Lord's answer does not avoid the consequence; with man it was impossible: plain, earnest and solemn testimony. But that did not hinder God, all was possible with Him and He could save. We have then the consequence of giving up all for Christ, but not beyond the kingdom. All here concerns the kingdom. Peter, ever forward, puts the question, What were they to have who had forsaken all? In the renewed world, which was coming, they would be on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, the first places in the centre of the kingdom; and every one who had left what nature loved, for Christ's name, would have a hundred-fold in this world, and then everlasting life; for in following Christ, eternal life comes in, not in doing the law.

But the principle on which it is done is also of all importance. Many then first should be last, and who were last

262 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

first, but as a principle it is (chap. xx.) always true. And the principle laid down is this—labouring through confidence in Christ, and not for so much reward, grace and not law: reward is encouragement to endurance not motive. Those who agreed for their penny got their penny, those who trusted the master of the vineyard got according to his heart. “What is right I will give,” and they went on his word. The assurance of reward for sacrifice is there when Christ is the motive of the sacrifice; but where the reward is the motive of the service, it is poor pay and indeed all is false. But thus there are (the converse) last first, those who with perhaps later opportunity of service have more trust in the Lord’s heart and faithfulness, and reap the fruit of it in Him. The sovereign grace of God is the source of true blessing. But here service, not conversion, is the question. Chapter xviii. on to thus far in chapter xx. closes the moral instruction of His disciples, as giving the true character and state of things, brought in by His

rejection, and the principles the disciples were to act upon. Chapter xviii. more within, among saints. Chapter xix. man's state and the kingdom, the principle of service being shewn in chapter xx. The Lord then proceeds to tell them of His rejection as immediate in Jerusalem where He was going. That He could give them the cup, that was all. He was taking the lowly place, ministering, and giving His life a ransom for many: the high places in His kingdom were for those for whom they were prepared of His Father. Then, as in all the three gospels, begins the history of the last scenes with the blind man near Jericho.

"Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" As Son of man He bore my sins, but victory over the world is through faith in the Son of God. What is the power of anything? When brought into collision with the Son of God, it is gone. Are you an overcomer? I do expect a Christian to overcome something, even if he be only born a few days. Overcoming is the habitual state of the believer.

ISHMAEL "THE WILD MAN," AND ISAAC.

MOST are aware of the importance which attaches to the principle of "calling," as illustrated in the ways of God with Abraham; nevertheless it was a strange act to call a man out of the world, until one sees what the fall of man really involved, and the contrast there was through it between Adam and the living God. Stranger still, when God destroyed that world by the waters of a flood, and brought Noah out of the ark, to begin a new history in this; and that He should yet further separate Abram, the head of the family of faith, from "his father, and his father's house." Was it change of mind and purpose on the part of the Creator, to destroy the work of six days which He affirmed to be so perfect and good, and where He rested? Why save a family of eight souls in an ark, out of the universal destruction by a deluge? Why did Noah on his part "build an altar unto the Lord," and take of every clean beast and of every clean fowl, to offer burnt-offerings?

Was there nothing left, that was morally clean in the sight of God amongst men, the head of whom had been originally "created in the image of God," that He could own? Nothing outside man, of all that continued clean and untainted, whether of beast or bird, that would avail for him, save as it was offered in sacrifice, as a "sweet savour" in his stead? The answer which every enlightened conscience gives before God, to such enquiries as these, tells plainly enough why Abram should have been "by calling" placed in advance of Noah, just as Noah "by covenant" was put really in advance of Adam, who stood by himself, as the sole and responsible head of mankind.

The sovereignty of God in thus acting towards one and another in the general ruin, and separating such to Himself, either by the promised seed of the woman, or by covenanted blessing, through the sweet savour on the altar—or else by calling out, and counting all such righteous by faith—was the only anchor for the soul, out of the general drift of a ruined

266 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

creation. This principle of separation unto God found its application in their families too; so that among the sons of Adam, "Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." On the other hand, Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, after the murder of his brother, "cursed from the earth; and a wanderer in it, all the days of his life." In righteousness, the punishment thus inflicted outside the garden, on Cain, was very different from that originally pronounced by God upon Adam and Eve: they were not doomed as fugitives, or vagabonds; but "driven out from the garden" of Eden. It is important to see further, that these judicial actings of God against sin and evil are as general and unchanging in His ways of government among the races of men, as are His purposes in grace (whether in calling, or blessing) special and unalterable to the elect. Among the sons of Noah, for example, the punishment of Ham remains upon Africa, to this day; as do the earthly

settlements of Shem, in Asia; and Japheth, in Europe, "dwelling moreover in the tents of Shem," as Japheth does in the east. So in the family of Abram, the same differences are maintained between Ishmael and Isaac. But perhaps the strongest examples of the sovereignty of God are supplied in the two sons of Isaac, by that memorable scripture, "Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated." Thus Adam and his sons, in the world before the flood; Noah and his three sons in the world that now is; Abraham and his two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, in the narrower circle of the circumcised,—all go to make up the classifications, and to maintain the contrast between those who are the children of the flesh, and others who are the children of God.

The first family had, alas, also produced the murderer, so that morally (as well as by righteous decree) Cain became a fugitive as regards God, and a vagabond in relation to the world; the two characteristics which (with their variations) stamp the great mass of the

268 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

world's population at this hour. In the second family (disgraced by the drunkenness of its head) the sons of Noah sought to *hide* the shame of their father, with the exception of Ham, who was cursed, and brought into the world this further punishment to Cain's, "a *servant* of servants shall he be to his brethren," and slavery was thus inflicted. In the third family of Abraham, Ishmael was the firstborn—of whom the angel of the Lord said to Hagar, "he will be a *wild* man, his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him, and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." It is with this last family, which was enclosed out of the wide world's population by the outward sign of circumcision, and more particularly with this Ishmael "the wild man" of it, that our attention is to be directed. The first intimation of his outbreak is recorded in Genesis xxi. after the birth of Isaac, "when Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian mocking, on the day that Abraham made a great feast upon the weaning of Isaac, the child

and heir of promise." The result of this was, that Sarah said to Abraham, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." So Ishmael dwelt in the wilderness of Paran, and became an archer, and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt. Years after this, when Esau discovered that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father, he went unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives he had, Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, to be his wife. Thus, "the wild man, whose hand would be against every man"—and this Esau, "who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright," drew together—and by the marriage of Mahalath became one flesh.

At the first, they pitched outside the border of Canaan, the land of promise, which Abraham carefully gave to his son Isaac, and "dwelt from Havilah to Shur, that lieth before Egypt, as thou goest towards Assyria," and became merchantmen. In the course of their

270 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

traffic, the Ishmaelites bought Joseph of the sons of Jacob for twenty pieces of silver, and God in sovereignty used them for delivering Joseph out of their hands. and for carrying out His purposes by taking him down into Egypt, where they sold him to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, and captain of the guard. The sons of Ishmael with their names, by their towns and their castles, twelve princes according to their nations are stated in Genesis xxv.; and their father died and was gathered unto his people, "in the presence of all his brethren."

Some of the wild men afterwards got into the land of promise, till under the captain of the Lord's host they and others were overcome; nevertheless the twelve tribes failed to drive them clean out of Canaan. In the times of the Judges, some of them "greatly oppressed and impoverished the children of Israel," till Gideon rose up against the hosts of the Midianites, and turned Ishmael again out of the house. Gideon however committed a trespass by coveting the golden earrings which these

Ishmaelites wore, and the collars and raiment of their kings, and the chains that were about their camels' necks. In this way Gideon brought strange flesh once more into the house—for (though like Saul afterwards, who spared the best of Agag, for sacrifice to the Lord) he made an ephod thereof, and in piety perhaps, placed it in his city, even in Ophrah to commemorate God's triumph and their victory, yet all Israel went thither a whoring after it, so that this thing became a snare to Gideon and his house. So also in the days of Nehemiah, they failed to separate themselves from strange flesh, but intermarried with the wild men till they were again put from among them.

The fulfilment of this remarkable prophecy respecting the descendants of Ishmael may be further traced in the history of the Hagarenes, Saracens, and other tribes of Arabs, who have been in all ages, even to the present day, a hardy, unsubdued race of freebooters, distinct from other nations. Indeed, with the exception of the Jews, the

272 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

descendants of Ishmael are the only people who have existed distinct from the beginning, and have been preserved by remarkable interpositions of divine power. Though in the outward government of God, the separation was thus maintained between Ishmael and Isaac, the sons of Abraham—as afterwards between Esau and Jacob—yet in Israel's typical days and its foreshadowings of the millennial glory, all these histories are in the divine mind but an allegory, and answer “to the two covenants, the one from Mount Sinai which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar—and the other to Jerusalem which is above and is free, which is the mother of us all.”

When all were finally put to the test, as Israel was, by the incarnation of Jesus as their Messiah (the true Isaac, and child of promise, Abraham's son and heir), the mocking Ishmaels of that day denied the Lord in all His rights and glories, and laughed Him to scorn, even when He proved the truth of His words by the miracles which He wrought. Their opposition to the Son of God, born

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 273

into the house, plainly enough proved whose children they were, and Jesus, on His part, lays this fact solemnly upon their conscience and heart, in His testimony against them in John viii. If Israel cannot receive this child born—this Son given—in the glory of His humiliation from the Father's bosom, and the virgin's womb (by the angel's song) according to promise and covenant and prophecy, they have no alternative but to pass into the place of Ishmael the wild man, and do the deeds of their father.

(To be continued.)

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE FIRST CIRCLE OF INTEREST; OR,
THE RIGHT START.

It is often the case, that though there may be much readiness and zeal to serve the Lord, there is not watchfulness enough as to the start. Activity is more before the mind, than the starting place for all true activity and service; and if the latter, starting from the

274 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

right point, be overlooked, there will be a flaw all through the course, which will betray the first failure; for however true and earnest the purpose, that which is crooked cannot be made straight.

No one can question that there is a right point to start from, and that there is a first circle of interest to the heart of Christ; and that whatever is first to the Lord, must be first to His servants. The first thing then to be assured of is the circle of interest which is first with Him. The Church, the bride-elect, is His first circle. "He loved the church and gave himself for it, and no man ever hateth his own flesh, but loveth and cherisheth it as the Lord the church." He is now sanctifying it, having purged it by the washing of water by the word. Now as the Church is Christ's first circle of interest on earth, so every servant, in order to be right, must start from it. This being conceded, let us see how the work of Christ can be carried on in keeping with it. First, let us see

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 275

how scripture insists on this truth. In Matthew xvi. the Lord, consequent on His rejection looming before Him, after the death of John the Baptist, conducts the disciples to the new ground, practically defined by "the other side and no bread" (see ver. 5), and they then learn not through flesh and blood, but through revelation from the Father, that Jesus is the Son of God; and that He is the Rock, the new ground, and the foundation on which He builds His Church. Here is disclosed the great circle of His interest on His being rejected; and every builder walking in faithfulness, must seek to have his work really and truly laid on this foundation, which is outside and beyond man's mind and power. The work that does not start from the Rock, and find its foundation on the Son of God, will come to nought, and losing sight of this, as the only true starting-point, has led to the enormous bulk of Christendom. Next, in John xv. when the Lord was about to go away, He tells His disciples to "love one another as I have loved you."

276 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

This is His one simple direction to them. This is the start, and the maintenance of this start would put them in their true place here on the earth, in the absence of their Lord. This, their one grand occupation, to love one another as He had loved them, even unto death, and then they would be His friends. He had been their greatest friend, and now He shews them how they could be friends to Him, not in dying for Him, as He had done for them, but in dying for one another. The sphere of His interest was to be the sphere of their interest. Blessed that it is so; and sad deprivation were it otherwise. The effect of this would be, that the world would hate them as it had hated Him. All men would know that they were His disciples by their love one to another. This devotedness of interest for one another unto death, so novel and unaccountable a thing here, would arouse and arrest the attention and chagrin of this selfish world, in a very remarkable way. Who could doubt it? Hence it was the centre from which all the

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 277

vigour of testimony would flow. If the heart be in tone and vigour, there will be vigour throughout the system. The attempt to warm up the extremities when the heart is weak, is superficial and transient. No doubt the vigour will extend from the central organ to the extremities, but all the vigour depends on it. The Lord is explicit as to the course of action, which would awaken testimony to His name; namely, loving one another according to the quality of His love for them, making His first circle, their first circle; shewn in private in washing one another's feet, and publicly in giving their lives for the brethren. It is evident that this is the first circle, and it is also evident that saints failing in it is the great cause of the little testimony now. It is useless for man to argue that there are other ways. The word of God lays down the only right one; and all the others must be defective, whatever the intention may be. Many a true saint seeks on his conversion to do good to others, and is thus led to what are com-

278 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

monly called charities; he becomes interested in the circle of man's need. Now it is not that this should be overlooked, but when it is the principal object before the mind, the start is not a right one, and there will be no real progress in service, no entering into the place of a friend with the Lord, until there is a beginning from the right point, and from thence extending; in fact a running within the posts. It is quite right to reach out our hands to the poor and needy (see Prov. xxxi. 20, &c.), but the wise woman never placed them before her lord's interests in the house (see ver. 11—20). Unless I make this first, He does not communicate to me as to His friend, and the testimony at best cannot be intelligent or after His mind.

Now in Romans xii. where the devotedness incumbent on the justified one is presented, the first circle is the body of Christ. The saint who presents his body a living sacrifice, has first to see and comprehend his relation to that great organization here of which

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 279

we are through grace a part; so we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. If this new relation be not known, there must be an individuality in one's actions which cannot be supported by the Spirit of God. As a member of this great company, how weak and inefficient must I be as a unit instead of co-operating with and receiving co-operation from all the others. One voice isolated from the choir is feeble by itself, and the rest is enfeebled by its absence. For true personal devotedness, one has not made the right start unless he finds his beginning with the one body. Devotedness in its true form and force is lost, unless it starts from the circle of Christ's interests, because otherwise, it must be only a zealous adherence to something less than the chief thing in the mind and heart of Christ. That which I am connected with in my devotedness, necessarily imparts to me a character. It is according to the object which chiefly commands my interest and attention, that I am found. The very

280 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

claim made on me by it, and which I like in my devotedness to answer to, conduces to make me useful and suitable. That which is entitled to the greatest devotedness necessarily makes me the most devoted, and hence, where devotedness is not found by starting from the chief circle—the Church—it must be of a lower kind, and rises no higher than what the sphere of interest requires.

If many a true saint loses the place of being a friend, because He does not start from the right circle, there are more who fail in devotedness, because they accept a lower sphere for its origin and claim than the Church. They satisfy themselves that they are devoted because they are enough so for the line of interest which claims their attention and this is true in itself; but then this devotedness would not be considered sufficient even by themselves, were they to see that the first circle of Christ's interest, the Church, was the sphere where they were to begin their devotedness, and where it was to be born.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 281

Now in 1 Cor. x. where in company with the saints as the one loaf, one has discerned the Lord's body in death, and therefore has judged oneself (chap. xi.), the new sphere is opened out in chapter xii., where the fact that we are baptized by one Spirit into one body is insisted on, and therefore in chapter xiii. we are fitted for service according as we have charity. Charity is shewn to be a surrender of all selfishness, and the effect of the grace of Christ in ourselves. For it is as we are cleared of self, and have Christ's nature working in us, that we are efficient and useful; but the sphere presented to us for this service is distinctly and peculiarly the body of Christ. That which led to so much failure at Corinth was simply this, that each thought for himself and did not connect himself in purpose with the new and spiritual sphere—the sphere to which we are introduced as we truly realize what it is to reach Christ through His death. Then we find that the circle nearest to His heart is now ours, because we are His, and we are conscious of being near to

282 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

Him; and have come so near through His death, that that which interests Him most interests us most. This is the order, and the heart understands it and accepts it; as in Romans the devotedness gets its colour and character from its start, or first circle; so here, the service derives its morale and character from the claims of the body of Christ. If it were an organization of less perfection or sensibility, the service would be less delicate; but seeing that it is the body of Christ, in order to be really qualified for serving it, so that the gifts of the Spirit may be unhindered, we must learn the more excellent way, and that is, the transformation of the man to the nature of Christ in love.

Now in Ephesians the first practical thing enjoined is "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." For this there must be the right start, the first efforts must be in the new order of things. It is not ascending from a low and imperfect order of things up to a high one, but from a high one descending to every circle appointed for

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 283

me here, in order to contribute to them. Here in Ephesians we have God's purpose and view of the Church set before us, and now, when the practical part comes, which would spring from this great truth, the great thing pressed is, that we should endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit, the new relationship, in which we are set. There are plainly other circles in the remainder of the Epistle, and most distinctly defined, and the suited practice enjoined; but the first circle heads the list, intimating that if the first be not first in practice there will be a great deficiency in all the others. As it is devotedness in Romans, service of charity in 1 Corinthians, so is it I apprehend the heavenly element or the mind of Christ which is acquired here in Ephesians. It is important to bear in mind that for progress in any circle, we always begin in the highest. The strength of the natural body is always determined by the vigour of the heart and the head. No one doubts that the beginning must be with Christ, and if so, the start for all progress must be there;

284 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

there is no progress elsewhere, nor can there be advance in any circle but as there is progress in the knowledge of Him, and as there is knowledge of Him, there is necessarily a deeper and fuller connection with His body, the Church, the circle nearest His heart. Every moral quality must come from above, and therefore it is not at the point to which it descends that I am to learn it, and from there to ascend. No, I must learn it above with the Lord, and as I have it, I can then descend, and range through all the lower circles according to the measure of power and grace which I have learned in the uppermost one. Going from darkness into light, is really to better oneself—to be released from the darkness. Coming from the light into the darkness is to confer on those who are in the darkness. As we learn the place in which the grace of God has set us, we enter on a sphere compatible with it. Thus, as we have seen in Romans, it is devotedness, beginning with the body of Christ. In 1 Corinthians it is the manner of service because of our

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 285

relation to one another; in Ephesians, the Spirit's manner and purpose because of our relation to the Lord, and as deriving from Him. Finally, unless I know something of what the Church is to Christ, unless I have learned His affection to the bride, how can I be as the bride prepared and ready for Him? I must be a bride in heart, before I can speak and act as one, and I must know myself as one. I must have learned His love to the Church, before I could be found in the enjoyment of such a relationship. The Lord's first communications after rising from the dead, the first expression of His heart, after He had cleared away in death every obstruction, was to lead the disconsolate Mary Magdalene, the sorrowing earthly bride as it were, into the knowledge and standing of the heavenly one. No one can be prepared or fit for the close—for the reception of the bridegroom—who has not learned the affection which alone can make him in heart and desire a bride.

To recapitulate—First, there is the

286 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

new ground, the building is the Church (Matt. xvi.), and this is the clue to all true work. Secondly, for testimony and to obtain the confidence of the Lord as friends, the circle of the saints must be paramount. (John xv.) Thirdly, for devotedness, it must be the body of Christ. (Rom. xii.) Fourthly, for true service in love, it must be the one body. (1 Cor. x., xiv.) Fifthly, to express the mind of the Lord, the chief endeavour must be to maintain the new relationship. (Eph. iv.) Sixthly, to be the bride here, the first circle of His heart must be the one first and best known to our hearts.

If the Son of man has been "lifted up," I may expect anything—nothing too great to satisfy Him, till He sees us in the glory.

God's delight is in a living person in His presence, whose heart is set upon His people down here, and who wants them to live for Him.

Can you say that you have a full cup outside this scene, and that all the mercies in it are supplementary?

THE PROSPECT OF GLORY.

I go on my way rejoicing,
Though weary the wilderness road—
I go on my way rejoicing,
In hope of the glory of God.

Oh, well do I know that glory,
For there is the Lord I love,
And within the veil is the anchor
That holds my heart above.

Yes, well do I know that glory,
For with open face I see
The light, and the love, and the beauty,
Of Him who is there for me.

And here in the earthen vessel
That treasure of glory gleams—
The life of the Son in heaven,
The fountain from whence it streams.

I gaze upon Christ in glory—
That glory so bright, so fair—
And there passes a change upon me
Till I am as He who is there.

Then no more in the earthen vessel,
The treasure of God shall be,
But in full, and unclouded beauty,
O Lord, wilt thou shine through me.

288 PROSPECT OF GLORY.

Afar through the golden vessel,
Will the glory of God shine bright,
There shall be no need for the sunshine,
For the Lamb shall be the light.

With a light like a stone most precious
The city of God shall shine,
His light in its cloudless glory,
His eternal light is mine.

Undimmed in that wondrous vessel,
The glory of God's great love
Shall beam o'er the earth He ransomed,
And shall fill the heavens above.

All, all in that blest creation
The glory of God shall see,
And the lamp for that light eternal,
The bride of the Lamb shall be.

A golden lamp in the heavens,
That all may see and adore,
The Lamb who was slain and who liveth,
Who liveth for evermore.

So I go on my way rejoicing
That the heavens and earth shall see
His grace and His glory and beauty,
In the depth of His love to me.

1872.

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

PART XII.

IN chapter xx. 30 the Lord accepts the title of Son of David, acting in grace where the place of the curse had been. He is therefore now no longer with the poor of the flock in Galilee, but drawing nigh to Jerusalem, in the character in which He had to say to His people there as such; a last testimony to them before His rejection by them, and their judgment. Accordingly He enters into Jerusalem as King, according to the prophecy of Zechariah, only the first part of it is omitted, the accomplishment of which will be at another time. Then He will be just and having salvation. He was it always; but it was not in that character that He rode into Jerusalem now. His whole character here is placing the Jews under the final test of the presence of Messiah their King, bringing on their judgment as about to leave them, the rejected King passes them all in review before Him

290 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

and assigns them their place. It is the last closing act between Messiah and Jerusalem. God put the testimony in the mouths of the multitude which shall be the cry of Israel in the last days according to Psalm cxviii. He acts as holy King and Judge, and clears the temple of its defilements.

All that follows is the final procedure in which the dignity of the humble rejected One is vindicated against the withered pretensions of the unbelieving heads of Israel; in which each class pretending to call Him in question and perplex Him, comes to receive its sentence from His mouth. Still for every need His power is yet in grace. The blind and the lame come to Him in the temple and are healed. When the chief priests see this done in the temple in public and before the multitude, and the children crying, Hosanna to the Son of David, according to Psalm cxviii., they are sore displeased, and appeal to Jesus to stop it. He answers by the eighth Psalm. He must be glorified, and if He gave Himself, still His glory

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL. 291

must be maintained, and if the simplicity of children did not fulfil the task, as we read elsewhere, the stones would cry out. Here we have only the short and silencing allusion to Psalm viii., and He leaves them. He would no longer sleep in the condemned though loved city. We have then the testimony to the final judgment of Israel as under the first covenant, that is, of man in his responsibility. He came to look for fruit; there were only leaves, and man is judged as utterly fruitless for ever. Israel thus judged would immediately wither away. But the whole power of the people, if the disciples had faith, would be cast into the sea of the Gentiles, and so it was. At the same time, the Lord insists on the power of the prayer of faith in their service.

The chief priests and scribes came to Him as He was teaching to demand His authority for what He did. This is the common question of what is really apostate ecclesiastical authority. That which is of God owns God's work; God's work proves itself. If God's

292 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

work is done, God has wrought it, and God's authority to act is not a matter of question for those who being of God know His work. Man may sometimes mix that which is of himself with it, and so far spoil and enfeeble the testimony, but that which is of God they who are of God will own. In Christ all was perfect, of course. Hence the Lord puts them on their capacity to judge of God's work, and from carnal motives they avow their incapacity to judge of it. Why then should He tell them by what authority He acted? they were confessedly unable to judge of it. It was a humbling setting aside of their pretensions—avowed incapacity. But it is well to remember that God's work does not need authorization. From whom is it to receive it? God assuredly needs none to work, or make others work, and he who pleads ecclesiastical authority for working, proves it is not God who is working, for who can authorize Him?

It may seem more difficult till the proofs are there, but that is a matter of

faith. If Christ has given the talent to trade with, the seeking another authority is proving that he who does so does not know his Master. He does not know that he is sent of Christ, for then he need not seek another. If he has another without that, it is simply nought. But the Lord goes further with their religious authorities, and in the parable of the two sons shews that the repentant sinner, not the pretended just one, was the doer of God's will. The publicans and harlots went into God's kingdom before such. Terrible and humbling sentence, but so it was. Nor had the bowing to John's testimony by these repentant sinners wrought on the conscience of these hardened self-righteous ones.

The Lord then gives utterance to a parable which was the divine judgment on the whole conduct of the leaders of Israel represented by those before Him. He had done everything for His vineyard, and then in due season He sought fruit,—sent the prophets and they were rejected, and persecuted, and killed—yet

294 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

more, and they treated them in the same way; at last He sent His Son, saying, They will reverence my Son. Him they cast out and slew. The chief priests and scribes pronounce the only possible judgment on them in reply to the Lord. It was their own sentence. The Lord then from scripture — testimony which they could not deny — shews that what they rejected was made by God the head of the corner. There could not be a plainer testimony, more immediately applicable. God, and the chiefs of Israel, the builders, were in open contradiction. It was the Lord's doing to exalt the rejected stone. It is still Psalm cxviii. the special oracle of God as to these events. We have then the Lord's open comment and statement as to the result with the Jews — the kingdom of God taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits of the kingdom. It was to Gentiles, but that is not the special point of the Lord's words. It was to a nation bringing forth the fruits of the kingdom. If that be not done, they cease to answer to the

description, whatever the patience of God; and though that be not the subject here, they also would have to be cut off. The same truth is otherwise told in Romans xi.

Further, the stumbling stone (Is. viii.) was there. It was indeed Jehovah Himself in grace. Whoever stumbled on it, was offended in Him, and (this is of wider application than the chief priests,) would be broken, but those on whom He fell when coming again in judgment, would be ground to powder. Such was the present and future result of the responsibility of the Jews to whom every advantage had been given, and to whom the Son of God Himself had come. Here the Lord is looking for fruit. The aspect of the crisis from the side of grace follows. Meanwhile the chief priests and Pharisees would have taken Him, but feared the people.

The very thing I want is death to my flesh. Death to me is only the end of the old man, and if I could always hold myself dead I should always walk in the Spirit.

ISHMAEL "THE WILD MAN," AND ISAAC.

(Continued from page 273.)

THIS sinful and adulterous generation chiefly surrounded the true Son of Abraham, this "Word made flesh" in these chapters of John, of which this eighth is a sample; and judging of His person, and doctrine, and works according to themselves and their thoughts, they mocked Him. How could those who were of the flesh, and born of the flesh, and in sin, judge of Him who was born of the Holy Ghost, and who took upon Him the likeness of men, and was God manifest in the flesh? He passes before them into His own heights, when challenged as the light of the world, and says, "I am from above, ye are from beneath; ye are of this world, I am not of this world." If this record of Himself is judged by them to be untrue, He further sustains it by declaring, "I know whence I came and whither I go; and I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me:" but they cannot rise to its grandeur and beauty!

They drop down into their own littleness and ignorance, as He rises up into His oneness with His Father—and they only sink lower and lower (as man in the flesh must) by every challenge they put. Having refused the record He had given them of Himself, as untrue—they demand, “*where* is thy Father?” and when He further spoke of going, where they could not follow Him, they ask, “will he kill himself?” If in grace He then brings Himself down to the range of their own wants as sinners, and says, “If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins;” it only calls out their stupidity and hatred instead of their faith, and they ask (as if He had but just come among them) “Who art thou?” One step lower Jesus takes, that they may read their own hearts in the light of His presence, “when *ye* have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself, but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things”—but they are Ishmaels and mock.

He has thus walked before them in

L 2

298 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

this significant chapter, as "the light of life," if they had but faith to follow Him, and obtain it. He had also presented Himself to them as "the truth, and the truth which maketh free," if they can believe it and receive Him as the Son who maketh free. Descending in grace into the condition and circumstances in which they were (for they had not faith to rise up to who and what *He* was—and whence He came, and whither He was going) so that He might suit Himself to their state; they deny that they were ever in bondage to any man, and demand "How sayest thou Ye shall be made free?" It is at this point that Jesus makes His mission plain, "verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin: and the servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth ever." This is the new test for the multitude which stood around Jesus; will they own Him, and enter the house with the promised Isaac, now born into it, and keep the feast which the Father has made, and become free from the bondage of sin and

its slavery through the lifted up Son of man; or take part and place with Ishmael the wild man, whose hand was to be against every man, and prove they are of the flesh by condemning Him and going about to kill Him? The Lord owns their claim to be Abraham's seed, but denies that they were Abraham's children, because they did not the works of Abraham. In the midst of sinners, yet He walks as holy and separate from them as such, and asks, "Which of you convinceth me of sin, and if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" Now that the Son of God is come into the midst of men, tests of obedience and standards of faith cannot remain as they were, but must take their new character from what He is; and the light whence He has come, and the glory where He is going. The flesh and sin, the world and Satan, are also brought out and manifested in their own proper nature, in relation to Christ and to God. "We be not born of fornication, say they, we have one Father, even God;" but Jesus said to them, If God were your Father, ye would

300 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

love *me*; for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but He sent me. Owning the Son of God, born into the world, is now the test of faith, "To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." These Ishmaels might boast they were Abraham's seed, but the children of promise are they who are born again; not of the will of man, nor of the flesh, but born of God. Such standards and tests brought into their midst and applied by Abraham's Son the true Isaac, in this chapter, bring out anew the mocking of the wild men, who declare Christ to be a Samaritan, and affirm that He has a devil. Come to deliver from the bondage of sin in the flesh and Satan's power, He further speaks of death, saying, "If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead and the prophets, whom makest thou thyself?" Confounded and made fools in the presence of this Son of promise, by the glory

of His person and words and ways, they can but nourish their hearts, by their own hatred of this Isaac. Their enmity is still further increased, when Jesus said of their father Abraham, "he saw my day and he saw it and was glad." How differently *they* looked on Jesus is plain by their saying, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, hast thou seen Abraham? And Jesus said unto them, Before Abraham was, I am." How truly they were Ishmaelites, and of their father the devil is clear, for "then took they up stones to cast at him," but Jesus hid Himself and went through the midst of them and so passed by. The opening scene of John ix. which begins with the words "And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth," has great meaning when connected with John viii., and the blinder men of that chapter. Morally, they refused Jesus when He spake again to them saying, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life," and remain where they were. "Ye are of your father the devil,

302 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

and the lusts of your father ye' will do; he was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him; when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it." The man blind from his birth, in chapter ix. rises up to condemn them, and the spittle and the clay and the pool of Siloam do for him, in giving sight (and opening the lips to confess the Son of God and to believe on Him) what Christ was as ready to do for them. The Lord who refused to take the place of a judge in chapter viii., between the woman taken in adultery, and the scribes and Pharisees (type of the nation's sin and harlotry) passes into this place in chapter ix., and sums up their guiltiness by saying, "for judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind."

Abraham's two sons not only differed as being born, the one by a bondmaid the other by a freewoman; but he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh, but he of the freewoman was

ISHMAEL AND ISAAC.

303

by promise; and this it was which bound up the purposes of God in grace and glory with Isaac. The child of promise was also the acknowledged son and heir through death and resurrection, for such are the sure ways of God in our calling and election. The mount Moriah with its altar and the wood laid thereon; Isaac bound, and the father's hand upon the knife, to slay his son, tell us plainly of the child of resurrection in Abraham's day; and more really of the passing away of Christ (the true Isaac), by death and resurrection from all that is after the flesh. By ascension into the heavens, our Lord Jesus, the rightful son and heir of all things, has been born out of the sterile grave into the Father's house. That barren womb of death, which never gave forth a firstborn, has now placed its only begotten Son on the right hand of God. *The mystery of the circumcision on the eighth day, which put Jesus outside the seven days of created things, even when He took flesh and blood with the children, on whose behalf He was born, did but lead on to the more significant time*

304 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

when Isaac was weaned, and Abraham in type made a great feast the selfsame day. What is this language and these actions to us, when taken out of an allegory, and established between ourselves as the children of promise, and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in *fact*? “Henceforth know we no man after the *flesh*; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we him no more;” for in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. Isaac was weaned from all that according to the flesh he was born into and nourished by, and became the child of resurrection at mount Moriah.

(To be continued.)

To put out one tendency of nature by indulging another, is to strengthen nature the more; for nature controlling itself is invigorating itself, and such an one, though apparently improved, is really stronger in nature than ever. *Nothing can displace nature but Christ.*

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

ADD TO KNOWLEDGE, TEMPERANCE.

THE end of knowledge is to furnish one with skill to act rightly in every circumstance. The great advantage of knowledge in a world of evil is that it tells a man how to find the true and holy path through it. Hence, "the knowledge of the holy is understanding." The coming in of sin by man eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, only made it necessary that he should be taught of God in order to be preserved from the evil which he had introduced by acting in his own will. This then is the path which the vulture's eye hath not seen—the path—"the wisdom"—of which the "fear of God is the beginning." (See Proverbs ix. 10.) The greatest and most eminent course for any one in this scene is to be so intelligent in the mind of God as to know how to keep separate from all that is foolish and evil. The glory of knowledge is that it shews me this wondrous path, and conducts me by divine skill

306 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

away and apart from the snares and pit-falls and vexations which are on every side, in this world. "I have more understanding than all my teachers because I have kept thy word." One cannot conceive anything grander than to see a man so instructed, that he is never at a loss how to act; and though he has to refuse many things, he does not feel aggrieved; he sees that it is right and wise for him to do so, and that the way of wisdom is the path of pleasantness and of peace. The use of knowledge is to inform a man what he may do and what he may not do, and hence, we are to add to knowledge, temperance. (2 Peter i. 6.) According as you have knowledge, you know how to steer clear of things which would otherwise hinder and check you. "He that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." Divine knowledge teaches us how to be temperate.

The desire to be wise was part of the temptation, which led to the eating of the forbidden fruit. The desire to know more exists in the natural mind. To

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 307

exalt and to minister to oneself, is man's continual effort, and mere knowledge peculiarly contributes to it. Nothing so exalts a man above his fellows as knowledge, and hence there may be a labour and pursuit to acquire even the knowledge of the scriptures, without having the conscience exercised by this simple principle, that for every increase of knowledge, there is an increase of responsibility. It is plain as man has turned everything here to self-aggrandizement, that as I hear the word of God and receive it, so must I break away from the things, in their endless variety, which this world presents to me. The world is an organization by which everything is arranged to suit and to add to man's greatness. It is order, but an order to suit and to please man, and all human knowledge has been used to this end, even to form a system entirely suitable to man; and for this end Christianity has been adopted by man. God is not really before the mind, but the benefit of society. Now the culmination of this world is Babylon, where

308 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

there will be the best of everything, with entire and unequivocal independence of God. The calling of the saints is, "ye are not of this world," and yet we are in it; and we are taught of God in it, and as we learn and understand the mind of God, the better and the more distinctly do we keep clear of the world. A saint of full age has his senses exercised to discern good and evil. We are to regard ourselves in this world as ships at sea. Unless properly guided the ship will surely be wrecked, and all the learning and knowledge of the mariner is to keep it safe, and to find a clear path where it is exposed to dangers and adverse elements on all sides. The master of the ship understands very well that his knowledge is of little use, unless he can apply it to the navigating of his ship. This is just the way a saint is to regard all knowledge; he has to apply knowledge to a definite point, and that is, to steer his way safely through elements that he cannot trust, and which are often set dead against him. The first thing for a saint is to accept in

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 309

his conscience that he is in a world where everything is against him, and where there is only one true path, the path of life; made and walked in by our blessed Lord, and therefore that all light points out this path. It shews us what we are to avoid, and what would divert us from this path; for our calling is to walk as He walked. Divine knowledge instructs us to turn away from man's principles and tastes, and to adopt what God approves, so that I have fulness of joy, because I am in the path of the One who knew all God's mind, and who walked here entirely separate from everything not of God. Thus, as my knowledge increases, I am either more unworldly, or I get a bad conscience. It sets knowledge in a very high place, when we see that the end of it is to direct our steps to the one only divine path, the path traversed by the blessed Lord, from infancy to glory. Thus there are two things for us to accept: first, that the world in its very rudiments diverts us from God: secondly, the light of scripture is the only guide

310 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

to the path of life. We are perfectly incompetent to act even in the most ordinary duty, till we are taught of God, and therefore the more we are taught of Him the more distinctly are we kept apart from the world. The word is the guide.

Now there are two actions of the word by which this temperance, or separation, is produced. The first is the washing of water by the word. (I need scarcely add that we are first born of the word "the incorruptible seed, the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.") Now this action, as the word "washing" implies, is to remove soil or worldliness which adheres to us here, when it is on the conscience. The conscience is enlightened, according as the word of God is made known. The washing is to remove every soil on the conscience—everything which hinders communion. It is more the negative side; while the second, sanctification, is more the positive side. "Sanctify them through thy truth—thy word is truth." This imparts a new and holy intelli-

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 311

gence; "the knowledge of the holy is understanding," and the Lord adds, "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they might be sanctified through the truth," or by the power of it. That is, He has gone away entirely outside the range and action of things here, in order that through association with Him, we might be separated from it all, and to another and glorious order of things. Chastening too is with this view, that we might be so broken away from things here as to be partakers of His holiness. Now, in order to preserve a good conscience we must have our feet washed. We must be detached from that which defiles, and as our hearts are instructed in the order of things which is of God, we are sanctified, walking separate from the world even to the measure of the Lord's separation in heaven.

We may now consider the various practical ways in which we add to "knowledge, temperance." For the sake of clearness in speaking of the world, I will divide it into four classes. First, there is Dress. This is a course of the

312 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

world within the reach of almost every one. The poorest may, by some very small thing, shew a desire to be in the fashion; the attempt to be in proximity to it shews where the heart is; and if the conscience be not offended by approximating to the world, it is because there is not in that person divine knowledge, which would inculcate temperance, or a separation from the world. How sad it is to see the greatest sorrow, because of bereavements, made an excuse for an expensive dress and costly array with a parade abhorrent to true sorrow. Surely this is not of the Lord, and to act in this manner is not after the "knowledge of the holy," nor is it as the "holy women adorned themselves," nor as those who have their lights burning and their loins girt.

The next class I may call "Ease and Style;" under which we may range fine houses and everything in one's surroundings, which denote how careful and concerned one is for one's own comfort and consequence; not that a roomy house in a healthy locality is to be refused, when

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 313

the Lord is pleased to give it; but this is a different thing from seeking or retaining what is worldly because one can afford it, or has been used to it. Divine knowledge must cast a new light on everything in the world, and in its course; and certainly this is no evidence of this knowledge when one excuses oneself for either seeking or retaining a grand surrounding, because it can be afforded, or because one has been accustomed to it. I believe that divine light would judge everything; and though at first when there was little knowledge, there might be but a very moderate separation from these things, I cannot see how any one can increase in the mind of the Lord, and intelligence as to His path on earth, and not feel that there must be a refusal or a renunciation of that which lends consequence or distinction to one, in the world from which He has been rejected. It is often alleged that the house, &c., which would be renunciation for one, would be vanity for another, because of his means. I am not contending for levelling, I am

314 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

shewing that as any one knows more of the mind of the Lord, he retires from the habit or course of the world, and as the rich man has the greatest opportunity for renunciation, he receives more from the Lord in this present time for so doing; and if the man of small means seeks or desires style, he evidently has not added to his knowledge temperance; that is to say, if he has any knowledge he has it not divinely, for he knows not how to turn it to profit, and he is no witness, for if he be not able to refuse the king's meat, and the king's wine, as Daniel and his companions did, he will not be able to face the king's fire, in faithfulness to Christ. I do not advocate an iron rule, far from it. All I endeavour to shew is, that the increase of divine knowledge must conduce to a great and decided change in all one's tastes and arrangements; and this according as there is advance in it; so that what was allowed or undiscovered by one, ten or twenty years ago, is now refused or put away. If it were not so, increase of knowledge would not

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 315

be increase of light, which distinguishes between the evil and the good.

The next class I will call Luxuries. What comes under this head almost every faithful saint would denounce and deprecate, if indulged to excess; but yet many things which must be classified under the pleasures of the flesh and of the mind, (and all superfluities are such), are sanctioned and indulged in. Things are partaken of for gratification, which are not necessary for the health, and things are looked at, or read, for the gratification of the natural mind, which the knowledge of the mind of the Lord would refuse and reject. Is it not evident that seeking or retaining superfluities is an evidence that divine knowledge does not govern such an one? and that if he were led by the mind of Christ, the purpose of the heart would be, "let me not eat of their dainties."

The last class I term Position or Self-consequence. Perhaps the last thing one surrenders, or loses sight of, is self-importance. It is curious and unmistakable how it clings to us, and

316 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

even while all the others may be partially refused. The pride of life lies so deeply imbedded in the heart that like a ruling passion it is strong in death.

To me it is a solemn and momentous consideration how little our knowledge in the present day has conduced to our temperance. Have we learned to lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race set before us? Is it not a painful fact that when there was less light among us there was more separation? the sanctification was of a more marked character, and that while knowledge has greatly advanced, temperance has rather decreased? Men who began in the simplest way have been gradually drawn back again into worldly habits, through marriage, or increase of means, or one cause or another; but this is evident, that there is not as much separation as there used to be; there is an attempt to keep up some link with the world and what it commends and acknowledges, and this indirectly promotes worldliness in those who have the opportunity to be so. It

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 317

is sad to hear that God has given us what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and yet to be as interested as a worldling in what the eye sees, and in all that nature can contribute. The one simple question for us to decide is, Can there be divine knowledge without a proportionate separation from the course and fashion of the world? and does not the latter determine the real extent and power of the former?

The Lord delivered Paul from the people and from the Gentiles, associating him with Christ in glory; and sent him forth into the world, which is without God—as dark as pitch—to carry this testimony, to deliver them. What he was an eye witness of was what he preached. That is where you are sent. You are not apostles of it, but each one is to be a witness in his own little sphere. If you call yourselves Christians, you are set in the world to be the epistle of Christ before men. What I see is, that the vessels of testimony are those who are closest to the Lord. Mary Magdalene was not an apostle, but she was able to tell the disciples of that which was their highest privilege, because her heart clung to Christ, and she found the world an empty sepulchre. If you want true knowledge, you must be near Christ in affection.

THE GOLDEN BOWL.

Death reigned ! The stern destroyer trod
The earth, and laid beneath the sod
Adam, the likeness first, of God.

And still death reigned o'er every soul,
The doom descends upon the whole,
And judgment, death, must o'er them roll.

But, in due time, down here was born
The Prince of Life ! one precious "corn
Of wheat," the desert to adorn.

Alone in beauty—Son of God !
In matchless grace the earth He trod,
Unloved by man ! The joy of God !

And He must *die* ! "That Holy Thing,"*
That from His grave new life might spring,
And sheaves to glory He might bring.

O precious blood ! Beneath heav'n's eye
Poured forth on earth, borne up on high,
Witness of death, and victory.

O wondrous death, once seen on earth,
Of priceless value, unknown worth,
Nor tongue of man can tell it forth.

* Luke i. 35;

THE GOLDEN BOWL. 319

O hour of anguish, untold woe,
When waves of wrath were made to flow
Over that head in death bent low.

O night of darkness mid noon-day,
Sin's sorest judgment on Him lay,
Nor from God's favour came one ray.

The only fair, the spotless One,
The 'Treasure of God's heart become
As one far off, and left alone!

That *such* a death on earth has been,
Stamps with its impress all the scene,
For in that death man's place is seen.

The one true Light extinguished *here*,
God's germ of beauty killed down *here*,
God's "golden bowl" lay shattered *here*.

What have I left me but His tomb
To be my grave, and through the gloom
To hasten onward to *His home*.

Each fair scene spoilt, but yonder light,
Opening a path where all is bright,
I brave the storm, and fight the fight.

His home and *mine* I have in view,
His word, so faithful and so true,
To change and fashion *me* anew.

320 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

What charm for me where *He* is not !
Under the sun that one foul blot
Darkens the sky. But yet one spot
Is left, where we can *shew* His death,
Bear witness of it on the earth,
With joy accept it, prove its worth.

We cross the Jordan, gain the land,
We take possession, in it stand,
Brought in as conquerors by His hand.

And so His portion now is mine,
His presence for the days of time,
His place, His Father, mine and thine.

And when the sheaves are safe in there,
The Golden Bowl, once broken here,
In radiant beauty will appear.

Glory of God ! seen in 'mid-air,
Glory of grace ! For *we* are there,
Life, peace, and joy ! The Lamb is there.

I must know a person well individually and privately, or I cannot know or understand him in company and publicly. If the Lord be not known privately to the individual soul, He will not be recognized in public in the assembly.

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

PART XIII.

THE Lord presents then the state of things on the side of grace, not of seeking fruit. A king is making a marriage for his son. This leads us on into the christian sphere of things, though taking it up first as to Jewish responsibility. It is the kingdom of heaven, only the Jewish invitation here takes no effect. The streets and lanes of the city, the poor of the flock in Israel are not in the scene here. We have the invitation to the Jews as then given. They would not come. When all is prepared after Christ's death they are again invited, but they made light of it, and went their way to their own occupations, or treated the messengers injuriously even to death. This brought judgment on them and on their city, Jerusalem. They were not worthy, and the King sends out to such as had no claim or hope of such a privilege—sent, as sinners of the Gentiles, and the wedding was furnished with guests. But all this was

VOL. VI.

M

322 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

the external thing. The title really to partake is tested amongst those who have come in, a single example being taken as the principle. He must be fit for the wedding, a wedding garment can alone be allowed at the wedding, and that is Christ. Fine clothes might be displayed perhaps, but the wedding garment was indispensable. If a man has not really Christ, he cannot be allowed there. This, then, is the outward profession of Christendom tested by the possession of Christ. Judgment was exercised as to those who being there were not fitly there. What suited the King's mind and purpose could alone be allowed. The offender was cast out into outer darkness. The fullest grace that seeks the needy does not content itself with unfitness for the place that grace brings into. All blessing, the feast of God's delight and joy, was there, but if we have not really Christ we cannot have part in it. One who has not really put Him on is in a state discordant with the whole place and meaning of what is going on, and

he must be cast out. He had no real title there.

We have now special classes who come up, but only to have the real state of the nation judged, and all the classes judged; they blamed each other, all were wholly wrong before God in the point they particularly contended for as their pride. But all the phases of Jewish moral condition are brought out, and the real truth of God in opposition to them. The Jews were under the power of the Gentiles since the time of the Babylonish captivity. This ought not to have been, but their unfaithfulness to Jehovah had brought it on, only God had spared a remnant to present Messiah to them, whom they were now rejecting. Till God gave deliverance they were to bow to the chastening. It was God's hand upon them. The last of the four great empires now held the rule. But while one part accommodated itself to Cæsar and made nothing of unfaithfulness to God, the other instead of bowing to the yoke as humbled under God's hand for their sins, were in constant

324 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

rebellion against the empire, insisting on their rights as God's people, which they had really forfeited, hypocrites with Him, and not bowing to the yoke He had laid upon their necks for their sins. These two classes come together, that Jesus might be found in fault either way. No deliverer from the Roman yoke if he accepted the tribute easily; accused to the governor if He forbade it. The Lord puts all in its place. He asks whose authority this tribute money represents; "Cæsar's," they reply. Give to Cæsar, He says, what are his, and to God what is God's—the true secret of their place. They marvelled and left Him. Then came the Sadducees, the infidels of Israel. Israel was the sphere of God's earthly government, and resurrection no express part of the law. They gave as a fine piece of reasoning what shewed their ignorance, but the Lord was plain on so capital a point. They erred, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God. The Lord reveals the state of the raised, shewing the mere ignorance and folly of the reason-

ing of the Sadducees. It is a high and holy state where what is merely earthly will have passed away for ever. Things ordered of God, and owned here will have passed away there. What is spiritual alone remains, and the body itself changed into suited glory. But the Lord goes further and shews that the origin and basis of Judaism before the law was given is God's revelation of Himself, the basis of all hope for them. His memorial name for ever condemned their thoughts. If Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had ceased to exist, could God have still taken their names, the name of naught to characterize Himself to Israel. He might have said, I am He who was with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, when they existed: and even so it would have been an utterly unworthy relationship—the God of those who had a mere animal existence. God characterizes Himself by them—is not ashamed to be called their God. Could He characterize Himself by a mere dying animal, who when He calls Himself theirs, did not exist at all? He is not the God of

326 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

the dead, but of the living. But this truth went further, for as to separation of soul and body, Abraham was dead, and though living for God, was not what God meant him to be as his God. God was not even in this sense, as an abiding state, the God of the dead. They must be according to what He would have man, soul and body. Till all was accomplished they might wait with their spirits blessed, but this was not God's thought as to man. He was to be complete, and hence raised from the dead. The name of God indicating His relationship with those, gone for the moment, demonstrated the resurrection. For Him indeed, as we read, all are alive, but the ground of the argument here is God's relationship with them. He cannot be the God of those who do not exist. It was a living Abraham, body and soul, of whom God could be the God. Death therefore, for he was dead, proved the resurrection. Thus divine truth was established in contradiction to the Sadducees. This brings the Pharisees forward, who used the law as

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

327

a repertory of good deeds of different value to make out worth for themselves. They ask the Lord which is the greatest. This was all human pretension of doing and reasoning. The Lord goes to the root and gives the summary and essence of the whole law in two verses, picked out of the mass of Moses' writings. This gave the law of God as He saw it. Thus we have resurrection, and another world, and the essence of the law established. Next, for Christ: whose Son was He? David's, they reply; and so He was according to the flesh, but that was only man's view of Him, and not what was being made good now. The truth that was fulfilling now was Psalm cx. He was David's Lord too, and going to sit on God's right hand. This closed the whole pleading between God and the people. They could give no answer, nor durst ask any more questions. The scene was closed with Israel. Yet till judgment was executed, testimony has its place in their midst; for the patience of grace is great. Morally they were now fully judged.

ISHMAEL "THE WILD MAN," AND ISAAC.

(Continued from page 304.)

To us who are one with a risen and glorified Lord and Head, "Christ is all and in all;" in Him there is neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; and our Isaac is the firstborn Son in the Father's house, the Second man and beginning of the new creation of God. In the world which has mocked Him, and laughed Him to scorn, there are the Cains, the Ishmaels, the Esaus, and the betrayers and murderers of Christ—amongst whom the Father has sent back the glad tidings of the appointed feast for His Son, saying, "I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage." Alas! for the wild-men of this day "who make light of it," and go their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise. Judicially, Jerusalem that now is, is in bondage

with all her children—their eyes are blinded, and the veil is upon their hearts—but when Israel turns to the Lord, and owns the true Isaac, the veil shall be taken away, and they will be blessed under the Sarah covenant. In that day too Abraham's Son and Heir will be adoringly owned as "the light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel."

In the meanwhile and in this dispensation, characterized by the birth of Christ, and His death and resurrection (typified at Mount Moriah) and the weaning of the Son and Heir, as hidden from both the houses of Israel in heaven—we who own Christ, no longer after the flesh, pass on into the further thoughts of the Father, in seeking a bride for Isaac, the partner and sharer of all His joys. The Holy Ghost, come down at Pentecost to witness of "the Father's delight in his Son, and that he has given all things into his hands," is to us, who are in Christ, what Eliezer was to Rebekah and her father's house, when Abraham sent him there on such

330 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

an errand. Genesis xxiv., which gives this touching narrative, lights itself up and comes out in all its moral beauty, as we give place and prominence to Abraham's faith in God's purpose, respecting a wife for Isaac. Eliezer's prayer to the Lord God of his master, who began to make it good before he had finished it—the Rebekah made ready to his hand, by the secret test which he had named to the Lord, and which was to mark her out, were all as they should be; for "she said to Eliezer, Drink, my lord, and when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also!" And the man wondering at her, held his peace, so he took a golden earring of half a shekel weight and two bracelets for her hands, and wooed her and won her for his master's son. And as Rebekah drew nigh, she lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel and took a veil and covered herself—and the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's

tent, and she became his wife, and he loved her and was comforted after his mother's death.

Here *we* may, and must take up this precious narrative of Abraham and Eliezer—Isaac and Rebekah—the bride, her journey and her home, and say of them all, “which things are an allegory.” These answer as much to Jerusalem above and Jerusalem below, when the marriage of the Lamb is come and the bride hath made herself ready, and the voice of the Beloved is heard, “rise up my love, my fair one, and come away”—as did Hagar and Ishmael to Mount Sinai in Arabia, which gendereth to bondage, and to “Jerusalem which now is, and is to be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” The Son of man the Heir of all things, is in the Father's house on high, crowned with glory and honour—the Holy Ghost is come down to form the body, and to seek and gather out a bride for Christ. The blessed hope of the Lord's coming to present the Church to Himself, a

332 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

glorious Church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing—the marriage of the Lamb, and the presentation of the wife in the Father's house, and her subsequent manifestation with the Bridegroom in His own glory, and in the joy and glory of the kingdom—eclipse all the types and allegories that did but point on to that which is perfect. To us who are “Christ's, and therefore Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise,” the Son is a Son over His own house, the first-begotten from the dead, on the right hand of His Father's throne—the rejected and derided One, by those who are born after the flesh. It is the fact of the world's enmity and crucifixion of the Son which leaves all the races of men under the heavens to ripen in their iniquity, and fill up the measure of their guilt. All are in this sense Ishmaels, who are not one with Isaac, and by their redemption through His death and resurrection united to Him in life and divine righteousness and in the hope of glory.

The Cains, the Lamechs, the Hams,

the Ishmaels, and the Esaus, with the traitor Judas, and the released Barabbas, will all find their antitypes and doom in the winding up of the world's rebellion under the Antichrist, the beast and the false prophet, with its Babel and Babylon city, in the Apocalyptic visions. The seven seals, the seven trumpets, the seven thunders, and the seven vials, with their woes and their judgments, do but prepare the way for the great winepress of the wrath of God, into which the clusters of the vine of the earth are to be cast and trodden down. "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, and the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell; and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath."

The history of the liar and murderer from the beginning, the deceiver of the whole world is finished, and the mystery of iniquity gone with the dragon, that

334 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

old serpent, the devil. The fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone which is the second death. All, all must be eventually turned out of the house who laugh at Isaac, and are the son of the strange woman, according to the flesh. They must give place and make room for the true seed, the children of promise, and for the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, having the glory of God, and prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. The weaning of Isaac, and Abraham's feast on that day, will have found their fulfilment in the coming One; when the marriage of the Lamb shall be celebrated and the great voice out of heaven declare, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God."

LIGHT.

THE first outward expression of divine presence is light. Genesis i. shews this: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light," and this at a time when "darkness was upon the face of the whole earth." The use of this in 2 Corinthians iv. is striking. We read, God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give out the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But this is the result *now* in grace of *the Light* having been in the world. "The Light shone in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." Christ brought perfect light into the world *in Himself*. He was it Himself—and in effect. "This is the light which coming into the world lighteth every man."

What a contrast is presented to this in the scene of those three hours of darkness on the cross! The light of the world was gone. Even nature owned the truth of this. The sun even, whose

336 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL

circuit is unto the ends of the heavens (compare Psalm xix.), veiled his face. That Light, that true Light refused in the world was now to be displayed on the throne of God in the glory. Hence the light of the glory of God (now) in the face of Jesus Christ—on high. Again, the apostle saw “a light above the brightness of the sun.”

But to trace it a little; notice Genesis i., as a starting point gives the first testimony about it. The condition of things is darkness—absence of light. God speaks, “*Let there be light.*” Wherever God is there must be light. God is light and in Him is *no* darkness at all. The earth without God is full of darkness, physically and morally.

The Spirit of God brooding over such a condition of things, is a figure of what was afterwards displayed, and we now through grace are called to enjoy and walk in. “Ye were sometime darkness, now are ye *light* in the Lord.” The light shone on the earth, and was the beginning of *order*: the first intimation of one continued principle that

“the evening and the morning were the first day.”

There was but *one inlet* of light into the ark. Judgment all around, light could only be from above. In Ex. xiv. we see “the cloud,” a cloud of darkness to the Egyptians; “but it gave *light by night* to these.” Again, in Exodus xxviii. 20, “oil olive for the lamp” is ordered. “Thou shalt command the children of Israel that they bring their pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always in the tabernacle of the congregation without the veil,” &c. There was surely something more in this beyond the mere fact of the candlestick being required to give light in the holy place? We see the figure of “that true Light” combined with the “true Bread:” the candlestick on the one side, and the shew-bread on the other. This again in the temple order.

Let us pass on then to the antitype of all these, and in John i. 6—9 read, “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for

338 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

a witness, to bear witness of *the Light*.... He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light, which coming into the world lighteth every man." Here then in the person of Christ we have the embodiment of that perfect Light so long foreshadowed. "The people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up." "Now this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." This light coming into the world tests everything. All must be and is exposed. Here was the full and complete power of divine light in the world and that in a man. Perfectly displayed in Him.

This was the Christ. A Man the

perfect display of God upon earth—and on the earth where man had dishonoured and despised the love and care of that God whom He displayed. This was quite new. The manifestation of One in whom was life, and that life the light of men. But He was moreover the *true* Light.

John viii. 12 goes a step further, "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Psalm xxxvi. could speak of the *prospect* of light: "In thy light shall we see light." Here it was now *manifested*. John ix. 5, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." The light is gone now. We have not the blessed Son of God down here in grace as the Light of the world. When He passed out of the scene the whole earth felt the absence of the light—darkness was upon the face of the whole earth, and so it is to this day.

What has the Church made of her responsibility as the light of the world

340 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

during the absence of the Lord Jesus? Has she been faithful? Nay, the candlestick has been removed and there is no light—all is failure and ruin.

It *must* be individual now. Let *your* light so shine. If thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light—transparent—there will be the display of that which is within. A saint is called to be light, practically, ye are light in the Lord, walk as children of light. Christ must be all to me before I can reflect Him, before I can give out the light.

(*To be continued.*)

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

“HE WALKED ON THE WATER TO GO TO JESUS.”—MATT. xiv. 29.

To know the right way and to have power to walk in it, is the greatest favour in a scene of danger and difficulty. Before the flood, man in the flesh was proved to be unfit for God; and after it, when he was set up again upon the earth, on

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 341

more favourable terms, the saint, in the person of Noah, failed to control himself, and man in general used the new favours of God to be independent of Him, as the tower of Babel testified, and they worshipped demons. The earth had thus become in the eyes of God a moral swamp; and hence the call of Abram defined the now necessary path for the saint in it. This path was the path of faith. The eye must turn away from all visible things and must wait entirely on God. Abram was called to break from all natural associations. He could retain his own—all belonging to his own house, but he is called to break with all the rest, and this break included three classes, namely, his country, his kindred, and his father's house. The break was a very sweeping one, but no less could be enjoined, if the moral state of man on the earth be taken into account. If every new favour which God had given man on earth only proved man's incompetence to be trusted with favours in it; nay, that it had been used by man to supplant God altogether;

342 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

what other course could be prescribed but one of complete break with the order of things here? and then nothing could afford guidance but that which was not of earth at all—even the word of God. The importance of this new path will not be apprehended unless there be a true sense of how man had perverted all the favours which God had given him on the earth, and had used them for his own self-exaltation. These favours were not effectual in leading the heart of man to God, but the reverse; and hence, a new path is introduced, and the great characteristic of it is faith in God; not in anything given or visible, but in the word of God. “Abram went out, not knowing whither he went.” He became a pilgrim and a stranger on the earth, because he had no guidance but by the word of God. To appreciate this new path, it is necessary to bear in mind what the earth had become in the eyes of God; and again what unerring guidance God in His mercy vouchsafed to every one dependent on Him. Dependence be-

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 343

comes the great characteristic instead of independence; and henceforth these two forces, like rival streams, course the earth until one culminates in the new Jerusalem for glory, and the other in Babylon for doom and judgment. From the call of Abram onward, faith, or counting on God as He had revealed Himself, determined the guidance of the saint; whether to walk in the land as Abraham, or to return to it as Jacob, faith ensured it; and be it deliverance from Egypt, or succour in the wilderness, there was but one way to secure either, and that was faith. In the wilderness where there was nothing from the earth, there especially the supplies from above were daily assured; both the cloud and the manna thus intimating that there would be no separation between guidance as to the path, and support in it, when there was nothing to be found on the earth.

The forty years in the wilderness pre-eminently teaches us the greatness and blessedness of the path, because where there was really nothing, everything

344 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

was supplied by God, independently of the earth, and hence it is said that it is there we should learn "that man should not live by bread only but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord, shall man live." Now this is the passage which our Lord quotes when entering on His public ministry, as describing what would guide Him in His course here. He begins by shewing to Satan (Luke iv.) that nothing here will divert Him from the word of God; that He has nothing to guide Him here but the word of God. To get relief from personal suffering, even though it be righteous suffering, will be no guide to Him. To prove the care of God, will be no guide to Him. To receive all the world and the glory of it, will not induce Him to go outside the word of God.

We shall find that it is always in one or other of these things (for each may be taken as head of a class) that we are drawn away from the path of faith and the guidance of the word. Jesus is the author and finisher of faith; and there

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 345

is something supremely imposing to see Him the Creator and Upholder of all things, counselled and guided by the word of God, and thus walking in the power of God unmoved by anything here. He looked to God for everything and not to His own creation. Thus the five loaves were enough for the five thousand, and the fish supplied the piece of money to pay for Himself and for Peter. He silences and expels evil spirits by His word. He hushed the wind and calmed the sea. He was never balked by anything, but ever as the dependent Man with power and guidance to act on every occasion. He passed unhurt through the enraged crowd, and yet He had not where to lay His head. His counsel and His strength were from God. He shewed how a man of faith could master every opposition and never expect anything from man. He was always superior to things here, and for God, whether it was in relation to things affecting Himself or others. He expected nothing from the earth, but derived everything from God and

346 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

therefore was ever for God. This was His path before His rejection. Consequent on His rejection, as He foreshadows in Matthew xiv., He goes into the wilderness, there feeds the poor of the flock which He does to this hour, and then walks on the water, no longer calming the sea and rebuking the wind as He had previously done, but shewing how He would be superior to them; that while He would allow them to take their course, yet that He would be superior to all power here. As we read, "far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come." (Eph. i. 21.)

The path of faith in which every saint, all the way down had been guided, blessed, and tested, was now perfected by the Son of man who is in heaven. And now that the greatest favour from heaven has been refused on earth, faith only acquires a new force and value, and as the eye rests on Him, one is not only perfectly guided, but

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 347

endowed with power to overcome every adverse force. Jesus exalted, gone into heaven, angels, &c., being made subject to Him, was to be the magnet not only to attract and to guide, but also to determine the measure of power for us while walking through this hostile scene. Peter inaugurated the new path when "he walked on the water to go to Jesus." It is now with the eye on the ascended Man and deriving power from Him that we surmount every opposition here. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

Every conscientious person values guidance and power also to walk according to it; but while every one desires it, very few find it, because they are seeking to learn it from something on the earth, where even providence cannot be a guide, because the mere checking of evil, which is the order of God's present dealing with the world, cannot indicate how He would direct things if they were all in order, no more than what is prescribed for a maniac would

348 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

indicate the course proper for a man in sound health.

In seeking guidance now, the simple object must be to reach the spot where the Lord at the moment is. "Peter walked on the water," which was superhuman, "to go to Jesus." If the heart be simple in seeking Jesus with the eye only on Him, every difficulty will be surmounted, however great the waves, or however boisterous the winds, and nothing less will be expected. Guidance is generally sought in order that one might find an easy path without trial or sorrow, and prayers are made to this end. The path of faith now leads to Jesus, and as the eye is on Him, His power worketh in us mightily, and is confirmed in us as the difficulties are surmounted. The heavenly Man who was rejected by the earthly man is the One who imparts power to every faithful heart to walk on to Himself, superior to every opposition here. Nay, He uses the obstacles as only opportunities to prove to us that we can do all things through Him who gives us power. In

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 349

the path of faith, obstacles come first, and necessarily so, because the enemy is in power here, and afterwards is the victory over him; the evening before the morning—the fence before the flat—the conflict before the peace. There must be the walking on the water, the superhuman power, before reaching the spot where the Lord is — where the fellowship with Him is enjoyed. If I look for the removal of obstacles in order to be assured of guidance, I have lost sight of the exalted and ascended Man, and have no sense of how the whole tide and force of everything here is against Him. When we reach a desired end without obstacles, as one would reach any spot through a gap in a fence, the act brings us no increase of power, and if trouble arises afterwards there is an easy surrender of the ground gained.

In order then to ensure guidance, the first thing to be ascertained is, whether the Lord is there (that is, that He assures the heart that He is there); this being settled, the next thing is that **though every obstacle remains, yet there**

350 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

will be power given to rise over them. In the wilderness wherever the cloud rested, there the manna was. As soon as they were assured of the cloud, they could reckon confidently on the manna. So now, wherever the Lord is simply presented to your heart, you may be assured that He will sustain you in order that you may be in association with Himself.

There are two marks of guidance in this time. The first is, that it is the Lord I seek to reach in the spot where He is; and the second, that I am ready to walk on the water and encounter what is contrary and impossible to nature in order to reach Him. The latter proves the sincerity of the former. Paul is led to Philippi and there endures every kind of trial, but afterwards reaches the desired end. He had to walk on the water in order to reach it.

When the eye is simply on the ascended and rejected Man, the point where He would be at a given moment is never reached but through difficulty, which is so above one's own power na-

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 351

turally that it would be as death to attempt it; and the course is literally that of a man walking on the water, but still surmounting and finally reaching safely where He is.

But it will be said, Are not obstacles removed, or how could one ever reach anything? The obstacles are overcome when you are undaunted by them, when you have accepted them as opportunities for the power of Christ, and not as insuperable barriers. It was thus with the three wise men (Dan. iii.) who were not afraid to face the fire. The obstacles were not removed, but when they accepted them they were superior to them. The fire had no power against them although they were exposed to it. Thus the very obstacles which Satan throws in the way—as those he stirred up against Paul at Philippi (Acts xvi.)—only make the power of God the more manifest. A wife or a child in a godless family, though dutiful and subject, finds plenty of obstacles; but the true way, the path of faith, is to learn how Jesus would

352 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

act there, and having learnt this, to fear no obstacle; and it will be found that if there be faithfulness, the fire has lost its heat, and as the devil flees when he is resisted, so are irritating oppositions suspended, because they are found to be ineffectual in checking the course of faith. The walls of Jericho fall down, not in order that one may enter in, and indulge oneself like another Achan, but that one may be more simply the friend of God, drawing the Rahabs out of it into the heavenly ground.

May we be so filled with the Holy Ghost that we may look stedfastly into heaven, and see the glory of God and Jesus, and thus be able to walk superior to every power here for Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

The only man that is independent (from Satan and the world, and free from himself) is the one who is in Christ, and dependent upon God.

If we are not thoroughly cleaned out of ourselves, we cannot be the Lord's vessels.

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

PART XIV.

CHAPTER XXIII. is a remarkable proof how in this gospel, till we arrive at the very last chapter, all refers to the Jews, and even there it is not what actually took place among the Gentiles in our present gospel. The scribes and Pharisees are still seen as sitting in Moses' seat with the book of God in their hand, and in the very chapter in which they are utterly denounced (for it is the object of this chapter) in every aspect, the disciples, as moving still as Jewish disciples among the Jews, are to follow what they say from Moses' seat, and their testimony (ver. 34) is sent to these same Jews. No one sits in that seat now. We may find some analogies, the church found them early when it was corrupting itself; but there is no seat of Moses to sit in. Father or Rabbi is alike out of place. How completely however the testimony is here viewed as among the Jews, is seen (ver. 34) where the apostolic and christian ministry is

VOL. VI.

N

354 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

formally so treated, sent to those whom the Lord was now denouncing. With this is formally designated at once their place and ministry. The object of the chapter is to denounce those who led the people to reject their own mercy in Christ.

All the various sides of pharisaic evil are denounced. They impose burdens, and heavy ones, on others, but do not touch them with one of their fingers; to be seen of men, and solemn ritual observers for that purpose, is their object. To be made much of by men, set in high places, greetings, to be called Rabbi, theological doctrinal importance in the world, to be looked up to as having official religious importance, such were they; but all this was forbidden to the disciples: he who set up to be great among them was to be servant; they were to follow the lowliness of Christ, who ever came down, yea, from the form of God to the dust of death. Christ was their Teacher and Rabbi, and their Father was in heaven.

Then come out the various aspects

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

355

of ecclesiastical pharisaism. First is the shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men; not going in themselves, they seek to hinder others; they profit by their religious profession to get widows' money, making long prayers; very great zeal to make a proselyte to their superstition, making him then worse than themselves; blind themselves, they lead the blind, but into the ditch. With refined casuistry as to what is evil, they shew their folly to the spiritual mind; excessively exact and zealous about the minute externals of religion, the substantial realities of it they neglect. They strain at a gnat and swallow a camel — as the chief priests bought Christ's blood for money without a scruple, but would not put it into the treasury because it was the price of blood. They clean the outside of the platter to appear very religious and holy, within they are full of extortion and excess.

As whited sepulchres, clean without, full of uncleanness within. They honoured the true witnesses of God who

356 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

were of old, true children of those who had killed them, piously alleging that had they lived then, they would not have been guilty of their blood. They would fill up the measure of their fathers. God would test them, sending to them prophets and wise men and scribes, as He did in the beginning of the gospel, and they would kill, scourge, and crucify them, that the measure being filled up all the righteous blood from Abel might be required of that generation.

Ecclesiastical solemnity and superstition, and often with the profession of orthodoxy, have been the persecuting power and spirit of opposition to truth in every age and in every land. Look around and see where the traits here depicted are found, and see if it be not in hierarchy in the measure of its influence. Be it Jewish or Christian it is the same story. If we go out to Mahometans, nay, even to heathens, it is the same story. But specially in a pretended orthodox hierarchy, persecution and all the traits noted by Christ will be found. I appeal to every history in

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

357

every land. For Jewish and Christian I may appeal to scripture, for though the chief priests were Sadducees, the scripture shews the same spirit of persecution, and the Pharisees and the doctors of the law fill up the rest of the picture, the Lord Himself being witness. Who delivered to the secular arm in Christendom, hypocritically asking for mercy? And as in Jerusalem for Jews, so in Babylon for Christendom, was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all that were slain upon the earth. In the ecclesiastical power, from the pope downward, will be found in the measure of its realization what the Lord describes here.

Finally, verse 37, the Lord, though in words of tender compassion, pronounces judgment on Jerusalem. Often would Christ, Jehovah her Lord, have gathered her children together as a hen her chickens under her wings, but they would not; but now her history was closed, their house was left to them desolate, and until they took up the children's cry, the words of Psalm cxviii.,

358 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

they would not see their Lord again. The repentance of Israel, as proposed in the intercession of Christ, Acts iii., but then refused, would be the signal of His return to them. It is of importance to see clearly what I have remarked, that the position of the disciples and their ministry is in Israel more exactly among the Jews. It helps us in understanding what follows.

LIGHT.

(Continued from page 340.)

The day is coming when the light of the presence of the Christ will again be seen, the full perfect display of that which was seen on the Mount. But meanwhile how is the light communicated? Christ is not here. The Church has failed and is no longer a lamp, the candlestick is gone; what then? "The entrance of thy words giveth light." (Psalm cxix. 130.) It is *the word* that reaches down deep into the recesses of the heart, and there

reveals perfect grace. Now look upward. Where has the Light gone that was here? Where is He who could say, "as long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world?" Where is He now? He is ascended to the right hand of glory, and *there* beholding Him with unveiled face we are changed into the same image. The light that was refused a place *here*, is now illuminating that scene of glory where the love of the Father is displayed, and thus grace calls us to admire that glory of God. If ye then be risen with Christ, set your affections *where Christ is*.

God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath so shined in His grace from that glory to us; *that we may give out the light of the knowledge of it in the face of Jesus Christ.* 2 Corinthians iv.

The blessed servant, used of God to write such truth as this for us, could say of himself "At midday, O king, I saw a light above the brightness of the sun." It was this that ravished his heart.

360 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

This dazzling ray of light piercing down into the very depths of his soul left him with one desire, to be transformed into His image.

“If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.”

But again, Light is the last expression of Christ as regards this world. The great white throne is light, when those who have refused the light in grace are brought into the light in judgment, and where they no longer are sheltered from the searching rays of Him whom they refused when He cried as wisdom at the gate of the city. (Prov. viii.) But these are judged by that Man who is the wisdom of God and the power of God.

John opens his epistle in the *Light* of the beginning, not from anything that had grown up since He who was the true light on earth had passed into the heavens and taken His seat at the right hand of God; but he gets some sixty years back and begins with the true light, and commences to judge everything around and about him by its

scrutiny, which he first brings to bear upon the darkness or the lie of Satan in the garden of Eden, where he succeeded in making our first parents believe there was a dark spot in the heart of God towards man; and boldly asserts, "that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all," and thus refutes the false insinuation of four thousand years' standing. He then proceeds to measure pretension to fellowship, and in so doing at once deprives man of any ability to judge what the standard should be, and declares "if we walk in the light as he [God] is in the light, we have fellowship one with another," &c. but upon no other ground whatever; and remark the importance of the fact, that it is not a mass of people walking together, but the individual walk of the saint with God; and by this gauge John puts to the proof all that pretends to be of God in the saint. And passing on through the writings of this evangelist, how sensibly we must be aware in our survey, that we are with the one whom the Holy Ghost em-

362 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

ployed to write last and wind up the word of God—not fulfil it—that was Paul's part. But we feel ourselves back in a sense with Joshua, chapter xxiv., and hear him with the children of Israel assembled around him, saying, how that he had seen all the mighty works of the Lord, in the day of power in Jericho, and finishing his charge by falling back upon what the character of God was in the midst of all the failure he instinctively felt was coming, by declaring that He is a holy God (ver. 19), and a jealous God, and warning them against want of faith in this mighty One, for unbelief always substitutes idols—something for the natural eye to rest upon. We find John following in the same parallel—when both the Church of God, and he to whom God had given that revelation had in different ways disappeared from testimony on earth. The one, having “finished his course and kept the faith,” had gone into the presence of the author and finisher of it; the other, as a body, had fallen from the place of confidence.

For what was true of the first Eve, is true of the second. The first thing she lost was confidence—the devil robbed her of the best thing she had—so with the Church; she was no longer the channel of the pure and unadulterated truth of God to the world, but had become so great a mixture that all the blessed apostle can speak of as “sure” when writing of the great house is, the “foundation of the Lord.” At this moment John gives us his *revelation*, not how the Church was to be built up and restored to its day of power—its Jericho day—but the judgment on it as the house of God upon earth; and he portrays Christ, First, as attired in *light* and righteousness. “His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow” (1 Rev. 14)—the colour of light—(Matt. xvii.)

Secondly, with a golden girdle, about to execute judgment upon that which had so long borne His name, only to the denial of the truth of His person; and then as “the Judge of all the earth,” putting down all rule, all authority and power. So that whether a Creator-God,

364 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

or judging Son of man, from His first action to His last, we find Him ever moving in His own essential element.

At the Lord's supper we emphatically meet Him in the most searching rays of light and power as the glorified One in the place *where He is*, to travel back with Him to the place where *He was* in the hour of His "weakness"—in the hour of darkness. And by that light we look with Him at that momentous event—the death of the Lord—when having been the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, He stood alone in the Jordan until He could say, "It is finished," and yield up His spirit to the Father's keeping. At these moments we are led back by Him to the place where He in grace first met us, and He tells us, as the angels told the women (Matt. xxviii.), to come, see the place where the Lord lay; while at the same time we rejoice in the fact that "He is risen, He is not here." This is the key-note of that same heavenly host that only a short time previously had welcomed His arrival, as a Man, amongst

men, saying, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace," &c. At that time they remain in the air, but now they take their place as those who belong to the Victor on the conquered earth, to proclaim the glorious news that death had lost his dominion over man, and that all was changed; that there was *now* a Man who not only had possession of death Himself, but could make it a transferable property to the believer! "All things are yours whether life or death." And in passing, let me say what a perfect picture of a saint do these heavenly messengers present to us as they stand like sentries on the conquered territory!

They are heavenly people whose whole appearance is Light — their raiment, and their conversation, telling of the bright sphere from whence they came; and the world—figured by the keepers—trembles and shakes in their presence; in a word, they not only play their part, but what is more, their appearance tells what they are.

A soldier who only knew his drill

366 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

would not be counted much in the eye of his officer, if he did not *look* like a soldier. The angels do their part well. The world to them is the place where their Lord was crucified, but they carry with them the joy of His resurrection.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE PROOF OF POWER TO ACT FOR
THE LORD.

IN the time of a divine movement, many are acted upon by it, who are not able to act in it. Many receive grace who do not become witnesses of the grace. "Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?" are words which describe the result of the grace of God to man. Many are cured of dangerous maladies who cannot cure others, or attempt to do so; and so is it with too many of the recipients of mercy. But to the true heart, it must be in a time like this, a question of deep interest, What course

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 367

must I pursue in order that I may be able to act for the Lord?

There are, I may say, three qualities necessary for the one who shall act for the Lord in a time of difficulty. The first is the power to deny oneself voluntarily. The second, is the ability to view or to judge of man and of every thing, as they are in the eyes of God, or in relation to Him; and the third is, patient dependence on God when everything is against one. The power to deny oneself voluntarily is the first, because when I am truly set on the work and service of Christ, self-consideration must be in abeyance. It proves that I have His interests primarily at heart, when I can overlook what personally concerns myself. A man cannot serve two masters. When the Lord's interests are paramount, then my own interest must be secondary; and hence the proof of power is, when I can voluntarily set aside my own for His. It is not only that I do not anxiously seek my own interests, but that I can turn away from the very mercies of God's hand to me in order that I

368 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

may give myself to His. Thus the ten thousand men of Gideon's army (Judges vii.) were tested. They were neither fearful nor afraid, but the Lord said, "Bring them down to the water and I will try them for thee there." Now water represents what refreshes and cheers one in the earth—earthly mercies. The water was a distinct favour from God, but while even the three hundred owned that it was a mercy, they shewed in the manner in which they partook of it that they had deeper and greater interests at heart. And this is therefore the first qualification for a true servant in an evil day. Thus Moses proved himself to be such by "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." He forgets himself in order to serve—risks his life to deliver an Israelite; and when weary and sad at heart—a lonely stranger by the well of Midian; he forgets his own troubles and delivers the women and waters their flock. The one who has a heart really set for service, and fit for it, always thinks how he can serve others,

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 369

regardless of himself. He proves by his ability to deny himself, like a well-drilled soldier, that he is qualified for service. Daniel and his fellows refused the king's meat, and the king's wine, and thus proved that being masters of their own appetites, they were qualified for great service. Paul declares, "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway;" and again he says, "I endure all things for the elect's sake." He is not only comforted by the Lord, but he is able to comfort others, as he himself has been comforted of God. (2 Cor. i.) Many a man is cured or relieved of maladies or sufferings and yet has no ability to cure or relieve another; for in order to be able to relieve the suffering of another, I must study the course and nature of the suffering, as well as enjoy the relief from it myself.

In the journeyings of Israel through the wilderness, Amalek represents the flesh which opposes their onward course. "Then came Amalek and fought with

370 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

Israel." (Ex. xvii. 8.) By birth they were Syrians, and they were bondsmen in Egypt. After their deliverance from Egypt, they are opposed by Amalek. Now Amalek is in type any one, either ourselves or those nearest to us, who oppose our course. To such we *must not yield*; and there will always be open and palpable victory according as we wait on God in our hearts. Thus in the conflict with Amalek, it was when Moses' hands were kept up that Joshua prevailed. Henceforth the ability to fight against Amalek becomes the test of real power. Thus Saul was tested (1 Sam. xv.), "Go and smite Amalek" was the Lord's word to him. Now in the way in which this injunction is observed, does every one prove his power for service. Saul failed under the test. He only destroyed the vile and the refuse; *that* he "utterly destroyed," but he spared Agag, and the best of everything. This in principle is what many a servant does in the present day. While destroying the refuse, he spares the best; he has regard for that which man

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 371

regards; he savours of the things which be of men, and not of the things which be of God. It was thus that Saul proved himself incompetent for the throne. "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king," is the word of the Lord to Samuel. Joseph, on the contrary, proves that he has the qualification for a true servant; he refuses in Potiphar's house to be anything else but a bondsman. God is more before him than himself. Saul could not refuse the best; the best of the spoil was to him what the water was to the nine thousand seven hundred who set out with Gideon—too much for him, he thought of himself and he was disqualified for the throne. He was given there the finest opportunity of proving his fidelity to the Lord, and he failed, while Moses proved his ability for service, in one so small and unseen as helping the women who were oppressed by the shepherds.

The second quality necessary for a servant is viewing or judging of man, and of everything, as they are in the

372 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

eyes of God, or in relation to Him. As the first is the virtue of the "forlorn hope" who counted not their lives dear unto themselves, in order that they might secure the interests of Christ; the next is, that as I see Him in His glory, so am I able to judge of everything of man as in relation to Him; and it is in 'proportion as I see Him thus, that I can judge of what is of man; but if I see the height but partially, I can only judge of the depth partially. In the epistle to the Ephesians we get this contrast. When we are set in the highest elevation (chap. i.), then the greatest disclosure is made of the corruption of man in the flesh. (Chap. iv.) It is only as the servant knows his connection with God that he can refuse what is contrary to Him, and be really and truly for the Lord among men. Moses was pre-eminently qualified for being the Lord's servant, at the time when in answer to his own request, "Shew me thy glory," his face shone from the effect of it. He had witnessed many a wonder from the hand of God, and had

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 373

been the instrument of many, but now when Israel worshipped a calf, he for the first time requests to see the glory of God; and the effect is, that his face shines, and thereby is exposed the distance, which is morally between man and God. "They could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance." Thus too with Isaiah (chap. vi.), he is not fit to be a prophet in the lowest state of things in Israel, until he has learned that before the King—the Lord of hosts, his iniquity is taken away, and his sin purged. The servant's ability to judge of things here, depends on the height of his personal and conscious connection with the Lord. The Lord presents this in Luke ix., when after the transfiguration—the highest elevation for a man on earth, He descends from the holy mount to encounter, not only the worst form of Satan's assault on man, but to announce the momentous tidings, "Let these sayings sink down into your ears, for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men;" there will be a close of

374 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

His history in a fearful death. How can I know what man is in himself, or what he is in relation to God, but as I know God? One may, like Job, hear of Him by the hearing of the ear, but what a change when one sees Him! "Now mine eye seeth thee, and I abhor myself." The servant who is not high up consciously can never judge largely or fully of what man is in relation to God at the time. Stephen is consciously connected with the glory of God and Jesus, and then he is personally qualified, not only to announce where the Son of man is, but to endure the worst of sufferings without swerving from serving those from whom he suffered. Paul is introduced into the full elevation of a man in Christ, and he learns in himself the weakness of man and the sufficiency of grace, so that he takes pleasure in infirmities, &c., that the power of Christ may rest upon him. In the knowledge of the good, he can refuse the bad. As possessor of the highest things, he can refuse all inferior things. He can maintain the standard because he knows it,

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 375

and is of it. Gold remains gold however it may be abused or defaced.

The third quality or proof of power to serve is, patient dependence on God, when everything is against one. There is no way in which our capacity for service is so tested, as by being placed in circumstances where we have no door of escape but from God. Joseph in prison ("The word of the Lord tried him") is prepared or fitted for service by his patient dependence on God. Many a servant does not understand why he is subjected to imprisonment, no more than Job understood why he was deprived of everything. Every competent servant is imprisoned in some way or other, in order to be tried in the balances as to whether he has patient dependence; whether he can be, as it were, steady under fire. David at Ziklag is a very striking example; everything was against him at that moment. His conscience must have reproached him for being in the Philistine territory; his heart was bereaved, for his wives and children had been carried away, his pro-

376 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

perty was destroyed, and his friends spake of stoning him. In such an accumulation of distress, he proved to be God's servant, for "David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." When Joseph was suffering from the irons in prison; when Job was scraping himself with a potsherd; and when David was at Ziklag, none of them had any conception of the high service for which they were being proved competent; and this is very instructive. We see this patient dependence in Paul and Silas at Philippi. He had been called by a man of Macedonia to come and help them. At Philippi he had been for more than many days. No man had come forward. Satan had offered to countenance him; and when Paul refused it, the power of the world endeavoured to crush him; his feet were made fast in the stocks, but his patient dependence on God continued. At midnight they prayed and gave thanks, and when they little expected it the Lord appeared to them, and the jailor is at their feet seeking salvation. Thus the true servant waits

FRAGMENT.

377

patiently on God, when everything is apparently against him, and thus he is proved competent for serving according to the Lord's mind at the time.

FRAGMENT.

"You are always looking up into heaven, like Stephen when a-dying: you ought rather, as seated in heavenly places in Christ, to look down from heaven," said — to X.

"How am I to set about that?" replied X.

"The how," answered —, "is easily *told*."

"First, there is one man up there on the throne; how do things below the throne, and down here, appear to Him? what their origin, character, tendency, end?"

"But secondly, there have been men down here, men who could correctly answer that question, men who saw all things, and things here too, just as He on high does. The apostles and prophets of the New Testament wrote *His* thoughts in the light of God, and of the Spirit of Christ which was in them, and nothing else. Let Paul's and Peter's and John's truth get hold of you and you have got the Holy Ghost's thought—who is the Spirit of the glorified Man and of God the Father.

"And thirdly, remember there is such a thing as the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

“THE GREAT MYSTERY—
CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.”
(EPH. v. 32.)

THE Father hath sent from His glorious throne,
Where He dwells in effulgence bright—
Fountain of life, and of love, unknown
Thro' eternity's waneless light.

He hath sent His Son, in whom God doth shine,
To unfold that love divine.

The Son He hath found the one whom He sought
Who was lost and who knew it not,
All unconcern'd in the death she had wrought
And the sting that embitter'd her lot.
With His own life blood, the purchase He paid,
The life He so freely gave.

The Spirit hath left those blest scenes above,
Where the river of life doth flow;
He's come to tell of that wondrous love,
That made Christ a stranger below.
'Mid ruin and death, where He wander'd alone,
In paths where He had no home.

He's come and He meets her, thirsty and lone,
Afar from the haunts of man;

THE GREAT MYSTERY. 379

He shews her the One who for sin did atone,
 God's willing and spotless Lamb.
 "Daughter," He says, "'tis the Father has given
 Him who claims thee from heav'n.

"Wilt thou arise and leave house and kin,
 For a love so sorely tried,
 And follow the One who, thy heart to win,
 Hath suffered and bled and died?
 So shall He greatly desire thy beauty
 E'en thine for eternity.

"Fear not the waste, His arm He hath bared,
 The mighty shall carry thee through;
 Weakness His burden, strength He's prepared,
 His manna will daily renew.
 On thee He joys all His gifts to bestow."
 She answered and said, "I will go!

"I will go! for this heart is no longer mine,
 This place is no rest for me;
 Afar I look and the glory doth shine
 From His home, where I long to be!
 Hasten, O hasten my steps by the way,
 I pray thee make no delay."

She journeys, but ah! she heeds not the track
 Where glitters the scorching ray;

380 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

The past is behind, she will not look back,
On each wearying toilsome day.
With Him her rest shall for ever be,
'Tis Himself she will surely see.

He waits, He lists, as her steps draw nigh,
For His pearl, His long-sought treasure;
Enrapt He leads her to realms on high,
Where His love she can never measure.
As a cup in the ocean doth her bliss run o'er,
But His must exceed for ever!

September, 1872.



London Tract Depôt, Warwick Lane, E.C.