


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. X.

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A Voice to the Faithful.

MARK'S GOSPEL.

CHAPTER XIII. 30-37.

“HEAVEN and earth shall pass away ; but my words shall not pass away.”

The destruction of Jerusalem under Titus the Roman emperor was something like this, but the Lord's prophecy was in no wise accomplished. First of all, the Lord did not come after this event ; then also that about which Daniel had spoken had not come to pass. Whether we count 1260 days or 1260 years after the destruction of Jerusalem, nothing happened at that time ; and then there cannot be two tribulations “ such as never were.” In Luke's Gospel we find first of all the destruction of Jerusalem and the present state of the Jews, but nevertheless he does not speak of the abomination of desolation ; but he distinguishes very

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in this scene, where His death was required, and where we are commemorating it.

This was **THE BEGINNING**, and thus only can there be a true sense of my relation to Christ or of His relation to His saints on earth. This was lost for centuries, and it is now revived, but not through the instrumentality of books. When the truth is revived, it is, as it was at the first, through channels immediately instructed by the Lord Himself. This is the revival and the manner of His grace in this day. As He taught Mary Magdalene, as He taught the two disciples, so does He in His gracious lovingkindness, teach in this day. The same steps have to be trodden, the same exercises have to be passed through. The church, so-called, with its writings of centuries, and its pious ministers, contribute nothing to this revival. It is entirely and absolutely effected by the Lord's instructing, and leading souls into it, as He did at the beginning; so that He can say of the Philadelphian church, "Thou

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hast a little power [no power but from abiding in Christ], thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." His word and His name are His doctrines and His character; and one who keeps this is a Philadelphian; and this is the way in which he is taught.

The Lord give us to see the nature of the great revival in the present day, and to partake of the untold blessings connected with it.

THE EMPTY PITCHER.

God's purpose is (as one has expressed it) that we should always 'float in the full current of His grace.' To accomplish this, and safely pass the shoals without touching ground, we have need to be vessels of light draught. But there is the flesh within us, which, so to speak, is not buoyant, only dead weight, like the axehead which fell into Jordan (2 Kings vi. 5), and it is only in proportion as this is judged and kept in the place of death, that we know what it is to be carried onward by grace on our

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voyage homewards. A self-judged saint, like a vessel of light draught, can be safely freighted with that which would otherwise be the cause of his stranding. Another, less exercised in this, and therefore less buoyant, needs to have everything thrown overboard in order to pass the points of danger in safety. Hence the variety of the Lord's dealings with us on the way, inexplicable to all who are forgetful of the purpose of His heart, and the unchanging grace that seeks the accomplishment of it by removing every obstacle from within, and from without. What a God is ours, who thus cares for us, subjecting us to processes and discipline, often both severe and painful, but none the less needful to keep us from shipwreck;—stripping off and emptying out everything, even to that which seems to us essential for us, in order that flesh may be kept in the place of death, and our souls brought fully into the enjoyment of the peaceful fruits of righteousness, which chastening yields to them who are exercised thereby.

THE REPOSE OF FAITH.

As the storm arises,
Full of fears they stand,
For they have not known Him
In the heavenly land ;
Anxiously they wake Him,
Call upon His power ;
And He calms the tempest,
Clears the clouds that lower.

They behold and wonder
At the Word of God,—
Of the earth's Creator,
As they round Him stood ;
All is calm in nature—
As before the storm ;
All the suffering ended,
Hushed is their alarm.

Had they lain beside Him,
Left Him still to sleep,
They would pass with Jesus—
O'er the rolling deep.
See Him ! calmly resting
On His God above ;
And *as Man* depending
On an arm of love.

They would taste of glory,
Prove the wing of power—
Share with Him the blessing
In the trying hour ;

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Learn to sleep with Jesus,
Wake when He arose ;
Know the blessed secret
Of His deep repose.

Wondrous preparation—
Of a Father's care,
For the King of glory—
As He wandered here.
Ere one restless billow
O'er the waters rolled,
Love doth lay its pillow
For that head of gold.*

Happy brother pilgrim !
Step within the boat,
If the Master bid thee,
Safe with Him afloat !
Take no self-made comfort,
For a coming storm ;
Thou art heir with Jesus,
Launch without alarm.

All the winds of Satan
Rolling o'er the world ;
Raising waves as mountains,
All his power unfurled ;
Cannot, dare not, harm thee,
In the path He trod
Thou shalt find a pillow—
In the peace of God.

* "His head is as the most fine gold," Cant. v. 11.

THE REPOSE OF FAITH.

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Had we talked of dangers,
 Ere we launched away,
 Might we not have carried
 Helps for trial's day?
 Or alas! it may be—
 Not have launched at all
 Every plan found wanting—
 For the tempest's fall.

Oh the joy of flying
 'Mid the waves and wind!
 When we've done with trying
 Nature-helps to find;
 Far from all resources—
 Of the Adam-land;
 On the rest provided
 By our Father's hand.

Sweet it is to nestle
 Under grace's wings,
 Covered with its feathers—
 Timid weakly things;
 As a hen, He gathers,—
 Thus He proves His care—
 And as grace aboundeth
 We draw closer there.

Glory—resurrection—
 Ends our toil and strife;
 Now we walk in newness—
 Of a glory—life;
 Soon we shall live with Ilim
 Now He lives in us—

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Vessels from the glory,
Are our bodies thus.

On the wings of eagles
Up and on we soar,
Through the raging waters
As they swell and roar;
Thus we learn our power,
Learn to sympathize,
Giving from the glory
What that land supplies.

And we act like Jesus
When He fell asleep;
Leaving One to guard us
Through the rolling deep;
Finding then a pillow
We did not prepare,
Teaching those around us,
Our repose to share.

And while taking pleasure
In distresses; we
Even in our trials,
From ourselves are free;
On the heaving billow
Silent preachers there,
Pointing to the pillow
Of our Father's care.

THE FULNESS OF THE DIVINE WORD.

THERE is a fulness in the divine word which distinguishes it from merely human productions. For though human instruments were selected for the writing of it, they were either the mouthpieces, or the penmen of the divine author, the Holy Spirit of God.

An instance of a mouthpiece of the Spirit is furnished us in Jeremiah, from whose lips Baruch wrote down his predictions (Jer. xxxvi. 4, xlv. 1); and another in Paul, who employed Tertius to record in a legible form the words which flowed from his lips. (Rom. xvi. 22.) An instance of a penman we have furnished us in Moses (Deut. xxxi. 9), whilst of David the king we read (Ps. xlv. 1), that his tongue was the pen of a ready writer. Remembering then the position in which the different sacred scribes stood to the one and the divine author, we can readily understand that there may be, and the study of the Bible

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proves that there is, a depth and a fulness in God's revelation, the like of which we may seek for elsewhere in vain. For as words are but the index to the mind of the one who makes use of them, and the expression of the thoughts intended to be conveyed, the deeper, the more comprehensive, the mind of the author, the fuller we may surely expect will be the communication when made known; and when it is God's mind that we have unfolded to us, and just so much of it as He has thought fit to reveal, He must have spoken as one fully acquainted with the subject of which His words treat, and as one who knows the importance of every expression of which the Spirit has made use.

By fulness then we mean, not the multiplication of words, but the force and the meaning of the well-selected terms, each one of which in its place is of great value, and the loss of any one of which would be detrimental to the reader's advancement in the knowledge of the divine revelation. An illustration of this characteristic of the word we meet

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with in Psalm cx. To this the reader's attention is sought to be directed.

Short though this Psalm is, it is a most important section of the Bible, full of instruction for God's saints, and a solemn, most solemn word for unsaved souls. For following Psalm cix. in which we have predicted the rejection of the Lord Jesus, and the judgment on Judas for his treacherous dealing with his master; we learn from the opening of Psalm cx. where Jehovah has placed the rejected one, and in the body of it we are taught something about the royalty, and official position, which will openly be His in the day of earth's millennial sabbath.

The purport however of this paper is not to dwell at length on the general teaching of the Psalm, but simply to call attention to the fulness there is in the opening verse of it, as taught us by the Lord Jesus, the subject of it, and by the Holy Ghost who indited it. We tread therefore on sure ground, for we deal not with conclusions or surmises of men, which may or may not be correct, but have before us divine teaching as to that

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which the words were intended to contain, and to convey.

The first, as far as we know, who drew attention to this portion of the word was the Lord Jesus Himself, when in the temple at Jerusalem shortly before His crucifixion. Having been questioned as the Teacher successively by the Herodians, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees, and having given them each an answer, which silenced these different classes of questioners, He, whom they professed to regard as a Teacher, in His turn interrogates the Pharisees: "What think ye of Christ; whose Son is he?" To this they returned a ready response, "The Son of David." Again the Lord interrogated them: "How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy foot-stool. If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" (Matt. xxii. 42-45.) This question none could answer. Had they known the solution of that which seemed like a riddle, truth as to the person of the

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Lord would have been understood, and statements, which they characterized as blasphemous, would have been made clear to subject hearts. To us, who have the advantage of fuller divine teaching, the answer is simple enough, yet although the Pharisees were in ignorance about His person, the Lord by His reference to this Psalm made it clear to all, to them if they would receive it, as well as to us, that David, when he penned it, was really writing of the Christ.

The general subject of the Psalm having been thus stated, further teaching about it was postponed till its partial fulfilment could be asserted. The opportunity for this was not far distant. A few weeks later, Peter on the day of Pentecost called the attention of his numerous listeners to its statements, and pressed upon them its legitimate teaching. The Lord's ascension to heaven had in part fulfilled it. For of whom did David write? Not of himself, said Peter, for his sepulchre was with them to that day. David therefore had not risen, but Christ had, and further, He

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had ascended to heaven, in proof of which He had shed forth that which they saw and heard. A bodily ascension, then David sang of, not a spiritual one; an ascension in person with a human body, not one in spirit, was what the Holy Ghost by David here taught. David's sepulchre, still tenanted by its occupant, proved that David had not ascended into heaven; and the language of the verse proved that the king was not writing of himself. But He of whom the words spoke—Christ—had ascended, and on the authority of this Psalm, which spoke of Him, Peter announced that God had made Him Lord and Christ. The Master had declared David thus wrote of the Christ. The Spirit by Peter calls attention to His being made Lord, a title of dignity, but not an assertion of divinity.

Yet He was, He is God, and this same verse is quoted in support of the teaching of His divinity. His Lordship as owned by God is clear; His divinity as declared by God is equally indisputable. "For to which of the angels said he at

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any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?" (Heb. i. 13.) Here it is the apostle Paul who takes up the Psalm, and draws attention to the place now occupied by the Lord Jesus as demonstrative of the truth of His person. For whilst Psalm cii., quoted in that same chapter of the Hebrews, takes us back to the past, and Psalm xlv. carries us on in thought to the future, the quotation from our Psalm tells us of the present, thus together forming a threefold witness to His divinity. Peter then in the Acts notices the title bestowed on the man Jesus. Paul in the Hebrews reminds his readers of the place He now occupies. His ascension to heaven, and the dignity conferred on Him, were Peter's theme, so he quotes the whole verse. His divinity was the subject of Paul's teaching, so he brings forward only the latter part of it.

But we have not exhausted the teaching of these few inspired words. For the apostle Paul refers to them three times, once more in this same epistle,

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and again when writing to the Corinthians.

Where the Lord is, is a testimony to His divinity, for who could sit there but one who is God? It is a Man who sits there, it is true; for ere He sat down on high, He had drunk of the brook by the way; but Jehovah alone could be by the side of Jehovah in heaven. Not only, however, are we reminded of His present place, but His attitude also we learn is instructive. He sits as High Priest for a continuance (Heb. x. 12, Gr.), whereas the priests on earth were standing daily. These latter stood, because their work was really never done, each day, each week, each month, each year, called for renewed service at the altar. He sits, because His sacrificial work is ended. To the divinity of His person we see this Psalm bears witness, since it reveals to us where He now is; to the perfectness of His work, as never to be resumed, it also calls attention, since it expressly tells us of His attitude on high. He sits, the token that His work is done. Where He sits, throws light on His

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person, and by consequence on the value of His atoning work. That He sits for a continuance, speaks volumes as regards the completeness of it. But more. He sits in expectation. But of what? To minister again, as it were, at the altar? To offer Himself afresh? No, that has been done once for all. He awaits now only God's recognition of the service He rendered to Him, by putting all His enemies under His feet. Do we rest then on our estimate of the work of Christ? Nay. It is Christ's estimate of it in which we are invited to share; God's estimate of it too, as witnessed by the expectation of Christ, and attested by the Spirit's presence on earth, and by His teaching through the word.

But further, our Psalm speaks of His enemies. "Thine enemies." God will treat them as His own, surely, but they are written of as the enemies of Christ. Who then are these? What will be classed in this category, when God puts Christ's enemies under His feet? When too will that be effected? On these

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points the Psalm, which is silent, receives elucidation from the New Testament; and this serves to remind us that there is, at times, more in the Old Testament scripture than what at first sight appears, needing, however, the teaching of the Holy Spirit to disclose it. In this instance it is 1 Corinthians xv. 25-26, which declares it. "For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Here by the omission of the pronoun, the thought of the Psalm is expanded to its full dimensions, and the duration of time during which that clause of its first verse will be in process of fulfilment is revealed to us. "Thine enemies" wrote David, "all enemies" wrote Paul. Nothing which can be classed as an enemy of God or His people will be exempted, but, till death itself shall be destroyed, of which Revelation xx. 14, gives the account, the full mind of the Spirit, who revealed the truth by David, and commented on it by Paul, will not have been carried out.

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How full then is this word! Of the Christ and Lord David wrote, of His divinity he taught, and by the Spirit's reference to the words he penned, a light is cast both on the finished character of Christ's work, and on the enemies which are to be put under His feet. With all this in so few words, we may well remember the importance of not merely skimming the surface of the Bible, but of digging, as it were, more into its depths, as far as the Holy Ghost gives us light on its pages, its clauses, and its words.

DISCIPLINE IN THE SCHOOL
OF GOD.

ISAIAH.

In chapters xiii. and xiv., down to verse 27, the *rise* and fall of Babylon are presented to the prophet. It is worthy of note that at this time, historically, Babylon was a very insignificant place; but the Spirit of God instructs His servant

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words ; like one afraid to loosen one stave of the cask, or one spoke in the wheel, lest all should be broken up.

THE EXERCISE.

If I am in Christ, Christ is in me. Then comes the question, Is my flesh so broken down that I am practically up to this ? The flesh is never altered ; we have to watch it incessantly.

The apostle Paul is taken up into Paradise. Now, you may think, he will not have a trace of flesh left in him ! Not at all. He needed a messenger of Satan, or he would have been puffed up : he needed something to humble him. The Lord put his servant into the danger, but what met the danger was something thoroughly humbling to Paul. He does not take the revelation away from him ; but neither does He take the thorn away. He lays him in the dust—makes him contemptible in the very thing his whole soul was in, even his ministry.

THE EXERCISE.

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So with Job. God can say of him to Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth? He was surrounded by every blessing, and he says, "When the eye saw me it blessed *me*." "Oh," says God, "that will not do." It was all true; but he was beginning to esteem himself for it, so the Lord gave him up to be broken; and then it was no longer "when the eye saw *me* it blessed *ME*," but "now mine eye seeth *THEE*, therefore I abhor myself." That is what we all need: full consciousness of what we are in ourselves, but not to weaken the consciousness of what we are in Christ. I first get to know that I am a man in Christ, and God forbid that that should be weakened; but then I have to learn that the treasure is in an earthen vessel. The flesh hinders my realizing it, and the flesh must be put down. I must learn that the flesh has not the smallest title to say a word, or to have a will; and then I grow in the blessed knowledge of the unsearchable riches of Christ. I first get the place in Him,

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and simply own it to be all of grace; and secondly, I get the dealings of God and the exercises He puts me through here. I thus learn entire dependence, and utter weakness; but like Paul, I have Christ with me, and I like to be weak, that the power may rest on me. The secret of all power is the sense that I can do nothing, absolutely nothing, but that His strength is made perfect in this very weakness of mine.

We are left here to manifest the life of Jesus here, where Christ is not. Is it our whole purpose to manifest this life of Jesus in our mortal flesh? Is our one desire to possess Christ in glory? If God has spent His Son (if I may so speak) on having our souls, ought not our souls to be so with Him, that we may spend our lives here for him who died for us? He died, "that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but to Him who died for them and rose again." Is the earnest desire of our hearts to be epistles of Christ, known and read of all men? If we are His, what we have to seek is

HE IS ALTOGETHER LOVELY. 63

this one single thing—to manifest Christ, to serve Him, and then to wait for God's Son from heaven; to be as men that wait for their Lord. The blessed Son of God has been given, not that we should live in the flesh but that we should be His in heart as in title.

May we be conscious, and gladly conscious of the claim of Christ over us as redeemed ones, that we may be for Him here, until He comes again to take us to Himself in glory.

“HE IS ALTOGETHER LOVELY.”

We gaze on Thee, Lord Jesus!
 Thy beauty fills each heart,
 And from that sight, Lord Jesus!
 We would not, cannot part;
 We bow entranced before Thee—
 Rapt with Thy glory, Lord!
 Our ravished hearts adore Thee,
 In one exultant chord.

And as we gaze, we wonder
 How Heav'n could spare its Light;
 And God—Thy God—surrender
 His one supreme delight.

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All heaven's gaze is centred
On earth, those wondrous years,
For Thou this scene hast entered,
And God as Man appears.

And glory burst from heaven—
And owned, its King was here ;
Angelic choirs were given—
Heav'n's music filled earth's sphere.
Now heavenly hosts surround Thee—
For heaven has claimed its own,—
The Father's glory found Thee,
And placed Thee on His throne.

All heav'n with praise is ringing
Our souls drink in the strain !
The anthems, they are singing—
We echo back again ;
Our hearts o'erflow with praises,
What tongue could silent be
When God—the Spirit—raises
Such heav'n-born melody ?

What rapture thus to know Thee—
What bliss Thyself to meet !
And owning all we owe Thee
Fall prostrate at Thy feet ;
To know we're Thine for ever,
That Thou our portion art,—
And never, never, never,—
Our Lord, from Thee to part.

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

IF I look at Saul of Tarsus (or any man in fallen nature, where all are sinners), I see a man who is descended from the first Adam—under condemnation as such, an enemy to God, under Satan, of the wicked world, possessed of a mind which always puts self first, and loves to have it so.

If I look from such an one to God, I see (according to what is written) One who, according to His own place of supremacy as God, can do as He wills, and who, in that same liberty of His, has been pleased, acting from Himself and for His own glory,* to do a work which is the expression of His own character. He made Him who knew no sin† to be

* As God He had the right to care for His own glory, He chose to do so; on His doing so hung, in reality, the blessing and preservation of all under Him.

† Paul speaks here of Christ, the only Man (Him) who was without sin.

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a sin-offering for us,* that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

In Romans i. 1–7 we see how in God's glad tidings (and it was joy to God Himself—part of His glory) the Person and works of His Son were chiefly in question. In them were God's answers to man's ruined, lost condition. They themselves (the Son and His works) are in and before God. He proclaims them as His answer to the ruin of every one that receives them. Being themselves out of sight, and only reported of to us, it is *of faith*; being wrought by another (Christ), and not by myself, it cannot be *of my works*; being from God, His way of clearing from all evil, and of introducing into a blessing (far above what man ever possessed in Eden, or could, as a mere descendant of the first Adam, ever hold), one who has nothing but *demerit*, and is in character that which God hates, for it is the contrast of what God liked (that is Christ),

* The *us* are believers; but the work is presented to sinners (2 Cor. v. 19—21), as God's refuge for them.

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it is mercy and compassion of God which its report proclaims. It makes nothing of Satan, lets him do his worst, and so bring in his own judgment by doing it (Heb. ii. 14, 15); let the world (ripened to maturity) have its place in accomplishing the divine counsel, for men, Jew and Gentile, in Jerusalem killed the Messiah—this was their sin; but His blood was needed in order for mercy's course to be free; and the contrast of the whole character of men, and of the Man who knew no sin, stood confessed: the will of man led him with wicked hands to crucify the Lord Jesus, who was obedient to God unto death—the death of the cross—fully tasted death for all, and who was the only spotless Man who could, because spotless, be a sin-offering for others.

The Epistle to the Romans was not written to a church.* Its great subject—the last three verses excepted—handle that of which I have written

* The detailed proofs of it, and their variety, are well worth studying, though I may not stop here to do it.

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above. The beginning, the middle, and the third part present us, not with what struck Paul's mind in the hour of his conversion (save that it was involved therein, and can easily be seen to be so), but a close and detailed argument of how the counsel, and plan, and works of the last Adam were God's answer to the ruin brought in, to himself, and on his family and heritage, by the first Adam. God's mercy and remedy are briefly referred to in chapter i. 1-17, at the commencement (a gracious way of putting it), and then man's need of it,* argued out from chapter i. 18 to chapter iii. 20.

The next turn (chap. iii. 21) is to God's remedy for man so finding himself lost and ruined. If a man knows his ruin, what refuge is there like that of God, who knows no ruin or change?

Three grand truths stand out to light between chapter iii. 21 and the close of chapter vi. For there are three grand realities which the glory of God makes needful, if He becomes the refuge of

* See previous note.

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the ruined sinner, and needful to the conscience of the sinner, if, having fled for refuge to God, he is to be at peace, full peace, there.

God will have His own name manifestly vindicated from all aspersion, and glorified in all that He does, and both of these before all His creatures, friendly or unfriendly. It might be asked, first, how can He be clear if He becomes the patron of a rebel? Secondly, how can He remove from a rebel's conscience the dread of the results of a true and righteous judgment to come? Thirdly, how can He give power to a self-loving creature over the world, self, and Satan? The three great realities referred to answer such questions.

In Romans iii. 21, to end of the chapter, the first of these questions is answered. God makes His own throne, which would have been the throne of eternal judgment against every rebel, a mercy-seat, by placing at His own right hand the Son of His love, in whom He had provided the sin-offering; who offered Himself without spot to God,

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and was accepted as such, and who now is enjoying the fruits of God's delight in that His service. The throne of God is set forth as the mercy-seat now; and the light of the mercy is shining down upon all the wicked of the world, and as it shines, and they go on in their sins, it proves the more awful character of their sin—they love darkness rather than light. Most of such, if they get even the notion of mercy, turn from it in wrath and disgust. Mercy glorifies God only, and if received into the soul makes it to know that it had nothing of its own but sin, demerit; or else why rejoice in mercy? It does shine into, rest upon, and dwell in some, even those that believe. Knowing their own fitness in themselves for rejection, they rejoice that God should Himself have taken care of His own glory, and having provided a sin-offering, should have placed Him, accepted and delighted in, at His own right hand. This portion clearly agrees with Leviticus xvi.,* and

* It must be remembered that sacrifices were

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the atonement part of that chapter. That victim slain is no more found in its record, save on the mercy-seat.

2. But the Azazel, or scape-goat, was not killed, it lived to carry the people's part of all the year's sins into a land where they could not be found. So in Romans iv. 7-19 we get the principle of *resurrection* connected with the faith, as also more fully in Hebrews xi. 17-19. This points to the resurrection of Christ, as referred to in 1 Corinthians xv. 17. "If Christ be not risen from the dead, then are ye yet in your sins."

For, in Romans iv. 24, 25, it is written, not only that Christ was delivered for our offences (that is, our offences being before the mind of God), but also was raised again for our justifying (that is, God's justifying of us being before His mind). But for this the heart of the poor sinner never could have said, "Now is Christ become the firstfruits of them that slept." (1 Cor. xv. 7.)

not of Moses, though arranged by God through him. They existed, too, before Abraham, Noah and Abel being witnesses thereof.

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“Christ died, yea, rather is risen again, and maketh intercession for us.” (Rom. viii. 34.) “*My* sins (says faith), I know them well, blessed Lord, and so dost Thou. Thy brow (though crowned now with honour and glory) records where they are; thy hands, too, though about to wield the sword and the sceptre against sin, tell thee where my sins are” (turned by thy grace from being my shame and terror to be thy glory).

Read, too, Romans v. 1—11, and see how blessed the experiences of the believer. There are three noticed; first, verses 1, 2: one through faith in God—past, present, and future, all savours to faith of God.

Past: Having been justified on the principle of faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Present: Through whom also we have access, by faith, into this grace wherein we stand.

Future: And boast in hope of the glory of God.

And not only so, but also we glory in God's schooling us in the wilderness.

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It and our very weakness having, through grace, to pay tribute to us.

And not only so, but the God who gives the faith in Himself and in the blessed truths of His own providing; in His use of the wilderness for us. What a God He is! how transcending every thought of every creature, the One at whose hand we received the reconciliation.

In all this we see *Azazel* blessing. The burden removed from the hearts of the people; their feet set in a wealthy place, and they knowing that the God that has blessed them is forming His own rest, and blessing, and hope in them.

These things give joy in God, the desire and will to be His, not only hereafter, but now also. Yet the doctrine thus far unfolded contains not *power* over sin, power to die to self and sin, and to rise above the world and Satan, the god of it.

Another truth about the blessed Lord perfects the blessing. The Lord Jesus Himself made the throne of God to me

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the mercy-seat. The Lord Himself, alive, and known to be risen, was the Azazel; but He also is the last Adam, of whom the first Adam was but a passing type. And the grand lesson of chapter vi. is just this, that our Lord, in His humiliation, crucifixion, death, and burial, was proposed by God to be the hiding-place of a people that should believe in Him. That *to God's mind* the believer is seen as having been crucified together, died together, and been buried together with Christ. That, as God looks upon it as so, we may *reckon* it so as to ourselves. In that Christ died, He died unto sin (not His own, for He had none, but ours, whose judgment He bore) once; but in that He lives, He lives to God. Now, if that is a fact, a reality, before God, then (but not otherwise) it can be added, "likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Chap. vi. 11.) And observe the power that is supposed present: "Let not sin therefore reign," &c. (ver. 12); "neither yield," &c.

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(ver. 13); and both these statements growing out of the truth of (ver. 14), "for sin shall not have dominion over you."

Sin (the root), not sins (the fruits of the root of sin), is what is in question here. Sin, self-willed independence of God. But if I am not standing before God as a mere descendant of the first Adam, who was made at first a living soul, but instead of that I am ranking under the Last Adam, who is life-giving Spirit. He, ere He formally took that place, and the glory of acting upon it, had been crucified, died, and been buried, for our sins, and we, being one in God's mind, through faith, with Him, faith can say, my own old self was crucified together with Him, and the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea was my burial-place. But, in that He liveth, He liveth unto God, and I (yet not I, but Christ in me) has the mastership; and so I reckon myself dead, and I live to God. For Christ died, that they that live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them;

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and it is thus that the love of Christ constrained Paul, and constrains to-day each believer. My Lord, I know this purpose of thine, "that they that live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto thee, who didst die for them," and for me. Certainly, Lord, here is motive, and motive power too.

The chapter vii., which follows, abundantly confirms this. Salvation is of the Lord, and from the Lord, as much as the last Adam was. That is the first part of the chapter (vers. 1-4), and in the rest of it God's salvation is shewn to put no honour upon the strength or ability of any descendant of the first Adam. He needs, as such, to be saved from *himself*. Pitiab!e position. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (ver. 24.) The individual is hopelessly bankrupt. But "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord," brings in the Saviour, the last Adam.

Divorce from the law of God! Yes; that is wanted, and we believers have become dead to the law through the

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body of Christ. (Chap. vi. 1-5.) The rest of the chapter treats of awful conflict which *must* follow the attempts of any one who, having believed in Christ, tries to keep still out of the ranks of the last Adam, and to go on with the attempt of living to God under God's claims over man as a descendant of the first. Victory! an overcomer! will never be said of such an one by God. If it were, it would be honour to selfish self-confidence. On the contrary, it is said of each one who, turned by God from the first Adam to the Lord, counts and acts upon it, that all deliverance is in Christ, the last Adam. Power, too, over selfish independence of, and obedience to, the Saviour-God.

For *height*, nothing can go higher than the subject as presented in chapter iii.; God having made His throne the mercy-seat, that He might be known to be just in justifying the ungodly. For *breadth* and *width*, the subject, as it is in the end of chapter iv., is perfect. For what is David's measure, in Psalm ciii., compared with ours now? What

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is, "As far as the east is from the west, so far as he removed our transgressions from us," when compared with the resurrection of Christ from among the dead, all our sins which took Him there left behind as His grave-clothes? And of all the *deep* things of God now brought to light, it were hard, as it were, to find a *deeper* than that subject of Romans vi :* all the terrible effects of the fall to a believer found clean put away in the humiliation and death of the last Adam.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.
HOW TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE
FLESH AND THE SPIRIT.

THERE is the flesh and the Spirit in every believer. Before the indwelling

* I am often made ashamed by the way in which most—I fear I must say most—of my brethren in the Lord read and quote Romans vi., as though they saw nothing more in it than instruction as to the mode of water baptism, and this as much upon one side of the question as upon the other.

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of the Spirit of God, there is but one energy—the flesh ; but, consequent on the sealing of the Spirit, there is another energy, namely, the Spirit of God, who seeks and demands the entire rule.

Now these two energies always resist one another ; “ the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other, so that ye may not do the things that ye would.” The Spirit has the sway. The great and constant aim and labour of the Spirit is to suppress and silence the flesh, while the unceasing effort of the flesh is to re-occupy the place of unquestioned sway, which it once had, and which it ever exerts, when not controlled by the Spirit. It is a new era when the Spirit dwells in the believer, for though there be not always a cessation of the flesh’s strife, yet it ever grieves the Spirit, and the saint is conscious often of depression, without knowing the cause of it. The new and legitimate ruler has been hindered by the old one ; and “ he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corrup-

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it note its own feelings, and derive either pleasure from the way they are enlivened, or depression because of their insensibility. At all events, it is one's own state that furnishes either pleasure or pain, like a miser who recounts again and again his possessions or losses. Lastly, in

WORSHIP,

the unerring proof that I am in the presence of Christ, is that my flesh has no place there ; it is in no way ministered to or recognized, as the apostle says, " Whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell." Again, " Whether we be beside ourselves [that is, literally outside of myself] it is to God." There is no " bread " in the presence of Christ, —nothing to sustain nature. It is " inside the veil," which I have reached through the " new and living way." Now when worship is attempted in the flesh, there is excitement and enthusiasm, the feelings are made the centre, and the effort is to move them to a burst of expression, like a firework exploding,

GOLD.

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rather than to engross the heart with Christ in rapture so deep, that silence is imposed, until there is time enough to comprehend something for utterance.

May the Lord use this faint attempt to distinguish between the Spirit and the flesh in a day like this.

 GOLD.

“ become God’s righteousness in him.”—
2 Cor. v. 21.

I SAW Him full of goodness,
 Watched Him on His way;
 He gave to all, and empty
 None were sent away;
 And all the varied beauties
 Of that veil of old,
 I traced in Him—the Gracious;
 Yet I wanted—*Gold*. *

A man in nature perfect,
 Wondrously unique,
 Unfolding every virtue—
 Gentle, patient, meek.
 I knew I was attracted,
 How could scarce be told;

* Gold—divine righteousness as displayed in Christ now *where He is*.

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Yet oh! my heart was craving—
Thirsting for the gold.

I heard His cry of anguish
On the wondrous tree,
And saw that Justice left Him
There *alone* for me :
A heavy weary burden
Off my spirit rolled,
And yet I lacked a something,
'Twas this thirst for gold.

My faith I knew was reckoned
Righteousness to me,
And I was free—acquitted:
Why not happy be ?
I seemed like one possessing
Rights to joys untold ;
The cheque was mine, most truly,
Yet it was not gold.

I looked at my 'believing'—
Wondered was it true ;
It seemed to *give* me nothing :
What was I to do ?
My debt of sins was cancelled,
Judged—the man of old,
And sin consumed to ashes :—
Yet I had not gold.

The righteousness demanded—
Satisfied by blood,
The One in resurrection
Cleared me with my God ;

GOLD.

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All this my cheque so precious,
 Fully did unfold :
 I found I had some silver,*
 Yet I burned for gold.

A famine fell upon me :
 Nothing I possessed
 Could satisfy my spirit,
 Longing after rest.
 The Solomons and Davids,
 Earthly things could hold ;
 For me such hopes were over :
 Oh, to reach the gold !

“ This righteousness, now reckoned,
 WHERE was it ? ” I said ;
 Or “ Was it mere acquittal
 Through that One once dead ? ”
 Strange hopes now tinged my sorrows ;
 I could not unfold
 The ebb and flow of longings
 I had after gold.

The brass† I could not fathom,
 Though I wept to know
 The depth of woe HE suffered
 On that cross below.
 I *saw* each court-yard pillar
 In its brazen hold,
 But only *heard* of shittim
 Overlaid with gold.

* Silver—grace exhibited in man, *the* Man Christ Jesus.

† Brass—God’s righteousness in judgment on the sinner where *he* is.

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The tent concealed completely,
 What my soul would see,
 Although the brass and silver,
 Outside gleamed for me.
 No feet, save priests' could enter :
 How should *I* behold
 That furniture uncovered
 Everywhere of gold ?

I knew that for salvation
 I had nought to do,
 Yet HOLINESS seemed hidden
 From my eager view.
 I feared, amid my searchings,
 I must soon grow cold ;
 For I was weary, weary,
 Looking for the gold.

That blessed—'in Christ Jesus'—
 His peculiar word
 Who looked on One in glory
There confessed as Lord,
 Now to my heart kept telling,
 God doth there unfold
 (As in that curtained dwelling)
 All His store of gold.

I felt I wanted treasure
 Far beyond the ken
 Of all my would-be helpers
 'Mong the sons of men.
 My failures!—oh, their number
 I could not have told !
 Then why should I be seeking
 For the finest gold ?

GOLD.

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I seemed to hold a basket
 Seeking 'precious seed'—
 Now testing, now refusing;
 None would suit my need.
 O, when the *perfect* standard
 Would these eyes behold—
 The wheat I sought for sowing
 Must be sheaves of gold!

I hated, like "the Preacher,"
 Life; and yet the word
 Had said it now was ended
 Through my blessed Lord.
 In vain I tried to reckon
 Dead this life of old;
 I felt I could not do it
 Till I saw the gold.

The Song of songs entranced me—
 Drew my heart away,
 And seemed to stream upon me
 Many a golden ray.
 I craved a life of freedom,
 Powerful to hold
 Myself as dead—for ever
 Satisfied with gold.

Jerusalem the holy,
 With her jaspered light,
 Wherein God's fadeless glory
 Ends the name of night,
 I knew I soon should enter,
 Learn her joys untold:

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The more I gazed, the deeper
Grew my thirst for gold.

* * * *

I read—if Christ be in me
Dead the vessel lies;
And was not He now dwelling
Where my heart would rise?
That Man above—whose dying
Closed the things of old—
WAS HEAD OF GOD'S CREATION,
Channel of the gold.

The risen Christ had ended
Righteousness of *law*;
God's righteousness was something
Quite distinct, I saw.
Then, lo ! a train of wonders
Through my spirit rolled,
For glory-light was falling—
Shewing me the gold.

And now I saw, in fulness,
Out from heaven above,
And in the light of glory,
God's unbounded love.
The Place, I found was opened
Where was wealth untold—
The MAN beginning all things
In Himself the gold.

GOLD.

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That Man was in the glory,
 I in Him up there ;
 Before His God and Father,
 I was *thus* brought near.
 An Orb, the sun surpassing,
 Heaven doth now behold ;
 He set, as brass for justice,
 Rose—to pour forth gold.

The cheque that I was given,
 Faith—could act below ;
 For grace was in abundance,
 Downwards did it flow.
 The treasure-house of glory,
 Asked me to be bold,
 And draw from God's resources,
 Of 'the gift'—the gold.*

The righteousness God *giveth*
 There rejoiced my heart :
 'Twas from the consummation
He would have me start.
 When all the wrath of justice
 O'er that Man had rolled,
 Then—in the face of Satan
 Out came all the gold.

He shews the gold-set diamond
 In the darksome night,
 Who cares not that its beauty
 Should come forth to sight;

* Rom. v. 17.

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But he who knows its value,
 In the light doth hold
 His gem, and all its lustre
 Flashes o'er the gold.

The CROSS seen thus in glory
 Deep in heaven's own light ;
 No more the fruitless groping
 Near the shades of night.
 I once was lost, a sinner
 Under Satan sold,
 And now I'm lost in glory,
 In the Source of gold.

The wealth of grace and glory,
 Mine for evermore—
 Oh, how they made me value
 That which bought such store !
 For now my heart was trying
 Not to get, but *hold*,
 A new exhaustless treasure—
 Satisfied with gold.

Below I walk as widowed,
 For He is not here ;
 And why ?—I know His presence
 In another sphere.
 'Tis when God's Christ in glory,
 We at last behold,
 We learn—as with Rebecca,*
 HE begins with GOLD.

* Gen. xxiv. 22—30.

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CHAPTER VIII.

Gives us the charta of the privileges of them that are in Christ Jesus.

To be *in Christ* clearly proves that there can be *no condemnation*. But it is a pitiable and questionable state of soul found in many—though it is the conventional view of the subject that *no condemnation* (ver. 1) and *no separation* (ver. 39) are the greatest blessings. It would mark man's mind at work thinking of self, and not the Spirit's, in the new man, thinking of Christ.*

The items of blessing might be stated thus: In Christ Jesus (ver. 1); and,

* Israel as a nation was in relationship with Jehovah as its God and King. The way into this position was not explained. The blood of the paschal lamb; that of the great day of atonement, the scapegoat, &c., were all typical of God's way to the sinner and of the sinner's way to, and standing before God. (See Hebrews.) The truth of the last Adam could not be spoken of while the first Adam was still on trial.

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according to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, free from the law of sin and death (ver. 2); fruit-bearing (ver. 4); life and peace (ver. 6); a standing in the Spirit (ver. 9); the Spirit of God, of Christ, of life, of Him that raised Jesus from among the dead and will raise up us also in quickened bodies—dwells in us (vers. 9–11); Spirit of guidance, sonship, adoption, crying Abba Father: witnessing with our spirit that we are the offspring of God; and if so, then heirs, namely, heirs of God and co-heirs together with Christ; sufferers together with Him now and to be glorified together with Him hereafter (ver. 14–17); yet the glory to be revealed makes present sufferings appear as nothing (ver. 18); for earnest yearning after the manifestation of God's sons leads to waiting for it (ver. 19); if vanity of vanities is our experience, hope still holds the heart on what is beyond (ver. 20); for the freedom of the glory of the sons of God is before us. (Ver. 21.)

This (being amid a creation marked by vanity of vanities, but the spirit of

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glory to come having become earnest and firstfruits in us of the glory) makes us feel things as they are and groan within while we await the sonship, namely, the redemption of our body (vers. 22, 23): but saved in hope, we wait for that for which we hope. (Vers. 24, 25.)

Yet this sense of need and infirmity and ignorance vents itself; and the Heart-searcher above knows what the Spirit means (vers. 26, 27); then, too, we know that all things are working together for our good; (we love Him who first loved us) for He has called us according to His purpose (ver. 28); this connects us with His foreknowledge of us and predestination to be conformed to the image of His Son, so as for Him to be firstborn among many brethren (ver. 29); for the predestinated were also called (as I have been) and the called have been justified; and the justified also glorified (ver. 30); What is to be said as to all this? God for us! who or what is he who is against us (ver. 31); God spared not to give up His Son for us! how not then give us all

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things? (Ver. 32.) Whose charge against God's elect, of whom He is justifier, will stand? (Ver. 32.) Condemn! who will do that? Christ the dying One, risen and who is at God's right hand interceding for us. (Ver. 34.)

Separate us from the love which is in Christ's heart toward us—who can? Sorrows down here from things seen, only realize to faith its present portion and become witnesses of our blessing (vers. 35, 36); and in all these things, through His love, we are overcomers (ver. 37); for faith is assured that nothing, in the visible world or in the invisible, shall have power to part us from that love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Vers. 38, 39.) God's love to Christ embraces and holds fast those that are IN HIM.

I advise you, reader, to write out a list of these blessings direct from the scriptures, and I beseech you challenge your own soul, as you write, as to *how far* you are standing on and acting consistently with each successive item of blessing in the charta. Christianity is

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not merely a beautiful theory—full of grace and glorious promises, an abstract religion—wonderful and marvellous! but it contains the manifestation of God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; contains God's description, too, as here, of what Abba, Father, thinks of His own sons and daughters: is addressed to the understanding, giving light to the simple, but never understood aright until the heart is living upon its contents. I pray you, as in a day of great knowledge like the present (superficial as that knowledge may be, and because it is superficial), not to be for yourself without enjoyment of and practical consistency with this rich grace of God.

CHAPTERS IX., X., XI.

Are most precious in themselves, and heart-searching in their contents. Many see that in the gradual opening of truth by God, from the beginning down to the time when *the truth*, all that God had to communicate, was presented in the person of His Son, the Lord (though men could not profit from it fully until

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certain works were done by the Lord, and the Holy Ghost had come down witness thereof as instructor and power of understanding), many see, I say, that saints in Old Testament times had less light than we have since Pentecost. The unity of truth in itself is strikingly proved by these chapters. As God's working with sinners for their blessing was at the beginning, so necessarily, it has been ever since : at one time working for blessing among a people for the earth, and at another time working among a people for blessing in heavenly places, but the same God had ever the same counsel, purpose, character, motives, and ends ; and man has been man from the beginning.

What the Spirit of God in Paul saw in all God's way of blessing was such that it made the rejection of the Jews as such certain, for the principles brought out to light as connected with God's line and seed of blessing through Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, *they denied*, and so rejected God. And these principles were identical with those which

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secured Paul's blessings and those of every humbled believer from among the Gentiles.

Paul always gives the first place to Israel, and the second to the Gentile; that is, as looked at in the flesh. The propriety of so doing is clear; for when Jehovah had no worshipper on earth He called Abram, that in him and his seed the worship of Jehovah might be made known upon earth. The Jews say Abram was a maker of idol-images before he was called. Be it so or not, no satisfactory reason can be given why he and not another was called except this: that He that called him being God, He acted as God and was justified in so doing. But God did call him and was pleased to promise him a seed (Isaac), and many great blessings. To a creature who has confidence in itself, it is felt to be an awful position to be in, to be before God, and therefore who, because He is God, does as He wills, calls whom He will, gives promises to whom He wills; but to any one who knows the truth of the entire ruin he as a man

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is in, as descended from the first Adam, it is felt to be the only sure and the very best ground to be upon. Ruined and bankrupt in myself, if God has had really to do with me, and I understand the grounds which He is acting upon, I must recognize the ruined bankrupt state of Adam's family and of myself as one of them. And so I know that 'mercy alone will do for me,' yea, 'Nothing but mercy full and free.' My freedom from all merit and my demerit are clear, and mercy from first to last is my boast and song.

I will now just give an outline of these three chapters.

Chapter ix. 1, 2. Paul's fervent love to the Israelites.

Verses 4, 5. They were the people upon earth to whom all the privileges were presented—of whom, too, as concerning the flesh, was Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever.

Verses 6–9. Nevertheless the word of God was accurate and true: To be of Israel, God's call and promise must be known, for it was written, "In Isaac

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shall thy seed be *called*," and the children of promise are counted for the seed. His having been called and having promises is true of every one who is in Christ.

Verses 10-13. Then in Jacob and Esau it was shewn that the blessing stood according to the purpose of God, according to election, not of works, but of him that calleth.

Verses 14-16. An objection is raised, Was not this inconsistent in God?

The answer is, If God had not acted consistently with His own Godhead and character, and shewn mercy and compassion on whom He would, where would Moses have been? (Ex. xxxiii. 19.) However, Moses the mediator both failed and lost all right to promises given conditionally. God had His own glory as God, and His own character, and chose in mercy to act on them. But not only does this, amid the failure of a people on whom He has set His love, turn their shortcoming to an opportunity of magnifying Himself and His character; but

Verses 17, 18. The senseless, haughty

E 2

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pride of the hardened sinner, who will not own God or bow to Him, is put to shame. If Satan, a liar and a murderer, forgets his coming doom and how his judgment will but serve to magnify the glory of God's character; let all the pride that cannot see and will not own the living God, remember the word to Pharaoh: "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth."

And so it is not only He will have mercy on whom He will, but "and whom he will he hardeneth." These are solemn words truly, and heart-searching, to discover and shew to us what God thinks of haughty pride and self-willed ignorance of Him. If we were a little more open to the word of God, such passages would search our souls more, so as to leave no little ways, or occasional actings, of wickedness in us.

Verse 19. An objection is proffered: Then why does He find fault, for none have resisted His will?

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Verses 20, 21. The answer is curt: man replying against God, who are you? Shall the thing formed say to its former, Why hast thou made me thus? Has not the potter power out of one lump to make one vessel to honour and another to dishonour?

Verses 22, 23, deserve close attention. There is a double contrast: God, willing to shew His wrath and to make His power known, *endured with much longsuffering** the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. On the other hand:—

And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory.

The contrasts are between His will to make His power known: and His delighting in His own character of mercy.

* Note, *He suffered in much longanimity*, bore with certain vessels, whose opposition to Him was sure to bring them into judgment; they were only fit to be marred. It says not that God fitted them for this, or that the wrath was prepared for them. It was not; but for Satan and any that choose to follow him.

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And His having afore prepared for glory and enduring with patience for a time.

Verses 24, 25, 26. These vessels of mercy were the called, whether Jew or Gentile, according to Hosea ii. 23; i. 10;* and according to Isaiah. (Ver. 27-29.)†

Verses 30-33. Another topic comes in here. The Gentiles, who were not righteousness seekers, had found the righteousness which was (in another world and) of faith. The Jews, seekers after righteousness by their own works, had not found any. In fact, occupied with things down here and of themselves, they had stumbled over a stumbling stone and rock of offence, of which David had written, "Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." (Ps. cxviii. 22.) For Christ Jesus the Anointed Man (Jehovah-a-saving) was the only one in whom righteousness could be found, and He was earth-rejected but honoured now in heaven.

* The difference of these two passages gives much force to the argument.

† Here again the argument is fortified by the testimony of the texts.

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In chapter x. Paul shews this most clearly, in proving that in the close of Deuteronomy (the book of the *second* giving of the law), it was shewn that after Israel had got into judgment, and scattering from the land, yea, into circumstances in which no precept of the law touching the feasts could be kept; and got into this awful position through its own self-righteous love of the law, which it thought it could keep, but would then be proved not to have kept (and how ever could a rebel that had a good opinion of himself get the blessing due to One who, being God, humbled Himself down to bear the judgment due to the rebel?) that then those who owned their sin and accepted the judgment at God's hand, yet looked up to Him, would find deliverance and blessing. (Deut. xxx.)

Verse 1, Paul's yearning towards them; verse 2, the ignorance of their zeal notwithstanding; verse 3, ignorant of God's righteousness, they had sought—they had been rebelliously seeking—their own (ver. 4), not Christ; but (ver.

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5) their own doings and merits—these would have been of workings that could be seen ; verse 6, not of Christ, through faith of Messiah, who, from being God in heaven, had descended from God in heaven, and (ver. 7) descended into the deep (though now ascended and made Lord in heaven).

Verse 8. Him for righteousness—the word is nigh, in the mouth (for confession), and in the heart (for faith) ; and this the word (good news, indeed !) that, if we confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God has raised Him from among the dead, it is salvation.* (Vers. 9–11.)

Verse 12. It is the Lordship and mercy of the Lord which is in question, not the difference in man, if (ver. 13) whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved, is scripture truth. Verses 14, 15, unbelief might shut out ; men that have not heard cannot believe ;

* It is impossible, in the very nature of things, to know the Lord Jesus as He is and to own Him, and not to see how God is interested in man and as a sinner, and has provided salvation in Him.

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 111

heralds of the word must go out on the blessed work. And yet, alas ! (ver. 16) Isaiah (liii. 1) was heard and not believed, yet verse 17 stands true. Faith by hearing and hearing by the word of God ; and (ver. 18) yet David said the testimony was abroad everywhere. (Ps. xix. 4.) Verse 19 ; Had not Israel known it ? Moses they had (Deut. xxxii. 21) : and God would try to provoke them to jealousy by means of individuals, and anger them by a foolish nation. (Vers. 20, 21.) And another, whom they knew, had drawn a bold picture between finders and losers. (See Is. lxxv. 1.) “I was found of them that sought me not ; I was made manifest to them that asked not after (as it befell Saul of Tarsus when found by the Lord Jesus) : and (ver. 2) all day long I have stretched forth my hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people” (as it was to Israel). See Luke xiii. 33-35.

(To be continued.)

RESULTS OR FRUITS OF SERVICE.

As to results, I think it is evident that there are always results from the utterance of the word; but there may not be the results which we look for. Paul was always led in triumph, and was ever "a savour of life unto life, or a savour of death unto death."

I am assured that the servant can know whether he is doing his Lord's will in preaching in any given place. I do not think he is to learn this by the results, though such would confirm him. I believe he in nearness to the Lord could ascertain whether the Lord would have him to go to a place, and remain in it, or leave it. If I am really led of the Lord in my service, the results He intended and ordered would follow. Paul essays to leave Corinth, not seeing the results he *wished for*, and the Lord tells him to remain, and he remained for a year and six months. (Acts xviii. 11.) There were many souls in the place, but they were not all brought in at once. I

RESULTS OR FRUITS OF SERVICE. 113

cannot imagine anything more trying to a servant than to feel that he has been losing his time attempting a service to which the Lord had not sent him. Nothing more humbling than that a servant should have to avow that he had mistaken in coming to, and in remaining at a place.

If the evangelist is led of the Lord he goes to a place, and preaches there, assured, whether he sees results or not, that he is doing as the Lord desired. His faith will be assured some way; but often, when it is right to go to a place, it may not be right to remain there; and here, I believe, that evangelists and teachers err. I ought to know when I have done my Master's bidding, and then to stop. The evangelist has a wider calling than the teacher. A teacher, as was once said to me, is judged of by his pupils. If he has not been able to form any, or to help on any, his service is impugned: hence results would be more gradual and progressive with a teacher, than with a preacher. With the latter the result is

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at once seen, because the soul has been turned from darkness to light. In teaching there is seldom a very great step at any one time, though the teaching is defective if there be not progress in those taught. The most accepted or the most exhilarating teaching may not be the most effective. Nothing really forms the soul but the word, rightly divided, applied by the Spirit.

Teaching which acts much on the affections seldom leaves great results, however much it may be liked at the time. Christ is never really formed in one without displacement of the old man, and this is always grievous, however consented to and done.

In a word, do not look to results to assure yourself of being rightly led, but having been assured before the Lord that you are serving in the right place, and that you have the right word, then I believe He will confirm to you that you have done His will either in preaching or teaching; and there will be results, though they may not perhaps be just what you expected. When I

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am serving according to His pleasure, He is sure to stand by me, and to sustain me; but the teacher must not expect the immediate results which are given to the evangelist, nor is the latter to expect to be stationary, or that because he had blessing in a place once he must have it there again. Whereas, with the teacher, it is to those to whom he has been useful he will be ever more useful, if the conscience be good on both sides; that is, his work continues.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE HOLIEST OF ALL.

WHEN we learn the position given us of God, it is so novel and wonderful, even to the smallest apprehension, that unless we are very subject to the word, and what is revealed therein, as the only true measure of it, we are in danger of concluding, that because we have seen a part, we have seen the whole. This has been the ever recurring check and obstacle to the most sincere. The very greatness of the thing promised with the

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Himself to those who keep His commandments, but the saint that knows most of Him in His manifestation, is sure to be the one most careful and desirous to enjoy Him in the midst of His gathered saints.

The Lord grant that we may so know what the Holiest is, with all its attendant blessings, that we may feel we cannot accept any lesser blessing, however great, in lieu of this—the greatest which our God has given us.

GRACE.

Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—
2 Cor. viii. 9.

SATISFIED with gold in glory,
Through REDEMPTION, on the wing,
I have seen unfading sunshine—
Reached the everlasting spring
Opened by the Son of God—
Opened with the price of blood.

Him—who knew the Love eternal—
Coming from God's heart to me,
Bringing thence His hidden treasures,
Vast, unsearchable, and free,—
Him it is above I know,
Thence would trace His course below.

GRACE.

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Oh, how brightly Joseph entered
 On his suffering journey here—
 Coming *from* his home in Canaan,
 Knowing one who loved him there;
 'Here am I'—*began* the way
 Marked by grace in rich display.

He alone, of all the fathers,
 Started thus to run the race—
 Called to more than separation
 From the Syrian's low-born place :
 CONSECRATION'S voice revealed
 Glory-dreamings, deep concealed.

And should I, *in Christ*, so wonder
 To behold my golden store !—
That was what a princely Giver
 Like my Lord—would surely pour :
 Now, I asked—"How can it be
 He has set His heart on me?"

Grace—more wonderful than glory,
 In that lowly Man I trace;
 Grace of God and grace of Jesus !
 All I am I owe to grace :
 Glory without grace might be ;
 Were it so—alas, for me !

Not the value man proposes,
 On each ransomed one was laid ;
 Varied as his thoughts and feelings
 Would the ransom then be paid :
 Measured by the eye of God,
 One the price—the precious blood.

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Carefully each son was noted—
 Valued at no random cost ;
 Not one piece of precious money
 Could be spared, much less be lost—
 Like that silver, fitly wrought,
 Which was by half shekels brought.*

When at first I was attracted
 By the Man of grace below,
 Silver would not satisfy me,
 All my dross concealed it so ;
 I was asking—"What was I
 That for *me* the Christ should die?"

"Why should I be one whose ransom
 On that Cross was surely made?—
 Was not the atonement silver
 For a favoured number paid ?
 My half-shekel—was it there?"
 Thus I reasoned, full of care.

When I saw that man was ended
 In the Man enthroned above—
 Grace transferred from earth to heaven
 Shining then in light and love,
 God in Him was glorified
 And my heart was satisfied.

He set on me all the value
 Of my Saviour's precious blood ;
 Thus the grace was now unfolded
 Of the happy Saviour-God.
 By the spoils Christ won for me,
 Great indeed the victory !

* Exodus xxx, 11—16.

I was given blood-bought glory,
 Taken with Him whence He came
 Who, to end my wretched story,
 Went beneath my sin and shame:
 Glory-standing, glory-light,
 Must be had to see this sight.

Angels came—must hasten downwards—
 Bring ‘the glory’ in their train;
 Heaven itself must see and own Him—
 Gaze upon that wondrous Man:
 I—the one for whom He died—
 Wanted not the Crucified.

Hands well filled with consecrations,
 On He went—to *die for me*,—
 Said my name was in the heavens,
 Where, with Him, my home should be.
 Dull the ear that heard Him tell
 What my heart now knows full well.

‘It is finished’—told from glory,
 Turned my heart’s enlightened gaze
 Towards that Cross where nature’s sorrow
 Sought to weep in dreary days.
 Ah! my gold refused to own,
 Nature’s song or nature’s groan.

Freed from earth—I fain would follow
 In His footsteps day by day—
 Gaze upon His wondrous sorrow,
 Where *my* thoughts must die away:
 Nature’s self-assuming eye
 Once had sought therein to pry.

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Oft I wondered why those daughters—*
 Weeping as they saw Him here
 Pressed beneath His heavy burden—
 Were refused His grief to share ;
Now the gold exposed to view
 What was spurious, what was true.

Since I found the place He opened
 In the new-creation sphere,
 In the Father's heart abiding,
 Where He dwelt, tho' wandering here,—
 I am learning depths of grace
 From the glory of that place.

And the CROSS, and *not* the ^{*}glory,
 Is my boast along the way ;
 Not my death, but Jesus' dying,
 I am carrying day by day.
 Rent the veil : *this* blessed me so,
 Nothing here, save death, I know.

Not to die, I now am trying :
 But to live as one set free,—
 Walking, serving, praising, flying,
 In the power of liberty :
 Gold fast binds me to my *place*,
 Silver brought me there in GRACE.

For Rebecca—won for Isaac,
 Bound to Him with golden bands,
 Must be loosed by silver jewels
 From her native Syrian lands :
 Free, and filled, and satisfied,
 Hasting on—His coming bride.

* Luke ~~x~~xiii. 28.

DISCIPLINE IN THE SCHOOL OF GOD.

ISAIAH.

Chapter xxxvi.

WE are now come to Sennacherib's invasion of Israel, where Hezekiah, who represents the future remnant of Israel, is subjected to two trials, and is brought through two deliverances—one outward, when he is saved from the Assyrian; and the other inward, when he is, so to speak, raised from the dead. The part which Isaiah had to act in these two trials is the subject before us. It is always the manner in which the servant acts which discloses the effect of the discipline which he has undergone. Every servant requires, and as he waits for it, receives, preparation for every coming service. He does not know the service for which he is being prepared. Were he to know it, the tendency would be to make him think how to act, instead of being simply prepared of God. This is to be noted in the service of

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THE GREAT WOMAN OF SHUNEM; OR THE MORAL ASCENT.

THE history of this woman is the history (morally) of many a saint now. In the opening of it we find her occupying a position in complete contrast with that of Elisha, the man of God. He separate, and therefore despised; she in the full tide of outward prosperity, and, as possessing that which the world values, held in honour, and esteemed "great." Nevertheless, she does not share the current thought about Jehovah's prophet—she does not despise him, but constrains him to accept her hospitality: "And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread." (2 Kings iv. 8.) This owning of God's servant, slight as it was, and expressed in the way of patronage, initiates a new era in this woman's history, and marks the point from which begin the unfoldings of His ways in grace to one whom He designed

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to bless, by bringing her down from the height of *independence* she was occupying into the only place of blessing—that of *dependence* on Himself. It is this which makes the history so full of instruction for ourselves.

Two points now come out of very great interest. Elisha so maintains his place of separation in her presence, that she is constrained to own to her husband, “Behold, now, I *perceive* that this is a *holy* man of God, which passeth by us continually.” And the woman, having thus *perceived* what Elisha was, *understood* what was suited to him—not the place she occupied, or the things with which she was surrounded as one of earth’s great ones, but a *little* chamber on the wall, furnished to meet the simple exigencies of life. “Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick; and it shall be, when he cometh to us, he shall turn in *thither*.”

From this it seems evident that, whilst entertaining Elisha at first in the way of

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patronage, it was not the love of patronage that constituted the motive to her act. His conduct, as one separate to God, had now made patronage no longer possible — (are we thus true to our place ?)—nevertheless she owns and entertains him as before, with this difference, that she now acts in the intelligence of what became him as a “*holy* man of God,” little thinking that she was thereby writing “Ichabod” with her own hand on all that was hers. She has now to learn *practically* that what is suited for Elisha is that which becomes herself, if she is *willing* to have the God of Elisha as her portion ; and we shall find that she learns the lesson, as only it can be learned—through DEATH.

This quitting of the place of “patron,” and taking that of one who would *serve* the man of God, is very beautiful, as giving token of that which was already at work within, and which, as we shall presently see, was to issue in complete subjection of heart and will to Him of whom Elisha was but a type, and in unreserved acknowledgment that He must

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be the source and dispenser of all blessing for herself, and she the simple recipient of it. What a lesson for her proud natural heart to learn, and how severe the process by which it was acquired! And yet it is the same lesson which every soul who has to do with God in grace has to be taught at the very outset. It was thus the Lord Himself revealed His own place—and hers—to the woman of Sychar: “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.”

To know this as Mary did, and sit at His feet in conscious emptiness, waiting upon inexhaustible fulness, is to discover, not only what it is to hunger and thirst no more, but how to become the largest dispenser of blessing; but if there be reluctance to accept it, such as is exhibited in this woman of Shunem, we shall have to come to it as she did, by a painful path of needed discipline, in order that every obstacle may be removed to the full accomplishment of

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that purpose which His grace has formed for us, and which (blessed be His name) He will carry out perfectly, for His glory and our blessing, in spite of all that opposes. Let us see how all this is verified in the history before us.

Elisha, having accepted what had thus thoughtfully been prepared for him (ver. 11), sends Gehazi to call the woman, and when she comes before him inquires by the mouth of his servant what *he* shall do for *her*. “Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care: what is to be done for thee? Wouldst thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host?” (Ver. 13.) Her answer shews that, if she could descend from the heights of patronage, she was not as yet prepared to be, even in Elisha’s presence, anything less than a “great woman,” who was rich, and had need of nothing, or to esteem as worthy of her acceptance what was peculiar to himself and his people. What were the king and captain of the host to her? “I dwell,” she replies, “among mine own people.” This has to be noted,

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because we shall find she has to do with the king by-and-by.

Human kindness is easily stayed in its course by refusal; not so grace, whose motive-spring is in the heart of God, and therefore works on, unchecked by all that opposes, until its object is attained. If the woman will dwell among her own people, and not be spoken for to the king or the captain of the host, the purpose of God to bring this entertainer of His prophet into blessing shall be accomplished in another way, by supplying a need unuttered by her—the barren shall have a child. And now we find that what is promised is too wonderful for her; she cannot entertain it, for it is that which death had made impossible to natural thoughts, and she says, “Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid.” Nevertheless it comes to pass, according to the word of Elisha, and that which is impossible with men is shewn to be possible with God. All this is, however, only a step in the way of blessing. Elisha is the type of Him who, conse-

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quent upon ascension (as figured in Elijah), is now free to bless according to his own thoughts, and this is never accomplished in its fulness until the bestower of blessing is known and owned as the central object for the heart. In the possession and enjoyment of the gift, the Giver is not exactly forgotten, but overlooked, and ere she can be truly devoted to the latter, she must know what it is to have every other link snapped. The child dies ; and now we find her on the way to the prophet, and when she has reached him, her attitude and words are remarkable. All is well at home (though the child be lying dead there), and she declines all consolation for the present, or hope for the future, apart from the *presence* of the one to whom she is now devoted. "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave *thee*." (Ver. 30.) It is himself, rather than what he can and will do ; otherwise why not follow Gehazi ? Can our hearts sympathize with this as those who can say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is

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none upon earth that I desire beside thee." (Ps. lxxiii. 25.) The prophet now follows the woman, raises her child, and she receives it again in resurrection life, falling at his feet, and bowing herself to the ground before him, whom once, as we have seen, she patronized. Thus effectually was she brought to know how "the little chamber on the wall" must find its counterpart in her own surroundings ere true blessing could be hers; and the lesson of dependence is completed, when, after having given up all, and left her land for seven years by reason of a famine, she is compelled at the end of that time to come back, and cry "for her house and for her land" to the very king to whom at the beginning she declined to be spoken for. How wondrous the grace that thus patiently deals with us, emptying us of the vile and worthless, that He may fill us again from His own resources with that which is precious in His esteem!

It is interesting here to observe, that after the death of her child, the first act of the Shunamite is to place it on

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the prophet's bed—typically the *place* of death, if sleep be type of death itself; and she then goes to the prophet himself, counting on him as the one who can raise the dead. He responds to this confidence of hers, returns with her, and raises the child, but *gives the mother the privilege of taking it up from the bed* when restored to life. This is in contrast with what took place in the case of the woman of Sarepta. There it is Elijah who places the dead child on his own bed, and it is *he* who takes it from the bed when revived, and delivers it to the mother. Has this no voice for us? I believe it has. “Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” answers to “take up thy son,” and can only be fully comprehended and acted upon by those who know what it is, in the confidence of faith, to do as this woman did, counting on the faithfulness of Him who gave the precept, and who alone can give life. The child of the woman of Sarepta is subjected to the same action, but the mother, through lack of faith, has no part in it,

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

GOOD BUILDING, OR, EFFECTIVE TEACHING.

Two things are necessary in order to insure the value and permanency of any structure, namely, material and skill. The one is that with which it is to be built ; and the other, the manner in which the work is done. It is evident that any building must suffer from defects in either of these, only with this difference, that when the material is good, but there is deficiency of skill in using it, the defect will be apparent from the start. There is no good building then ; but when there is skill with bad material, there will often be the appearance of good building, until an unexpected collapse or dilapidation discloses the badness of the material.

In order therefore to secure good building, or effective teaching, there must be two things—divine material, and divine skill ; the lack of either is fatal to the building. The only good material is the word of His grace, and

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bear them that are evil; literally so occupied with the dangers on man's side, that they lost their first love. While barricading the back door they left the front one open; the greatest treasure was abstracted; and thus with all their antipathy to evil, they were really unfitted to be the candlestick, until at last in Laodicea they can boast of their natural acquisition of doctrines and scriptural knowledge with great human results, and Christ Himself outside—man benefited by christianity and the new creation in Christ entirely overlooked.

May each servant of Christ who reads these lines seek grace from Him in order that he may be preserved from using natural material which natural skill can utilize in the most acceptable way to the natural mind of the mass, alas, of inquirers; but that he may be more and more careful each day, to adhere to the pure word of God, the gold, the silver, and the precious stones, learning from Him skill to use it beneficially for His people.

THE TREASURE.

GOD in heaven hath a treasure,
Riches none can count or tell,
Hath a deep eternal pleasure,
Christ the Son He loves so well—
God hath here on earth a treasure,
He alone its price may know—
Deep unfathomable pleasure—
Christ revealed in saints below—

Christ the light that fills the heavens,
Shining forth on earth beneath,
Christ by God the Spirit given,
Light of life midst shades of death.
Down from heaven's unclouded glory,
God Himself that treasure brought,
Closing thus His love's sweet story,
Till the resurrection shout.

God in tongues of fire descending,
Chosen vessels thus to fill,
With the treasure never-ending,
Ever spent—unfailing still—
Still unwasted, undiminished,
Though the days of dearth wear on,
Store eternally unfinished—
Fresh, as if but now begun.

Earthen vessels marred, unsightly,
But the treasure as of old,
Fresh from glory gleaming brightly,
Heaven's undimmed, unchanging gold.

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God's own hand the vessel filling,
From the glory far above—
Longing hearts for ever stilling,
With those riches of His love—

Thus, through earthen vessels only,
Shining forth in ceaseless grace,
Reaching weary hearts and lonely,
Beams the light in Jesu's face—
Vessels, worthless, broken, bearing,
Through the weary ages on,
Riches given with hand unsparing,
God's great gift, His precious Son.

Thus though worn, and tried, and tempted,
Glorious calling, saint, is thine—
Can the Lord but find thee emptied,
That is all He seeks to find.
Vessels of the world's despising—
Vessels weak, and poor, and base—
Bearing wealth God's heart is prizing,
Glory from Christ's blessed face.

Oh, to be but emptier, lowlier—
Mean, unnoticed, and unknown—
And to God a vessel holier,
Filled with Christ, and Christ alone !
Nought of earth to cloud the glory,
Nought of self the light to dim—
Telling forth His wondrous story—
Emptied—to be filled with Him !

MARY OF MAGDALA.

THERE is a person who figures prominently in the gospel narrative, her name and her deeds being mentioned by all four evangelists ; and yet that, of which they chiefly speak, has reference only to three days of her earthly existence.

She wrought no deliverance for Israel, as Jael did. She encouraged by her presence no host on their way to the battle, like Deborah. She gave birth to no son, like Sarah or Bathsheba. She founded no kingdom, and wielded no sceptre. She built no city, nor was patron of a class of people, or of a district. Yet she has immortalised the town from which she came, and has preserved the remembrance of that little spot from ever sinking into oblivion. Mary of Magdala, commonly called "the Magdalen," has become a household word, and, whether rightly or wrongly, is not here the question, penitentiaries and collegiate institutions alike bear her name. What has made her famous? In what did she

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surpass the women best known to the world in her day ?

Her fame rests simply on her true living devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ. But her actions, which have been recorded in attestation of this, are chiefly connected with His death, burial, and resurrection. Her last service, noted in the word, was performed on the day the Lord rose, when she carried from the garden that message to His disciples, with which the Lord graciously entrusted her. That done, she has no further place in the sacred narrative. Other women, namesakes of hers, are mentioned (Acts xii. 12 ; Rom. xvi. 6) ; but she retires from our view. Her devotedness to the Lord was however never to be forgotten, so years after His resurrection the different evangelists recall and recount it. Service done to the Lord, and done as she did it, is precious to God, and ever remains in His remembrance.

Of her birth and parentage we know nothing. To Magdala she belonged, a town in the south-east corner of the plain of Gennesaret. All the evangelists de-

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scribe her as the Magdalen, ἡ Μαγδαληνή, but who she was is carefully veiled in obscurity : and indeed it little matters now. For whether of noble birth, or of plebeian parentage, (and of what value would that be to her now ?) she was born again of water and of the Holy Ghost, and is numbered amongst the children of God. Noble birth may give its possessor advantages, but when life here is ended, if these advantages have not been made use of, what matters it hereafter in what rank or circle down here individuals were born, and once moved ? The birth, which avails hereafter, is the new birth. The parentage of which heaven takes cognizance is that of relationship to God. In this, most surely, Mary of Magdala shared, and hence has a place in the Father's house.

As respects her circumstances, she seems to have been a woman of some means, for she ministered in common with others to the Lord and His disciples of her substance. To Luke we are indebted for this fact, who tells us, that

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she with other women ministered to *them* of their substance. (Chap. viii. 3.) By some she has been identified with the woman of Luke vii., but surely without any real ground for this supposition. And all that we do know of her antecedents, before she ministered to the Lord, is related in one short clause by the beloved physician, when he first introduces her to his readers: "Out of whom went seven demons." As her introduction to his readers in chapter viii. follows so closely after the story of the woman in chapter vii., we may trace perhaps the origin of this connection of thought; but her former state, as told us by the historian, was not one which would necessarily have led her into that path of sin.

But what a dreadful condition hers had been, equalled only, as far as we know, in its intensity of demoniacal possession by the Gadarene demoniac. And this her condition must have been well known. Mark speaks of it in the closing part of his Gospel. (Chap. xvi. 9.) Such then had been her state. How in-

duced, or how long it had continued, curiosity might wish to pry into, but all that is carefully concealed. What however it is of importance to know, the evangelist tells us. Divine power could and did cope with the beings which possessed her. Divine compassion had had mercy on her. She was an attesting witness to the truth that God was stronger than demons, and that the Son of God had been manifested to destroy the works of the devil. (1 John iii. 8.) But who would have selected this woman to bear tidings to the disciples on that eventful morning, when she carried the message of Christ, and told them she had seen the Lord? (John xx. 18.)

It was grace to take up such an one and use her; for Mary, set free from the indwelling presence and power of demons, became a most devoted follower of her Deliverer, and openly confessed Him, at a time when so many were afraid to be identified with Him.

Let us trace this out. And, as we do it, we shall see how the statements of all the evangelists are needed to give us

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a full and orderly account of the Magdalen's devoted attachment to her Lord.

Ministering in Galilee to the Lord Jesus and to His disciples in common with other women, Mary is found at Jerusalem at that last passover, engaged in the same service. She had ministered to Him in Galilee. She ministers at Jerusalem. Luke writes of the former service ; Matthew (xxvii. 55) of the latter. How fully, how persistently, how devotedly, she cared for Him ! She needed no prompting when to act ; she required no suggestions as to what she should do. Whilst living, He received of her substance ; when dead, there would be need for her services.

The hour of the crucifixion had arrived, and Mary is found at her post, for, as she had ministered to the Lord before it, so where He was, there was her place. And now in company with His mother, and John, and Mary the wife of Clopas, the virgin's sister, she stood by the cross (John xix. 25), identified with Him who hung on it. What thoughts must have passed through her

mind as she heard and witnessed all that went on, such as the Lord's conversation with the penitent thief, and His words to His mother and to John. But, though standing by, no words, that we read of, were addressed by the Lord to the Magdalen. During those hours of darkness she remained on the watch, though probably from the statement of the three evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the little company around the cross had, ere the close of that mysterious time, withdrawn themselves to some little distance, for after it had passed, they are found standing afar off. (Matt. xxvii. 55; Mark xv. 40; Luke xxiii. 49.) John, it would seem, describes their position before the supernatural darkness, the other evangelists agree as to their place after it. And neither the darkness over the earth, nor the earthquake which followed, would make her withdraw from that vicinity. She stood by the Lord when on the cross. She saw Him when taken down from it, for she followed to the tomb in the garden, to which His body was removed by Joseph and Nico-

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demus, and sat down over against the sepulchre (Matt. xxvii. 61), and beheld how His body was laid. (Luke xxiii. 55.)

The stone, rolled to the mouth of the sepulchre, hid that form so precious to Mary from her eyes. She could see it no longer. The Lord however was much in her thoughts. She left the garden, for she could then do nothing more there, but she left it to serve Him by preparing spices, for the embalming of His body on the day after the ensuing sabbath. During the sabbath she rested. God's day of rest she observed, but the Lord was evidently much in her thoughts. For as soon as she could, when the sabbath was passed, she busied herself in company with others in buying the spices that were needed for His embalmment. (Mark xvi. 1.) But that was not all. The previous evening she had left the tomb, just after the Lord had been laid in it, now she revisits it for the first time, before retiring to rest. For, as Matthew tells us (chap. xxviii. 1), late on the sabbath, as it began to dawn to-

wards the first day of the week, or rather as it was the dusk, τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ, of the next day after the 'sabbath, Mary Magdalen, with the other Mary, went to look at the sepulchre. All was then secure. The stone remained in its place, the soldiers, too, doubtless were there, and no premonitory sign had assured any of what would shortly take place.

Returning home to await the dawn of the first day of the week, when they could effectually accomplish their task of embalming the body, Mary evidently could not rest till daylight had gilded the tops of the hills round Jerusalem; for very early, while it was yet dark, John informs us, she came to the sepulchre. (John xx. 1.) Her eye detected a change since the previous evening. All then was secure; now the stone was rolled away. What she wanted, the body of her Lord, was there no longer. With winged feet she went to Peter and John, and communicated the fact she had discovered. To the sepulchre they ran, and Mary, who could not remain in the city, is found for the fourth time in that

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garden, near the once tenanted but now empty tomb. The disciples come and go. But she remains to weep. She wanted what none could give her—the body of her Lord. She wept, and angels witnessed it, and take notice of it. She wept, and the Lord had marked it. She told out her distress to the angels, and her Lord at her side hearkened to it. She could do nothing but weep. And how precious must these tears have been in God's sight, for they were, in a manner which defied imitation, witnesses of the affection of the heart for the object of her search. She had done what she could. She had ministered to Him whilst alive. She had stood by the cross, when He hung on it. She had sat over the tomb, when they laid Him in it. She had visited the tomb on the preceding evening, had bought sweet spices too, and prepared with others all that was needful. And now that He could not be found, she just gave vent to her tears. What more she could do she knew not. Her service, however, was not ended. The most joyful part of it had yet to

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be done, and for that she was to be commissioned by the Lord. But first He discovers Himself to His sorrowing devoted servant. One word effects that. "Mary," He said. "Rabboni," she answered. The recognition was complete. Her sorrow was turned into joy. To have clung to Him now would have been her instinctive act, but the Lord forbade that. He was risen, and she with Him once more ; but ascension was before Him, whither she could not then follow him. "Touch me not ; for I am not yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God." His ascension was the subject of the message she was charged to carry to His brethren. It was not a presentation of Himself to God, and after that He would be with His people, of which He here speaks. It is only of His ascension that He makes mention, with no thought of His return. It is the heavenly position that He would assume, of which Mary bore the tidings to the rest.

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Amplly then was she rewarded for all her toil and sorrow. The Magdalen, once inhabited by seven demons, is the messenger the Lord selected to bear these tidings to His brethren. In the Psalm it had been predicted of Him, but none would have guessed to whom that service would be entrusted by Him. It was in grace she had been delivered, and was thus used. And, as knowing deliverance for herself, she became devoted to Him. Others had heard His words, and seen His works. She had known His delivering power, and that attached her to Him. She was devoted to Him, because He had set her free.

CIRCUMCISION.

CIRCUMCISION was given consequent on Abram's yielding to Sarah's natural expedient for procuring an heir. God in His mercy overlooks, as it were, this gross act of Abram's will, and intimates in the ordinance of circumcision, "I will set aside man's will, so grievously

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betrayed in Abram." Circumcision is the sign of the righteousness which he (Abram) had by faith, before he fell into Sarah's snare. God carries him back to the high place, through faith, but this is assured by circumcision, which is, that God sets aside in the cross man's will, or the body of the flesh in which he acts. Hence, in Colossians ii., circumcision is placed before baptism. God does the former in the cross. We submit to baptism. The former is the setting aside in the cross, not merely the fruit-bearing power of nature, but the will to effect it. And baptism is the submersion of the status of man in the death of Christ, which the believer does genuinely, because he is morally in circumcision. Now when a saint attempts to set aside his own will by returning to the law, as in Galatia, then Christ will profit him nothing. That which is the deepest, fullest expression of God's grace, the putting off of the body of the flesh in the cross of Christ—even circumcision, becomes the most detrimental to grace, when attempted by

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man. Hence, practically we reach circumcision through Jordan, which is our death with Christ. Baptism is the Red Sea; it is *unto* Christ's death, leaving man no place, and a declaration that there is no hope, but in the death of Christ; so that when there is faith, one passes, not only out of the scene of judgment avowedly, as Christendom has done, but enters into Canaan the territory of God, and there circumcision is the normal state. There I have only the will of God, and I roll off the reproach of Egypt. Colossians is from God downward to me, and Jordan is from me upward to God. The man in moral circumcision is under the control of God's Spirit, he having died with Christ who had died for him; he has no will of his own, and is glad that he is freed from any claim on the flesh, so that he can be in everything a body full of light, subject to the Lord.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

SATANIC ACTION.

THE existence of an active evil spirit no one with any conscience will deny, but it is important to determine when the work of the flesh becomes the work of Satan. As a rule we may say that the act of the flesh merely, as such, is simply gratification, and is marked more by eagerness to be pleased, than by the energy that works for some definite end.

The flesh properly has only the immediate before it, seeking to please itself in any and every way. In Satanic acts there is purpose and design from the commencement, though it is not always disclosed to the tools; eventually it is disclosed to them when they are in the net, and it is too late to draw back; and this, in order that they may harden their conscience and thus be thoroughly defiled with the guilt.

Let us examine some of the instances in scripture respecting the kinds of Satanic action there spoken of.

The first occasion of Satan's influence

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He labours to prevent anyone from accepting the grace and knowledge of God. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ should shine unto them."

The Lord bless the attempt I have made to draw His people to the consideration of this great subject, for His name's sake.

THE IMAGE OF THE HEAVENLY.

I HAVE been feeling strongly how needful it is to get the second Man distinctly before us, for it is *after* Christ that God is forming His people. It is the second Man before God and not the first, and all to be brought under Him. "And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." And I feel there is such deliverance to the soul in getting hold of the truth of it; for our path is simple

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from that point ; we have but to expose ourselves to the word of God, which begets and developes Christ in us by the Spirit, and pass on in the consciousness that the Lord could do without us, but that we are simply here to reflect Him ; yea, that Christ is to be formed in us, and revealed in us. “ The life of Jesus to be manifested in our mortal flesh.”

In looking forward to the future we often sing with delight, “ In everything conformed to Thee,” but that speaks of the *glory*. In the *present* time it is His *virtues* that are to be shewn forth in us, and the present affords what the future cannot, even “ the shewing forth His virtues.” But oh ! what, and who are we to be called to this ? Yet I would seek in my soul to know what it is to be *formed after* Christ, the second Man—the last Adam : Christ, the great pattern before God in heaven, and me a weak thing here on earth ; to be formed after Him, and not to be spoiled after philosophy, vain deceit, or traditions of men, or the will and thoughts of men in any shape

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or form. What a calling it is ! and what need of grace for the path ! A Christian might say, " I shall make love to souls, and the conversion of sinners, my great life-work, and seek in every way to see them saved ;" but I feel that the having that as an *object* would spoil him as a Christian in God's mind. No ! The first point is, *down to nothing* before God, and allow Him to work in us after His good pleasure ; then there would be beautiful development according to Christ. The Lord accomplish it in us all.

THE CROSS.

God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."—Gal. vi. 14.

WHEN the famine found the wanderer
 In that land so far away,
 He began to see the distance
 He had travelled on his way ;
 How return and find the place
 Where the Father gives in grace?—

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Where the Father oped His treasures,
 Where the joy "began" to rise,
 Where the Gift, by man rejected,
 Pours in fulness heaven's supplies?
 Lost,—the way was all unknown;
 Dead,—the power to come was gone.

Where he found himself, in anguish,
 Was not where God's heart began
 To prepare the joy and feasting
 Known not in the heart of man:
 HIS the heart, the place, the source,
 Whence I would begin my course.

'Twas the light that streamed from glory
 Had been pouring through my soul,—
 Had been opening out my story—
 Made the billows heave and roll;
 But I knew not whence it came,—
 Called it by another name.

Yet, until that opened glory
 Fell upon HIS shame and woe,
 From the depths I still was crying;
 No relief my heart could know:
 How could I begin with gold,
 Till He closed the things of old?

Righteousness I craved—that treasure
 Paul exultingly made known—
 Standing, like a heavenly herald,
 Just beside the GIVER'S throne—
 Pointing to *His* blood which told
 Brass had opened up the gold.

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All that distance I had travelled,
Grace had come, and where I lay
He who loved the lost one found me,
Every hindrance cleared away :
All I sought to *do* was done ;
All I sought to *have* was won.

I began with shame and sorrow
To retrace my steps below ;
Christ above was 'the Beginning,'
God would have the wanderer know ;
And His Son revealed in me,
Thus my starting-point would be.

Not the cross I saw in nature
Is the cross I now behold ;
That—a framework I invented,
This—the basis of the gold ;
Oh! the glory of that light
Blinded me, then gave me sight !

All was finished in the glory :
New creation's power and spring
Was uncovered, where the praises
Of the heaven of heavens doth ring ;
Wondrous sight! a MAN was there
Seeking men His place to share !

First-fruits He,—still in the Vessel
Upon which the fire once fell—
Fire of wrath and condemnation ;
Who its fearful depths can tell ?
'Twas His blood,—which reached the gold,
Left me where was wealth untold.

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And in liberty unbounded,
 Fears dispelled,—my need supplied,
 I could now begin my journey
 Through the desert—satisfied,
 In the land where “no man gave”—
 Telling of the Arm to save.

* * * *

Rebel man despised deliverance
 Through the power by Him displayed
 Who had come in love and goodness,
 Bringing grace and offering aid.
 One resource,—and oh the cost!
HE must die, or all is lost.

All the powers of men and Satan
 Once before Him were arrayed,—
 Shrinking back in holy horror:
 Sin for us He must be made.
 What a tale, Gethsemane,
 Shalt thou tell eternally!

Satan came, and yet had nothing
 In the One in weakness there;
 Taunts and cruelty surround Him:
 None could in those sorrows share.
 Blessed Lord! we would adore—
 Own the grace for evermore.

This the One who passed to heaven—
 Glorifying God for sin,
 Measured from the heights of glory
 To the depths where He has been.
 We—become God’s righteousness—
 Here are left His name to bless.

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As we know the Christ in glory,
 Deeper doth His Cross unfold;
 On the brass the light is streaming,
 From the Mercy-seat of gold;
 While we taste the rest of home,
 To our place of blessing come.

There in spirit, we behold Him—
 Worshippers before the throne;
 And HIMSELF delights and fills us,
 Nothing seen save Him alone,
 Counting all things loss below,
 That we there Himself may know.

As the queen from distant Sheba
 Gazed upon the king of yore,—
 Ere one precious gift he gave her
 From his free and princely store:
 Toils forgot—the journey,—cost,
 He was all and she was lost.

Did she doubt, along her journey,
 What his royal grace might do?
 No,—his name, his fame which reached her,
 Taught her what was wisdom's due:
 Yet she *must* behold his face—
 See the GLORY of his grace!

Oh, the cost that opened glory—
 Won in woe and wrath and blood!
 He who gives the robe to enter,
 Calls Himself "the happy God."
 Lord, to us this God make known,
 And Thyself—to live and own.

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

CHAPTER XI.

CHAPTER xi. closes this part of the argument. It may be divided into three parts.

Verses 1-10 give the Spirit's view of the then state of the nation Israel.

Verses 11-32 give the tree of testimony upon earth.

The Jews not thinking of God's righteousness but of their own, lost the place of guardianship of God's oracles.

Gentiles found by God, rejoiced in mercy as individuals, but the mass of them would, in the end, think of themselves and be cut off. Israel, as a whole, is to get into blessing upon the ground of God's mercy. For God's thoughts are so large that He must act upon mercy if they are all to come out; and so (vers. 33-36) God will stand forth confessed as having had His own glory to display in His protracted dealings with men on earth.

Verse 1. Has God cast away His people? No, says Paul, here am I.

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Verse 2. None of His foreknown people are cast away. Though Elias (ver. 3) prayed against Israel as persecuting him, but (ver. 4) they are not of those whom I have reserved to myself, said God, so (ver. 5) the election of grace stood as now, and (ver. 6) if by grace then not of works. So (ver. 7) Israel did not attain to what it sought after, but the election obtained it and the rest were blinded; for (ver. 8) the spirit of slumber, God gave them eyes of not seeing and ears of not hearing; as (vers. 9, 10) David judicially prayed against them.

This brings in the second part of the chapter, verses 11-32.

Verse 11. Did they stumble that they might fall away? No, but that through salvation to the Gentiles they might be stirred up; for (ver. 12) if their fall aside is the enrichment of the world and their diminution the enrichment of Gentiles, what will it be when the time of their fulness comes? In verse 13 Paul was speaking in his true position as apostle of the Gentiles and one who

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knew God's ways. His object (ver. 14) is to provoke to emulation his kindred according to the flesh, for (ver. 15) life from the dead to the world was before his mind and that waited for the receiving back of Israel.

From verse 16 to 24 Paul speaks evidently of the tree as the channel of testimony down here, and of the responsibility of being in and of it, whether as in Romans iii. 2, or as from the day of Pentecost, when a new testimony was superadded to the old. The channel in which is found the guardianship of the oracles of God.

Israel was the channel, but knew not that Christ was God's end in the law for righteousness. The testimony was received by many Gentiles who, like Paul, saw that all was of grace, rejoiced in mercy and were humble. God remained the God of judgment still, and if, or when, faith failed in the mass and the love of many waxed cold, pride and boasting and readiness for cutting off came in; but (vers. 25, 26) there was a mystery in this: but blindness in part

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was happened unto Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, and so Israel as a whole shall be saved (and, we may add, the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the water covered the sea). Israel can alone be and will be the centre of blessing in that day ; (vers. 26, 27) iniquity taken away from them : a new covenant (live and do) given ; (ver. 28) though for the Gentiles' sake enemies while the gospel is preached, yet elect and beloved for the fathers' sake, was the nation as a whole ; (ver. 29) for God repented not of His gifts and calling. Verses 30, 31 should have been translated, "for as all you formerly disbelieved God, but now have obtained mercy by the unbelief of these ; so these also have now disbelieved in your mercy, in order that they also might obtain mercy."

The next verse is a very grand one (ver. 32), for God hath shut (or locked) up all in unbelief in order that He might have mercy upon all.

Here the apostle bursts forth in wonder at and praise of God and His praise.

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After opening his Epistle with God's gospel, he had traced out man's ways, leaving him as he judged, and as every one who has passed that road knows, not a word to be said for himself or any mere man, Jew or Gentile. He had passed through the provisions found by God for poor sinners, in chapter viii. had sketched the charta of privileges now enjoyed by the believer who stood in Christ, as a soul saved through grace. In chapters ix., x., xi., he shews how all this was confirmed by the principles of blessing in Old Testament times; that (not only so), for the present preaching to whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord formed part of a whole which Israel overlooked. When Israel should plead mercy, and the righteousness of God in Christ, it would, as a whole, find itself the centre of a new system, with streams of blessing flowing forth to the uttermost parts of the earth. The King of Israel owned, and the nation His nation, and the blessing should flow out not in measure to the four kingdoms of the Gentile dynasty, but the glory of the

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Lord covering the earth as the waters cover the sea.

And in verse 33 to 36 the heart and mind of Paul overflows. No petty jealousies, no difficulties, any longer. Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable His judgments and untraceable His ways!

For who has known the Lord's mind? or who has been one of His council? or who first gave to Him and it shall be requited to him again?

For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things.

To Him be glory for ever. Amen.

May those words take possession, through faith, and in the power of God's Spirit, of my whole body, soul, and spirit:—

“OF [OUT FROM] THEE, THROUGH THEE, AND TO THEE, ARE ALL THINGS”
—blessed God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

G. V. W.

British Guiana.

A THOUGHT ON THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

IN the book of Joshua we read of Israel's victorious career under the captain appointed by God. In Judges we learn of their declension, and of God's gracious interposition on their behalf through the instrumentality of judges. For "when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge." (Jud. ii. 18.) Without the judge Israel were powerless, for the Lord was not said to be with them, but with the judge. Thus He established a means of deliverance for His people, however degraded they might become, for their enemies were His enemies; but, the enemy was not subdued, unless the people took part in the conflict.

How humiliating, desperate, and hopeless, was the people's position at times between the days of Joshua and those of David! How powerless were they till the Lord raised up the judge! But

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they never cried to God, and confessed their sins in vain. Temporal relief, however, or deliverance, was a very different thing from the enemy being subdued.

With Othniel the judges commenced ; with Samuel they terminated. Under both of these victories were achieved of a decisive character, and the statement of the historian at the commencement of that portion of the nation's history, held good, though manifested in different ways, right on to the close, "the Lord was with the judge," but He was not with the people apart from the judge.

Again, whatever and wherever the enemy were, the Lord had not far to seek for the leader of His people. Ehud the Benjamite slew Eglon, who was dwelling within the territory of that tribe. Barak belonged to Naphtali, in which tribe, at Harosheth of the Gentiles, Sisera had his headquarters. Gideon was of the tribe of Manasseh, the northern hills of which overlooked the plain where his great battle was fought. Jephthah who warred with Ammon, belonged to Gilead, east of Jordan.

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To come now to particulars. Of Othniel the record is short, but what there is confirms the remark at the opening of this paper, "He judged Israel, and went out to war." (iii. 10.) The people then must have followed him, though in what numbers we know not; but victory was granted him, so that neither Chushan-rishathaim, nor any Mesopotamian power again invaded the land, till far on in the history of the Israelitish monarchy.

After Othniel came Ehud, who slew the king of Moab. Alone Ehud did this. But the death of Eglon did not of itself deliver the country from the presence of the Moabites. Israel by rising up, and following Ehud, when He blew the trumpet in Mount Ephraim, took part in the conflict. Had not the Lord raised up Ehud, Israel would not have overcome their enemies. Had they not responded to his summons, and in obedience to his directions taken the fords of the Jordan, would the Moabites have been cut off? For they "suffered not a man to pass over. And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand

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men, all lusty, and all men of valour ; and there escaped not a man. So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel." (iii. 28-30.) Saul afterwards fought with them, and that successfully (1 Sam. xiv. 47), and David subjugated them (2 Sam. viii. 2); but no fresh invasion across the Jordan by Moab, that we read of, took place from the days of Ehud till the death of the prophet Elisha. (2 Kings xiii. 20.)

Ehud died, Israel sinned afresh, and Jabin, king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor, became the Lord's rod, wherewith to chastise His people. At Deborah's word, Barak, accompanied by the wife of Lapidoth, drew to Mount Tabor with ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun, and with them defeated Sisera and the host of Jabin under his command. Barak fought the battle, and thus broke the yoke of servitude. To him, and to the ten thousand belonged the honour, for they "jeoparded their lives unto the death in the high places of the field" (v. 18); but all, it would

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seem, was not then done. "God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel." That was the immediate effect of the battle. We read however, and "the hand of the children of Israel prospered, and prevailed against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan." (iv. 23, 24.) Henceforth the Canaanitish power was laid low, never again to fight for its ancient position and power in the land.

With Gideon's history and victories most are familiar. By Gideon and his three hundred men with their pitchers, lamps, and trumpets, the Lord discomfited Midian, and put the enemy to flight; after that the men of Naphtali and of Asher, and of Manasseh pursued the flying foe, and the men of Ephraim, summoned by Gideon, took the fords of the Jordan, and slew Oreb and Zeeb, two of the princes of Midian. The slaughter was immense, for there fell of the invaders 120,000 men. Gideon afterwards crossed the Jordan with his three hundred men, and slew the two kings,

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Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all their host. The honour, we must own, belonged to him, and the three hundred with him. But here, as elsewhere, others of the people took part. In this instance the first and last blows were struck by him; but, before he crossed the Jordan, he pacified the Ephraimites by his acknowledgment of their services in that saying, "Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim, better than the vintage of Abi-ezer?" (viii. 2.) The result of it all was the final subduing of Midian before Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more. The overthrow was most signal, and effectual. It was never forgotten, and in common with that of Jabin's host, will only find its full parallel in the defeat of the confederacy of the latter days. (Ps. lxxxiii. 9; Isa. ix. 4, x. 26.) From that day Midian never appeared as an enemy of Israel. Her camels, which in Gideon's days crossed the Jordan in hostile array, will yet visit Jerusalem, not, however to threaten her liberty, or to imperil her existence, but

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to transport tribute of this world's wealth to the city of the great king. (Isa. lx. 6.)

In Jephthah's case we trace the same principle. The people followed him and victory was achieved, and Ammon was subdued. (xi. 33.)

Later on Samuel was judge, and the people had known a depth of degradation never reached in earlier years. The ark had been taken captive, and Israel were defenceless before the Philistines. Called by Samuel to Mizpah, they confessed their sins before God. But their assembling there attracted the notice of the Philistines, who prepared to attack them. Weak and defenceless in themselves, Samuel prayed for them, and when he was in the act of offering up a burnt-offering, the enemy drew near, but only to be signally discomfited by God Himself. Did Israel rest contented with the Lord's interposition? No. They followed it up, as became them, and smote the enemy till they came under Beth-car. "So," adds the sacred writer, "the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel; and

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the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. And the cities, which the Philistines had taken from Israel, were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath ; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines." (1 Sam. vii. 12—14.)

Now this was not the first time that these uncircumcised men had received a check, but it was the first time that they were subdued before Israel. Shamgar had smitten them, and Samson likewise. It was reserved, however, for Samuel's day to see that people subdued. Once before had Israel met them in battle array on that same field. (1 Sam. iv. 1, vii. 12.) Then Israel were smitten, and the ark was taken. On the first occasion they attempted, without confessing their sins to God, to do battle with the foe. They were beaten. This time, under Samuel, they humbled themselves before God, and came off victorious over the Philistines. To conquer they had to confess their sins, and repent ; to subdue the enemy they

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must take part in the warfare. This they did not do, that we read of, under Shamgar or under Samson. Those judges acted alone. God was there, and thus delivered Israel, but the enemy was not subdued. The display of divine power was perhaps more marked in the cases of Shamgar and Samson. An ox-goad was all that the former wanted wherewith to smite six hundred men. The jaw-bone of an ass was a weapon in Samson's hand to deal out death to a thousand of his enemies. The exercise, then, of divine power was not dependent on numbers. None of the other judges effected single-handed what these two did, yet, though there was deliverance through them (iii. 31, xiii. 5), there was no subduing of the foe. For that the people had to be stirred into activity. Before however that was done, they had to confess their sins. Great then, as were the achievements of Shamgar and Samson, they fell far short in result of those of the other judges. For unless the people co-operated, the historian does not record any decisive victories like

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those of Othniel, of Barak, of Gideon, of Jephthah, and of Samuel. Of the four last of these Samuel reminded the people. (1 Sam. xii. 11.) They were, in common with Othniel's, decisive victories, and for such three things were requisite, humiliation before God on account of their sin, the raising up of a judge, and the co-operation of the people in warfare against their enemies. We speak not however of a levy *en masse*, of that we do not read. But, unless the people did their part, the historian has not put on record, that the foe was subdued.

THE DECLINE OF THE CHURCH.

EPHESUS. Here we have the One "who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lamp-stands." The church on earth was to be full of divine and heavenly light. She possessed the lamp-stand of gold: the intrinsic value of divine righteousness was to be exhibited in a scene of poverty and darkness.

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Christ where He is, was to be her spring of energy in raising her above the earth ; His person,—the object of her love. She falls from this high (the highest) place, though much that is commendable is owned : she “cannot bear them which are evil,” and “has tried them which say they are apostles and are not,” &c. She still looks for purity : she has yet gold by which to try what is false, or rather, to know what is true. If she lose the gold and the light, her efforts must become negative.

The word to the overcomer puts “life” in the highest place—“the paradise of God.” It is *new creation* place and power.

Thus, in this Epistle, the person of Christ is seen in its fulness, while the church is losing her heavenly character in witness below. Is not this, as it were, the truth as in Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians on the wane ? Christ in glory is fading.

SMYRNA. Here we have life *out of death* in activity—the One of resurrec-

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tion power. This is the truth of Colossians. There is no fault found with this assembly—no call to repentance. *There is a pause*, so to speak, to see whether Smyrna will lay her hand on the heavenly light passing—or passed—away in Ephesus. If not, she must sink into the old scene and yield her bright hope as in resurrection blessing. The world snares her then.

Resurrection's base is lost in Smyrna, as the sequel proves.

PERGAMOS. Here the church is seen dwelling "*where Satan's throne is.*" There are those there who "hold fast my name, and have not denied my faith." Here is faith—so fully brought out in Romans—present still. "My faithful martyr" is spoken of also. Yet there are among them those "that hold the doctrine of Balaam." If the pleasant fields of the old creation be sought, Cain's world will, surely, ensnare: "earthly things" and all that man has erected in his "Enoch" must amalgamate in the church interval, when the

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eye turns from Christ in glory. If, however, resurrection power is lost, "faith" is still owned in Pergamos. If *it* wanes, the eye which sees even no more than forgiveness through the blood of the slain Lamb, may be closed.

How suitable the "sharp sword" here, as also the word to the hearing ear—"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of [not now the tree in new creation place, but] the hidden manna," &c. The "living and powerful" word of God must act painfully when things that are not seen are in danger of being relinquished; while the promise of that which nature's eye cannot behold or sense's taste relish, is held out. The manna is a type of Him from heaven in humiliation below. In the worldliness threatening Pergamos, suffering with Christ would find cheer in such food.

If faith fails, there is nothing left for the professing church save a religion of sense in the flesh. Then, all the truths of "the gospel of God" pass away—truth even back to the incarnation of the God-Man must suffer.

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THYATIRA. If "the faith" wholly waned in Paul's days, the result would have been a commingling of Judaism and heathenism. And such followed the retrogression of the Pergamos period. The flesh carried with it all it had gathered from Christianity also. And this is Romanism. Here, then, we see the sensual state of the church. Christ in glory, the hope as in resurrection, and the faith itself, passed away. The woman—Jezebel—rules.

A remnant now appears; and it will be seen that an effort is made to recover truth in precisely the same order (but *inverse*) in which it was lost.

SARDIS. Here, there are the effects of an effort at recovery; but no "perfect works" are owned. We know that, at the Reformation, truth was recovered, and very blessedly; but never beyond justification by faith through the blood of Christ. "Justification of *life*" was not seen; hence resurrection blessing, as dead and risen with Him, was never realized in power—not to speak of the

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truth of the new creation in Christ. Truth, nevertheless, *was* brought to light; and, where owned as more than mere doctrine, garments “not defiled” were there. Surely, “these things which remain” are to be acknowledged by every true Philadelphian, as he rises from Romans to Ephesian blessedness.

PHILADELPHIA. Here we have what corresponds to Smyrna. It is, “He that *is* holy, he that *is* true, he that hath the key of David,” &c. Is not this the One who leads from Luke to John—He who said, “Handle *me* and see?”—“The resurrection and the life?” As in Smyrna, we have no call to repentance—no fault found—in this assembly. Indeed the language of the Spirit is, in some respects, the same as in that epistle. There it is, “I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not,” &c. Here it is, “Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not,” &c. Is not this the Judaistic element which ever opposes resurrection

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liberty—people who make their boast of covenant privileges, and regard the faithful ones as outside the pale? The contempt manifested during the Smyrnian period is manifested here once more. And what is to sustain? Life enduring “unto death,” as in Smyrna? Nay; it is the hope of His coming. The Philadelphian’s hope is to be kept “out of the hour of temptation which shall . . . try them that dwell *upon the earth*. Then, *new creation* blessing dawns—is promised the overcomer.

Thus, the true Philadelphian not only comes *out* of the old scene; he is to reach *up* to the new. The standard will not be lowered, though the professing mass sinks lower and deeper in sin and indifference. He is like the salmon pressing against the stream. While he is rising, as it were, from Pergamos to Ephesus—recovering what the Smyrnian lost—the mere professing mass will fall, with Sardis, into Laodicea.

LAODICEA. The true Philadelphian not only uses the “open door” set before

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him ; he also has to open a shut door himself to Him who knocks, as he listens for His “voice”—a blessed attitude truly. Not only will the Holy and the True One prove to those who despise, that “I have loved thee ;” it is, “As many as I love” (*φιλω*) a word of peculiar attachment. If love to Christ waned in Ephesus, His own love comes in now to stir up to action—convicting and chastening. The “gold” of divine righteousness is again coming forth—commensurate with His place who is “the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of *the creation of God.*” It is not new creation in the future only ; the Head of it is there. If the church has lost the lamp-stand, light is to be had from Him—“eyesalve ;” true purity can shine in the “white raiment.”

Thus, the Philadelphian can, individually, have the highest and richest portion amid the ruin in Laodicea. What grace ! All that the church should have been is found in *Himself*.

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though the official title cannot be appropriated by any, or conferred by any one to any one ; yet there is grace given of God, so that by one or another the work should be done, and as there is true subjection of spirit, there will be an aiding of one another ; the elders will be alive to their responsibility and the others ready to bow to everything of God, because expecting it. The right to oversee and rule implies a reciprocity on the part of others, if there be grace to submit to oversight and rule. And practically, where there is most oversight and godly rule, though there be little gift, there is always a happier state in the assembly than where there is much more apparent gift, and little oversight and rule. For when divine love is truly exercised, and duly received, and responded to, there must be the greatest development and manifestation of every christian grace.

MY DOCTRINE.

THE particular line of truth taught by the apostle Paul pervades all his epistles, but it is only as we note the finish and completeness, to which he leads from any point, that we can arrive at the range and magnitude of it.

The Lord said to him at first that he was to be "a minister and a witness both of those things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." His "Doctrine" is derived from these two sources, and it is not so much the nature of the subject on which he treats which he unfolds, but he teaches it in accordance with the elevation and height of what has been revealed to him ; so that every point and part must be according to the glad tidings of the glory of God. (1 Tim. i. 11.) Every part of his teaching must be consonant and in keeping with this great beginning, and hence everything he treats of, must reach to, and be determined by this height. If it be, as in Romans, the living sinner, his doctrine

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necessarily leads to this—that he is not only forgiven but he is justified, and set in Christ, so that he can say, “whom he has justified, them he also glorified.” From whatever point he begins with man, he must conduct him to the appointed measure. But now, seeing that in Romans, it is the state of the sinner before God that is the subject, the apostle shews that God hath set Him (Christ Jesus) forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood. (Rom. iii. 25. There is justification through resurrection, with life in Christ, and because of our death with Him. There is a termination of the body of flesh, there. The man, as to his old nature and condition, is crucified with Christ. It is the man *vitally* which is terminated, in order that a new life may now be manifested in the body. The man is superseded, so that we are no longer debtors to live after the flesh; he that is dead is freed from sin. Thus in baptism there is an abrogation of the existence of man, because it is unto the death of Christ. It is terminated there,

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and the rite of baptism is administered to me by some one, in that standing, in order to introduce me into it. Paul's doctrine requires this; because every thing intervening between the soul and Christ in glory, must be absolutely set aside, and judicially so, in order that it cannot rise again, before God.

Now in 1 Corinthians where the failure arose from not maintaining union with Christ and one another, where there was a licence allowed to the man as an individual merely, without any corporate responsibility, then the apostle does not present baptism as defining and establishing it; but he shews the fellowship to which they are committed, at the Lord's table; and having accepted this communion, they cannot,—that is, it is simply impossible for them to have communion with anything else of an entirely different order. “We are called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” The Lord's table then enjoins an excision from man, and his fellowship, and binds us to the fellowship of the blood of Christ, and

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the body of Christ. As in Romans, man is placed in death through baptism unto the death of Christ, and therefore death to sin is enforced, so in Corinthians, where the evil was that each one did as he liked, it is insisted, because of the Lord's supper, that if I have discerned the Lord's body, I have judged myself; and that if I have not, my body suffers chastening from the hand of the Lord; otherwise, He does not govern it. Jesus Christ crucified here, cuts off all place of action for the man individually apart from Christ; so that while in Romans sin is to be silent through death, in Corinthians the body is to be ruled by Christ. I have not only been formally set aside by baptism unto the death of Christ, but I have avowed fellowship with Him in His death at the Lord's table in the supper; I have been placed in the one, but I have assumed and been incorporated in the other.

Now in Galatians there was a return to circumcision and ordinances, after having begun in the Spirit, so there, the

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doctrine of Paul demands that everything must be in keeping with the "revelation of God's Son in me;" that I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, (that "I" is dead according to Romans,) but Christ liveth in me, and hence, I have not to seek to be made perfect in the flesh, but if I walk in the Spirit I shall not fulfil the works of the flesh. Christ is my life now and I have to cultivate Him. Hence baptism is referred to, as setting forth the claim Christ has over me, because of it. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." (Gal. iii. 7.) They had been introduced by and through the rite of baptism into an entirely new standing, and that was Christ; and they were not consistent with that place, if they returned to the flesh; for they were placed by baptism, as having put on Christ; not now merely as in Romans, where man is consigned to death, and therefore entitled to be dead unto sin; nor as in Corinthians, in fellowship with Him in His death, and therefore out of the

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reach of any other fellowship—seeing the body is His ; but here in Galatians, there could be no return to the flesh, seeing that they had been declared as having put on Christ.

Next, in Ephesians, this doctrine comes out fully, because it is presented according as God sees the church ;—according as the church is in His sight, hence here the saint is seen in Christ in heaven, raised up together with Him, and seated together in heavenly places. Earth—man's sphere—is superseded, and there is the new man in the heavenly sphere. The enemy, the flesh is taken away. “ He is our peace ;” and “ there is one body.” Consequent on this elevation according to the purpose of God, there is the prayer in Ephesians iii. “ That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith,”—so that we might reach up unto Him, unto all the fulness of God. It is Christ in all His divine fulness. It is not the setting aside of man in any form ; and hence in the teaching here, neither baptism (save as to its unity) nor the Lord's supper

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is brought forward to indicate it as elsewhere.

In Philippians we have the walk of a man in Christ; there is nothing for me but to live Christ; Christ to be magnified in my body, by life or by death; counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ,—leaving the things that are behind to reach Him in glory; looking for His coming to change my vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body. While in the wilderness contented in whatever state I am found; abased or abounding; able to do all things through Him who gives the power to do them.

In Colossians the snare or attempt was to have a religious man in the flesh. This would allow the flesh (both in its principle and will) to continue. The snare here differs from that of Romans, Corinthians, or Galatians, inasmuch as both the body and mind are acted on in order to be a substitute for the man in Christ, as shewn in Ephesians. Hence here in Colossians, we have both

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circumcision and baptism: the one, to shew there was no room for the working of man's will, seeing that the body of the flesh had been put off in the cross, in the circumcision of Christ; and added to this, the status of man would be abrogated in baptism. Where then could there be any room for will worship? If man as to will and status has gone, then Christ must be all and in all.

I may add that in Hebrews the point is to shew that earth cannot now be a religious place. Christ being in heaven for us is conclusive as to this point.

The Lord grant that some may be helped by this very partial review to see how Paul's doctrine, though the highest truth, is the one most suited and helpful in the lowest state of the church.

SYMPTOMS OF DECLINE IN ISRAEL.

WITH the rise and fall of nations, and empires history has made us familiar. They have risen to greatness, their

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glory has culminated, decline has commenced, and at length decay and decrepitude have appeared, where vigour and activity were once prevailing characteristics. Of how many nations has this been true, and of Israel amongst the number. Twice in her history has she risen to greatness, and has sunk back through declension into a condition of weakness, to become the prey and the sport of nations around her. But, of other nations, on whom decay has appeared, we can only speak of the past; of Israel, we can speak of her future. She has a career before her more glorious than any she has yet known. Her palmiest days are still to come. To write of that future would be a pleasant task. To draw attention to her past history is profitable. To a portion of that we would now turn.

In the book of Joshua we read of the nation in the vigour of its early manhood, overcoming all its enemies, and taking possession of its land. We see, too, in those of Israel who dwelt west of Jordan, a trueness of heart for God,

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when they deprecated in the most solemn way, through Phineas their spokesman, the erection of an altar east of the river by the Transjordanic tribes. No sooner, however, have we closed the book of Joshua to open that of Judges, than we learn how declension set in, both in respect of activity against the enemies of God, and of the moral and spiritual condition of the people.

The first chapter of Judges describes the political condition of the people; the second acquaints us with their spiritual state, a short time after the death of Joshua. That the tribes did not clear their respective territories of the old inhabitants of the land is the burden of chapter i.; how they turned to the Baalim and the Ashtaroth, male and female divinities, is charged against them in chapter ii.; the two chapters thus together forming an introduction to the book, throughout which the same plan may be traced. For chapters iii.—xvi. treat of the political condition of the people at certain periods of their history, when under the rule of their judges; and

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chapters xvii.—xxi., by withdrawing, as it were, the curtain for a moment, discover to us the idolatry and immorality which existed amongst them.

To certain principles at work during this time of declension it is the object of this paper to draw attention, yet with no desire to expatiate on the faults of others, further than to get instruction from them for God's people in this our day.

Under Othniel and Ehud decline is perceptible, since the servitudes, from which by those leaders the people were delivered, were fruits of their departure from God. But, under Othniel the people appear, as far as we are given to understand, generally willing to rise up and expel the invaders, and were in a condition fit to be so used. Similarly, when Ehud blew the trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim for the people to cut off the Moabites, none appear to have held back from the conflict.

In the days of Deborah it was different, and she calls attention to it in her song. "In (*not* for) the divisions of Reuben

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there were great thoughts of heart. Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks (*or rather*, the pipings of the shepherds)? At the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart. Gilead abode beyond Jordan; and why did Dan remain in ships? Asher continued on the sea-shore, and abode in his breaches," (*or* harbours). (Jud. v. 15-17.) Indifference to God's honour and service was thus distinctly manifested. And one town is mentioned by the prophetess, whose sole claim to have a place in history consists in this, that they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord among the mighty. (v. 28.) The battle was fought, and won without their help. Their presence, or absence did not turn the scale one way or another. God had no need of their help, yet He cursed them for not rendering assistance in the hour of Israel's conflict. Would Meroz comfort herself, that Barak had not failed for want of her assistance? Vain comfort, for the angel cursed her most bitterly. Her assistance was not

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needed to ensure the victory, but it ought to have been cheerfully rendered, for the battle was the Lord's. Self-interest, then, as in Reuben, who abode amongst his flocks; self-ease, as of Asher, who continued on his sea-shore; and abstaining from the conflict, like Meroz; these were grievous matters in God's eyes. The help of the Lord! What an opportunity, what a privilege was offered, and—declined. Has Meroz stood alone in this?

In Gideon's day other phases of declension were manifested. Self-importance was at work amongst the people. God could not entrust a multitude with a victory, "Lest," as He told Gideon, "Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me." He could only employ three hundred picked men to go through the campaign, but of that small company we read of no losses. Many of the people at Gideon's summons took the fords of the Jordan, and cut off the fugitives of Midian, yet none crossed the river with him but the three hundred, by whom all

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the hardships of the campaign were borne. And was not the Lord's estimate of the people fully verified by Ephraim's war of words with Gideon, and his answer which appeased them? (viii. 1, 2.) Self-importance had struck deep its roots amongst them. At the Red Sea it was very different. There they sung, "He hath triumphed gloriously." God had the praise then. Would He have had it, if Israel in numbers had vanquished the Midianites under the leadership of the son of Joash? We know He would not.

After Gideon had crossed the Jordan fresh symptoms of declension were discovered, for it is in the days of conflict that the real condition of the people is tested. The men of Succoth, and of Penuel decline to victual Gideon's small force. Meroz had held aloof from the battle under Barak. Succoth, and Penuel refuse help to their countrymen in the hour of need. "Faint, yet pursuing" is the description of the devoted band, to whom the most ordinary hospitality was refused. Common humanity was for-

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gotten. The tie of brotherhood was practically disowned. Jerubbaal's moving appeal for food fell powerless on the ear and heart of those, who lived in fear of Midian's wrath. God was not in all their thoughts. Condign punishment was afterwards meted out to them. But think of their state, who, dwelling in the very place where God had appeared to Jacob (Gen. xxxii.), from fear of the Midianites could close their gates, their hearts, and their hands against their countrymen when fighting with the common foe. Gideon and his men did without their succour. What an opportunity they, however, lost, once and for ever.

Some time after Gideon came Jephthah. Israel was in deep distress because of Ammon. Where would a leader be found to overcome the insolent aggressor? A new device is adopted. The popular voice is heard, offering the leadership to Jephthah in a matter which concerned the Lord. Jephthah proved to be God's instrument. The choice of the elders of Gilead fell on the right

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man, but had they a right to choose their leader in the war? Jephthah looked up to God for the victory. The people were satisfied to make choice for themselves, forgetful whose people they were, whose land it was, and how the Lord had always before interposed on their behalf. What right had the people to choose a captain, under whom they would march to the battle? We can all see how wrong they were. But, has the principle of popular selection in such matters been acted upon only by the elders of Gilead?

Yet still further declension is manifested.

In God's goodness, when the Philistines afflicted Israel, He raised up Samson to begin their deliverance. Single-handed was he all his life. The people never worked with him, they seem to have been utterly demoralized. Alone did he cope with the common enemy, smiting them hip and thigh, that is, thoroughly, with a great slaughter. Yet none rallied round him, when he retired to the cleft in the rock Etam. The

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people as yet were quiet ; the activity of Samson it was, which disturbed them. And at length, Judah, which had not for many years been foremost in aggressive warfare, was aroused in earnest, and for what ? To fight for their liberty, their country, their national deliverance ? Oh, no ! Judah was indeed aroused, but it was to hand over the Nazarite, the judge, to the uncircumcised people, the enemies of the Lord and of Israel.

Let us read the account in the words of the sacred historian : “ Then the Philistines went up, and pitched in Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi. And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against us ? And they answered, To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us. Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us ? what is this that thou hast done unto us ? And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them. And they said unto him, We are come down to

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bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves. And they spake unto him, saying, No: but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand; but surely we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock." (Jud. xv. 9-13.)

Nothing can surpass the turpitude of these men. Samson, the judge, is viewed by them as the common enemy, and the disturber of the public peace. His dealing with the Philistines they look at as a blow against themselves. They were willing to sacrifice him, to secure peace under the Philistine yoke. How low had they fallen! "Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us?" Boldly, unblushingly do they proclaim their shame. Quietness under the Philistines they preferred to war and deliverance from them, and even the sight of Samson bursting his fetters, his slaughter with the jaw-bone of an ass of a thousand men, his thirst, too, after

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that great effort and service—these things failed to move the hearts of those wretched, wretched men. Has such a spirit never been developed since that day? History, it is said, repeats itself. In truth it does.

Need we wonder at all this? We might, if our hearts did not tell us, it is but the history of man when left to himself. The Lord in His mercy awake, or keep awake each one of us, to avoid the rocks on which Israel were shipwrecked.

THE SECRECY OF THE RAPTURE.

I BELIEVE that we have many notices which are enough to prepare us for such an event as the secret unnoticed rapture of the saints.

I do not say that we have a single type of it, but many things which may prepare us for it. "The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God." The eye of the natural body

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cannot see, nor the ear of the natural body hear, the visions or voices of the Spirit, if the Spirit please not.

Horses and chariots filled the mountain, but the prophet's servant had no eye for them till the Lord pleased. Neither would that same prophet have witnessed the flight of his master to heaven, had his soul not passed through a testing and fitting process. Daniel was given to see a very glorious sight, and to hear, as it were, the voice of a multitude, but the men who stood with him saw nothing, only a terror fell on them and they hid themselves. The glory on the holy hill shone only in the eye of Peter, James and John, though one object in it alone was as the brightness of the sun itself, so that there was light enough to have lighted up the whole land. Many bodies of saints rose, but it was only those to whom it was given, that ever knew of their resurrection, for no mere human eye or ear conversed with the great occasion. The heaven was open to Stephen, and Jesus and the glory were seen by him

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there, but the assembly saw nothing of it, and their only object was their victim. If Paul went to Paradise in the body, and whether he did or not he will not say, none saw him. As when Philip was found at Azotus, no one had tracked his flight from Gaza, for the Spirit had borne him away. In the light and the voice of Jesus which arrested Saul in his journey to Damascus, there was no word for the ear of his companions, nor form of man for their eye—all was mere glare and sound ; but Saul, the object of the visitation, knew it all, not in his eye and ear merely, but in the depths and secret places of his conscience.

Have not all the circumstances, shall I not say, of the taking of the saints away, been thus anticipated? We have visions and audiences, resurrections, flights and ascensions, the glory down here, and the heavens themselves opened, and yet neither man's ear nor eye conversing with a ray or an utterance of it all. For all these belonged to the regions and energies of the

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Spirit, and lay outside the range of the natural man and his faculties. And what will there be in the resurrection and glorifying and ascension of the saints, which will go beyond these notices when we take them together?

And beyond all these, Jesus rose—and rose too, forth from a tomb of hard hewn stone, and from amid a guard of wakeful soldiers, but no eye or ear of man were in that great secret. And this was the firstfruits, the pledge and sample. And after He was risen, though He might have walked the earth as before, He was seen only by them to whom it was given Him to appear. (Acts x. 40.) And He could vanish out of sight as He pleased, or appear in various guises so as to escape discovery as He pleased.

This is the great instance—but all these help us to apprehend the manner, and silence, and secrecy of the rapture of the saints.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

NO PART WITH ME.

It has been said that nothing can deprive the believer of eternal life, but that a very small thing can distract or hinder his communion with Christ. There is no communion but in the light. Light is the essential characteristic of our new existence, and that is light which doth make manifest. There may be much reality and devotedness without communion with Christ, and where there is really no part with Him. Can anything affect our hearts more than the fact that one can be really loving, true, and devoted, and yet because of some soil from some unjudged, unwashed away defilement one has no part with Him? I am sure there is no exercised soul who does not know how often he has felt there was something of reserve between him and the Lord, and that it was not removed until he was in heart and spirit freed from some false way by the ministry and power of His word. I do not here attempt to shew how the

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Isaac, there will be a want of divine intelligence in the use of it.

The Lord lay it on our hearts to watch against the smallest departure from Him; may we ever accept the action of His word, that we may enjoy the immense favour of sharing of His position and of His things.

 FRAGMENT.

Is not Mary's action in Mark xiv. 1-9, a bit of the "raiment of needlework?" The Lord says "wheresoever *this* gospel shall be preached . . . this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." He was speaking of what she had done in view of His death; and does it not prove that it is this devotion to His person which the gospel should produce? It is this personal devotion to Himself of which He will have a memorial kept. Instead of this, people often hold up Martha's devotion as what should result from receiving the gospel. They preach the gospel and *woven* work, instead of the gospel and *needlework*.

MARK'S GOSPEL.

Chapter xiv. 10-13.

VERSES 10-12. Now all hastens on to the end. Judas, urged on perhaps by the force of the bribe, but in reality urged on by the devil, goes away to betray the Lord. Good and evil are accomplished; they are accomplished at the cross. No conscience, no fear of God arrests the chiefs of the Jews on their way of iniquity and opposition to the Lord of glory; they consent together with Judas to give him money to betray the Lord. He seeks occasion to give up the Lord into the hands of the priests without too much noise—a wretched employment, truly!

Verses 12-16. But in the meantime the Saviour must explain to His followers the manner in which He gave Himself for them, and He institutes the precious memorial of His death, in order that we may always think of it; and that not only we may believe in the efficiency of this sacrifice accomplished once and

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disciples that this night they shall all be offended because of Him, and that they would leave Him according to Zechariah's prophecy, "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." But He announces to them His resurrection, and that "after he is risen, he will go before them into Galilee." We find a difference between the Lord's appearing in Galilee and in Bethany: the latter is related in Luke's gospel. It was from Bethany that He ascended to heaven. In Galilee the Lord is always looked upon as being on the earth, although risen from the dead; and He gives to His disciples the commission to preach the gospel to, and baptize all nations. This service was not accomplished by the apostles—later on, they left it to Paul (that is the preaching the gospel to the nations) having recognized the Lord's election and sending out for this work. We see that the commission in Mark is still different; it is connected with the Lord's heavenly power. The Lord's own work was done chiefly in Galilee; and the

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Jewish remnant is recognized as gathered together and accepted ; then it is sent out to bring the Gentiles into the blessings which were expected from God. The announcing of *heavenly* blessings, salvation revealed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven when Christ ascended there, is quite another thing. But whether the blessings be earthly or heavenly they cannot be brought in by the first man ; the second Man is the only possible foundation of everything.

THOSE WHO "REMAINED" AND
THOSE WHO WERE "RETAINED."

Judges vii.

It is a blessed thing when our souls are brought to that state in which we can trust God alone. We are living in a day when truth can be seen so readily—doctrines known to be true accepted without exercise of heart ; but if we are to be real servants we must be brought

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to hang on God only—to depend on Himself. How precious the lesson taught us in the words of Gideon to his three hundred followers—“Look on me and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that as I do, so shall ye do. When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also, on every side of all the camp, and say, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon.” This is the spirit of Paul when he says, “One thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus.” He can say, too, “Brethren be followers together of me;” and he weeps over those who, like those Israelites, remained behind, and did not go on with Gideon. “Mark [he says], those which walk so as ye have us for an ensample”—that is, those who had the same object and mark as he had himself.

Now the three hundred of Gideon's

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day, of Paul's day, and of our own day, are made by the Lord the subject of careful training and of encouragement too. They are always weak ones. "Fear and trembling" characterize them as to themselves. Paul can say, "I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling." (1 Cor. ii. 3.) Again, "When I am weak then am I strong." (2 Cor. xii. 9.) And see how this "cake of barley bread"—Gideon, needs and gets from God encouragement amid his fears. God says to him, "If thou fear to go down," &c. He would ease every fear which true dependence on Himself would have removed. What comfort, what encouragement, what signs, He gives to Gideon! He fits every servant perfectly, who will not move on until he has real guidance from Himself, and complete independence of all natural resources. In the very word which the Holy Ghost uses in speaking of the three hundred, we see this also. We read, verse 8, he (Gideon) "sent all the rest of Israel, every man to his tent, and *retained* three hundred men." When

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the first and ordinary (see Deut. xx.) separation took place, it is, “there *remained* ten thousand.” The twenty and two thousand *went* back, the nine thousand seven hundred were *sent* back, out of the ten thousand who “remained” or were left; but the three hundred were “*retained*”—kept by Gideon. The very word “retained” gives the idea of their needing encouragement. They were weak and probably felt their position. The word is often used for strengthening, and means to harden, to confirm, to lay hold of. A form of the same verb is used in Deuteronomy i. 38, when Jehovah says to Moses, “Joshua, the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither, *encourage* him.” So in Samuel xxx. 6, “David *encouraged* himself in Jehovah his God.” Thus Gideon *laid hold* of those three hundred, for Jehovah’s purpose, and for this he had to uphold *his* God’s goodness before them; like Paul he had to “comfort with the comfort wherewith he himself had been comforted of God” (2 Cor. i. 4)—to “lift up the hands

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which hang down and the feeble knees." They not only "remained," they were also "*retained*."

It is when we rise above man that we learn the joy of real dependence on God. How often are we driven to this, like David; but whatever way we learn that God must be our whole confidence, just at the moment when we cast ourselves on Him thus, He proves Himself not only equal to the emergency, but gives us joy and blessing far beyond our most sanguine expectations. "He will give grace;" but He stops not there; He will give "glory" too. (Ps. lxxxiv. 11.)

As an instance of this, look at David at Ziklag. What a hopeless state he seems to be in there!—his friends going to stone him, his failures stinging him to the quick; but it is then that he finds that God must be everything; he encourages himself in Jehovah his God. And God is about to open a wonderful "door" for David. Man would say it was all over with him; but God is going to shew His grace, and that He has

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“abundance” of it. (Rom. v, 17.) And this some of us have proved. The true Philadelphian gets this “key,” even that when all is ruin around, and in ourselves, God is the perfect resource, and there is the “open door.” God in Christ opens it, and “none can shut.”

David has encouraged himself in Jehovah his God. Will he get nothing from Him? He will get wonders. First, he is so enriched that he is made a bountiful giver himself. “He sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah.” (1 Sam. xxx. 26.) This is “grace.” But he must get “glory” too. A messenger comes to him with nothing less than a crown! “I took the crown [says he] that was upon his [Saul’s] head and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord?” (2 Sam. i. 10.) Did David encourage himself in the LORD his God in vain?

How blessed is this promise for the Philadelphian now! The hopes of the church for earthly testimony are over for ever. Soon the corrupt mass of

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profession shall be spued out of Christ's mouth, but "he will give grace and glory" still. The grace is fully seen in the Philadelphian stage, the glory in the Laodicean. The Philadelphian can have both. Are we among those who buy of Him gold tried in the fire—white raiment—eye-salve? If so, we are in moral glory with Christ now. The crown springs from the ocean of grace. We "sup" with the Christ who has *died* to all of man on earth. We find where He dwells, and abide with Him. This is as individual a matter as was David's resource in his God, and as inexplicable to many servants now, as it was then. How lonely, yet how blessed is the path of the one who learns what grace and glory is now! The depth of Laodicean indifference and pride will make this more manifest as the darkness deepens.

Have we been "retained" in grace by our Gideon? If we have not, we shall certainly go back. Have we found out that we are utterly weak? Let us not draw back because of this. Let us not turn to some oasis in the desert, some

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resource in nature's bank which we have stored up. *Nature must die.* We must find out not only the evil, but the *emptiness, of weak nature.* We must find ourselves utterly at the end of our own resources and plans and would-be power. Then all our self-assurance, zeal and activity even for God, in His service, is laid bare. Those who settle down outside Canaan, like the Reubenites and Gadites, never know what this breaking up is. They have "received their inheritance on this side Jordan." (Num. xxxiv. 14, 15.) They do not go on to receive the "abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness." But, oh, how sad, how solemn to stop short of the "possession of Jehovah!" (Joshua xxii. 19.) By doing so we escape all this exercise of soul—this conscious realization of the weakness, which death, because of sin, has brought in; but what an exchange! Of course grace can and does come in to break us up sometimes, no matter how we refuse and rebel; but I am looking at it now as it is shadowed forth in the Reubenites and

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their company, who are a sample of too many in this day. If we want to go on, Reubenite contentedness will pain us around; Reubenite zeal may seem to prove that we are doing nothing, and Reubenite anomalous mingling of nature-power and success even astonish us; but if Christ is really before us, if He is our object and mark, we *shall* go on—we shall be "retained;" our weakness will leave room for His strength to "tabernacle" upon us. When self is found utterly wanting, then we shall be fit for any service to which we may be called. Man's need will not make us active, when we ought to be sitting at our Lord's feet; we shall come forth knowing what "gold tried in the fire" is; and though nothing in ourselves, we shall be equal to do anything in Him. Want of complete dependence on God is the cause of all our disasters; and when we do fully trust Him, and wholly refuse nature's expedients, He never fails to help, yea, He gives "grace and glory." No matter how deep our failure—how extreme our

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case, He will succour us perfectly, when we turn to Him alone. No matter how great our mercies, how high our elevation or favour, if we rest on man we shall suffer and fall. To preserve a faithful remnant testimony, every individual in that testimony must have everything direct from the Head, though the channels of blessing may and should be gratefully owned.

The Lord grant that we may be, not merely among "those who remained," but that we may find ourselves "retained" by Himself. In all our weakness, our "little strength," He can and will encourage us. How gracious His words to the failing but true ones, in such a day as this! "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE ESSENTIAL FOR PROGRESS.

THE purpose of God is that we should be conformed to the image of His Son ; hence all progress now depends on the measure of our vigour in His life and ways. Though we do not here attain to the measure of our calling as new creatures in Christ Jesus, yet all our growth or progress is as we approximate to the proposed end.

The simple thing necessary in order to promote progress, is a closer and more absolute appropriation of the life and ways of our Lord Jesus Christ ; in a word, to do at the present moment what He would do ; what the Spirit of God is doing for Him. If I am not doing what He is doing, I am adopting a modification of His life, and consequently His Spirit in me is, in some degree at all events, hindered. Once it is admitted that progress depends on my vigour in His life and ways, then it is conclusive that my present action is not an imitation of any previous act or way of His,

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is made an object, the great purpose in God's mind cannot have the principal place, and there cannot be progress.

FRAGMENT.

THE difference between dependence and independence is this. In the former I see nothing of man to depend on; and I am so assured of God, that I seek nothing to lean on; nor do I feel that I need to be considered for, or to have anything to lean upon, because I am so cast upon Him, that even my need of Him is lost sight of, in the support I have from Him.

One is not really dependent on God when one is thinking how dependent one is. When I am most truly dependent on Him, I am most truly independent; that is, *I want nothing*. I do not feel any want. I feel Him only who supports me, and diverts my thoughts from myself to Him.

When you are seeking to be indepen-

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dent through circumstances, the circumstances are your masters ; and you are continually disappointed, or liable to be so ; and hence, fretfulness, and temper, and disappointment, spoil your spirit. A soul really dependent on God is never disappointed ; on the contrary, he is always reaping more than he ever sowed. With such an one, the smallest of seeds, that is, his faith, has grown into great happy realities. A man dependent on circumstances, is like a wild bull in a net. The bigger a person is in his own sight the more consideration he expects.

“ CALLED FAITHFUL.”

Rev. xix. 11.

“ FAITHFUL ” ! our Lord, that name is thine
 Recorded in the word divine,
 Inscribed on every page and line,
 Of Thy life's history ;
 'Twas Thine, or ever time began,
 Unfolding as unfolds the plan
 Of wondrous grace, to faithless man,
 Love's deepest mystery.

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We read it in Thy manger cot,
'Tis told out in Thy lowly lot,
Thy footsteps print it on each spot
In lines resplendent.

Gethsemane that name doth bear,
Engraved in agony and prayer,
But on the Cross,—behold it there
In death transcendent!

And heaven keeps the record now,
'The glory writes it on Thy brow,
The Father seals it; angels bow
In adoration.

“Alone” thou dost no more abide,
For heaven’s portals opened wide,
Welcome “The Faithful” to Thy side
A new creation.

Sent thence by Thee to this world’s night,
To bear Thy fragrance, shed Thy light,
And yield heaven’s fruit amid earth’s blight,
Thy grace expressing;
Bound by the love which set them free,
They “faithful unto death” would be—
Toil ended, reign in life with Thee,
Their crown of blessing.

MARK'S GOSPEL.

Chapter xiv. (*Continued.*)

Now the Saviour must be quite alone in His work and sufferings, and man must shew what he is when he is not kept by God. The disciples were warned, but Peter, full of confidence in his faithfulness (and he was perfectly sincere), trusting to his own strength, would not believe the Lord's words. But the flesh cannot resist the power of Satan: the Lord would find Himself abandoned and denied; and man, however sincere he might be, would have to recognize his utter weakness; a humbling lesson, but a very useful one, and one which makes the Lord's grace and patience shine out. It is very important to recollect—and we learn it clearly here, that sincerity is not enough to keep us right; it is quite a human quality; and we need as well the Lord's strength against the wiles of the devil, and the fear of the world. If the Lord be not there, a young girl can upset an

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earthly side, I confine Him to my need; and I lose the knowledge of Him in His own scene, where I can only know Him for my scene; but if I know Him in bright perfect scenes, as such I can count on His help and sympathy in my scene. The tendency is to reduce Him to the measure of man.

No one intelligent and interested in the church on earth could in any way comprehend and support the gravity of his privilege in connection with it, did he not know that he, with all saints, is united to Christ in heaven. The favour vouchsafed to me on earth, is assured and intensified by the other part of it, which refers to heaven. Hence, wherever a soul from imperfect teaching, or want of light, accepts the truth of the one body on earth, without seeing the other side—even, how we are placed together in Christ in heaven—he is practically lame; he has not power to walk in accordance with this high calling.

One more example. The Holy Ghost is sent down, not only to comfort me (see John xiv. 26), but also to testify for

Christ. (See John xv. 26.) It is not only the Holy Ghost acting in me, but acting for Him ; so that in proportion as I am in the second, I am enlarged in the first. And when any one confines, or in any way limits the Holy Ghost's action to the believer only, he correspondingly weakens the power of the Spirit for his own enjoyment ; because he has curtailed or denied the side of His action where there is the greater manifestation and scope for it ; as if a man would limit the light of the sun to those only who appreciate it. The principle simply rests on the great purpose of God, not only to reach us in our need, but to bring us to Himself.

May each of us more deeply and fully appreciate His grace.

THE REMNANT.

THERE are four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise. The Ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the sum-

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mer. The Conies are a feeble folk, yet they make their houses in the rocks. The Locusts have no king, yet they go forth by bands. The Spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.

Now even though you be "little," you can be, through grace, "exceeding wise," and for this, the first thing is to be like the Ant, preparing in the summer, that is, storing up in the favoured time for the coming winter—applying your heart to wisdom, so that when the demand for it comes, as it assuredly will come, you may be able to answer the enemy in the gate. You know the mind of the Lord, having learnt it before you were required to act on it.

The next exceeding wise thing is having your house in the rocks—having a position, a home, where no thief approacheth; where you are secure and unassailable.

Thirdly, with "no king;" without any apparent or recognized rules—visible power, you keep in company with your own people, the Lord's host; led and governed by the Holy Ghost.

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Lastly, you take hold of heaven with your hands;—your feet are not there yet, but you can speak of your hope and present enjoyment being in kings' palaces; for "eye hath not seen nor hath ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit."

May the Lord lead us in our littleness to be "exceeding wise."

FRAGMENTS.

If you want to get divine blessing you must be self-reduced. Self-consideration is the hindrance. I must feel "I am entitled to nothing, but there is grace enough in Thee to meet me who have no title at all." Whenever you go wrong, you may trace it back to the moment you began to look out for something for self—some self-consideration. If you are entitled to nothing, you cannot complain of your circumstances. If you feel you have no right

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to one bit of credit, you are in a state to get the blessing, counting on Him; on the love of His heart.

The Syrophenician woman (Matt. xv.) shews us the condition of soul which ensures grace. She is *nothing*—a dog—and she counts on the grace in His heart to meet a dog. If you will be nothing, you will get the grace; but not as long as you are an object to yourself. If you would have a “Be it unto thee even as thou wilt,” you must think a great deal of Christ and nothing of yourself.

There is a practical discovery in the presence of God of all the mischief that is in the springs of the heart; we want the springs of the heart broken up. How many are as discontented with God as possible, not looking after *holiness*, but seeking to make themselves comfortable! Until the will has been crushed in the presence of the Majesty of God, there cannot be a right state before God. God does hate iniquity and love righteousness.

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The world goes on on the principle of sin being in it. Deceit is the will unbroken in the midst of the consciousness of sin. Those justified God who received Christ. The Pharisees complained because He ate with publicans and sinners : but the publican can say, That is just what I want. The sinner justifies God in owning the sin and receiving the grace. A man never knows God until he gets to that point—
 “How shall a man be just with God?”

When I come to that point, to say not the world is wicked, but *I* am wicked, I have the “daysman” between me and God. He is the One who has come to me in all the wickedness of my heart, and has come to me because I am so. Now I have not only God working in me, sending Satan to plough up the fallow ground, and to shew to my conscience what was there long before, but God doing a work for me. He brings in a righteousness (His own) for the sinner. He works a work for us.

JESUS SAID UNTO HER,—
“MARY.”

I HAVE spoken *of* Thee, Saviour,
And it satisfied me not,—
Of Thy truth, Thy grace, Thy fulness,
And of all Thy love had wrought.
I wanted something more to know—
To fill my weary soul below.

I have spoken *to* Thee, Saviour,—
Told out all my soul's unrest;
And I found my heart come nearer
Where alone it could be blest;
Ah! still I longed for something more,
Though closer than I seemed before.

Thou hast spoken to me, Saviour,
Thou hast called me by my name,
And Thy truth, Thy grace, Thy fulness
To my yearning spirit came.
And then I wanted nothing more—
Enriched with such a wondrous store.

I can speak of Thee now, Saviour,
As I never spoke of yore;
I am speaking *to* Thee, Saviour,
As I never spoke before;
For now I know Thee who Thou art—
The One who satisfies my heart.

MARK'S GOSPEL.

Chapter xv.

THE gospel by Mark relates very briefly the circumstances of the Lord's condemnation : this is an important fact. As soon as He has been rejected by the Jews, St. Mark speaks of that which took place before Pilate, to relate again that which is necessary, and to shew that the Lord is condemned here too for the testimony which He bore Himself to the truth ; although indeed it was through the malice of the principal Jews ; for indeed Pilate strove to set Him at liberty, but having no moral strength, and despising the Jews and all that belonged to them, he gives the Lord up to their will without conscience. When Pilate asks, " Art thou the king of the Jews ? " Jesus answers, " Thou sayest." To the accusations of the chief priests, He answers nothing : His testimony had been given.

The Lord Jesus was soon to be a victim. All these accusations were

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that He is doing, the secret that He communicates to them, is the conversion of souls. I do not doubt for a moment that there is much and increased blessing in conversions, and I rejoice in it, but it is properly, as I see, the tail-end of the blessing and not the lead; and when it is made the lead, as no doubt it has been made, when servants are not really in the secret of the Lord, then, though there be conversions, there will not be a rising up to that measure of answer to His heart's desire, which is expressed by the Spirit and the bride, which I believe are in the lead; but when they are so maintained, the evangelizing and consequent conversion will not be neglected. Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely

The Lord grant that the one great inquiry with each of us may be, What is the thing the Lord is doing? Let us but learn of it and pursue it, and all must be right.

IN THY LIGHT WE SEE LIGHT.

THE most powerful human mind, however exercised on scripture cannot apprehend the mind of God respecting His own revelations. If any one says, (and many rationalistically assume it now) he has fellowship with God and walks in darkness, he is a liar, and does not the truth of God. Surely if one has not the mind of God, all one's thoughts are vain or worse. Now, if any one is in darkness, that is, in nature, he has not fellowship; he cannot apprehend the mind of God, and it is worse than presumptuous, his assuming to do so. The first action in nearness to God is the action of light; after light has done its work, then fellowship.

If I see a man walking in darkness, in nature, in *self*—I do not say wickedness—but in anything which is not the divine element, then I know that his spiritual judgment must be defective. Judgment is nicely distinguishing between two things in which there is the least difference. Who will decide between

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Jambres and Moses? The similarity between truth and falsehood is the refinement of wickedness, and the consummation of it, and what we pre-eminently now have to contend with. Judgment then is required. But one in nature—one not living in God's element—has not it. Nor can he have it.

“NOT AS THOUGH I HAD
ALREADY ATTAINED.”

THERE must be unrelaxed ardour in pressing on, or we lose. We can never while on earth get to a point where we can say, “Now I may sit down and enjoy; I have got enough.” If we fancy we have, we shall find that what we have, is really slipping out of our grasp. God has “prepared the things and revealed them;” and my faith has laid hold of them; but just in proportion as it has, I shall be found pressing on to them, because I have not yet reached them. Who knew more of them than Paul? Yet he was always pressing on

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to reach them. The more his faith led him into the appreciation and appropriation of it all, the more ardently he sought to attain to it, but it was always "Not as though I had *already* attained, either were *already* perfect." The Holy Ghost knew that we should require that verse, and the repetition of that word "*already*." Paul was rejoicing, and exhorting the saints to rejoice in the Lord, but he was pressing on to the mark, to reach the prize, and as he pressed on, "rivers of water" flowed out of him.

 THE WAY HE LED ME.

Thou didst turn to me, Lord Jesus !
 When to follow Thee I sought,
 Irresistibly attracted,
 Though of Thee still all untaught.
 Thou didst speak to me, Lord Jesus !
 Then my heart would with Thee be ;
 First, Thy voice awoke its longing,
 And then bid me "Come and see."
 Thou didst look on me, Lord Jesus !
 When poor nature played its part ;
 'Twas a look of love undying—
 And it broke my faithless heart.

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Oh! the bitterness of learning,
There is nothing good in me;
Oh the blessedness of turning
To find perfectness in Thee!

Then there came a wondrous moment,
When Thy glory met my gaze;
And entranced, I saw my portion
With Thyself, within its blaze.
There my spirit found its resting,
There my heart doth know its home,
Where to Thee I'm onward hasting
While I watch for Thee to come.

Thou hast called me to Thee, Master!
Thou hast bid me follow Thee,
And I long to do Thy bidding,
Till Thy face in light I see.
But in nature's strength no longer,
'Thou alone my strength must be;
When on Thee my weakness leaneth,
Then Thy power rests on me.

Through earth's darkness brightly gleami
Thou hast left a track of light;
And my feet are in Thy footsteps,
While Thy glory fills my sight.
And I faint not, nor am weary,
While I wait on Thee, my God;
For my soul is winged with praises
And my feet with peace are shod.

MARK'S GOSPEL.

Chapter xvi.

THE history of the resurrection in Mark is very short and simple. There is no doubt that more than one troop of those women who followed the Lord, visited the sepulchre, one after the other. It is clear that Mary Magdalene arrived before the others, and that the other Mary and Salome were together; then came the others. Each gospel gives us what is necessary for our faith, and that according to the special teaching which God desires to be presented in that gospel. For instance, in John's gospel we have the story of Mary Magdalene, and that beautiful story is fitted to the doctrine of that gospel. Verse 9 of this chapter speaks of it also; she came whilst it was yet dark; here in Mark we see her at sun-rise. Other women had bought spices to embalm the Lord; perhaps they had already bought some before the sabbath began, in order to rest during the sabbath day; and cer-

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other object, that the love of Christ is known, as it was to Mary of Bethany. John xi., xii. "Thy love is better than wine," it "passeth knowledge." It is the love of a *Person*, the One who loved the church and gave Himself for it. It is not merely the love of the highest and greatest relation, great as that is; but it is the love of One who, out of love, gave Himself for me: who can sympathize with me, who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin;" and the effect is, that as I know Him, I am kept from idols, just as when the love of the Father is in me, I am proof against the world and all that is in it.

May our hearts earnestly long to abound in both, for "if a man were to give all the substance of his house for love it would utterly be contemned."

RESTORATION.

RESTORATION of soul we get in a twofold way. First, I get my heart restored to

confidence in God, and the immediate cause of my failure, or the thing in which I have failed judged. Secondly, I get the thing that caused the failure so judged that I am delivered from its power.

In the Lord's dealings with Peter, when he denied Him, we have the pattern of His way with a soul that has wandered. The Lord first prays for Peter. This answers to His intercession for us, and comes first of all: we do not read of His ever reproaching Peter with his denial of Him. On the contrary, He sends a special message to him after His resurrection. "Go tell my disciples *and Peter*." He appears first to him. "Seen of Cephas." (1 Cor. xv.) He looked on him after his failure, and afterwards how He labours to establish Peter's heart in confidence in Himself, before He probed it as to what caused the failure. This proving we get in John xxi. which is a sort of appendix to the gospel, giving us the *finish*, as it were of the Lord's work in the restoration of Peter's soul. Even here, while

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probing him, He does not reproach him, though he lets other things speak to his heart and conscience. On the shore when they were come to land, there is a "fire of coals," the very circumstance connected with his failure; he had warmed himself by a fire of coals, in the palace of the High Priest. Then "when they had dined," He probes his heart with the question, "Lovest thou me more than these?" Then proves His confidence in him by committing the sheep and lambs to his care.

THE LEARNING TIME AND THE PROVING TIME.

VERY different are the effects of sorrow and joy upon us here, and yet we are more occupied with, or expect more from sorrow than from joy. There is joy here, as we are assured that we are objects of His care and love. Answers to prayer were to make our joy full. These are, I suppose, more for Christ's interests on the earth. To feel that we

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had succeeded here for Him where everything was used against Him, is very exhilarating. I think we are taught by the things which give us joy, to be able to trust God in things which try us. I have learned His love and the manner of it, in the things which afford me joy, and now when I know His love, I can trust Him (there is the trying of my faith) in the divers temptation. If I had not known Him, I could not trust Him. I have joy first, and then I am prepared for sorrow. I have learned the love in the first, and I am deepened in its reality apart from evidence in the second. In the one it is as it were, looking at the star-lit firmament, seeing what God's thought of me is; in the other, it is going up mount Moriah. It is Stephen seeing the glory of God and Jesus, before a single stone reached him. The reality of the glory was assured by the deep trial to which he was subjected, the setting of the diamond—joy, is in the sombre surroundings, the sorrow which man has brought upon himself. The horror of thick darkness was

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encountered by Abraham, after he had seen the brightness of the future day of glory.

May we be so assured of His love, have such joy in our hearts stored up through many a summer, that this winter may be well endured.

The Lord is equal to every demand, and the heart that has learned His love is equal to them also. There is the learning time and the proving time. We think we are proved by the sorrow, but the real fact is that we are really proving Him.

THE VOICE OF THE BRIDE- GROOM.

"I sleep, but my heart waketh, it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, open to me," &c.
Gen. xxiv. ; Rev. iii. 20; xxii. 16, 17.

Who is this that stands rejoicing
With that one so fair?
Opening out the weight of glory—
He has treasured there ;

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Joy, too deep for lip to utter,
Through her soul shall flow,
As the gift,—the golden jewels,
On her form doth glow.

Heir through death and resurrection
Is the only Son,
And in righteousness, his riches
Win the favoured one.
'Tis not only bare position,
And an empty name,
With the GOLD, undimmed from glory,
Thus the servant came.

And her country, house, and kindred,
Too must see her won,
Consecrated with the treasures
Of the waiting Son.
Not alone is every hindrance,
Perfectly removed,
All on earth is superseded,
To his well-beloved.

Ere the coming bride can journey
On her desert way,
Must he not, who brought the jewels,
RAIMENT meet display?

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All shall see her, ere her footsteps
Tread the arid sand,
Covered with the bridegroom's beauty,
Leaving nature—land.

Nought of 'needlework' so costly,
Could her home afford;
Isaac's bride must be dependent
Wholly on her lord;
While her feet are in the desert
All her heart must dwell
With the One whose treasure gave her
Gold beside the well.

See! the journey nearly ended,
He has come to meet
Her,—the bride, whom love, in patience,
Waited long to greet.
As she lifts her eyes to see him,
Mid the shades of night,
He who gave the wealth of Canaan
Fills her ravished sight.

First his gifts—to satisfy her,
Draw away her heart,
Then the garb to separate her,
Ere she could depart.

THE VOICE OF THE BRIDEGROOM. 379

Now her eyes behold the Bridegroom
Ere He takes her home,
To the rest prepared—the dwelling
Whence His steps have come.

Blessed Lord ! the gold of glory,
Thou hast freely giv'n ;
Righteousness divine subsisting
In Thyself in heav'n.
Power to hold us on our journey—
Thee in us below,
Man—"the earthy" gone for ever
In the life we know.

If the cry, "Behold the bridegroom,"
Has gone forth before,
Now **THY VOICE** is heard inviting,
Ere the night is o'er.
Consecrated separation,
Lost amid our shame,—
Thou dost give, to have us waiting,
Suited to thy name.

Grace abounding still; the 'eye-salve'
Drops, that we may see,
As our longing eyes are lifted,
Seeking, Lord, for Thee,

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Coming forth Thy bride to welcome,
Who at last shall say,
With her guide in fullest concert,
“Come,” ‘Thou Star of day.’

Thou Thyself the Star of morning,
Thou Thyself the Sun,
Now the Spirit’s full communion
Joins our hearts in one.
He who “hears” shall still re-echo,
Through the depths of night ;
What the bride’s whole soul must utter,
In her rapt delight.

And the thirsty one shall hasten,
Find the springing well ;
Thence to drink the living waters,
While the call doth swell ;
Then the toil, the weary journey,
All the suffering o’er,
Thou shalt have thy bride, Lord Jesus,
With thee evermore.

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