

A
VOICE
TO
THE FAITHFUL.

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

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A Voice to the Faithful.

THOUGHTS ON THE GOSPELS.

MATTHEW AND LUKE COMPARED.

It is interesting to examine the gospels in connection with the experiences of the saint, and as to their moral effect upon him. In viewing them dispensationally we might look at our Lord's course in Matthew, as He ostensibly came "to His own." But let us now look at Him there in contrast to the privileged representative man of the land, with the results of the law he had accepted surrounding him. Two men are there "under law," but oh! in such different aspects. One has come to "redeem" those under it—one who was "Emmanuel;" the other, a self-willed sinner who added transgression to sin,

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having accepted the law to mount to God thereby. The law itself waned before Him who came "under" it in Matthew. *It* came out from glory, it is true, but it came no lower than Sinai. "The Word made flesh" came down to the "dust and the dunghill" to take to glory (whence He came) those cast out as to law-righteousness. The latter, however, is Luke, who gives the Christ of God in contrast to the "holy and just and good" law itself.

When our Lord came, He appeared in connection with three phases of things which may be seen in the first garden (Gen. iii.), and which form the basis of the synoptic gospels. First, there is a representative man—the central object, as it were below, his conduct measured by law. Secondly, sin brought into the scene through man by the serpent, and the outflow thereof—all seen before God filled with the poison. Thirdly, the old creation, with all the fruit of the head Adam, ruined, the creation made subject to vanity. Now the first three gospels answer to these three phases, and

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the Lord meets each of them; while the fourth gospel (John) gives us what God had been keeping in counsel from everlasting;—"the gift" which lay in His heart, and could not come forth in its fulness, till man, the guilty refuser of love and goodness, was judicially ended; till sin and its fruit—sins—were put away according to the measure of His righteousness (Rom. iii. 23); and till we had died out of the scene of ruin; till we, formerly the children of the first man, had died with Him, who becomes our life and righteousness, in a new creation. Thus we pass from Luke (Paul giving us the bridge of union) to John. I may remark that Matthew in its moral effect, rather judicially *terminates*, while Luke *supersedes*, man as man; a new and heavenly Man (*incognito* as it were) crosses the earth in the latter gospel. Indeed we shall find it difficult to view the first gospel morally, without touching on the third: we naturally contrast law and grace. In the latter gospel the Christ yields up His spirit *after* the veil is rent, just as

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Stephen, ere he departs, sees heaven opened to receive him.

Thus, "There are three things, yea four," which we behold developed in orderly perfection by the Evangelists.

This first gospel sees Christ *conversely* to the third. In Matthew we have "the Just One" going down to the cross—there to be treated as if He had broken the whole law. Thus will He "magnify" it and make it "honourable." Whereas the unrighteous one is seen in boastful exaltation seeking to rise upwards in his pride. In Luke, God is, as it were, speaking to us of His blessed Son ; and we have the weak and dependent Man in a power not His own, on His way *up*, (ix. 51) to the glory—His reward, through the cross, however ; whereas the self-willed refuser of grace is on his way *down* to eternal misery. There we see (Luke xv., xvi.) the sinner taken with the rewarded One ; while the legal man, the elder brother, refuses grace at the door, (the spot where the two separate for ever) ; first he disowns his earthly sonship ; then (chap. xvi.

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1) as the steward in nature, he is seen with a hardening conscience, lowering the standard he himself had accepted; then, as the one “making merry sumptuously every day” (ver. 19), he insists on present glory without the cross, in final apostacy—having no conscience at all! Fearful end of man as man!

It is interesting to see that Matthew is the one to record himself as “the publican.” (x. 3.) He has no wish to make his “boast of the law,” but rather, like David, to say, “I have sinned against, not the law, but the Lord.” How suitable, too, to see that legal flesh *at once* rejects Him “who is born king of the Jews,” though having intelligence enough to know where He was to be born. Hence, ere John the Baptist preaches repentance (it is not said, in Matthew, “for the remission of sins—as in Mark i.; not to speak of “the salvation of *God*” as in Luke iii., nor of the “fulness” and “the Only-begotten” as in John i.) in connection with a baptism of water, the king is refused, and

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is a "Nazarene." We might trace a sort of order here too. As the despised king comes forward with "great light" in chapter iv. going on to "the *prophets*," to be thus rejected also, Mark, as it were, seizes the opening for his gospel, insisting He is the Son-servant, going far beyond the land. Again, as Matthew gives us His further rejection in chapter xxi., as He asserts His *creatorial* rights, and comes as David's greater Son, Luke seizes the opening, and insists on His widespread Lordship, going out to the whole creation; then, sweeping beyond even the eighth Psalm, and extracting all the heavenly riches from the sermon on the mount, &c., he unfolds the heavenly visitant, yet "Lord of all."

To return to Matthew. One would suppose that man would at least consider such words as "I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account," &c. But "men" cared not what this righteous One said; hence, in this gospel, we see their determination to banish and

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blot out of memory such a reprover. (xxviii.) But those who can thus “transgress the commandment of God” (and *transgression* is not named after Matthew in the gospels) shall hear from the Lord’s lips their fearful doom. Chapter xxiii. discloses the results of man’s seeking to recover himself by the law.

The seven woes here uttered (ver. 14 should be omitted) give us the perfection of misery brought on his head who is “under the curse.”

We do not hear “peace” pronounced to any one in Matthew—not even to the one who touched “the hem.” This, to me, is significant. How could there be peace till the man who has in every way insulted God, is judicially set aside? Nor do I believe any quickened one has solid peace till he sees the end of man as under judgment and in the flesh. In Luke we have “peace on earth,” and then, “in heaven” too. In John, “peace,” and “*My* peace”—the Son of man “*is in heaven*” there, having *gone up* in Luke.

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I may notice that since Matthew traces the legal man's story, terminating his history for us at the cross, and since Luke gives us the heavenly One who supersedes the earthly man altogether, we shall find the latter evangelist *adding* something, putting on a link, as it were, when relating the same truths or occasions. The added link is generally something which needs power wholly above nature; a contrast, not merely between good and bad, but between the heavenly and the earthly. Luke it is who shews the heart of heaven opened "unto men" (chap. ii. 9); who brings the Father out, and takes prodigals unto a new home and feasting. (chap. xv.) So for instance in chapter v. 36-39, we have in addition to what is given in Matthew ix. 16, 17, these words, "No man who having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new, for he saith the old is better." The old wine—the joy of nature, is to be superseded, and the taste for the new is spoiled if we drink the old. It is not only the necessity of there being "new garments,"

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and new bottles, but the desire is roused for "new wine."

Again, while in Matthew viii. 19-22, we only have the case of the scribe who proposes to follow the Lord everywhere, and of the one who was debarred from it, by waiting to bury his unconverted father; in Luke ix. 57-62 we have, in addition, the case of him who said, "Lord, I will follow thee, but let me first bid them farewell which are at home at my house;" and this is suitable to the gospel of the heavenly One who opens the door of the Father's house; for without that, how could we rise above the fair and laudable ties of nature?

Again, Matthew xii. 22 only names the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches;" Luke in addition (chap. viii. 14) speaks of "this life" (*βίος*, ordinary manner of living, a word not used in Matt.) and its usual enjoyments; for how can we cease to be snared by those agreeables,—sweetnesses of life, if we have not the joy of the "great supper?" Notice also how

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Luke xiv. 18-22 adds the tie of nature's relationship which he calls upon us to "hate" (ver. 26) if we are to be disciples of the rejected One; while Matthew (xxii. 5) only speaks of the "farm and the merchandise." The "field and the oxen" are what *we* possess; but nature's ties *possess us*. "So likewise whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke xiv. 33.) That is not a *demand*, it is a *fact*.

We might speak of other peculiarities as we examine this first gospel morally, but enough has been said to give a sort of résumé of what I proposed to touch upon. I would just remark, ere closing, how significant to see "the wise men from the east" bringing their gifts of gold, &c. They saw more in the royal Babe than human or law-righteousness. However, if, in the beginning of the history of "Emmanuel," we find some rising above all Jewish thought as they saw "his star in the east," we—in Laodicean days—may hear "the beginning of the creation of God" counselling those

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even who may be sunk in utter indifference, to buy of *Him* "gold." "The bright and Morning Star" is there too. The extreme between the Gentile magi and that Child of Matthew ii. does not equal the distance between the "thee" and the "me" of Revelation iii. 18.

May we own that God's righteousness is something more than acquittal because of the judicial end of man. Ah! when we have come from Paul and "my gospel," to hear the teaching of the four Evangelists, we can truly rejoice as we study the history of proud religious flesh, and say, "Now we are delivered from the law, having died to that in which we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." Hagar and Ishmael are thus sent away. The millennium, of course, will come, when the new covenant appears. The old is gone in Matthew, and we are beyond the new in Luke.

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simple force to the church of God: so that, in my judgment, in order to counteract the declension, and renovate the Philadelphian type, the pastor and teacher must be true to their gifts.

In conclusion, I would say that I believe Satan's aim and effort against us is to neutralize the effect of the great truth which has been revived in this day—the presence of the Holy Ghost. Baffled in his effort to get it denied, he then seeks to weaken its force in an insidious way. This I believe he has succeeded in doing amongst us, as to its practical power, though in point of doctrine it is fully acknowledged. But there is ever a tendency to separate the advantages of a truth from its responsibility; and so it is now. Many who rejoice in the truth of the indwelling Spirit, for their own comfort, are not alive to the responsibility which His presence on earth in testimony for Christ involves.

The Lord lead each of us to be so interested in His interests, that we may be helpers together of one another in the path of life.

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MARK.

IN Matthew we saw the moral effect of the acceptance of law, by man—"The law entered that the offence might abound." Now we shall see that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Hence, in Mark, we have the significant words opening the book, "The beginning of the gospel of [that is, relating to] Jesus Christ, the Son of God." (Chap. i. 1; Rom. viii. 3.) He is coming down to the place where sin and Satan ruined man. It is not only the answer to the question to man in the fall, "*What hast thou done?*" but also, "*Where art thou?*" It is the Son-servant, passing on *in haste* to glorify God.

In this gospel, we have, as far as I know, neither 'law,' 'lawyer,' nor any compound of the word (*νομος*) occurring. The measure, as to height, of that poison which "by one man entered into the world," is "the glory of God." (Rom. iii. 23.) The first gospel began

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with man under law, the offence so fearfully abounding, that he at once rejects "Emmanuel;" but Mark opens with man "in their synagogue, in the power of an unclean spirit," a peculiar expression, shewing Satan's tool, as it were, completely in the coils of the serpent. "The Seed of the woman" is on the scene, however, to bruise his head; and it may be remarked, that the enemy of souls is not called "the devil" in this gospel: he is always "Satan," as in Job.

In chapter ii. 16 we find "sinners" put first—coming to the front. (See correct Greek.) Jesus Christ, God's Son is pre-eminently their Friend, just because God is His object and not their need. The controversy is between the God of glory, and the ruiner of man; hence it will be seen that the measure of sin, as to its depth, is the place "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Thrice in chapter ix. must our evangelist declare the distance to which the guilty sinner must be cast who refuses "grace abounding."

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It is, "he that believeth not shall be," not only judged, but "damned." (Chap. xvi.) Hence the law is not the measure of sins on the conscience; it is the justice of God, opening up the lake of fire to the despiser of His blessed Servant: He who knew no sin, made sin, "that we might become God's righteousness in him."

The Servant speaks no good thing of the injured one in this gospel. He will not extol the faith of the Syro-phenician (chap. vii.), though He does so fully in the presence of the law-boaster. (Matt. xv.) If the sinner in the chains of Satan is to be saved, not one word is to be said for him. The Messenger is among, not only "an adulterous," but also a "sinful generation;" hence "the lusts of other things" must be added to the cares and riches of Matthew—not "the agreeables of this life," as in Luke. (Chap. v. 19.) Compare also such passages as chapters vi. 19; v. 26, &c. where the evil is more fully unfolded than in the former gospel. Truly, it is lawless flesh we behold; even the Jew must be shewn

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out, as in "the leaven of Herod." Mark adds this latter to "the leaven of the Pharisees," which is hypocrisy. (Chap. viii. 15.) Such is man! Behold the amazing grace of God in Him the "Patient, spotless One;" for such is the Son in Mark. It is the pure One who comes to the place where Satan's helpless instrument (man) lies, that He who sent Him may reveal from glory *His* righteousness; something apart from law altogether, that which is revealed in virtue of the work done on the cross. Hence He sits down at God's right hand; in chapter xvi., a woman having been the messenger to announce the resurrection of the Conqueror of sin and Satan. It is the "abundance of grace." A woman was the direct channel, in Eden, of the root of sin. Now a woman, out of whom "seven devils" are cast out, is sent with these tidings, This fact is not recorded in Matthew. Thus our gospel begins with man in Satan's power, and that even in the religious place, the synagogue: it ends with his captive perfectly set free by the

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God of glory. Thus captivity is captive led. Hence, "*she* [the word is emphatic] went and told it unto the residue." (Ver. 10.) It is not our death with Christ; it is God is glorified as to every hindrance, which, not Sinai, but heaven—and glory saw in the way.

We shall find the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" heard no more after Mark's gospel. The cross, in Luke, will be simply *death*. He who has cleared away transgressions and sins, and sin for the believer, calmly dies there; and, as I said before, the veil can rend before He gives up the ghost. Were we to gaze on the "two thieves" in Matthew and Mark, we should say, in our wisdom, both were lost; but Luke will shew us that all is so perfectly accomplished for him who receives life in a look to JESUS, that he can pass into paradise "*to-day*." He dies *with* Him, passing not into a manifested kingdom which he had looked on to, but into the hidden realm of life in God, in the heavenly side of the

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kingdom of the Son of the Father's love. Lord, give us so to see the perfection of Thy work for God, that we in spirit may know that sphere where Thou art "all and in all"—know it *now* !

We saw in Matthew xxiii. the woes uttered on him who took up law. In Mark vii. we shall see this pure and spotless One looking into that cage of unclean birds, man's corrupt heart. Here, nothing is said about things proceeding "out of the mouth;" as in Matthew xv. Indeed the word "mouth" does not occur in Mark. It is more the inner thing. John will give us the answer to this: the inner divine life acting in the believer in the power of righteousness. But in our gospel the Son-servant is passing on amid "unclean spirits" to rise, through the cross, and shine in eternal glory in heaven. It is not only a difference put "between holy and unholy," as in Luke, but between "clean and unclean." This is the wondrous Servant who stands, in chapter vii., in contrast to all that flows

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out of the evil house below. "He entered into the house from the people." There, outside man, He unfolds to His followers the enormity of the fountain's outflow from the evil one through man. He declares the truth. Man's wickedness could not be worse—it could not be concealed, however grace might meet it. But what of the Fount of purity? *It must flow out too.* He "went into an house, and would have no man know it: but *he could not be hid.*" (Ver. 24.) Verse 28 are Satan's communications into *his* vessel—his channel to earth. But oh, what a river is flowing from glory, from the throne, in the Servant who has come forth from God! The waters *must* burst forth. And to whom? Let the Syro-phenician of Tyre and Sidon declare: "The dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." Not a word about her addressing Him as the "Son of David," in Mark, nor to "have mercy" on her. At once she is in the place of the beggar on "the dunghill" (1 Sam. ii. 8), and therefore on the way to the princely place in

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glory. How this gospel levels down the sinner to utter corruption ! And such, does it seem to me, is the place the dog—the Gentile—occupies in the epistle to the Colossians. Paul there shews that it is among the Gentiles that the riches of the glory of this mystery “God has willed to make known.” Such are the crumbs “which fell to the dogs,” when the children refused Him, who as Jehovah’s Servant came “to his own.” Lost and dead sinners cannot refuse to receive grace. The legal man would not have it. Truly Mark gives us the basis of “the gospel of the glory of the Christ who is the image of God.”

Such is God’s perfect Servant in this gospel. He opens the way by which the sinner can pass not only from under law, not merely to have the law, as in millennial times, written on the heart, and sins forgiven, but into the presence of His God—into His presence in glory itself, where God dwells. He brings us to God. All this lends a peculiar charm to Mark. I am not the object : my need is not the requirement. The “Son,

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made in the likeness of the flesh of sin" sent to the scene of Satan's apparent success, "and for sin;" He is the One we behold. Our hearts are made to feel His spotlessness as He fulfils His great mission for God; God is the object, though this must include our blessing. And how suitably this gospel closes! Tidings can go out to all the world; the glad-tidings can be preached, not exactly evangelized (Luke will use this latter word) "to all the creation." The Victor declares that "serpents" can be taken up by those who believe, and "if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them." This moral truth is quite in accordance with the character of our evangelist. "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them he was received up," &c. May we really see Him now as the One who was received up into heaven, and who has sat down on the right hand of God." The Destroyer of death is *there*. In Luke we shall see the Man who has glorified God presented to us. In John, He declares the Father.

THE NEW CENTRE.

WHEN God created man, and formed him out of the dust of the earth, he was not only brought into relationship with God, as one into whose nostrils He Himself had breathed the breath of life, but was constituted the head and centre of creation, always, however, in dependence upon God. Made in the image of God, dominion was given to him over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth. His own blessing was connected with dependence upon, and obedience to God, as well as in intercourse with Him, and upon his maintenance of this relationship in its integrity depended the happiness of the creature over whom he was set. How soon disobedience and failure came in, we all know, as well as their terrible consequences on every hand; but the moment of the failure of the first man becomes the occasion for the announcement of God's purposes in connection with the Second, "The Lord from heaven," to whom, and

not to the first, the promise is made, that as the Seed of the woman, He should bruise the serpent's head. Thus early is introduced the *new centre*, the head of a *new* creation, as Adam was of the *old*, and in one aspect of it, the word of God is the unfolding of the way and manner in which the one is established and the other displaced.

The full accomplishment of all this is yet future, but for ourselves, as constituting the body of which He is the head, and as already "reconciled in the body of his flesh through death," the responsibilities attaching to such relationship, no less than the blessings which flow therefrom are ours *now*, and we have to maintain the one and enjoy the other, in the power of resurrection life; for need it be said that it is as raised from the dead, that He is made Lord and Christ, and that we are introduced into the same sphere in virtue of being quickened, raised and seated in Him.

Now in John xii. 1-3, we have the Lord presented to us as occupying this

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new place, and surrounded by those who have been the subjects of the power of death and resurrection ; Lazarus having been actually dead and raised, and Martha and Mary knowing it through sympathy with Him. In the chapters which precede, man's enmity reaches its climax and all is over. The Lord reveals Himself in chapter x. as the Shepherd, the central object of authority and blessing for the sheep, while chapter xi. shews, that as man is dead, it is only as Christ is known as the resurrection and the life, that the blessings which flow from Him in His new position, can be ours. The result, as we have noticed, is given to us in chapter xii.

Here we have the Lord presented (in contrast with the first Adam) as head of the new creation, the divine centre around which all revolve : " There they made him a supper," while Martha, Mary, and Lazarus surround Him, and illustrate in their several relations to Himself, our own place of privilege and blessing. Martha alone does not present this to us, nor Lazarus, nor Mary, but

the three together do. First, "Martha serves," and in this brief statement how pointedly does the Holy Ghost mark the contrast with what is told about her in Luke x. There she is in all the energy of nature, and *herself* the object of what she was doing, not the One at whose feet Mary was sitting, and hence her service is characterized as cumbrance, and the result to herself as being "careful and troubled about many things." Now this will be found to be always true of all service, however sincere the motive with which it is undertaken, unless not only the Lord Himself is the object before the soul, but His *mind* consulted as to the way and manner in which it is to be carried out. It is not enough to be clear that what I am doing is right in the abstract, but the thing which I do must be in accordance with the Lord's mind at the time, that is, it must be the thing He would have me to do, otherwise it will not receive the divine approval which marked Martha's service in verse 2.

Again, "Lazarus was one of them

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that sat at the table with him." This indicates our place of joint-heirship with Christ—Lazarus is a partaker of what is prepared for Christ.

Mary, the one who "knew the gift of God" (see John iv. 10), and had sat at His feet to receive from the One who came to impart, judged to be careless of service, and chided for her inactivity and apparent indifference by her less spiritual sister, is now the greatest *contributor*, she fills the house with fragrance. But more than this, there are marks of devotedness in Mary which we shall do well to study. She connects the costliest of her possessions with Christ in death, pouring the ointment on His feet. His grave becomes the grave not only of all that was of value to her, but of all which could in any wise contribute to her own importance, for she wipes His feet with her hair—with that which the word of God calls "the glory of a woman." It is only fit to wipe His feet. Is it thus with ourselves? Do we know what it is to be in the power of this connection with and relation to

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Christ risen, as the centre of all God's thoughts and purposes, so that, not merely as we sometimes sing,

All the vain things which please me most,
I'd sacrifice them to His blood.

But the *best* have no value for us in the presence of that which so excels; nay, more, that ourselves, and all that concerns us individually, are counted as buried with Him, and what alone we value now and seek to possess, are "the things that are above where Christ sits at the right hand of God."

Verses 4-6 of this chapter expose the real motive which actuates every service, however plausible, which has not Christ for its object. Judas manifests great concern for the poor and complains that the ointment is wasted. Viewed in relation to a lower object than the Lord Himself, it has a value, which one whose heart has no place in it for Him, can appraise at more than three hundred pence, and thus it is that things here possess an importance with many who *profess* to belong to Christ and to have

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His interest at heart. But what does the Holy Ghost say here? "This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag and bare what was put therein." Hence there are but two centres, and around one or the other of these every one revolves, Christ and self. The first man and the second. Which is it with us?

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

ADVANTAGES AND RESPONSIBILITY.

For the ruined and lost there is no help except through grace. When there is nothing but guilt, everything must be given. To give where there is no desert, and no claim, where judgment for sin is due and impending, is grace. Thus it is that, "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly;" "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Man is so irretrievably lost and undone, that he can now be only a recipient. "What

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hast thou that thou hast not received?"

If I have had nothing, or worse than nothing, all of any good in me now must be through grace. "By the grace of God I am what I am." Hence, in every instance, God conferred advantages upon His people. There would have been no difference between them and others if He had not. But plainly, according as He made their position different from the mere world around, so was it incumbent on them, and required, faithfully and truly to acknowledge, in life and ways, the favour conferred. Nay, they were responsible to do so, for otherwise, they would make little of the great, distinctive advantages which they had received. They would fail to realize them, and as they in any measure slighted them, they would be weakening or losing their value to themselves.

It is evident, that the more faithfully and deeply I maintain and concentrate my heart on any divine favour which I have received; the more I make of it,

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works. The works are the real measure of the inherent possessed power, and when there is any dereliction or defalcation of action in the Spirit, there is evidence of defect or deficiency within; and therefore the deficiency in responsibility would indicate deficiency in the advantages, as was seen in Israel in Haggai's time, or as we see commonly now, when there is failure in the act, be it a song or a step. The lack in either, is evidence of lack in internal power of some kind. You learn the power of the songster by the song. You judge of a horse's power by the test of its running or the height it can jump. The external act indicates the measure and nature of the internal power, and when there can be little externally, there must be correspondingly little internally. Therefore any one who cannot act in the energy of the Holy Ghost, in testimony for Christ outwardly, before the world; that man, whatever he may assert to the contrary, is defective, and wanting in divine energy and power in his soul.

THE HEART FIXED.

THE heart is never fixed, or as Peter expresses it (chap. v.) “settled,” until it has an object that controls it, not only one that it turns to and delights in, as a mother does to her child, or the miser to his riches, or the florist to his garden. I mean that it is not alone that Christ should be your resource, but you must be so detained by Him in heart and judgment (and not merely as a necessity), that you cannot bear to see anything but as He sees it. You would then be like the moon which has no light without the sun, and you would prefer to be nothing, rather than to be anything not derived from Him. The mistake is being too much satisfied with turning *to* Him, instead of issuing *from* Him; coming down into daily circumstances as sent to them from His presence. Of course we have to turn to Him, and He is then the object to us for what we need from Him; but when He controls me, I can enjoy nothing apart from Him; and the first thought of my

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heart about everything is, "How does He like it?" The heart likes to be controlled by an object worthy of controlling it. When you are thus controlled, you surrender your will and judgment to Him; you *follow* Him; you do not only seek Him. How differently we should encounter every question or care which crops up, were we to come into the scene of it reflecting the light of Christ, as the moon reflects and sheds light in a dark night; not merely submitting cares and questions to Christ, but casting the light and mind of Christ, which has been the cheer and sustainment of one's own heart, upon them as they arise in the path. There is a great practical difference between going from darkness to get light, and coming from light into darkness. In the latter one is always safe oneself.

“SHE SHALL BE BROUGHT UNTO
THE KING IN RAIMENT OF
NEEDLEWORK.”

LORD Jesus! Thy glory and beauty
Have drawn our hearts captive up there;
Then here let the garments that suit Thee
Be only the garments we wear.

In heaven, our Sanctification,
Thou shinest the Father beside —
The Sun of our God's new creation,
Enlightening the steps of Thy bride.

Now blest in the Father's good pleasure,
With all that His heart can bestow,
Thyself, in His presence, the measure
The Son whom alone He doth know.

If now she would taste of the sorrows
That thronged round Thy pathway of love,
Thy steps of rejection she follows
Since Thou art her object above.

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Lord Jesus! 'Thy bride in the glory,
 Shall perfectly answer Thy heart,
While she, in retracing her story,
 More fully shall know what Thou art.

And now, as we gaze on the beauty
 That soon shall be gracing us there:
We see that no garments can suit Thee,
 Save such as in glory we'll wear.

Then, Lord, as we worship for ever,
 Our eyes shall God's Wisdom behold—
Perfections more wondrous discover
 Which only His rest can unfold.

There in the repose of the glory—
 Where Thou art the Fountain of light,
The many crowns glittering o'er Thee,
 The Father's eternal delight.

For ever—for ever and ever,
 Thy presence our heaven shall be—
Adoring our God as the Giver,
 The Giver, Lord Jesus, of THEE.

THOUGHTS ON THE GOSPELS.

LUKE.

THE just claims of the law having been met in Matthew, and the throne of God vindicated and glorified as to sin and its outflow in Mark, we shall find that Luke gives us the result morally. Fruit according to God can come forth—that which is to be the fulness of the new creation can be spoken of. The remnant band can sing, “He hath shewn strength with his arm; he has filled the hungry with good things.” Again, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people.” The “Dayspring from on high” is the visitant; the abundance of grace flows down. When Israel crossed the Red Sea, Moses sang of salvation as accomplished. So in Luke; we shall find it only a question now of leading on to a new creation.

Hence this gospel gives us God’s tender Plant on its way to heavenly rest—the “green tree,” (chap. xxiii. 31) which cannot find soil for its roots in

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the first garden of the old creation, passes on to be transplanted to "the paradise of God"—to be displayed there in fruit-giving power, that "the righteousness of God may be *revealed*."

The law was never to give fruit: "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." (Gal. iii.) In Luke, this Seed—the Isaac—is crossing the desert earth. The just law honoured, the God of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, glorified—why should not "that Holy Thing" give Heaven's bread—why should not the Son of the Highest, the "sun-rising," display Heaven's resources?

Though Matthew unfolds the Christ "under law," He rises far above Moses, as in the "I say unto you," in the sermon on the Mount; and though Mark unfolds the One of the Prophets, the Son-servant goes far beyond this. So is it in Luke. The "Tree" of Psalm i., "who bringeth forth fruit in his season, whose leaf does not wither," is on the scene which is the millennium-earth,

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but which is *not* in millennium condition: "The Son of man," of Psalm viii., is there also. In fact it is the Man of the Psalms whom we behold; but, since "the heavens must receive" Him till the glory of the kingdom come, our Evangelist takes up the heavenly side of things for the *present* interval of abounding grace. Thus the word "To-day" is most expressive in this gospel. We read, "For unto you is born *this day*." (Chap. ii. 11.) "*This day* is this scripture fulfilled," &c. (iv. 21.) "*This day* is salvation come to thine house." (xix. 9.) "*This day* shalt thou be with me in paradise." (xxiii. 43.)

All the forms of the word "grace," (*χρητις*) first appear in Luke, as also "Redemption" and "Salvation." The salvation is of *God*. Luke is the one who uses the apostle Paul's peculiar word for redemption — *απολυτρωσις*. (Chap. xxi. 28.) Paul explains what Luke names.

It is beautiful to behold "glory," first appearing to men in this gospel. God is perfectly magnified as to every hin-

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drance: so "the glory of the Lord" shines round about the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem. They hear peace uttered, as the glory covers them. And in noticing this, I may anticipate a little, in order to point out the characteristic order seen in each gospel. In the transfiguration in Matthew it is, "There appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him." The giver of law is put first. In Mark it is, "There appeared unto them Elias with Moses," as His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow. The prophet is put first. In Luke, "There talked with him two men . . . who appeared in glory." Man is in company with the Man Christ Jesus—and in glory too. Moses headed "the law;" Elias, "the prophets." But who heads the Psalms? *Man*, "crowned with glory and honour," (Ps. viii.) in resurrection garments.

This is the One who took the first step towards this glory in chapter iv. 1: "*But* Jesus, full of the Holy Ghost, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, forty

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days, tempted of the devil." It is the "Jesus himself" of chapter iii. 23. In Matthew iii. it was "the Spirit of God" descended on Him at His baptism; in Mark i., it was "the Spirit;" but now it is "the *Holy* Spirit." Man, in the power of holiness, is in contrast, not only with the legal and the lawless man; he is also in contrast with the weakness of *innocence*. "Jesus *himself*" is the unique Man, as He shines in all the beauty of the veil. It is not only that He is free from all taint; He is not even of the innocent family—such a race never existed, for Adam unfallen brought forth no fruit. The "Green Tree" is the hope of new creation fruitfulness, though cut down at the cross as if it were "the dry." This seems to me the point in the words "Jesus himself was beginning to be about thirty years old, being, as was supposed, Son of Joseph, (Son) of Eli, (Son) of Matthat, . . . (Son) of Adam, (Son) of God." Then—"But Jesus, full of the *Holy* Ghost," &c. The man in weakness of innocence was conquered by the devil; the Man in

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dependence of power not His own, was victorious.

John the Baptist (whose preaching still owned man as man), being shut up in prison, the anointed One moves on. The tempter baffled, He "returns in the power of the Spirit into Galilee." He had lost nothing by the trial. "Full of the Holy Ghost," He is led in the desert. He comes forth to minister in the same power—Man in perfect dependence on God. He comes, too, "where He had been brought up." May not this be a figure of this poor earth where He was born as man, where His heart as Saviour still is, during the "To-day" of grace? If Matthew went back to Abraham (chap. i. 1), and Mark, to the other side of the deluge into a sinning Eden, when the world was in embryo; Luke contrasts the Man who said, "not my will," with him who fell because he used his will. It is, as in Philippians ii., the dependent One, who "emptied himself"—and the contrast is the independent one who exalted himself. The former is on His way, by humiliation

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and death of obedience, to "His glory" (Luke xxiv.); while the latter, having fallen, having dishonoured the law and fallen again into lawlessness and apostasy, is on his way to destruction. The first man fell, and became the head of a sinful race to whom he could give no aid—needing salvation himself. The second Man appears on the scene of ruin—coming from heaven to pass thither again. He is the Saviour for the lost.

But let us follow the type in chapter iv. He goes into the synagogue, and stands up for to read. He reads from the Prophets, and then having "rolled up the book he delivered it to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him." While He reads the book of the Prophets, He remains standing; He is still connected with things since the world began. He is "the holy servant Jesus," (Acts iii. 13; iv. 27, 30), until Stephen is sent as the messenger, saying, "We will not have this man." Then it is, "I see the heavens opened and the *Son of*

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man standing at the right hand of God." He is the "Holy Servant" no more, though He serves in a still more blessed way. Now He announces Himself as the anointed Evangelist of grace. He closes the book of Prophecy to be opened again by-and-by; and He Himself speaks now. He is seen sitting. It is typically beyond the day of Stephen. He inaugurates the "To-day" of grace. The "to-day" that brings salvation to our house (chap. xix.), the "to-day" that leads into paradise. (Chap. xxiii.) "*To-day*" (He says) "this scripture is fulfilled in your ears."

Jesus Himself is the Living Word, (the *λογος*). He can go beyond the Prophets, and can say, "*I tell you of a truth.*" Even Luke himself is one of the "attendants" only. (Chap. i. 2.) It is on Him, the mighty Evangelist, that the Spirit of Jehovah has come. He is full of blessing for man, but it is as of grace (ver. 22), the abundance thereof, and truth. (Ver. 25.) He unfolds a new thing, as Man—the human channel from the throne: even glad-tidings of "life"

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[see ver. 25] and of "incorruptibility" (ver. 27), in famished times, as with the widow and Naaman. Not only life—which might be said of the Old Testament saints; but incorruptibility—the power of divine righteousness which sustains in the new creation place. (See 2 Tim. i. 10.) When "he sat down," we read, "the eyes of all were fastened on him." During the present interval, all are looking towards Him—all religious profession. Many "wonder," yet "perish." (Acts xiii. 41.) "He *began* to say unto them," and has not ceased speaking yet. May we listen to this speaking One more intently. "To-day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." The interval of grace is inaugurated. Those whom man's righteousness has cast out, may pass "to-day" into paradise. The One who fulfilled the words of hope, "I will put enmity between thee [the serpent] and the woman," &c., uttered in the first garden, opens the paradise of God to undone sinners now. The promise of Genesis iii. 15, is fulfilled in Luke i. 35. "That

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Holy Thing" is "the Son of God;" and is the spring of blessing to a wholly new race to be led into another paradise. Luke, in the gospel, gives us the exhibition of the Tree of life in riches of grace on earth, and in Acts vii., he unfolds it in "glory and beauty" in heaven." The Son of man is seen there. The new paradise is opened now—"the Tree of life" being planted there to scatter its fruit in the old scene still. We, having become God's righteousness in Christ, can bring forth fruit unto God, fruit unto holiness. We are to express Christ during the present interval; to walk as He walked. The cross ends all human glory for us. The Christ ended Himself as a man after the flesh, and began a wholly new thing as Man. The "Tree" is cut down in Luke. The earthly man, the most beautiful expression of it, is ended. The Christ after the flesh is known no more. He who has glorified God here is on high, in divine righteousness; and we in Him. We have died to sin, law, and from the order-materials, or the elements

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of the world. Yet we are to “die daily.”

To return to our gospel. It is only in Luke, where the Day-spring from on high visits the barren earth, that we hear the words, “They forsook *all* ;” “He left *all*.” “Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not *all*,” &c. (Chap. v. 11, 28 ; xiv. 33.) The only one who gave “*all*” in the former gospels was the poor widow of Mark xii. 41. In Luke such forsaking is on the basis of “He *hath* filled the hungry with good things.”

A ruined creation cannot be *renewed* for such a Man as “the Lord’s Christ.” It must be broken up and pass away. Hence, we shall find in Luke, two great characteristics : *nature* is exposed as empty—“vanity ;” and the whole heart of *the Father* is expressed. If sinners are to be blessed, the One who did all for God is to be the measure of the manner in which “old things” are to pass away and “all things” become new. Need I say that chapter xv. is, as it were, the stand for us to take to see

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this? Chapter xiv. gives us the break-up of "all" below—the creature altogether wanting. Hard sayings are uttered there as to man's old abode, and his closest ties; but chapter xv. 1, proves that "the day-spring from on high" could draw: "all the publicans and sinners" drew nigh. Grace is for man when he is in destitution. He who can unfold abounding grace, need not fear to expose the barrenness of nature. A princely giver passing through a starving country would find it difficult not to betray whence he came. So is it here. "The heavenly One" and "Son of the Highest" states *facts* of man's scene in chapter xiv.; the needy ones draw nigh to hear Him in chapter xv.—the channel from the throne, who sets forth the Father's heart.

Here, I may observe, that we have no such expression as "my heavenly Father," or, "my Father which is in heaven," in Luke. Redemption has brought Him out—it is "how much more shall the Father from (εκ) heaven give." The Holy Ghost is promised (chap.

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xxiv.) as power for guidance through the desert. Then, after chapter xv., comes the way "the sons of light" are sent from the Father's house to the old-creation scene again. It was broken up in xiv., the new home is entered in xv.: now those who are to be "holding forth the word of life," come down to steward "the mammon of unrighteousness." "The sons of this age" have lost their character, and *Light* sends its fruit into the ruined place, to prove that "sons of the Highest" (see vi. 35) do not want earth's resources, though they use all the old-creation machinery as "another man's." Empty nature—not sin only, is superseded by the feasting in the Father's house; *then* the sons are to be here as supernatural visitants on earth. This is the order.

Now, since it is God's Christ who is *crossing the desert* (and we who are God's sons ought to continue expressing the abounding of grace), we find that He is not only blessing man, but man is found blessing God in this gospel. It is not "thanksgiving" only—which brings

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to, and through, "the gates," (see Ps. c. ; cxviii. 19), as we praise God because our own need is met ; Zacharias spake, and blessed [εὐλογῶν] God." (chap. i. 64.) So Simeon, in chapter ii. 28. So the priestly family, the disciples, as the Priest, or rather the ark itself—Christ enters the holiest—they are seen "praising and blessing God." (Chap. xxiv. 53.) Blessing leads into, and out from "the house." (Ps. cxviii. 26 ; cxxxiv.) *There* we become "like a green olive tree : " we see the excellence of " blood and fat." (Lev. vii. 33.) We reach God's thoughts of Christ. Hence, Luke names the Lord's Supper (chap. xxii.) in accordance with the revelation to Paul. (1 Cor. xi.)

Can we own "the sun-rising," like Zacharias ? "Thy salvation," and the "light to reveal the Gentiles," like Simeon ? Are we looking in through the rent veil, like the disciples, and worshipping the ascended Man ? If so, man is nowhere for us ; we have found an object for our burning hearts ; we are lost in "the Lord's Christ,"

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Lord, may we be worshippers as we see Thee not only received up into heaven (Mark xvi.) as the One who entered thither as the Victor, but also as the Man “crucified in weakness” and “*carried up*” thither. It was the glory bare Thee thither in divine power. We see “Christ in God”—the golden pot with the manna. The death pall is thus over the earth now. “He is not here.” Of the whole earth may it be said—“Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”

DISCIPLINE IN THE SCHOOL OF
GOD.

JEREMIAH.

IN chapter xxviii. Jeremiah has to encounter the false prophecy of Hanaiah, spoken to him in the fifth month “in the house of the Lord, in the presence of the priests and of all the

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can increase his knowledge of the great gift, which he possesses, by sowing to Him;—making Him the one who claims his attention, and from whom he expects to know more of Christ.

There are therefore three classes of saints. First, those who are quickened, but who have not yet received the Holy Ghost. Secondly, those who have received the Holy Ghost, but who, through ignorance or carnality, do not cultivate the Spirit, do not sow to Him, and therefore they are carnal and worldly, and dull. And lastly, those who continuously and sedulously sow to the Spirit, and daily reap the blessed fruits of His power, in happy communion with Christ.

FRAGMENT.

BELIEVING in Jesus is safety; seeing the work done according to the satisfaction of God, is deliverance. Walking in conscious association with a glorified Christ is power.

WORSHIP.

THE principle of worship is clear and simple. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship in spirit and truth." All believers will admit that there is no worship save in the Spirit; and that if "they that are in the flesh cannot please God," still less, so to speak, can they worship Him. There may be those, and alas many, who do not know what it is to be purged worshippers, with no more conscience of sins; but the principle of worship is owned by all who are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. But, however much the principle may be admitted, there can be no reality of worship, save as two things are actually known to the worshipper, two things without which worship is but a form and an effort—namely, an object and a power. The object, God; the power, the Holy Ghost. I do not here speak of the personality of the Holy Ghost, as dwelling in the church, and in the

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individual believer ; but the Holy Ghost as the power for worship.

Now we know that the Holy Ghost was sent down when the Lord Jesus Christ had ascended after His resurrection ; sent down to be the witness that God had accepted and glorified the One who, as man, had perfectly glorified Him ; the One who had been rejected and cast out from the world. The mission, (if one may use the word) of the Holy Ghost has a twofold object. To convict the world that has rejected Christ ; and to point the hearts of those who through grace have been led by that Spirit to accept Him, to the Person of that glorified Man at God's right hand ; in other words, to minister Christ to them. As soon, therefore, as the Holy Ghost takes up His abode in a soul already quickened by His power, that soul is sealed, and baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ ; and the soul previously quickened is now saved. The apprehension, by faith, of the finished work of a glorified Christ, clears the ground for the indwelling of

WORSHIP.

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the Spirit. “Believe on the *Lord Jesus Christ*, (mark the fulness of the presentation of that blessed One) and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” This result will be immediate, or not, as the finished work of that glorified Person is, through grace accepted, and peace and deliverance thereby known to the soul that believes.

Now what is the object ever before the Spirit of God? The Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. That being so, how is it that when we assemble together, when we are gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Ghost there as the power for worship, our praise and our worship are, confessedly, so feeble; so manifestly and so frequently only an effort? Is it not a well-known, though most unhappy fact, that oftentimes when we meet on the first day of the week around the table of the Lord, Himself in our midst, worship is the exception, and not the rule? How frequently do we tell the Lord, in our hymns and in our utterances, what poor feeble things we are,

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as if He did not know that far better than we do. How frequently do we remind Him of our sins, though the very scene we are brought to, tells us of that death which met and put away those sins for ever! How much more we pray, rather than praise.

And yet I say with perfect confidence that if the presence of that blessed One in our midst were a realized thing to our hearts, such an outburst of praise and worship would follow as would make that wondrous scene a heaven on earth. *We could not but* worship; there would be the sense, as it were, that if we held our peace the very stones would cry out. Just contemplate that scene for a moment. In one sense there will be nothing like it, even in heaven. An assemblage of redeemed souls, and redeemed at such a cost, gathered around the One who redeemed them, in the very scene in which He died; clustering around Himself; and hearing Him speak, as it were again, those loving words: "This do in remembrance of Me."

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Why is it then that when thus gathered, there is such a lack of worship? It is either because there are those among us who are not sealed by the Holy Ghost, or because there are those who have come unjudged into the presence of that One who is light, and whose presence detects all that is not fitted for it; and no worship can come from such. Let us each one ask our hearts as in His presence, "Lord, is it I?" For, is it not a fact, to be owned and mourned over, that the reality of His presence, which when known brings with it "fulness of joy," is a thing known and enjoyed alas! by few among us. How many of us can say, as we leave that scene, I have been consciously this morning in the presence of my Lord, in the presence of the One who could only give expression to His love by going into death for me, by giving Himself for me?

Ah, if that were a real thing to us, would it not leave its mark on us in everything in our daily pathway, till again on the first day of the week He

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brought us into that presence once more, to remember Him in death? And would it not bring from my heart, overflowing with the sense of the love of the One who is there, such praise and worship as would please His heart, and the heart of His Father, my Father, His God, my God? Assuredly it would. For worship is the expression of praise, flowing from the heart that is "beside itself" from the realization of the presence of Christ; lost to the sense of everything but Himself; and Himself revisiting, as it were, the scene of His sorrow, of His death, and bidding those to whom grace has endeared Him because of what He is, and what He was, remember Him in that hour of His sorrow when none remembered Him, when He was alone in death, alone in His love, for us.

If we realized Him thus in our midst, surely the only thing that would fail us would be words in which to give utterance to our praise. It is the Person of the Lord Jesus that alone can fill and satisfy the heart now, as

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it will fill and satisfy throughout eternity.

And I am sure that it is only as that Person is known in glory, so His claims, in everything and over everything, will be recognized on earth. Surely His death has set me outside everything here; and it should be the joy of my heart to own the rights and assert the claims of that risen Man, Head of God's new creation, over all that is mine, and to do so according to God. God will have nothing now but through His death; and faith rises up, as it were, to the heart of God, and in communion with Him, sees all down here through the death of Christ, and acts on what it sees.

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JEREMIAH.

CHAPTER xxxvi. We are recalled to what occurred some eighteen years

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therefore in power. Beginning with God, and reaching out from thence into service to the saints, and to every detail of life, neither the resistance of the flesh, nor all the power of Satan, can withstand him, for however feeble in himself through the power of Christ he overcomes.

THE EVANGELIST.

“ From the brightness of the Glory,
 Go ye forth,” He said—
“ Heal the sick and cleanse the lepers,
 Raise the dead.
Freely give I thee the treasure,
 Freely give the same—
Take no store of gold or silver,
 Take My Name.

Carry neither scrip nor raiment,
 Neither shoes nor staves,
Walk unburdened through the desert,
 O'er the waves.
Thou art fitted for the journey
 How so long it be,
Thou shalt come unworn, unwearied,
 Back to Me.

THE EVANGELIST.

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Thou shalt tell Me in the glory
 All that thou hast done (Mark vi. 30),
 Setting forth alone, returning
 Not alone—
 Thou shalt bring the ransomed with thee.
 They with songs shall come,
 As the golden sheaves of harvest,
 Gathered home."

Then I went as He had told me,
 He the Lord in heaven,
 Went in power of the Spirit
 He had given—
 And the sick arose rejoicing,
 Bore away their bed—
 And, in might of life eternal,
 Rose the dead.

And a light beyond the sunlight
 Did the blind man see,
 Loud and sweet the dumb sang praises,
 Lord, to Thee.
 And the leper, from his exile,
 Came Thy grace to own,
 Falling low in rapturous worship
 At the Throne,—

Where He sitteth working wonders,
 High at God's right hand,
 More than when an outcast stranger
 In the land,

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From the throne in heaven speaks He,
Speaks, and it is done—
Thus does God delight to honour
Christ, His Son.

Thus with instruments of music
Do His servants stand,
Harp and lute the King has fashioned
With His hand. (2 Chron. vii. 6.)
And “the music of Jehovah”
Sounds from every chord—
He who makes that glorious music
Is the Lord.

He by them tells forth God's praises,
To the ears of men.
And to God His praise ascendeth
Yet again.
He alone the Mighty Preacher,
Gathering in His own,
And the praise to God returning,
His alone.

THE CITIES OF THE LEVITES.

JOSHUA XXI.

WHEN Israel marched through the wilderness, the Levites were in the middle of the host; the Gershonites and the Merarites preceded the camp of Reuben, and the Kohathites, with the ark, went in front of that of Ephraim. Around the tabernacle the Levites pitched their tents, when the cloud rested. The outer circle of the great encampment was formed by the camps of the twelve tribes, arranged in companies of threes, according to God's appointment. The inner circle was composed of the Levites, each great family of whom, Kohathites, Gershonites, and Merarites, formed a distinct encampment; whilst the priests, under Moses and Aaron, had their appointed place on the east side of the tabernacle. The Lord Jehovah then was their centre, and around His earthly dwelling-place all Israel, as it were, kept guard. Now this position assigned to the Levites in the wilderness was one

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well adapted for the work they had to perform. Part of the tribe were ministers at the altar, and in the sanctuary. Part were bearers of the tabernacle and sacred vessels on the march, and divinely appointed servants for the tent of the congregation.

On their entrance into the land their position was altered. Instead of being grouped around the sanctuary, as they had been in the wilderness, they were scattered abroad throughout the land in the possession of the twelve tribes. Thus they were domesticated amongst them, were ever to be remembered by them (Deut. xii. 19), and were always to share along with the fatherless, the strangers, and the widows in the festive gatherings of the family circle, when the owners of the soil rejoiced in the abundance wherewith Jehovah had blessed them. (Deut. xiv. 27-29; xvi. 14.) As a tribe they had no territory. As the Lord's servants they had dwelling-places in the cities allotted them, with the fields of the suburbs of those cities, in which they could rear and feed

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their cattle and their sheep, &c. (Num. xxxv. 3.)

As God's servants the Lord provided for them with peculiar care. He enjoined on His people to remember them. He made, too, special enactments about their houses in their cities, and the fields of the suburbs of their cities. The former could never be finally alienated, the latter could never be sold. (Lev. xxv. 32, 34.) A person of another tribe could sell his own house in any city, parting with it absolutely, if so minded, or need required. His land, too, he could sell till the year of jubilee, when it reverted back to its former owner, the foreshadowing of Israel's re-entrance into the land of their possession, when the Lord shall return, and they shall own Him whom they have rejected. The Levite's house, on the contrary, could only be alienated till the jubilee, power being reserved to him to redeem it at any time before it. Their fields, however, were never to pass out of their hand, they were theirs for an inalienable possession.

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As they then surveyed their houses and the fields of the suburbs of their cities, they had ocular testimony of the providential care of their God. As we read of their location among the tribes, we have clearly demonstrated that the condition of things in Israel, as then existing, was after all imperfect. God's wisdom, God's care, too, for the people was displayed in His arrangement of the Levites, which Joshua and all Israel faithfully carried out. But the arrangements themselves witness of two important things, the kingdom was as yet not established, nor was the law written on the hearts of the people. By-and-by, when both these shall be together effected, and things shall be put in order in that land, the Levites will have a separate district of the country allotted to them. They will not then be scattered among the tribes, for their portion will be conveniently situated near the sanctuary, an inalienable possession, "holy unto the Lord." (Ezek. xlviii. 10-14.)

Our present business, however, is with

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the arrangements made under Joshua. These attest two things: God was then looking onward to the kingdom under David and Solomon, when Jerusalem should become the metropolis, and the temple be erected on Mount Moriah. God, too, was providing, if the people had been willing to profit by it, for the constant remembrance and practical maintenance of the oneness of the twelve tribes ecclesiastically.

The three great families of the Levites were the Kohathites, the Gershonites, and the Merarites. To each distinct service had been assigned in the wilderness, and distinct districts, in which to dwell, were apportioned to them in the land. In the territories of Judah, Simeon, Benjamin, Ephraim, Dan, and Manasseh, west of Jordan, were the Kohathites located. In the territories of the other tribes were the Gershonites and Merarites placed. By lot was it all arranged, and that betokened that it was of God. (Prov. xvi. 33.)

Forty-eight cities in all were to be given to the Levites. That God had de-

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clared by Moses. (Num. xxxv. 7.) The selection of them seemed to have rested with Israel, with the exception of the three cities of refuge east of Jordan, which Moses had chosen before his death. (Deut. iv. 41-43.) The Kohathites were divided into two great branches, for from Kohath came the priesthood. Of the forty-eight cities, thirteen were given to the priests, and these were situated in the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. Evidently the Levites valued God's promises on their behalf, for they went to Eleazar and Joshua, and the chief of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, to ask for their allotment, as the Lord commanded Moses. (Josh. xxi. 1, 2.) As evidently the portion assigned to the priests was of God. The tabernacle was then at Shiloh. There, of course, the priests had at times to resort for their official duties. But Shiloh was in the tribe of Ephraim, out of which not a single town was allotted to the priests. If man had arranged their dwelling-places, would he not have appointed some of the cities for the priests

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out of those given to the Levites in the tribe of Ephraim ?

Present convenience and suitability would, we may well believe, have guided man in his choice. To a future condition of things in Israel God evidently looked forward, and His choice of the cities for the priests tells us that, even then, His eye was on Mount Moriah, as the hill on which the temple should be built. In view of that the priests were conveniently situated. One would not say that in regard to the tabernacle then resting at Shiloh. The kingdom, therefore, God thought of, and as the lots for the Kohathites came out, it was manifest He was making arrangements in view of it. For till the kingdom was established the priests had nothing to do in connection with Jerusalem.

Further, God foresaw the division that would take place between Israel and Judah, and the enmity that would be engendered between them. Now the location of the Kohathites, partly in the territory of the kingdom of Judah, and partly in that of the future kingdom of

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Samaria, would have acted, if the people had been faithful, so as to keep up a common interest in the things of God. God evidently provided for this, though for wise purposes man was allowed to thwart His design. For Jeroboam, when he got possession of the throne, discerned, as he thought, how his personal and dynastic interests would be threatened if intercourse was maintained between Israel and Judah, through the former going up at stated times to the temple on Mount Moriah. He therefore made the calves, and placed the one in Bethel, and the other in Dan. (1 Kings xii. 26-29.) His policy was a worldly-wise one, but it led to the annihilation, not only of his dynasty, but of his race. (1 Kings xiv. 7-11.)

The king saw what might ensue from a common ecclesiastical centre and interest. Had the Kohathites been wholly on the one side of the frontier which divided the kingdoms, he might have attempted to exalt one family of the tribe of Levi as a rival to that located in the kingdom of Judah. But, as the same

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family dwelt among the children of Joseph, as well as in the tribe of Judah, that was impossible. Common interests there were with the Levites on both sides of the border. The wisdom of God's arrangements to preserve, under the most adverse and antagonistic circumstances, the oneness of the people ecclesiastically, is patent at a glance. The Lord, however, allowed Jeroboam to have his way; and the Levites, rather than acquiesce in the insensate and wicked act of the king, left their cities in Israel, and gave up the earthly advantages which God had bestowed on them, to be faithful, at all cost, to Him who had said, that He, Jehovah, was their inheritance. (2 Chron. xi. 13, 14.)

The political sagacity of Jeroboam, looked at from a worldly point of view, was amply vindicated by that movement of the Levites. The wisdom of God's arrangements was as manifestly proved. A connection between the temple and the remotest corner of the land would have been kept up by the presence, in all its parts, of the children of Levi,

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domesticated by God's appointment among the tribes.

But another danger, and a nearer one than that which we have been considering, threatened Israel when the Levitical cities were granted by lot. East and west of Jordan the tribes dwelt, the Jordan valley acting as a natural boundary between them, for through no tribal portion did the river Jordan run, though Manasseh had part of their inheritance east of the river, and part on the west of it. Now, had one of the great Levitical families been located wholly east of Jordan, the interests of the tribes which dwelt there might have seemed to be identical with it. All that family's local interests would have lain across the Jordan. How easily, then, might the enemy have taken advantage of that to make a rent between the tribes, and a schismatical division between the families of the Levites. But God, in His wisdom, assigned cities to the Gershonites in Issachar, Asher, and Naphtali, west of Jordan, and in Manasseh east of it. The Merarites were

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found in Reuben, and Gad, east of the river, and in Zebulun, on the west of it. Thus common interests bound the Gershonites and the Merarites to tribes on both sides of Jordan: and though Reuben, for example, had not a foot of ground west of the river, nor had Zebulun one inch of territory on the east, yet the presence of the Merarites in both tribes would tend to keep alive in their hearts the consciousness of the ecclesiastical oneness which ought to have been maintained amongst them.

Thus what the arteries and veins are to the human frame, through which by the circulation of the blood the connection between the heart and the remotest member is constantly kept up, that the Levites would have been to all Israel for ecclesiastical purposes. God's provision was a wise one, and shewed what He thinks of oneness ecclesiastically. He looked on to the kingdom. So should we. He provided that His people should remember their oneness ecclesiastically. Shall that be ignored in these days, or shall it not?

“TO KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST.”

THERE is danger to the soul when feelings and sentiments rule it instead of the Spirit's unfolding of God's word.

Much may be said and written about the love of Christ, which has its origin in the feelings of the heart, even though renewed by grace, and which is not the result of the communion of the Holy Ghost. The poetry of the day illustrates this remark. Fervent and loving words abound, but the object presented is the believer's heart, and the blessed Lord becomes the answer to the writer's wants or desires, and nothing more. The love of Christ is individualized, what the believer gains as its object is the one point of interest, and constantly the place of the church as the subject of the Saviour's love, is occupied by the individual, and what would be holy and reverent if said of the church of God, becomes familiar, and degrading to Him, whom God de-

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lights to honour, when individualized, and humanized, as the expression of a believer's relationship to the Bridegroom of the church.

There is one point in the apostle's prayer in Ephesians iii. which bears upon this, and is its corrective under the Spirit's teaching. The love of Christ embraces all saints, and the only way to know it, is to comprehend with *all saints* what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of all the counsels and purposes divine that find their centre in the Christ of God. This brings the creature, however blest, into its true place of nothingness before God. Christ, and not the saints, is the object before the eye. His love is known as that which passeth knowledge, and the tiny vessel finds its bliss in being filled into all the fulness of God.

When the spouse in the Canticles speaks of her beloved in reply to the question, What is thy beloved more than another beloved? she does not speak of her interest in Him, or what He has done to gain her affections, but

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of His own personal beauty and perfections. It is the divine portrait of Himself, and her bliss is summed up in the closing words, "This is my beloved, and this is my friend." (Cant. v. 9-16.) The Holy Spirit presents Him to our hearts, as the Christ of God. If it be His work that is before us, still what it is to God, whom He came to manifest and to whom in obedience unto death, He offered Himself, is the great object of the Spirit, though poor sinners like ourselves are the favoured subjects of the grace that flows from that divine and perfect work. If it be the blessed hope of His coming, the Spirit leads us beyond our individual gain, to our Lord's personal glory in reconciling all things to God, ruling all things for God, and finally subduing all things unto Him. (Col. i. ; 1 Cor. xv. 24-28.)

None but the Holy Spirit can give us one true thought of God or of Christ. He is the Revealer of the Son, while hidden with the Father. "He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you." (John xvi.)

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The Revealer too of all those coming glories of our Lord, of which the prophets testified *and into which they searched diligently, and into which the angels desire to look. (1 Pet. i. 10.)

May we test every word by the scriptures, which testify of Him, that self may decrease, and all self-seeking in the things of God, that we may have the Christ of God, the Revealer of the Father, the Centre of all the thoughts and purposes of God, truly dwelling in our hearts by faith, that like Mary of Bethany we may have the glory due to His Person so before us, that we may have our affections led out to Himself according to the mind of God. He is precious to God, says the apostle, and to you who believe God counts, as to your account, the preciousness of Christ. He values us solely as belonging to the Son of His love. Whether we think of the need of souls, or the blessing of the people of God, let this Christ of God be our object. We want to have His glory before us, even as the Father's was before Him, as we read so fully in

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John xvii. And He counts upon this being our eternal bliss, even to behold His glory which His Father had given Him, "for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. He does not say to enjoy our own blessings, or to sing of our salvation, but to behold His glory, as the object of the Father's ineffable love. Thus is self excluded, and God is all in all, "filled into all the fullness of God."

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE SERVANT AND THE TRUTH FOR
THE LAST TIMES.

WHEN the ruin of a beautiful order has occurred—when the ship, once perfectly trimmed, has been strained and dismasted—it is evident that all true hands on board have a very different service, and submit to a very modified order, to that at first appointed. It would be vain or foolish for anyone on board to suppose that because they had

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not sunk, the first order could be observed; yet no other order is right. The great question, and the only one of any value is, How are we to preserve what remains, and how, in keeping with the commission under which the ship started, are we to make for our destination?

The church must be comprehended under two aspects; the one, as God's house on earth; and the other, the body of Christ. Had the truth of the latter been preserved in the power of the Holy Ghost, the virtues of the wise woman in Proverbs xxxi. would have secured order, and her Lord's honour in the house. The house is the habitation of God through the Spirit; and if the diversities of gifts, according to the administration of Christ in the body, had been maintained, the external disorder could never have occurred. But if the heart of the whole system becomes enfeebled, surely everything connected with it must indicate the lack of vigour. We must retain these two aspects of the church unto the end, and when there is

GOLGOTHA.

Matthew xxvii. 33.

THERE cannot be a doubt that in that wonderful record which has been given us of the most stupendous event which time can shew—the cross of Christ—every incident and every word which was penned by the inspired historian, has a deep meaning, and much blessing for those who not only seek, but expect to find, blessing in every portion of the word. The place where Jesus was crucified was called Golgotha, that is, the place of a skull.

If there is one thing that speaks more than another of the pride of man brought low it is a skull. Have you ever thought, as you looked at one, that the empty case before you once contained all that guided the energy, and directed the will of the poor fallen being to whom it belonged? an energy and a will which, if not through grace brought into subjection to God, was directed against Him. That empty case now

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represents all that is left of the wretched pride of sinful man—and surely there would be no more fitting place than Golgotha—the place of a skull—for the death of the Son of man, the Lord of glory.

If there is one thing which the cross of Christ teaches more than another (though *all* is wonderful that is taught in that scene) it is that the pride of man received its death-blow there. When the second Man, the Lord from heaven, bowed His head in death, the first man came to an end before God; and all his pride and intellect came to this, that when divine love, and grace, and goodness, had been manifested to him in the very scene in which he lived a rebel against God, he never rested one moment till he got rid of the One who manifested it. A fitting place was Golgotha for the death-blow to the pride of man.

And surely the heart that knows anything at all of the cross of Christ, rejoices to know and own the end of man in that scene of love and grace.

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There, in that place of a skull, the Lord Himself went into death, through death destroying him that had the power of death, and rising out of it in all the power of an endless life, Head of that new creation into which death can never enter, which sin can never stain. Faith looks up now into that scene of light and glory, and sees there the One who died at Golgotha; and as it tastes of the reality of that scene, and learns more and more of Him who is the brightest object in it, learns also the depth of the wretchedness and ruin of the place from which He was cast out.

And it is only in proportion as I really *know* Him there, I can be *for* Him here. I may know a great deal *about* Christ in glory, but if I do not know Himself, there will be no impress of the Glorified One on my path down here. It is the company I keep, which gives its colour to my ways. I may read, I may talk, I may hear about Christ in glory, but if I have not made His acquaintance there, in some measure at least, I shall not be reflecting Him

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down here. The more I know of the cross, the more I shall be learning of the glory ; and the more I know of the glory, the more I shall be learning of the cross ; and learning too that His death has written death on everything for me down here. Oh to be more willing learners of that which makes nothing of us, and everything of Him ! The more I know of that Head in glory, the more will this world be Golgotha for me, and the more joyfully shall I own the claims which His death has made over me and all that is mine.

THE VALUE OF PRECEPTS.

1. PRECEPTS serve as tests. If a soul is backsliding, you may use them in discipline. It is very well, in such a case, to have a well-defined precept to guide you.

2. Then, God is dealing with living realities in His word. If doctrines tell me that *God* is dealing with me, precepts tell me that it is with *me* God is dealing.

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God is not revealing an indefinite light that may sparkle before me. He addresses Himself to me, a corrupt creature, and says, "Let him that stole, steal no more."

3. There is this beauty in precepts. They do greatly honour the doctrine; they are *the expression of the hidden moral virtue that lies in the doctrine*. For instance, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." The doctrine had already taught me, that I had received the Spirit as the seal of salvation. The precept tells me, that the Spirit I have received is sensitive of the least touch of unholiness. So, the doctrine is glorified by the precept.

4. I will tell you further what precepts do. They shew you that your holiness must be dispensational. You will say, is not holiness holiness? No; I boldly say, it is not. We can only judge of it in the dispensed light of God. Is it unholiness now for the Jew to traffic with the Gentile? No; it is not. Yet, under the law, they dare not *eat* with them. So, holiness may vary its form.

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JOHN.

IN John's gospel, when the soul tastes the living water, it is easier to speak from it, than of it. Christ in John is the Gift of God; the One who has been drawing us across Luke, like a load-stone acting in unseen power. John reveals the intrinsic power and glory of Him, who dimmed all nature as He spake in Luke. Luke is rather a servant deathwards, while John unfolds words in spirit and in life. Luke and John are linked by the words, "that as sin hath reigned in the power of death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Out of the abundance of grace, we behold the abundance of the gift of righteousness arising—the glory of His grace. Luke lays bare the first garden—the earthly paradise, and sets Man in the paradise

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of God. John reveals the effect of it; the fulness comes out. Man is made the channel of the free-giving of God; the living waters flow forth from the ascended Man into, and out of, the body of the saint, which becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost. We saw Christ pass through the rent veil in Luke xxiv.; there the priestly family gaze after the ark as it were, while it ascends to its place in the holiest. The veil is rent in John. Hence, at the crucifixion there is no mention of its rending, as in the three previous gospels. The Christ too displayed in that unique and beautiful veil, is gone. Christ after flesh passes away in Luke from the old home of man. He expended Himself, as it were—poured Himself out in obedience. Thus the outward expression of the Man who delighted to do God's will, is gone, and the earth beholds Him no more. We are to express this One now. But where is the secret energy and power for this? John is the answer. I find the Living One there in all the intrinsic power of divine righteousness—the

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ark without the cloth of blue (Num. iv. 6), which made Him to be seen of men in Luke. I have thus His present glory as "the life," and I can enjoy it in all its fulness, since in me there is a well of living water.

In chapter i. we have Him who was in the beginning,—the Life and the Light; and this Living One is drawing His followers who have beheld Him, the *heavenly* One "as he walked," into His own sphere of power and communion. "Come and see" is the word to those who ask Him, "Where dwellest thou?" The *Divine* is revealed to those who follow in the light of life. In this gospel He is in the twofold glory of the Resurrection and the Life; as He says to Martha in chapter xi., "I am the resurrection and the life," when He was about to shew "the glory of God" in His present hidden glory of life and incorruptibility. And though our bodies are not risen, our souls can know the fulness of the Life now. We walk in "entire newness of life." Hence this gospel unfolds the blessed fact that the

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well of living water is in the believer *now*, springing up unto everlasting life. It is the gift of God. (Chap. iv.) On God's side there is nothing to hinder. He has been glorified on earth, and He can come forth now with His "right hand full of righteousness," and make the riches due to Him who glorified Him, the fortune of those who receive Him. This free-giving was the state of God's heart from all eternity. The Man to pour it forth, is at Sychar's well. This is graciousness indeed. That is where we meet Him, and find Him the channel from the throne. "With thee is the fountain of life." This living water flows into the soul that has found nature's wine exhausted. (Chap. ii.) When the old wine has run out, and man is made to feel that it is not to be had, then His hour has come to give His wine; and this we find throughout the gospel. In chapter iv., the Samaritan woman had turned to every source to find joy here, and had not found it. In chapter xi., He remains away until nature had run

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its course, and corruption is felt. In Luke, He is the Nazarite in this scene in perfection of walk and dependence, where nothing could defile the head of His consecration. Through death He passed away to wait the time when He comes to drink the wine anew in the kingdom. Now He is hidden as the Life, In His present glory we are associated with Him until He appears as the Resurrection : He makes wine now, and we drink it with Him.

But let us return to chapter iv. He says, “ Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again ; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst ; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” *In him !* How wonderful ! what was once the devil’s channel, to contain a well of living water ! This well springs up unto everlasting life. The Holy Ghost becomes this well of living water in us ; the only-begotten Son—the Beginning and the End—the channel of it. Thus our bodies become, as it were, the gar-

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den of the Lord. Into them, and through them, the river of life can flow forth into the chaos on earth. "He that believeth in me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Man is gone ; sin put away in God's sight ; the old creation proved to be in famine because of the man who has subjected it to vanity. There is nothing to enjoy save Christ and the fulness in Him.

In chapter vi. we find that it is through death this life is reached. After speaking of Himself as the manna, He says, passing on to the cross, "Verily, verily I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and *drink his blood*, ye have no life in you." Death is the way, as in the *bullock* of Leviticus i. : "the sons" have communion with the priest as to the blood (ver. 5) and "the parts, the head, and the fat." (Ver. 7, 8.) "He that eateth *me*," not my flesh only, "even he shall live by me."

In verse 70, the real power in which man acts is uncovered in the fearful words the Lord utters of Judas, "one of you is a devil." In chapter vii.

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the state of man under law is exposed. The Rejected One walks in Galilee; not in Jewry, for the Jews sought to kill Him. The Eternal Life is wholly above legal man. The law demands that all under it should come up to the feast of tabernacles. Jesus remains in Galilee; but when the rest had gone up, He went "as it were in secret." He is coming to deliver and comfort the crushed ones under law; and on the eighth day He invites the thirsty ones to come to Himself. Law never gave living water; but now He who is above all law, cries, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink."

In chapter viii., the sinner is seen standing in the light. Love detains her there while the light acts on the conscience. The guilty one is held there until full deliverance is made known; until the light of life, the Living One, announces there is "no condemnation." Life sets free, though the seed of the serpent seeks to condemn. (See ver. 44.) He is not only the bruiser of the serpent, but He can say, "Neither do I

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condemn thee ; go, and sin no more." The light exposes the corruption of the sinner, without condemning; while the *Eternal Life*, in divine righteousness, dismisses the ruined one, in liberty and power.

In chapter ix. the Light exposes the chaos made by Satan, and the corruption of flesh in man, while He draws towards Himself the child of light. In chapter viii. it was "Go, and sin no more;" here it is "Come." This child of light, like a satellite following the sun, must rise above neighbours, Jews, Pharisees, and natural relationships, and be a follower of Him who has cleared the believer of the law-place, and the sinner-place. Nature is broken up, and he is led on, till he is a worshipper, in the presence of a divine Person, the Son of God.

But not only is the saint to be drawn after the heavenly One, and raised above the old scene ; he needs power to return thither, for he is to be sent into the world, and to be there for Christ and *as* Christ. (John xvii.) He is not only to

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be a worshipper, looking up ; he is to come down again, and move on in the scene of chapter vii., as to religious man, and in that of chapter viii., the world, where corruption is reigning in death, and Satan rules ; and he is also to take up again the old-creation relationships, which he rose above in chapter ix., when he “left all and followed” the One from heaven. Hence he needs power, not only for him, but in him—not only power to draw upwards, but divine energy to press onwards below.

In chapter x. 40, the Lord retires beyond Jordan, and in chapter xi. we have the “sickness which is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby ;” and life out of death is known in Lazarus raised from the dead, and the old-creation mechanism—the vessel for time—taken up again, as death is stamped on him who had entered the sphere of life and incorruptibility. “They consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death.” (Chap. xii. 10.) If we are to

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sup with the Life, we suffer with Him and as He suffered among men. (xi. 53.) In this scene, the power of new-creation life is, in type, known in the saint, while the sympathy of Christ is given to the one who (like the man of chapter ix. whose eyes were opened) beholds nature broken up. Such is Mary of Bethany in John xi.; while, in chapter xii., we find that all the old relationships can be resumed on resurrection-ground, in service for the Lord. Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, seem to typify the normal position, in three spheres, of every saint after life out of death is realised. Lazarus—life in power (Col. iii. 1, &c.) as knowing our place in Christ *in God*. Mary—life in worship (Col. iii. 12, &c.), as having an object for the heart which satisfies. Martha—life in service, in the sphere of old-creation relationships, as we act under the Lordship of Christ, in the scene where He is not (Col. iii. 17, &c.), and where the Holy Ghost is. Lazarus and his two sisters, are a beautiful picture of power in communion, worship, and service. To reach this

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morally, we must learn what we are in Adam. To be risen ones in the power of life in light—to enjoy really the wine of life in incorruptibility, the old vessel must be emptied. If Mary is to have power to break her box—not only sitting at His feet in affection as in Luke, but in the power of resurrection and incorruptibility: if Martha is to have power to serve in her household—not “cumbered” now as in Luke x., but in her true place:—Lazarus must be sitting at table with the Life. But for this, nature must be broken up. This is the way to power and the only way. And this process is what we get in chapter xi. In John, it is God’s side. Lazarus is put first. It is Lazarus, Mary, Martha. (Chap. xi. 1.) In Luke (chap. x.) the order is reversed. It is there, Martha, Mary—Lazarus is unnamed, but Luke prepares both Mary and Martha for the Lazarus-place. (See chap. xxiv. 49.) John sees all in their places (chap. xii.): the feaster at the table with Him; the devotee at His feet, whose “spikenard sendeth forth the

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smell thereof" (Cant. i. 12), and the active server in her sphere too. The *three* give the normal state of the saint now.

Chapter xii. closes the public utterances of our blessed Lord. In verse 24, He announces that "the corn of wheat" must fall into the ground and die. All the substance of the new creation was in that corn of wheat. Death must give its First-born Son to glory. In the first garden, death gave its first-born to the wicked one, while the innocent man had no fruit at all. In Luke, the dependent Man entered the scene as a *Babe*—in contrast to the man in Eden. In John, what death could not hold is there. (Acts ii. 24; Rom. i. 4.)

In chapter xiii., His public service being closed, we have Him in His activities among His own. He, as it were, makes the laver, as in chapter ii. He makes the wine; that is to say, He makes provision for their walk through this defiling scene, that during His absence there might be no distance of spirit between Him and them. Like

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the priestly family, the disciples were bathed in death, and sanctified in a new life; therefore "clean every whit." Their feet alone need washing. The priests were "bathed" as to their *persons* at their consecration; the laver was only to wash their feet thereat as they approached. The owning of this truth gives us complete deliverance. We have but to see it is done. Thus we, possessed of eternal life, are perfectly cleansed; for that life is ours *out of death*. And this bathing is not to be repeated, any more than the blood-sprinkling; but the feet are to be washed; for if we are not practically clean, we cannot know or enjoy the Father's house; our ways must accord with the place prepared for us. Thus chapter xiii. prepares us for chapter xiv. Our place in the house of the Father is first made known, and then there is peace and rest for our hearts, while chapter xv. is joy and fruit-bearing. The heart, having found its rest in the house, there can be fruit-bearing on earth. "Those that be planted in the

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house of Jehovah, shall flourish in the courts of our God." (Ps. xcii.) While abiding in the Vine, this joy is known. Our roots are above, our branches come downwards to man, bearing fruit.

Then in chapter xvi. we come into a scene where we need an *unseen* power against the whole energy of the world, which lieth in the wicked one. But knowing the joy and peace in the hidden regions of life, we can cope with the dangers, and the whole world arrayed against us, as we practically learn that man is Satan's channel. The Holy Ghost is here promised. None but He can give us to know the measure of the Gift of God. "The ministration of the Spirit" is not only the spring of refreshing, but it is the power by which we grasp the extent of God's giving, and also the power against the world and for testimony. Hence, how blessed is the word Himself utters, as to the Spirit! "He shall abide with you for ever." He takes of the Son's riches, and shews them unto us. He leads us to where Christ dwells now—to respond to His

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invitation, "Come and see." (Chap. i. 39.) Union with Christ can be known now. Not that John unfolds this: Paul unfolds it; but John gives us the results of it.

In chapter xvii. we are *as He is*—associated with Himself. He has sanctified Himself, that we may be led into His own moral elevation. But the rays which fall from the Sun set in "the firmament of power," not only sustain us above; we receive power to pass onward below also. The very words which guided the dependent Man of Luke, are for us. "I have given them," He says, "the words which thou gavest me." These words have vital energy, because they flow from the fountain of light and life. They are separative, and they are formative, as He Himself is known where He dwells. Thus we refuse all that is unsuited to Him, and are changed from glory to glory. This is sanctification in the power of the truth.

It is interesting to see that the cross *follows* these chapters. In them He has

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been speaking as the One of counsel. Now the work must be accomplished that we may receive it all. As the One of counsel, He declares that all is done: "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." We *have* all. Then, He passes on to lay the wondrous basis. Christ, the eternal Son, had come to earth, that the cross, which was in God's counsels from all eternity, might be planted on the earth, where he who had the power of death reigned. The pole or banner of victory unfolds its trophy in the light of the God of glory, and before the enemy and destroyer of man. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." He goes on to this. He gives up His life; and He is laid "in a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid." A virgin tomb gives the First-born Son to glory. In Luke, a Man was given to *men* through the vessel—the virgin: now death gives a Man to *God*. No corruption is there. "David fell on sleep, and was laid unto

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his fathers, and saw corruption." Not so with regard to Him whom the "new tomb" gave to glory. "In that he died, he died unto sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." He who took part with the children of flesh and blood, passed on high to be displayed as God's righteousness; revealed in heaven for us, and in us below. Luke displayed the "tender plant" to nature, where it "grew in grace." John displays to the circumcised heart and ear, the fruit-giving Tree in the full power of life and incorruptibility, whence it becomes the gift in grace, giving its secret stores in glory. Not only is nature displaced by grace, but death is annulled by glory.

In chapter xx. He breathes on them the "more abundant life," as the last Adam. This He could not do, until He could exhibit the proof that righteousness has been established in the cross; and then He says, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." In Mark *He* is the sent one; here in John *we* are the sent ones.

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May the Lord teach us that we, according to the will of God and our Father, begin with life,—life out of this new tomb, where never man was laid, and that we are begotten in the risen One now. He is the *measure* of our power, sonship, and place. We are in the “Omer of the first-fruits.” (Lev. xxiii. 10.) There we are hid till He appears. This is “the hope of glory.” The whole “fulness” of the future harvest is in Him now; and *we are in Him*. Nature is proved barren, and death has given its First-born to glory. Luke displayed the abounding grace which saw the Isaac bearing with the bond-woman’s seed in the house, ere the latter was “cast out” for the Heir to rule the scene. (Gen. xxi. 10.) John is the result of Mount Moriah—the Only One—the Resurrection and the Life. This Life alone is to be owned in the believer, in the mind, the heart, and walk below, in the energy of the Holy Ghost.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

INFIDELITY—ITS COURSE, AND THE SAFEGUARDS OF FAITH.

No one was ever an infidel or atheist from birth, that is to say he was at first conscious that he was responsible to an unseen Supreme. There is no infidel nor atheist who to his own knowledge, at one time, was not an infidel; and if he is one now, he is what he once was not.

Man naturally has a conscience, that is, he acquired at the fall the knowledge of good and evil, and according as he becomes intelligent, the claim of the great Supreme, of God, must either be acknowledged and dreaded, or violently, (as by a volcano of the mind) refused and dared. To escape responsibility is the one great cause of infidelity. As the mind of man becomes active and informed, the pressure on his conscience increases, and he fears the more, as he is made more assured that he is responsi-

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that one learns most, and acquires most moral fitness, because then one is increasingly acquainted with God in all His greatness and reality, so that infidelity could no more intrude there, than darkness could into the full blaze of the sun.

SEEK CHRIST AND NOT JOY.

THERE is really but one answer to your desires, and it is "seek and you shall find." The Queen of Sheba had not desired only, she sought and she found; and surely if you seek you will find, but then you will be tested, and in a way balked, as the Lord sees it necessary, before you will find. If you are seeking for this satisfaction of heart merely for the comfort it would give you, assuredly you will be allowed to try other things first, and be put through some weaning process before you will reach Christ for this.

If it be satisfaction of heart you are

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seeking, even though you are assured that no one but Christ can give it you, yet He cannot make Himself known to you with this object, because really it is your own heart that is your object in this pursuit, and you in the very sense of want open the door for many offers to supply the need.

The moment the sense of want is allowed, I open the door for that which best promises to relieve me. Hence with many a young true-hearted saint this desire has been the forerunner of the strangest, wildest, sometimes severest, sometimes most sentimental enthusiasms or aberrations. The heart is running mad after something to satisfy it.

I am sure whenever it is true, that after the death of the gourd, Christ will be sought for His own sake, and not for any merely specific purpose. When you seek for any particular thing, you in principle avow that Christ is not sufficient for you, and then you are allowed to try the vanity of seeking any thing for yourself; and when you

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have reached the point that you do not deserve to be satisfied, then He will abundantly satisfy you.

Giving up the toys by which you have tried to amuse your heart in order to find what you believe is in Christ, is not enough, because you do it for a gain to yourself, and not simply that you may win Christ. When you have learnt that your heart is not worth satisfying, but that Christ is the delight of your heart, you will find Him, and you will accompany Him to the banqueting house," where you will be satisfied with the streams that make glad the city of God.

But before you reach this, you may dig many a well in order that you may learn that it is the Lord only whom you are to seek. May He teach you His way to His "banqueting house," and gladden your heart with joys that are for evermore.

PRAISE HIM IN HIS SANCTUARY.

WITHIN the veil, in light divine,
His presence there to know ;
His God my God, His Father mine,
A child, in love's full glow.

Entranced, I find my portion there,
My Father I adore ;
He calls all heaven His joy to share,
A joy unknown before.

The feast prepared, the mirth begun,
The music swells around ;
I, once afar,—th' accepted son,
A place, a home, have found.

That home the Father's ! wondrous thought !
I, for His home made meet,
In rapture view what love has wrought,
And worship at His feet.

Let every heart break forth in praise,
Let every tongue proclaim,—
The perfectness of Wisdom's ways,
And bless the Father's name.

Angels are there, archangels too,
With faces veiled they bow ;
But I, with unveiled face can view,
His unveiled glory now.

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They never knew the outcasts' place,
Nor tasted of that woe ;
The joy of one brought nigh through grace,
Is bliss the children know.

And many sons are with Him there,
A bright and glorious band ;
Reflecting Him whose place they share
And in whose beauty stand.

Delight unspeakable is this,
A rapture none can tell ;
The Father's joy, the children's bliss,
Most heavenly anthems swell.

As higher still the strain we raise
Unnumbered echoes ring,
With shouts of joy, and bursts of praise,
As His blest name we sing.

Oh, holy, holy, holy One,
Eternal Light and Love !
Our theme—as countless ages run—
Thy name all praise above.

THE ALTAR EAST OF JORDAN.

Joshua xxii.

THE wars of Joshua were over. The conquest of the land was effected. Israel west of Jordan had rest from their enemies, as much as those east of the river, but with this difference, the old inhabitants on the east had been extirpated (Num. xxi. 34, 35), the Geshurites and Maachathites excepted (Josh. xiii. 13): the nations on the west were subdued, but dwelt amongst their conquerors, the seed of Jacob. The time therefore had arrived for the return to their homes of the contingent from the trans-Jordanic tribes, to doff their armour, and to enjoy in peace and quietness the territory assigned to them by Moses, the man of God.

Between six and seven years had elapsed since they had left their families, and had crossed the Jordan, armed for the war, before their brethren, whose territory lay west of that river. Now, with their share of the spoil, these 40,000

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were about to return to their homes. Sieges and battles had they witnessed, and in all the toil of the different campaigns they had taken part, proving in this respect the reality of the corporate oneness of the nation ; for no one tribe could settle down in its inheritance, whilst the rest remained confronting their enemies. The territory for all Israel must be secured, ere any tribe could return from the war. " Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here ? " Moses had asked. (Num. xxxii. 6.) To this the 40,000 had in the most practical manner given an answer in the negative, as they preceded their brethren to the battle fields in Canaan.

The privilege of forming part of the people of the Lord they were fully acquainted with. By the river side they had stood when the waters of the Jordan were cut off : and before the rest of the people they had passed through its bed dryshod. (Jos. iv. 12.) Encamped in the plains of Jericho they had seen the walls of that city fall

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down, after they had been compassed about seven days. With the arrest of the sun and moon in their celestial course at the word of a man they were perfectly acquainted, and of the full benefit conferred on Israel by that miracle they were cognisant. Marching northward with Joshua to the waters of Merom, they had confronted the Canaanitish host with their chariots of iron, and had proved, that no human power, and no weapons of war of man's devising could stay the avenging arm of God, or parry the blow, which He would have struck at His enemies when righteously devoted to destruction. In the mountains, and in the plains the result was the same.

But now a new experience awaited them. The wars were matters of the past. The Jordan must be re-crossed, and the reality of their position east of that river must be faced, and understood. Whilst warring with their brethren their oneness with them was manifest. All would acknowledge it. But how would it be, when the Jordan rolled between

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them and the rest of the tribes of Israel? Surely Joshua thought of their position as he bid them farewell. They evidently felt it when they had recrossed the river. Joshua saw their danger, as settled east of the river, so he exhorted them to keep faithful to God (xxii. 5), and, when giving them his blessing, added a word about the spoil with which they were returning to their homes. The spoil they had fought for, and won. The toil of the campaigns had been theirs, whilst their brethren at home had been cultivating the ground, and tending the flocks and the herds. Should they then keep all the spoil to themselves? Men might have answered Yes; Joshua said, No, "Divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren." (ver. 8.) Was that right? It was. In the eyes of men these 40,000 were the heroes, the warriors, the victors. All perfectly true. But their brethren, by remaining at home, and caring for their possessions, had set these warriors free to fight the battles of the Lord. Those then at

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home were to share in the spoil. The warriors were to give evidence practically of the oneness of the people, by dividing the spoil with those who had never gone forth to the war. Those at home had looked after the interests of their absent brethren. They were therefore to share in the fruits of the victory. The interests of the two parties were common interests, and they were to remember it.

Thus counselled they started forth homeward, and put the Jordan between them and the nine and a half tribes whose territory lay on the west of it. The blessing of having part in the privileges of God's people they had seen, and they valued. The danger of their children being denied participation in them they now feared, so they built an altar on the east of the Jordan, it would appear, over against the land of Canaan, to be a standing memorial of their right to participate in all the privileges of the services of the Lord at His altar of burnt-offering. Their act indicated the desire to perpetuate the remembrance of

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that corporate oneness, which existed between them and the rest of the tribes. Corporate oneness : because the tribal divisions, and certain tribal privileges, existed side by side with the recognition of the oneness of all the tribes as a whole. And this was especially the case, it would seem, with those which dwelt on the east of the river. For the tribe of Reuben had its line of princes till the captivity by Tiglath-pileser. (1 Chron. v. 6.)

Reuben and Gad, for they seem (and we can understand it) to have been the instigators of the act, feared eventually the dismemberment of the nation by the denial to their children of any part in the Lord. (Ver. 25.) Did then those west of the river look on unconcerned, when that altar was built ? Did they say, It is their sin who built it, not ours who did not ? Oh no. Their godly jealousy was at once aroused, and they would not rest, till the matter had been thoroughly sifted. To war they were ready to resort, if the matter could not otherwise be adjusted. Before however

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proceeding to such an extremity, they deputed Phinehas the son of Eleazar with ten princes, one from each tribe, to seek an interview with the children of Reuben, of Gad, and of the half tribe of Manasseh. Every tribe was concerned in the inquiry, so each was represented. Asher was as deeply interested in it as Benjamin, whose territory bordered on the river bank. None could plead indifference to the erection of that altar. None were allowed to pass it by as a matter of small moment. "The whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together' at Shiloh." The corporate oneness of the nation was not a figment, or a mere dogma : it was a vital truth, a most practical one.

The embassy set forth on their mission. They reached the trans-Jordanic tribes, and had an interview with them. The fears of Reuben and Gad were seen, at present at least, to be groundless. The tribes on the west side of the river well knew that all Israel were one, and they asserted it in the clearest manner. "Is

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the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the Lord, but that ye must turn away this day from following the Lord? And it will be, seeing ye rebel to-day against the Lord, that to-morrow he will be wroth with the whole congregation of Israel Rebel not against the Lord, nor rebel against us." (vers. 17-19.) The rebellion would be that of the trans-Jordanic tribes. The wrath would rest on the whole congregation. We should mark the pronouns here, *us*, *we*, *ye*.

The corporate oneness could not be broken, nor must it be ignored. God would not forget it. The tribes in the land of Canaan distinctly asserted it. Reuben and Gad desired to perpetuate it. Man had not formed it, nor devised it. God would assuredly uphold it. All the tribes must acknowledge it. Had not their past history sorrowfully, but abundantly illustrated it? Phinehas had turned away the Lord's wrath from Israel, when he slew Zimri with His

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paramour Cozbi. (Num. xxv. 14, 15.) Had not Achan of the tribe of Judah sinned, and did not wrath fall on all the congregation of Israel, and that man perished not alone in his iniquity? Israel west of Jordan could not disown their brethren on the east. How touching too was the proof they gave of their desire to avert the sin from all Israel, and to help their brethren of Reuben, of Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. Did those east of the river think their land was unclean? Let them pass over to "the land of the possession of the Lord, wherein the Lord's tabernacle dwelleth," were their words, "and take possession amongst us." (Ver. 19.) They would willingly diminish their own portion to give to their brethren, if need be. At all cost the sin of rebellion against the Lord must be avoided.

The answer of Reuben, of Gad, and of the half tribe of Manasseh was satisfactory. Their purpose in building the altar was explained, and the explanation was accepted. They had thereby de-

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livered the children of Israel out of the hand of the Lord. (ver. 31.)

Thus the tribes east and west of Jordan were found to be of one mind. Jordan might roll between them, but the corporate oneness of the people must be maintained. God did not forget it. Reuben and Gad valued it. The tribes in Canaan were determined to uphold it. By-and-by, as we learn, the Jordan will not run between them. Then it did. Tribal divisions existed, and were to be maintained. Corporate oneness however could never be ignored with impunity; for, what God had thus joined together, man was not to put asunder.

Is there not at present existing a oneness of all God's people, formed by the Holy Ghost? Shall that be ignored? Shall Christians fall behind the children of Israel in their understanding of the divine mind about the day in which they live? God does not assert that oneness by judgments as of old. But it is none the less real. And is it not a loss to the whole body, that the unity of the Spirit is too often ignored, and too little known?

WORSHIPPING.

Who can question the deep settled purpose of God to have worshippers eternally before Himself? And if we see that it is the purpose of His heart that His saints should be in His presence worshipping, it is happy to know that in His own grace He has already fitted us with divine qualifications to this end, and furnished suited occasions, too, for its expression.

That the volume of praise in glory will immeasurably exceed, and its harmony transcend, anything we have known or conceived here, is a fact which leaves untouched another and equally important one, namely, that the character of all real and true worship now is identical with that which will prevail then. The character and quality of what it will be, is now assured to us, and should be in measure reached here.

The highest order of creature blessedness, and the highest order of worship answering to it, were inaugurated by the advent from a glorified Christ of the

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Holy Ghost at Pentecost, and His abiding presence is alike the pledge and the power of their continuance until we are no longer only connected with the glory as being sustained and gladdened by it, but conducted thither by the same power in company with Him who is its essence, whether in the scene of its display there, or as made known to our hearts by the way. And if, as we know, it is His presence in spirit which gives occasion for worship in the assembly on earth, so too, we also know, that He is there to lead the praises which His own presence has inspired. Change the scene as we may, its character and its power, its occasion and its auspices, begun in the mission of the Comforter, reach on into the glory, untiring, unchanging and unending in all eternity!

May we not well challenge our hearts how far our seasons of worship practically express, and faithfully produce before God the normal issue of these wonderful conditions which His grace has established? Submitting our worship meetings to such a test, the discovery

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which might follow, while humbling us for our feebleness and failure, would doubtless be wholesomely conducive to clearing the ground for, and raising the tone of, whatever is of God. If each asked himself as to his own part in such seasons, if it were in the sense of conscious union with a glorified Christ, in the power and unction of the one Spirit, and the membership of the one body, and not only in the name and in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, but as *led* of Him, where would the answer land us, alas ! if one may speak for others, but in confession ?

And, not only does the worship suffer from the admixture of foreign or extraneous elements, the unsealed taking part and the unjudged being present at the table, as pointed out by another, but must we not acknowledge how often the converse of this, damages the meeting ? Some gifted brother, exceptionally there, by his very presence distracts the worship and silences the worshippers, the expectation of ministry taking the place of holy, happy occupation with

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Christ, and the consciousness of such expectation oppressing him who has occasioned it; so that in result the worship is hurried through and spoilt, the desire for our own blessing having defrauded Him to whom we are gathered. The fact that midnight overtook the ministry of Paul at Troas (Acts xx. 7), clearly suggests, without drawing any extravagant conclusion, that the worship of the saints gathered to break bread on that occasion had not been curtailed by the presence even of such an apostle.

Again, is it not a matter of common frequency that we find ourselves praying that we may worship, and saying much to God *about* worship; and perhaps drawing many a nice and choice distinction, more fit for private study, or public teaching, than for Him to whom it is addressed—and all the while fail entirely in rendering one single note of actual worship as already in the Holiest in spirit, telling out in the presence of the glorified One there, the overflowing fulness of hearts tutored, tuned and prepared by Himself?

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May it not be added that when the Holy Ghost acts ungrievedly in the worshippers, and audible expression is given to the worship of the saints, such worship is as spontaneous and unlaboured as it is happy and bright? Who has not felt this when overcharged hearts found joyous relief by the Spirit of God opening a channel in which, as in one common current, the high praises of the saints flowed out, and flowed on, to gladden the heart of the Father and the Son, without a strain and without restraint? And if it be not always thus surely it is because we have hung our harps upon the willows as though it became us to say, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" as fitly enough we might say, did we not know that already our place of worship is in the Holiest. But our *state*, as it was, as it is, as it will be; where we are and where we are to be; experiences and self-occupation in one form or another carry us away, instead of our seizing with joy the unique occasion as a coveted opportunity for self-forgetful-

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ness and obliteration, that He may be all who is in all !

Suffice it to say, in conclusion, that effort implies absence of power, as seeking denotes that we have *not* found ; surveying only the foundations, suggests misgivings, as to the security of the superstructure, and beating the boundaries ever so efficiently is another thing to entering the domain. May our worship speak profoundly and blessedly to the fact that we *have entered*, and are restfully and joyfully at home in the scene, for if there be not an evident unction of present enjoyment and heavenly freshness, how fitting soever the language and current of thought may be, it will fail to carry along with it the hearts of heavenly worshippers. Nothing surely could be more sad than there should be found, as usually amongst us, all the conditions of worship, the occasion and the material, the object and the power, but the thing itself utterly unsustained if ever haply reached.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE DOCTRINE OF BALAAM.

THE effort of evil is to reduce everything to its own level. We cannot be in a scene of evil, where the spirit of evil rules, and not be sensible of the continued effort or assault made on us to yield to the course of things here, which is the world.

The moment we recognise and are in any measure established in the great fact that we are of God, from that moment according to our progress, must we feel that there is a direct and continued opposition to us in everything around. "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own : but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." But besides this, there is often, in various ways, an assault planned and prepared by the god of this world, to reduce us from our heavenly or divine status, to the order of things where he can rule without being discovered.

ACTS AND LUKE COMPARED.

THE believer is not only saved, he is also "called with an holy calling." (2 Tim. i. 9.) Now the saint, as in this calling, occupies two distinct spheres, and may be viewed in two aspects, as translated into the kingdom of Colossians i. 13. He is in the region of life, hid with Christ in God, he enjoys the state, and breathes the breath of the new creation; he is "circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of the Christ;" and he is "buried with him in baptism." Luke, in his gospel, leads Theophilus to the door, as it were, of the "new creation sphere." The Tree of Life is in chapter xxiv. transplanted into the paradise of God, where it is to begin a new creation, "in the power of an endless life." The wave-sheaf, or omer of the beginning (see Lev. xxiii. 10) is stored up in the granary, for future harvest, as "the hope of glory." Having led Theophilus up to this door, Luke closes his gospel;

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and, in the Acts, he leads him into the sphere, where an absent Lord is duly owned by the believer. In this region, all his old-creation relationships are owned; but because he is in the energy of the new-creation sphere, he has the power to use all the old-creation mechanism—though death is stamped upon it. He thus yields his members “as instruments of righteousness to God,” and his body, “a living sacrifice.” The death of Christ has changed the character of the saint on earth, while His resurrection has opened to him a paradise where the new man is put on. He feasts with Christ there. He is in rejection below because of the absent and rejected King; yet he does all in His name; though he knows “His life is taken from the earth.” (Acts viii.) Note, it is not only from the *world*, from whose rudiments the believer has died, but from the *earth*.

When the ascension is recorded by Luke in Acts, we read, “a cloud received him out of their sight.” It is not so in his gospel. There is an im-

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portant moral parenthesis from chapter i. on to the martyrdom of Stephen. (Chap. vii.) In this parenthesis, the apostatising nation is invited to repent. If they do—if the “holy Servant Jesus” is to return, the open door into heaven need not be revealed as yet. But no; the call is refused. The messenger is sent after the One who went into the far country, to say, “We will not have this man to reign over us.” And now comes a wondrous moment! Ere righteousness shall reign in the times of the restitution of all things, spoken of since the world began (Acts iii.), the Son of man is announced by the one leaving earth, and about to enter the paradise of God, as “standing at God’s right hand.” The very same council, a short time before, had heard the rejected Jesus utter similar language. (Matt. xxvi. 64.) For the council and its high priest, the words of Stephen were, doubtless, construed as of judgment; but for us, the Holy Ghost records the inward blessedness of the scene on which he gazes, in the words,

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“he saw the glory of God and Jesus.” The priest is in the Holiest; the “green tree” of Luke xxiii. is displayed there; hidden life is unfolded. Until righteousness reigns, we behold the righteousness of God, subsist in a living Person, for our hearts. *He is there*—He in whom we have become God’s righteousness. Thus Acts vii. connects us with Luke xxiv. Righteousness is dwelling in life of new creation. As to our place in the new creation, we follow where He dwells. As to the old, we own Him as Lord, and place under His Headship, all our belongings to which we have not died. We are dead to law, sin, and the world; we are not dead to nature; yet we loyally cast the death pall over our ties and relationships below, while we use and own them all.

In chapter viii. 1, we see those who have become God’s righteousness in Christ “scattered abroad,” as to earth. Persecution effects this. The old scene is the region where activity for the exalted Jesus is to take place. The grains of the new ear from the corn of

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wheat, must be sown in the Spirit for fruit-bearing. Though all is kept as one in the "omer" by the God of glory—yet the earth, desert now, is to be the place where the gracious One of Luke, gone on high, is to act, by His gifts during the "to-day" of grace. One of these, Philip, is sent to evangelise Jesus to him whom the Spirit has prepared for the message. The man in the desert who has been led as he reads the word to consider the despised and rejected One, hails the "beautiful feet of the evangelist," and goes on his way rejoicing. How suitable it is to read of the first evangelist going forth after the Tree of life is seen in the glory of God in chapter vii. ! All resource, all power is in the paradise above. No resource out of the scene where Christ is not. The Spirit alone is to be owned in the lower region, while He takes of His, who is dwelling in the higher region, and shews them to the rejected ones.

Then in chapter ix., a deeper thing comes out. Those who are in Him above, are regarded by Him—as Himself

ACTS AND LUKE COMPARED. 223

below. “Why persecutest thou *me*?”
 “I am Jesus *whom* thou persecutest.”
 The grains of the ear of wheat are formed into a unity by the Holy Ghost on earth. This unity is to express Christ as “one loaf.” Fruit from the Tree of Life is being gathered into one; yea, more, formed into one body; and this in the desert, amid persecution, and in defiance of the power of Satan. The old garden where the tempter triumphed, is to become the place where this wonderful work is to go on, while the new, the paradise above, is to be the source of life and power.

It is not my purpose to take up Acts chapter by chapter. I am merely seeking to shew the moral character of the book, in relation to Luke’s gospel, as giving us the earthly side of the rejected Son’s kingdom (Col. i.), where the saint is to order everything, as one who owns the absent king; under whose *rule* he is; while he enjoys His presence where He *dwells*. Not only in the Spirit, who *in propria personâ* is in the earthly sphere, the unseen power

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against the world ; but He reveals the once beautiful Eden to be empty and unfruitful. Man is gone, and his earth is in famine and desert. *God's righteousness is revealed.* To have this righteousness the simplest look of faith is enough, but to *enjoy* it, man after flesh must be consciously known no more. Not even is "the Christ after flesh" our portion. He is seen in a new place above ; the desert is our place below, and nothing but the saints, as one body—the "*Me,*" is life on earth. The higher region grace would have us enter by the Spirit, first. *Then* we can conduct ourselves as we ought in the sphere where we do "whatsoever we do in the name of the Lord Jesus."

Hence Luke wrote a treatise to Theophilus, proving that even nature's ties must be laid down unreservedly, before he wrote the Acts, which sets the saint in his earthly standing. All must be given up before they can be taken up for God. In the old-creation sphere, we have trial and snares in abundance ; in the new, we are in all the peace and rest of hidden life.

THE LORD AND THE REMNANT.

THE Lord's threat to the church of the Laodiceans is, "I will spue thee out of my mouth." When the church is characterised by the state of things described there, the Lord will no more use it as a vessel of testimony. It is not that there are not many true souls in it; there were many true ones in Israel when Christ was rejected, but when the Lord of glory was refused in the person of His witness, Stephen, all hope for the nation was over. One might reply, But the true Israelites of that day were transferred into the church, which was better. Certainly; but Israel, as a nation for God on this earth, was at an end. So there comes a moment when the church, which has held so great a place as a vessel of testimony for Him, will be spued out of Christ's mouth; and, consequent on this, we find that the beast carries the harlot. (Rev. xvii.) This opprobrious epithet is given to the professing church after she is spued out

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of Christ's mouth. When unsuited for Him, she is suited for the beast. It is not that profession does not go on; but there is a moment when Christ has done with it, and then the imperial power—the beast—carries it. Christianity is being used to bring about an organisation and an improvement of man, with which man will be so satisfied, that he will in the end declare that he can do without God; and thus, as it were, a feather is taken out of the eagle's wing to destroy the eagle. It is always the loss of the chief thing which constitutes apostasy. In Laodicea Christ is lost. He is outside, while truth is held and professed to adorn man.

But there is always a remnant. Now what is the characteristic of a remnant? A remnant of anything is a piece of the original—a small, torn piece, it may be, but still a piece. If we turn to Isaiah vi. 13, we shall see what a remnant is: "Yet in it shall be a tenth," (here I would notice that the tenth was the spoil of the conqueror. It was not, properly speaking, priestly, and Abram, as a

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conqueror, handed it over to Melchisedec,) “and it shall return, and shall be eaten, as a teil-tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves; so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.” The *substance* is in it; it has lost its leaves, but the substance is there.

Now that is the great characteristic of a remnant: it has the substance, but not the leaves. And what is the substance? The peculiar and distinguishing grace which God gave at the beginning.

Enoch is the first sample of a remnant; and he revived in his own practical life the failure of Adam in the garden of Eden. There were no leaves, but the substance was there. He was small in the eyes of man, he did not live to half the term of what man's life was at that period; but he walked with God, and was not, for God took him. This was a wonderful manifestation of the fact, that death brought in by Adam is not to have its course; he does not see death, and “before his translation

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he had this testimony, that he pleased God."

I have no doubt that there was the remnant character in Noah, but it is not so distinct, so I pass on to Abraham. God had said to Abraham, "You are to be a pilgrim, entirely depending on my word." That was his testimony. Who was the remnant of that testimony? Jacob. He had the characteristics of one—the substance without the leaves. He is a poor feeble man, but he is worshipping God leaning on the top of his pilgrim's staff. How did he feel about things here? "*As for me,*" he says, "Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan . . . and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath, the same is Bethlehem." That is as much as to say, "I have no link here; all my links to earth were broken at Bethlehem." But was he indifferent to the future blessing? No; he was blessing Joseph's sons.

Now I come to another dispensation—a long way on. A wonderful distinction was conferred on the people of God

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when they were placed in Canaan. God gave them the sabbatical year, which marked them as a people dependent on Himself. In the sabbatical year they were not to sow, but in one year (the sixth) there would be enough for three years. When declension set in, this was one of the first things they gave up. This is just what the church has done. The church of God should have been a thoroughly dependent people, and this in a double way. Like Abraham, they should have no possession here—all possession in the future; and like Caleb, they should be so in the power of the Spirit, as to have the joy of possessing all things. But they gave up this blessed standing, and sought and accepted countenance from the world. As God raised up judges for Israel, so He has raised up men like Luther for the church. Under the judges you get every human means tried—a hammer, an oxgoad—everything; and there was deliverance, but the invisible power, before which the walls of Jericho fell down, was lost. Before the last of the judges

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was Samson, a man with plenty of "leaves," but he was not the remnant. Who, then, was the remnant of this period? Samuel. He comes in by prayer, and he testifies, "I have no power at all but through prayer." That is not "leaves"—nothing to be seen, but it is the "substance." I believe this should mark us now. Are you a pilgrim, walking outside the corruption of the earth? If so, you are an Enoch. Do you feel the ruin of all here? If you do, you are a Samuel, a man of prayer, and you have the characteristics of the remnant.

Next, kings are given. Man is tried in divine rule. Did he succeed in it? Did it bring in the millennium? No! it only betrayed the terrible weakness in man. Now the Lord Jesus Christ is the remnant of the kings. He is the last one of the line. He comes in outward feebleness, but in divine power; and, as David says in his last words, "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord:" so with Him; He will not take the kingdom from man,

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and He has to suffer, and even for His own rejection. Let me note in passing, that the Bible is the history of two men; one has been tried in every possible way, and has failed; the other, having done God's will perfectly, so that He could be glorified on the mount of transfiguration, comes down to die for the man who never did anything right.

In Luke's gospel the two characteristics of the remnant are found. One in chapter xxi., the poor widow giving all the living she had for what belonged to God on earth; no "leaves" there, but "substance." The other is Bethany, where the Lord (chap. xxiv.) retires to, having turned away from Jerusalem, and ascends from there. These should be the two characteristics of the saints now; one is giving up all here for God's house on earth; the other providing Him in one's own house, with a resting-place for His heart during His rejection. This is the remnant character — the "substance" without the "leaves." At the close of the church's history on earth the bride is the rem-

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nant. John does not give us the *body* in his writings, but he gives us state—not individual state only, but corporate state—and he concludes with, “the Spirit and the bride say, ~~Come~~.” That is the substance. I do not look upon the bride as an eclectic class. The Lord will awaken all His saints for His coming, so that in true love they will go forth to meet Him.

There is always a revival before apostasy; and I doubt not that Philadelphia is the revival of the church period before Laodicea, and Philadelphia will be to the end. But in Philadelphia it is not merely the possession of truth, but conscious union with Christ. That is what was lost by the church; and that is the “substance” which Philadelphia has, and which Laodicea has not. Laodicea has Philadelphian truth, without Philadelphian power. Hence it is said to Philadelphia, “Hold fast what thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” There was danger of losing it. Why? The wave of Laodicea was approaching. Christ will not spue it out of His mouth

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till it can boast of its acquisition, and He outside—satisfied with knowledge without Him. *Then* He cannot *bear* it—He spues it out.

I believe there is an energy of Christ in ministry at the present time—the Lord increase it! It is not so much the opening out of truth, as the presenting Himself as the object of the heart, and power of life in the Spirit; and thus souls are *preserved* from Laodicea, and by this means, too, will they be *rescued* from it. It is better to be preserved than rescued. A man who is in a life-boat in a storm is preserved, in the same way as others would be rescued from a wreck. But when the Spirit of God is leading in any particular line, Satan is sure to try and spoil it by proposing something similar to it, to be attained in a natural way; and thus the great hindrance to the inculcation of the truth that preserves, even having Christ Himself for the object of the heart, is that people think that their affections can be drawn to Christ by a natural effort, instead of only in the power of

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the Spirit of God ; and thus the beautiful stream of divine affection has been soiled by dropping natural feelings into it. But the watchful and exercised soul will know the difference. What is of nature is fitful and excited, and followed by depression ; while what is of the Spirit is ever existing, ever deepening, as one is spiritual, and in proportion as it increases, it becomes controlling.

Nevertheless, in the worst state of things, the Lord says, “ Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.” It is as if He were saying, “ I am here to rescue you from the wave of Laodicea, if you will open to me.” In Philadelphia it is not the knock. They were ignorant, but eager to hear, and to listen to Him, and He teaches them ; just as it was in Luke xxiv., where He opens to them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself ; then He sups with them, and then they go to Jerusalem, and find Him in their midst. Thus it was at the beginning, and so was it in the revival marking Philadelphian times. But in Laodicea it is, “ *I knock.*” There is a

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difference between a cry and a knock. I think the Lord does not knock unless you know what you ought to do, and do not heed it. If you do not know it, and wish to know, He teaches ; but if you do not act up to what you know, He knocks. When Jacob comes back to Canaan, he has been taught deeply in the night of wrestling, and he is on the right ground, but he forgets that he is a pilgrim, and settles at Shalem. Then comes a knock. Shechem is the knock. It is not to give him further light, but to make him use the light he had. After this he hears the word, "Go up to Bethel." The same with Peter. After the cock crew—the knock—he "remembered the word of the Lord."

I believe the Lord is often knocking now ; not but that He is bringing out blessed truth still, but it does not come with the same moral weight as when it was first recovered, because there is not acting up to the light received ; and His knock is to stir us up, and to teach us in His grace what He is Himself, and to lead us to understand the meaning of

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the words, "I will sup with you, and you shall sup with me." The church is not characteristically in this state, but individuals who are lapsing into it, after having known the truth, are thus graciously preserved by Him, or rescued by Him. His promise is, "I will sup with him, and he with me." This is sympathy and fellowship, and it is only in the Holy Ghost that I can know it. I am in the bridal character when I know His sympathy with me, and have fellowship with Him. I must first learn His sympathy: that is, His entering into my circumstances. Nothing softens one like sympathy. Trial without sympathy hardens; but if I am not subject to the word, I cannot know the Lord's sympathy. Martha did not know it, but Mary did. Mary was subject to His word, and when she lost the stay of a human heart, He uses the opportunity to acquaint her with a heart that lasts for ever—His own. In the breakdown of the best thing she had, as to the first man, He teaches her that there is a heart that will never fail, but will bear

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her company in the depths of all trouble here. He makes known the greatness of His love to her first, and then He raises up Lazarus, and gives him back to her, when she had learned that if he had not been given back, she had enough in the acquaintance she had got with the Lord's own heart. He knows all my difficulties, and can sympathise with me. He cannot, of course, sympathise with what is wrong. For instance, if I lose my temper, I need His correction, not His sympathy; but He took upon Him all our sorrows, that He might sympathise with us. The most loving friend would not do as He did. A mother will nurse her child to the utmost, but she would not bear the sickness, in order that she might know what the child was suffering. Christ relieves me out of it, but His sympathy with me in it teaches me Himself. He softens the heart, by shewing it the tender solicitude of His heart; but then, as I have said, it is only when I am subject to His word that He can do this. There are two actions of the word—it directs and

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corrects ; and if you are not under its direction, you need its correction. The word separates between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, so that you may be set in divine purity ; and then you are not only on the right line, but you come up out of the wilderness, leaning on your Beloved. But sympathy is not fellowship, though it leads to it. Many confound sympathy with fellowship. I hear people say, "I have had a very happy time ; I have had sweet fellowship with Jesus ;" when, if the terms were explained, they would mean, "I feel the shelter of His wing, and His touching care of me." This is not fellowship, but sympathy ; and you lose fellowship if you substitute sympathy for it. The tendency is to call a lower thing by a higher name, just as prayer is often designated as worship.

Fellowship is not His coming down to my level, as in sympathy, but bringing me up to His. In John xx. He comes into the midst of His disciples, and announces peace ; and not only so, but as risen from the dead, He takes His

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place above all our ruin and distance from God, and introduces us into a new region altogether. This is one of the most august and wonderful moments to the soul. The disciples only saw Him with the natural eye. We have, of course, a greater sight of Him than they had then, but this is set forth as an example, like the mould or pattern for a metal casting. It is not the church, but we have there the pattern of the divine institution.

He comes into the midst of the saints now, and He leads us up to Himself, not on account of anything of our own, but on account of what He has done for us. "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously." Whatever you see of Christ you possess. Saul is told when he gets his commission from the Lord (Acts xxvi. 18), to "open their eyes." What use would that be if there was nothing to see? But we are brought where there is everything to see, and everything ready. We must see Christ *risen*, and when we are with Him on that level, all our enemies are sunk like

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lead in the mighty waters. And more, we must have life for this place that we are brought into. He breathes on them, gives the life to maintain this blessed position by the Holy Ghost.

Now what I desire to press is, that, in order to be preserved from the Laodicean flood that is flowing in on the church, you must individually know the Lord in this way. This is His supping with you, and you supping with Him. It is the knowledge of what Christ is to you in your circumstances, and having fellowship with Him in His, which will preserve you. And although this learning is individual, it will not solate you ; you will follow with those who call on the Lord with a pure heart. He has come into my circumstances with divine and tender love, making Himself acquainted with all the little details of my life ; and He has brought me, in the power of the Holy Ghost, in endless life, into His own magnificent circumstances, where I enjoy the light of His countenance, and am the delight of His heart,

THE TWO SPHERES.

THERE is the sphere where Christ is, as it were, *in propria persona* and the sphere where He is not, and where the Holy Ghost is. In Ephesians we have the sphere where Christ is; in Colossians, the practical effect of the Holy Ghost. Romans viii. gives us the Holy Ghost's sphere. We are there still in *time*, passing through the difficulties and trials of the scene where Christ is not. But in Colossians Paul is leading on to Christ's. The Galatians were retrograding from Romans viii. If we do not see these two spheres, we may still be found in the land of Sheba, unable to rise up to Solomon's wisdom in glory. The more I live in the sphere where Christ is, the more I shall move in the energy of the Holy Ghost in the sphere where He is not, but where I am under His lordship. Few seem to see that a place can be reached where the range of God's *heart* is known; not His love only; but God is light as well as love,

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and when I am in the light, I get at all the strength of what He is, and love is strengthened with a vigour unknown in the lower sphere. I am where my life is hid with Christ in God. The Epistle to the Romans goes on the basis that there is a new place where Christ is known, though that place is not there brought out ; but it is only as I am “ in the firmament of his power,” that I can reckon myself dead as in chapter vi. Thus Romans viii. becomes very different to those who know the new place. How would Saul of Tarsus read chapter vi. after he had seen the Sun of glory in His new path ! He got the apprehension of that wondrous sphere at his conversion. The exercise followed in proportion to this sense, and in relation too, with the place he was in as a sinner, the place he had to occupy where Christ is not. *Then* he insists on the new life and the new place, and can reckon himself dead. When Christ in glory was seen by Paul, then it was Christ *in him* here. We get the measure of sanctification in divine righteousness

THE TWO SPHERES.

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in glory, and it is through His cross and His death that we pass thither. Till we have righteousness, we cannot have holiness. Forgiveness merely will not do. The certainty of a future heaven will not do. The cross has ended the man here, and the old status too. I am to Another, in His own blessed sphere now. We shall seek power and character of life merely according to our need, and our own thoughts, until the Spirit of God leads us consciously through the veil, where in God's righteousness we can know Him. You may say, "God sees me in Him there." True, but are *you* there practically?

Now here in the Holy Ghost's sphere, all my old creation machinery is owned; my "members." (Rom. vi.) The old will is gone; but my body and its mechanism is for the Lord. If we do not see this, we shall be in a difficulty as to the regulation of nature, which is not the flesh, and is still owned of God. Nay it would be sin to despise it; and

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while in the higher sphere we rise above nature ; in the lower, our life, as in the wilderness, is fully owned ; though the new life powerfully acts upon it. We supersede things thereby ; and never exact from nature. Often something "lawful" is found to be a weight, and hinders us, so we lay it aside. We leave the lower sphere for ever by the death of the body, or its being changed from its state of humiliation, whereas the higher sphere never ceases ; and now, as in it in spirit, we are empowered with all power, according to the might of His glory, so that we can mortify our members which are upon the earth. "Be thou partaker [says Paul to Timothy] of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God, who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling."

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.
KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT CONSCIENCE,
OR,
THE WAY OF CAIN.

MAN in innocence knew nothing but as he was instructed of God. Now when the serpent was listened to, it is clear another line of instruction came in, and man in yielding to this evil line, and eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, learned evil, by committing it; and here conscience entered. I have the sense that there is a better line that I am to act up to, and that I yield to one I do not approve of. Hence it is plain that from the fall there were two lines of instruction: one, which addressed the conscience, asserted the claims of God, whether declared by the works of creation, or heard of by revelation. The other, as contributing only to man. Soon, alas, it became general that man did not like to retain God in his knowledge; he preferred what ministered to his own self-exaltation, and the conscience was neglected and despised.

“FAR BETTER.”

OH ! shall I be with Thee,
Lord Jesus, where Thou art ;
Where nought shall evermore intrude,
To claim with Thee a part ?

Shut out from all beside,
Shut in alone with Thee ;
In the full meaning of that word—
“ In paradise with me.”

“ With me” ! no more is told :
What more, Lord couldst Thou tell ?
Thou knewest that would satisfy,
The heart that knows Thee well.

Say not such hope can lull,
My longing for that day ;
When Thou shalt with a shout descend,
To call Thy bride away.

The climax of Thy joy,
Thine own all gathered home,
The day of Thy rejection o'er ;
My inmost heart says,—“ Come.”

But on the way to this,
May not my spirit yearn,
For taste of paradise with Thee,
Before thou dost return ?

FAR BETTER.

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To wait *with* Thee above,
While that blest day draws near ;
As truly, though in feebleness—
I've waited *for* Thee here.

I do not ask to go,
Until the race is run ;
Thy purpose for me all fulfilled,
Thy work in me all done.

I am not weary here,
Thy footsteps I can see ;
And prize each precious moment given,
For learning more of Thee.

The circle of Thine own,
My heart must hold most dear ;
The dwelling of the HOLY ONE,
Who represents Thee here.

But oh, when this is past,
“Far better” lies beyond ;
With Thee, who mad'st that circle loved
Who art Thyself its bond.

To find Thyself far more
Than all *of* Thee below ;
And more than coming glories e'en,
Which I in heaven shall know.

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To pass through nature's strait,
Where flesh nor heart can stand,
With none but Thee, and yield in trust,
My spirit to Thine hand.

To follow in Thy path
On to its close, and rise
Through the same portal Thou didst pass,
From earth to paradise.

The same, but oh ! how great
A contrast it will be,
Death's deepest darkness Thou didst face,
To make it light for me.

The bars all burst, Thou hast
Now but to ope the door ;
To lift the latch and take me in,
To Thee, for evermore.

Thy presence ne'er to leave,
But to go out with Thee ;
When Thou Thy glory wilt display,
For every eye to see.

How bright soe'er the day
Of glory, to the heart,
No glories e'en can fully shew,
Lord Jesus ! what Thou art,

DISCIPLINE IN THE SCHOOL OF GOD,

EZEKIEL,

EZEKIEL is a priest. His position among the captives by the river of Chebar, prepared him for the grace of God. He says, "The heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God." The servant must needs be placed in circumstances here which will fit him the better for appreciating the favour of God, as entirely outside and apart from all here. He is shewn the glory retiring from the earth, because of the wickedness of the professed people of God; and yet, in the brightest spot of the retiring glory, there is the figure of a man, indicating that though the glory leaves the earth because of man's wickedness, yet that man will be in the brightest place of the glory.

Chapter ii.: Ezekiel, having seen the ways of God in the light of glory, is now directed—"Stand upon thy feet,

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individual joy, cannot comprehend Him in the great sphere of His presence on earth ; and hence, with much scriptural knowledge, they have not reached that which was at the beginning, and in their lack of separation from evil, and imperfect discipline, they give painful evidence of their ignorance.

The Lord give us steadily to preserve and maintain that which was from the beginning, for that is truth.

 WAITING.

“ *For his Son from heaven.*”
 Hearts individually set upon a Person out of sight, feeling that nothing could satisfy them out of Himself. The thought of your belonging to the Lord Jesus ! of Christ being now on the throne of the Lord God Almighty, bearing your names individually on His heart, —this surely is enough to make you respond to His love, and to wait for Him from heaven. Is there not an answer in the heart of the believer to the Person

WAITING.

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of the Lord Jesus Christ? It is not against the scoff of the infidel I would warn you, but against grieving that heart that has so loved you.

The real value of 1 Thess. iv., turns on individual love to Christ. What to me, if I do not love Him, is the uncovering of what was hidden about God's next step, when He puts forth His Son, bright with all His crowns of glory? If I do love Him, shall I not care for His glory? We wait for Himself, and we say, Come, Lord! come.

Who shall speak the word? The Lord who has been guiding my steps here all through the wilderness. What will be the sign of His coming? His voice. How shall I know it? I never heard it yet. Ah, but faith knows *Him*, and when He speaks, faith will respond. It will not be those silent whispers in which He so often speaks to us, but a "shout." The word is always used for a regulating word. Christ is the regulator of everything, and what will be the effect of that voice? Oh what a thrill will pervade all the minds

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that are in harmony with God! Can any be attuned with God's mind and see His beloved Son rise up from the throne to fetch his children home, without having a thrill through his soul? Impossible. The archangel will take up the note, and God Himself comes in at the end as giving His full sanction to all that His Son has done. "He shall descend from heaven." It would take a whole great volume to express the thoughts that wake up with that little clause. Oh what a sight will that be that you and I *will* see! You and I individually shall see that Lord descend, to shew the character of His Father's love, and give confidence to the hearts of His people who are to be ushered unto His Father's house.

We ought to think about what it will be to see Him, to behold Him rising up to come forth. The dead in Christ shall rise first, then "we which are alive and remain" shall be caught up. The double glory of the resurrection and of the life stand out there, and the state of His saints gives occasion for the

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display of both, and according to His grace. As usual it is weakness that is first thought of. The dead in Christ rise first. What a field of glory is that! Martyr saints, their bodies burnt and ashes scattered to the winds. Some just fallen asleep, some whose dust is findable nowhere. The Lord knows where it is, and lets a virtue in Himself at the resurrection attract every particle, and raise it up a glorious body. "So shall we be ever with the Lord." That is the climax, "with Him," in the Father's house in the glory, each one of us in a glorified body. Are you believers? Have you counted *this* a proper thought for you? "I am to be with the Lord in glory." Do you carry it about with you? What are your prospects? your plans? The Lord is coming to fetch you! What kind of persons are you? *Do* challenge your hearts whether you *individually* know that love which the Lord Jesus Christ has towards you. He is coming to take you to the Father's house.

“NEAR THE END OF OUR JOURNEY.”

GLORIOUS and solemn hour
Thus at last to stand,
All behind us the great desert,
All before the land !
Past the gloom of the deep valley,
Past the weary plain—
Past the rugged mountain pathway ;
Ne'er to be again.

And before us ever stretching
In its golden sheen,
Lies the fair, the blessed country,
Where our hearts have been.
Where our hearts have been whilst wan-
dering,
Through the desert bare—
For the souls' adored, beloved One,
He abideth there.

Clad in love and glory standing
On that glowing shore,
There to speak the blessed welcome
All our journeyings o'er,

“ NEAR THE END OF OUR JOURNEY.” 287

Now at last our eyes behold Him,
At His feet we fall,
Two and three, have we adored Him,
Now are gathered all.

All His saints from all the ages,
Every clime and tongue,
All together now we worship
In a faultless song.
In the song no discord troubles
And no weakness mars,
Loud we sound His Name beloved
Far beyond the stars.

That blest song, first sung in glory
By His lips divine,
Now in chorus deep and endless
All His ransomed join.
Glorious and solemn hour
On the verge to stand,
Of that endless day of worship—
Of that blessed land!

Not our sorrow we remember,
All is lost in bliss,
But our shame gives deeper sweetness
To the Father's kiss.
Shame that all that desert journey
Nothing more could prove
Than the marvels of His patience,
How divine His love.

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Tale of weakness, sin and folly,
Tale of wandering feet—
Tale of strength and grace and wisdom,
Victory complete.
Sin and death and Satan trodden
'Neath those feet at length,
In the glory of His triumph,
Greatness of His strength.

Solemn hour—thus on the margin
Of that wondrous day,
Where all former things have vanished—
Old things passed away—
Nothing but Himself before us,
Every shadow past—
Sound we loud our word of witness,
For it is the last.

One last word of solemn warning
To the world below—
One loud shout that all may hear us
Hail Him ere we go.
Once more let that Name be sounded
With a trumpet tone—
Here amidst the thickening darkness,
Then before the throne!

FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

It is interesting and profitable to trace the experiences, as recorded by the Spirit, of the progress of the soul from Egypt to Canaan. First—

THE PURPOSE OF GOD.

In Exodus iii. 7, 8 we read the purpose of God as declared to Moses. “And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt; and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters, for I know their sorrows, and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land, unto a good land, and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.” This purpose is set forth *before a step was taken in the journey*. It is of the greatest benefit to us that we should be assured of the purpose before we have entered on the experiences which will be encountered, ere we reach what has been purposed for us. Thus

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the purpose of God is told us in Ephesians i. ; we have not reached the completion of the purpose yet, but we know that it has been accomplished for us by One greater than Moses, and that He is the first-fruits there, and the Head of the church, which is His body. So much so, that the Holy Ghost can now reveal to us the things which God hath prepared ; and the teacher can instruct souls in them.

It is a great encouragement and cheer to be assured, as you enter on a long and trying voyage, that there is no doubt of your ultimately reaching the desired haven ; and that though you have to do business in great waters, yet that the Captain of the fleet has reached the land, and that “ we have an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the Forerunner is for us entered.” It is a great thing for the soul to be assured of the purpose of God, and the scope and intent of it ; for though heaven be revealed to us, yet we cannot know it in any of its perfect bless-

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edness until we are there. But every view we get of it through the Spirit only augments to our hearts the coming bliss, when we shall fully enter on and enjoy those scenes : and hence we value the teacher, as he leads out our hearts to look for and dwell on them. One likes to get views or accounts of a great and desired inheritance, but we must plough the deep seas of experience in order to enjoy the succour of the Spirit along the course.

Now, the first experience is the effect produced by hearing and seeing the testimony of the grace of God. This was taught Moses by signs. (Ex. iv.) The first sign—the rod turned into a serpent, and then again turned into a rod—was emblematical of God's power over the power of Satan. The second—of substitution ; sin—leprosy, put away by the One who was made sin. Thirdly, the judgment of God—the water turned into blood.

The first great experience in the soul of him who cometh to God, is to believe that *He is*. This, in a very

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comprehensive and distinct way, was set forth in those signs. "And the people believed, and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, they bowed the head and worshipped." When the grace of God, in its great and blessed fulness, enters the soul, like light, there is a bowing to it, and a happy acceptance of it; but then the power of the flesh to refuse and set it aside, has not yet been encountered. In a measure, the seed sown on the rock was readily received, but it had not then encountered the antagonistic influence of this evil world. The people had readily believed, like many a one in other times, but when the power of Pharaoh would stifle the new aspirations in their hearts, they regretted that they had ever accepted them, and they—for scripture fully exposes the murmurings and rebellion of their hearts—say to Moses, "The Lord look upon you, and judge, because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his

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servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.”

This leads to the next experience, even the sense of the overwhelming and universal judgment of God, and how they are sheltered from it through the blood of the lamb. The condition of things—the setting, in which this wonderful grace shines out—is very grand and affecting. The soul stands aghast before the terrible wave sweeping over the desolate scene; for there is a double distress. There is not a green thing in all the land of Egypt. In that garden of all lands the beauty and attraction have died away, and now death stalks abroad. There is not a house of an Egyptian in which there is not one dead, from the king upon his throne, to the maid behind the mill. Until the pressure is felt, the relief is not valued. But now, in the moment of terrible extremity, His own hand hath found a ransom; judgment is averted by the blood of the lamb on the two side posts and the upper door post of the houses wherein they shall eat it. But in addition to

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this, they were to eat the flesh on that night in households, roast with fire, and unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs shall they eat it.

This typifies the sense and the exercise of soul which the believer has who enters into what Christ passed through because of the judgment of his sin. The three days and three nights during which Saul of Tarsus ate nothing, answered to this in the history of his soul. If we do not enter into, and feed on, in our hearts, the terribleness of the death of Christ in judgment, in order to rescue us from the judgment impending over us in Egypt, we never can sincerely and heartily abandon the place. When one has been rescued from the gulph of the sea by a life-boat, the great and earnest desire is to reach land, and to be quite clear of the place where he was exposed to such danger. Many have the sense, true and right, as far as it goes, that they have been sheltered from the judgment in this world by the blood of Christ, who have not in heart and walk come out of the world; and yet there

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may be a great deal of sentimental piety in their expressions. This is referred to and forbidden in the sentence, "Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water."

When I have entered in any measure into what Christ bore at the hand of God on account of sin, I have too deep a sense of His greatness every way to speak or think of Him in any way but the profoundest appreciation. There will be no levity nor familiarity in my feelings or words, and I shall testify of my sense of what He has endured by abandoning the place and people which had exposed me to judgment. Hence, "Thus shall ye eat it, your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand;" in every way ready to leave Egypt. This step indicates the experience that I am not only clear of the judgment, but of the place where I was exposed to judgment.

After I have been sensibly clear of judgment, the blood of Christ having averted from me the judgment of God, for He had said, "When I see the blood

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I shall pass over"—I have still further to learn how the Lord Jesus Christ in His death laid low the power of death, silenced every foe, and has placed me through His resurrection in peace and righteousness in the presence of God. Now this is set forth in the passage of the Red Sea. This represents the death of Christ more as it is in Psalm xxii., where every power, every thing against us was encountered by Him; and after enduring to the lowest point, even to the dust of death, He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. He has not only intercepted judgment by the shedding of His blood, but He has in such perfect holiness encountered everything against us, and glorified God therein, that He has been raised from the dead by the glory of the Father.

When I pass through the Red Sea in the experience of my soul, I enter into the resurrection of Christ; and this is Exodus xv.—the song. The song is simply my joy of heart on tasting of the victory of Christ. "I triumph in thy triumphs, Lord." Wherever I see Him,

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I enjoy the place as my own, for He has secured it for me. I have reached through the Spirit the great fact that peace has been secured in righteousness. "Righteousness and peace have embraced each other." There is nothing to bar the one from the other. They "kiss," because in eternal nearness and affection. Thus deliverance is now experimentally reached. Consequently the First Epistle of Peter is now entered on as the experience of the soul. There is "a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." There is a looking forward to the "unfading inheritance reserved for us in heaven." This is the first thing, and it runs through the psalm or song. The next is the sense awakened consequent on deliverance, that there should be a habitation here for God. How could any one really sensible of, and happy in, the deliverance which Christ has wrought for him, be content here without a place for God? The sense of perfect deliverance, the enjoyment of peace and righteousness before God, awakens in

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the soul the necessity for a habitation here for God. This is the second experience in the song, also dwelt on in 1 Peter ii.

The third is that we are going on to His holy habitation : “Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in ; in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established.” It is with this experience we enter the wilderness. Miriam and the women chanting the chorus indicate the strength and fulness with which the affections are in it.

The first experience in the wilderness (chap. xv. 22) is, that there is no water there, and when the water is found, it is Marah. It is intolerable to man’s nature, and can only be made sweet by the introduction of a tree, which represents the cross. When I enter on my wilderness journey, I find nothing here but the same water which drowned the Egyptians—it was the water of the Red Sea. Man naturally cannot drink of it ;

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but the cross of Christ introduced into the circumstances here makes all sweet. My selfishness is silenced in the cross, and I see the ordering of God in wisdom for me ; so, instead of murmuring, I practically approve of the necessity of terminating my link to all Egyptian pleasures ; and all that in me for which Christ suffered. It is not that I am dead with Christ (that is an experience farther on) but in the wilderness, "if need be in heaviness through manifold temptations," and yet we can have here "joy unspeakable, and full of glory." And, finally, as there was once an Elim in the wilderness, so there is now in the dearth here, a sense of how Christ can make the heart perfectly satisfied in this dry and barren land, where no water is, even as when in person with His disciples, here they could say they "lacked nothing."

(To be continued.)

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types in the Old Testament, might know the sin-offering, but the ram of burnt-offering is quite another thing; and, as in the offering for consecration, it was offered up *whole*. Christ is in the presence of God, raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and this is the nature and measure of an acceptance, of which we cannot know, unless we know Christ where He is; and if we do not know this acceptance, how can we walk acceptably here? Moses cannot set up the tabernacle until he has seen it in perfection. A gardener cannot grow an exotic, in any way in keeping with its beauty, unless he has seen it growing in its natural climate; and thus I account for the small and meagre representation of Christ on earth; because many of the most pious, and devoted, and intelligent are not acquainted with Him where He is, and have not tasted of their acceptance there.

In fine, a saint might have the faith of an Abraham, and not enjoy association with Christ in heaven. He might have the courage of a Daniel, and not

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know union with Christ in heaven. He might be assured of the forgiveness of his sins, like the woman in Luke vii., and not know that he was united to Christ in heaven. He might have the devotedness of a Mary of Bethany, and the affection of a Mary Magdalene, and be as sure of heaven as a Simeon or the thief on the cross, and yet not know the deep, wondrous effect of being united to Christ in heaven.

The Lord teach us to see that, as our standing is immensely higher than any of the saints who have preceded us, we are called to surpass them in a heavenly walk here on the earth, for His name's sake.

THOUGHTS ON THE PAULINE
EPISTLES.

ROMANS.

THERE are seven epistles of Paul, which might be called strictly Pauline, omitting the three addressed to individuals, and Hebrews. Three of them—Romans,

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Colossians, and Ephesians—take the individual believer out of his place in the Adam family, and unfold his place in Christ Jesus, step by step. The remaining four are various phases of the assembly's difficulties and snares (as the assembly of God) in its course in time. The three which I have first named are not addressed to assemblies as such ; but each has a line of its own, perfect in itself. Each, moreover, requires the remaining two to be grasped by the soul, ere the beauty and depth of the truth in any one is really measured.

The Epistle to the Romans gives us the sphere where the Holy Ghost is present while the Lord Jesus is in rejection. It seems to me the opening verses of chapter i. give us the key to the character of the epistle. The gospel of God is “concerning his Son (which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness (ἀγιοσύνη), by the resurrection of the dead), Jesus Christ our Lord.” If the Spirit is on a groaning

earth which is "made subject to vanity," the Son of God, in the power of divine righteousness, is the new Source of the race whom He leads onwards through the desert. There is an energy below which is suitable to the Fountain of life eternal above. As truly and really as we were "constituted sinners" (our actual sins the external proof of it, for all *have* sinned—see chap. v. 12); so are we truly and really "constituted righteous," as in Him who has become in resurrection the power of God to us. Christ Himself, *risen* in victor-strength, is to be known in the saint (chap. viii. 10) as really as he felt the terrible power of evil in his Adam-state. There is actual, positive righteousness—not only justification by faith.

It is established in the cross, and in virtue of the work done *there*, it flows down, with glory in its train, and lifts Man out of death, and sets Him to be its own channel from and in glory. That Man, crucified in weakness, is exhibited as God's Son in power, according to the Spirit of holiness. And, oh, what a

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fact! every believer is privileged, in this same power and energy, to begin his walk across the wilderness, as "alive unto God in Christ Jesus," *reckoning* himself dead as to the old man. He may pass through exercise ere he bows to the facts, already true of him, before God; but real deliverance is known whenever his *will* really goes. Whenever he "*receives* the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness," he has deliverance "through Jesus Christ our Lord." Then it is not only "being justified by faith, and having peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ," but he enjoys life in righteousness. It is not only the sense that he is acquitted of guilt; it is much more. He may know this, and have no sense of power. He may know the grace wherein he "*stands*," but *walk* needs actual power. When faith accepts the truth (and it must be faith, not a mere acceptance of *doctrine*), the wing of power is found. I *am* alive to God in Christ; I do not want my will, having learnt by experience what my

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will is. The process of learning it may have been painful—and is often most so when the heart is truest; the light exposes my ways and thoughts, and intense distress may be felt, because of the deep longing after holiness, with the sense of powerlessness to attain to it, because no fruit unto God seems to be borne; sin is there—the law of it leading captive; but at last deliverance comes. This process is often needful. It is the Spirit revealing to us the moral history of man, from Eden to the cross; and we are brought to repudiate, not only the evil, but the man who acts it. In Romans vii. the believer is only on Old Testament ground. He may be walking very admirably without, but he is miserable; for he must have the fruit unto holiness now. In chapter viii. “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” sets free.

Such is Romans. It is not exactly the region where the new-creation tree is, it is the place where it bears fruit—where the body of the saint expresses the beauty of Christ. He is like Caleb,

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displaying the fact that he *has* the grapes of the land, though bodily in the wilderness.

In chapters i., ii. we see the corrupt tree of the first Adam exhibited. It is utterly worthless. It is not only guilty as responsible to bear fruit ; it is full of evil sap. The law only exposed these facts. *Glory* being the measure now of everything (chap. iii. 23), propitiation must be accordingly. And so it is. In chapter iv. David is typical of the guilty and corrupt tree ; Abraham of the unfruitful, or “dry, tree.” Both phases the exercised soul passes through. Satanwards, the law of sin ; Godwards, the law of death ; both measured by the God of glory. I, in Adam, have everything for Satan—nothing for God. The measure for fruit-bearing is divine righteousness in glory.

In chapter vi. we have the Jordan side of the Red Sea. Paul always gives this for the wilderness. The Jordan side of the sea touched makes the wilderness a desert.

We are not seen as *quicken*ed with

Christ in this epistle. We are *alive* in Him to God; our bodies, that is, the outward vessel as seen on earth alive, living sacrifices to God. (Chap. xii. 1.) God's claims are paramount; then the saints; then subjection to the powers that be. We are to be a beautiful expression of Christ in all things, were He now on earth, owning Him our Lord. We put on "the Lord Jesus Christ."

Now, though this is all on earthly ground, heavenly resources are needed, and divine power too. The latter we shall find in Colossians. In Romans the saint learns the mighty resources of grace, while dawnings of sonship gleam on his soul meanwhile. He first served *as a duty*. Then came the blessed moment of deliverance. He then becomes the *slave* of righteousness (chap. vi. 18), and an heir of glory. As to his body, he is still in the old scene of sin and death, but he delights to move on through it for God only. He learned himself under law; but when set free by the truth, he becomes *at the same moment* a bondsman to righteousness. This sphere

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which he thus enters in spirit, is not unfolded in Romans; we have that in Ephesians. The Roman Christians were ready for this liberty ere Paul wrote, as chapter vi. 17 proves. This epistle only brings us to the door; it does not unfold the glories of the house within. If I caught sight of the inner glories, without seeing that the blood is before God's eye, that the death of the Sin-bearer is mine, and I myself wholly gone in the cross, being *permitted* to count myself, my old status, &c. gone in Him who died and rose again, my pain would be all the greater. Hence Romans is the *relief* to those saints whose hearts want liberty, and who are prepared by the Spirit to rejoice in a work done once and for ever.

In chapter x., Paul himself is an example of an emancipated one—the Lord's freeman, and Christ's bondsman. (1 Cor. vii. 22.) This "hebrew servant," thus set free, has reached "the end of the law." It is a positive end—*Christ* "the Omega." No other way can the soul get rid of law. He who was the true

Antitype of Exodus xxi. is in the house above, which is now Paul's home. How dreadful to lower that place, to wish to have a "Christ after flesh" again, or even to want millennial blessing in the desert now. He possesses three wondrous privileges inside "the door;" he gets a new object, a new hope, and a new place there. The new place is the home, and his heart is there.

But that heart is so large, that it turns downwards to all the poor "hebrew servants" on earth. It is, "Brethren, my heart's desire . . . for Israel is that they might be saved." His heart believed to righteousness—*God's* righteousness: his lips must confess to salvation.

In chapter xi. he still lets out his heart. We are like Paul when we long to see all—absolutely all—our family (mankind) hear of God's love and grace, because we have been inside the house of feasting ourselves.

What a blessed place the saint occupies on earth now! a joint-heir with Him who served so faithfully His God below. *His* liberty is ours, as to spirit,

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now, in life and righteousness: as to body, it will be so very soon. *Our* wretched state He ended in the cross of shame. How sad when we allow, in will or act, the old thing (so perfectly put away before God) to act! What daily, hourly, dependence we need as we cross the groaning scene where a groaning Spirit takes the place of the "Man of sorrows." To have power to own ourselves "subject to vanity," is a greater thing, after all, than mere doctrine can afford. The blessed One of Luke ii. took this place: He had power to do so. Coming out about "His Father's business," He first disclaims all interference from earthly control—the conscious Heir and loved One in the house. Then He goes down to be "subject unto them" whom He acknowledged still as His parents.

May we know where the power is found for this going down. Then we are content, "having food and raiment;" and we can refuse all the glory of this Cain-world.

FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

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THE wilderness has been entered and we have learned on the one hand to overcome our own selfishness in the cross, and on the other, to find abundant resources in Christ. But for the journey through the wilderness we require

THE MANNA.

This scene becomes a wilderness to the saint the moment he is dependent on God for everything, and finds that he must not any longer turn to the world for help and countenance. As I am really dependent, I feed on Christ in His walk here—the one perfectly dependent Man on earth—and this is the Manna. It is a supply accorded to each waiting soul, prior to every event here. When we are truly dependent, we are furnished with grace for the coming need before the demand comes.

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Hence the Israelites were to begin the day gathering the manna. At early dawn before the sun rose, before the day was really entered on, they were to be provided beforehand. If not provided before the sun rises, before the influences here begin to act, then the manna "melts;" there is a weakening of the supply, because it is interfered with by the influences which rule here. Each of us should begin our day, and every definite course, in the assured faith, that Christ Himself as He walked here, is enough for us. Of course I must be in union with Him where He is, to receive of His grace to walk here as He walked; but it is of great moment that I should enter on my daily course, with the sense of possessing in Him everything adequate for the exigencies of it. True, like the Israelites, I must draw on my store in the course of the day, but then I know it is there. I am not looking for supplies, I am sure of them; though I do not use them, but as I require them. Now after the manna comes

THE SMITTEN ROCK.

I do not dwell on how the distress of the Israelites gave occasion to the resources of God. I wish only to trace the experiences in the journey. "They drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ." Not only had they manna, but water too; both I apprehend are expressed in the words of our Lord, "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst." The water is the energy of the Spirit of God, and hence as has been said, as soon as the Spirit is acting (as we see in 1 John, where the Spirit is spoken of), then we are told to "try the spirits." So the next thing we have is, "Then came Amalek and fought with Israel." Satan counter plots. This is the "fiery trial" which is to try us; Satan desiring to have us that he may sift us as wheat; the trials of the wilderness, as we find in 1 Peter, for we are all along in the wilderness in that

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epistle. Now Amalek is triumphed over by dependence on the grace of Christ, in a twofold way, namely, intercession and resistance. His grace in us leads us into both. We come to the throne of grace and we obtain mercy and find help for every time of need. We resist the devil ; “ whom resist steadfast in the faith ;” grace for us, and grace in us, Christ securing the one for us, and the Spirit in the virtue of it leading us to present victory ; I am learning, “ If God be for me who can be against me ?” but I am made sensible at the time that my help comes from God and that I have to resist the devil.

THE LAW AND THE TABERNACLE.

It is not easy to define the experiences which arise from the giving of the law and the tabernacle ; yet every man of God in the wilderness, is taught that he, as a man, cannot meet the law of God, though in his inner man he delights in it. He finds that “ when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.”

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This is properly the experience of Romans vii. ; a very trying experience from which one suffers in the wilderness ; for there is no real deliverance until one enters into resurrection-life ; thence into Canaan. Now with the law which exposed man's incompetence to meet the mind of God, the tabernacle, the figure of the true, was given, setting forth God's purpose in grace, as we see in Hebrews, for those who could not by any sacrifice which they could procure reach to. So that when sin abounded grace did much more abound ; the extreme of man's distance and guilt exposed by the law on the one hand, and on the other, the greatness of the sphere to which grace elevates the one hopelessly condemned by the law. Like the thief on the cross, consigned to death and judgment by the law, yet through grace to be that day in the third heaven.

THE GOLDEN CALF AND THE GLORY OF GOD.

It is intended that we should be warned by the failures of Israel. While

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Moses is on the mount, obtaining instruction respecting the tabernacle, Aaron, to quiet the people and to minister to their natural religion (natural religion represents God by something visible) sets up the golden calf. There is one great fact repeatedly impressed on us by the experiences of Israel in the wilderness, how utterly weak man is to live for God in the wilderness. Representing the invisible God in some form either by idol or priestly assumption has deprived the camp of the tabernacle of God, but it has also disclosed the glory of His grace, so that the people of God see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. With man the law was broken before the tables of it were received; now this, while it necessitated the rejection of the camp as the place of the tabernacle: for God could not dwell according to fixed arrangement when idolatry in any form had been set up. He could not be subjected to a fixed rule, or be in a secondary place. But beside this when Moses comes again with the tables his face shone with the

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glory of God ; thus intimating that while on earth the dwelling place of God would be apart from all human arrangement, yet the glory of God in the face of a Man, the Son of the Father, would be the measure of our acceptance in righteousness before Him. How wondrously man's most grievous failure gives an opportunity for the manifestation of the grace of God !

THE QUAILS, OR REMEMBERING EGYPT.

This is one of the most painful experiences we have in our journey through the wilderness. How humbling after we have set out in dependence upon God, and have partaken of the manna—the bread of life—that we should remember the luxuries of Egypt ! “ We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely ; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick.” (Num. xi. 5.) We may censure Israel, but alas ! it is too true a picture of our own hearts, and these things are written for our instruction.

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THROUGH FEAR TURNING BACK INTO
EGYPT.

Now we come to their murmuring; when terrified by the evil report of the land, they refused to go up, and proposed to return to Egypt. Ten of the spies had given an evil report of the land, saying, "The land through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof, and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." (Num. xiii. 32, 33.) This is set forth as a fatal failure, there is no leaving the wilderness after this. Their carcasses fell in the wilderness. I conclude that every saint now (for every believer now has a heavenly calling), who turns to Egypt instead of to Canaan, falls in the wilderness and does not taste of Canaan here. He never tastes of the joys of

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heaven while he is here—he has never been true to his calling. Worse still is the case of those, such as we read of in the Hebrews, who surrender their heavenly hope, drawn away by worldly advantage or deterred by the difficulties which threaten them if they attempt to be true to the calling of God. Surely we have seen how their course has been terminated in humiliation.

THE BRAZEN SERPENT AND THE WELL OF GOD.

We now come to the end of the wilderness, and as we find in Numbers xxi. king Arad the Canaanite fought with Israel. A saint in the wilderness standing, is never equal to the difficulties belonging to the heavenly standing. Still though the Lord vouchsafes to them a great victory, and they call the name of the place Hormah, they are not up to the wars of Canaan in the wilderness, and they are not satisfied with manna. No one is ever really able to walk in the grace of Christ, as He was on earth, who is not raised up with Him,

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and because of His power thus acquired able to walk here even as He walked. Christ humbled Himself; and I must be in His resurrection power before I can be in the marvellous place of Christ in humiliation on earth, which is the manna. However, now comes out the irremediable nature of man's alienation from God. After thirty-nine years of the most unparalleled daily care and provision of God for them in the wilderness, they spake against God, and His servant Moses. They glaringly testify, "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." The perfect kindness of God for them, waiting on them day by day for thirty-nine years, has failed to evoke a good feeling in their hearts towards Him; on the contrary, they spake against Him and His servant. Man's nature is proved irretrievable as we find in John ii., He would not commit Himself to man because He knew what was in man. The trial of man, so to speak, is over. It is no longer works now, because he is manifestly incompetent and hence must be lost except for

grace. Therefore, fiery serpents are sent among the people, and they bit the people. They are made sensible of their real state because of the old serpent, the devil; and now, writhing under the sense of a poisoned, embittered life, grace comes in, and the brazen serpent is set up, so that he that looked lived. As we find it in John iii., "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

(To be continued.)

THOUGHTS ON THE PAULINE EPISTLES.

EPHESIANS.

In the Epistle to the Romans, Christ has passed into a new world; but *we* are not there. We are supplied and invigorated *from* the sphere in which He dwells. He has reached the eighth day

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—risen out of the place where the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He taking part of the same. But we are still passing on through the “seven days” of time. (Exod. xxii. 30; Lev. xxii. 27.) We are buried with Him by baptism to death—in the wilderness, without its Sinai, and sustained from glory—carried along in spirit, through the trials of the way, so that we can “glory in tribulations.” Such is the character of the one who is justified by faith, having peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, enjoying the justification of life—the power of righteousness *actually* known in the vessel on earth.

Ephesians gives us the heavenly Man, where we are manifested in God’s presence. We are seen *in* Him in heaven, occupying our place there—seated in the heavenlies: consequently we are in conflict with the devil and his host *there*; whereas, in Romans, we press on through the world where Satan is enthroned, still under the government of God.

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As we open this blessed epistle, we launch out into the full *measure* of our place and portion. We pass beyond the "seven days;" and, as risen with Christ, being co-quickenened with Him in the same righteousness (2 Cor. v. 21), we can, as worshippers say—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who *hath* blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ, *according as* he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." *We* are seen as *in* the perfect offering of Leviticus xxii. 17-22 in "the offering made by fire to Jehovah," in the fat.

Romans gave us state and character, as those who are set in Christ Jesus. Ephesians gives us our place and measure of blessing. Hence, though the former epistle only unfolds our pilgrim-place on earth, we need "the truth as it is in Jesus" and the power of Ephesians, to give tone and energy there. So while the body moves onwards in the scene where the Holy Ghost is and

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where Christ is *not*, the new-creation light and glory of the new Man who, "according to God is created in righteousness and holiness (*οσιότης**) of truth," can be known.

In chapter i. it is well to note that all is *individual* till the last verses. It is not "the body and the Head:" it is "the Head and the body." Do we not often forget this? Is not the corporate place of the saint sometimes pressed on the seeker after truth in a way which makes him at last only too clear in a natural way as to the fact of there being one church of God; the living person of Christ being overlooked—the constraining Him (Luke xxiv.) to come in and draw us up to His own sphere? This not only brings weakness in our souls, but actually obliges us to have to retrace our steps; for we shall have to discover that knowing truth as a dogma

* This word is not the usual one rendered *holiness* in the New Testament. The adjective is used for "the sure *mercies* of David," in Acts. As another has said, it has more the thought of *oil* than of *salt*. (See Luke i. 75.)

will not do, however correctly we may have received it. The natural mind may take in thoughts of right order—get ideas of unity, just discipline, &c.; but when the living power of Him who subsists in *divine* righteousness comes in, the natural man must wholly retire, and we see the cross to be his *end*. It is the *Head* we are told to hold, in scripture. To find Him—know Him, is indeed individual. Hence, in chapter i., the eyes of our heart are opened that we “who *believe*,” may know the power in Him towards us. Then, as we gaze on the glorified One, as sons and co-heirs, we are told of the body of which He is Head, and Head over all things to it. We come from Him first.

I may remark that, from verse 3–12, we have counsel truth—true, of course, of all believers as in Him; but from verse 13, we have the divine energy—the well of water, by which we *consciously* enter into it all. It is “*In whom* also . . . ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.” Natural intelligence will not do. And if the fresh-

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ness of this "living water" be not ungrievedly kept up, the abstract truth of the first part of the chapter may become the possession of Laodicea. Oh, how carefully the Holy Spirit of promise—the seal of redemption and the earnest of our inheritance, must be owned as dwelling in us, if we want an undimmed eye and consciously realised power to live in the present enjoyment of our place above.

The action of the Spirit is always a present living thing now. It is individual knowledge of the *measure* of our place and blessing in Christ and union with Him first; then "the church which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Lord, give us to own that a *divine* Person is servant (Gen. xxiv.) to the *Man* who was raised by the power of God when crucified in weakness. Thus the joy and vigour of life in Thee shall be a constant *now* in us.

But we "who believe"—whence came we? We, who, as raised up with Christ, can know the exceeding greatness

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of the Father of glory's power? We were "dead in trespasses and sins." This is the picture in chapter ii. It was first the Head; then the body. So it is, first the Christ of God in all His glory and beauty, and we seen enriched in Him where He is; *then* the awful place in which we lay as to power Godwards to help ourselves, or, if a question of walk—moving on in the world in the wicked one.

Here, the "dogs," the Gentiles must appear, they who were "far off." The Rahabs must come in in sovereign grace, as the new-creation host rise out of Jordan. Such are Jew and Gentile in this chapter. Not only is "the middle wall of partition" gone—peace between them made by the blood; but a new man is forming in *new-creation*; one body formed by the Holy Ghost, with its Head in glory, *is* on earth. The individuals who become members of that one body, were washed, sanctified, justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God, as in Romans; but that which the Holy Ghost

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has formed, since the Head is in heaven, is a wholly new thing. Such is the theme of chapter iii. Paul cannot have a gospel which does not bring out “the unsearchable riches of Christ”—unfolding the mystery hid in God from eternity.

Then follows the second prayer. The first was for the *knowledge* of the power usward, that we might leave, like the eaglets, our nests below, and have confidence to soar away to our own place, as in Christ. The apostle had spoken of “the riches of the glory,” now he prays that, *according to* those riches, we may have power *in* us to take in the fulness of God—to be “beside ourselves” in “the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of it ;” to be eagles in might, since we have “boldness” because of the work done, and “access” by the Spirit. (Heb. x. 19, 20 ; Eph. iii. 12.)

In Romans, it was the results of “our bodies washed with pure water,” as buried by baptism to His death. Here it is the sphere which the *heart*, “sprinkled from an evil conscience,”

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enters. The heart is my person as to affection, where my treasure is, like the swallow at home in God's altars, in Psalm lxxxiv. The body is my person where my treasure is *not*, finding all a desert below, yet going on my way rejoicing ; because, set free from law, and the unfruitful scene, and earthly care, I *can* rejoice as I work righteousness. (See Is. lxiv. 5 ; Acts viii. 39.) A nest in glory—a wilderness, aye, even a tomb, on earth. Abraham could *afford* to buy one, when he was blessed in “the mount of Jehovah.”

After the parenthesis of chapter iii., the saint is sent *down* to *own* (iv.), in the scene of Satan's defeat, the unity of the Spirit. Verse 4 gives us the fact of a new-creation thing formed by the Holy Ghost, being on earth ; and verse 5 connects us with the sphere of Romans. The outward vessel—the body, as under the Lordship of Christ, will express the fact that I am a member of that one body. Verse 6 is wider still ; for God's government acts everywhere.

Then follow, not what I might call

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the grace-gifts given to believers, as in Romans xii. ; but the person-gifts given from glory, "for the perfecting of the saints," &c. Even the evangelist is given for this—not only with a view to the soul's safety and meeting its need.

(To be continued.)

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE TWO POWERS.

WE must first know our true calling before we can know either the power for us, or the power against us. Satan always suits his power to the position we occupy. It is against the place into which we are set for God that he is opposed, and hence according to the progress in the true position, there is a different kind of opposing force. There is opposition all along the course; which even when overcome has not died out, for if we were in the place where it could reach us, we should suffer from it still. Progress, or the power to pass on, frees us from one form of opposition,

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and though we are exposed to another, yet we are more assured of the power which worketh in us—just as David was prepared to meet Goliath—the enemy in his present position, because he had overcome the lion and the bear in a past and lower one. It is a complete system of opposition from the beginning to the end. If it be Pharaoh at the beginning, it is the Canaanites at the end; and the one who may have triumphed over the former—Pharaoh, may have been compromised by some other form of Satanic power, or even by the latter—the Canaanites—as the Israelites were.

The great distinctive difference between the leading of God and the opposition of Satan, is, the former has little or nothing visible to assure you; while the other, sways you by the imposing aspect which it presents. Eve surrendered faith in God, because of what she saw; the visible swayed her, and perverted her heart from the unseen place which she had with God. Satan's power at first is like a net; there is

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great and grand characteristic of our present calling, and may we in heart and voice refuse every aid which is not of the Spirit of God.

“ THAT THE LOVE WHEREWITH
THOU HAST LOVED ME
MAY BE IN THEM.”

At Thy right hand there are pleasures,
There are pleasures for evermore,
In the depths of Thy glory are treasures,
A measureless, priceless store—
O God, we have shared Thy pleasures,
Thy treasures of countless price,
Those joys that no thought can measure,
For all are Christ.

That cup of Thy love and gladness
Has cheered us along the road,
Through ages of sin and of sadness,
Partaking the joys of God.
Through Thy Spirit sent down from heaven,
Thy Christ to our hearts is dear;
The Spirit who tells of His sweetness
Is with us here,

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Thus false as our hearts and faithless,
 We love Him with love divine—
 With a love that is true and scathless,
 For it is not ours, but Thine.
 Thy love from our hearts out-flowing,
 Its source in the heavens above,
 That love of Thine own bestowing
 Eternal love.

O God, with Thy love we love Him,
 And thus are our praises sweet,
 A fragrance that fills the heavens,
 As we fall before His feet.
 Our God, of Thine own we give Thee,
 And Thine is the golden store.
 What are we that we thus can offer,
 Can thus adore !

Our heart and our flesh may fail us,
 And the mists of sin may rise,
 They may hide the land of the glory
 From our faithless wandering eyes.
 But the Spirit within us fails not,
 For ever to tell of Him.
 And His face is seen in the glory,
 When all is dim,

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In the dungeons and in the deserts,
 Have Thy saints by the world despised,
With joy untold and unmeasured,
 Looked on the face of Christ.
In the torture or in the fire,
 Midst the scorn and the hate of men,
They have seen but the light of His
 presence
 Around them then.

O Lord, we adore and we bless Thee,
 That we in Thy hands of might,
Are the chords whereupon Thou makest,
 The music of Thy delight.
Whereon Thou wilt sound for ever
 In wondrous and glorious tone,
The name of Thy Son beloved
 His name alone.

What reck'st it that cold and worthless,
 And wayworn my heart may be,
If the love that came down from Heaven
 Flows back to the Lord from me?
A glorious tide of worship,
 Unsilenced by sin and by death,
Sweet melody made in the cornet,
 By God's own breath.

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(Continued from page 331.)

THE WELL.

Now we come to Beer ; that is, “the well whereof the Lord spake unto Moses saying, Gather the people together, and I will give them water.” They had learned that there was life in a look. He that looked lived. Life is found in Christ. He is our life when our ruin is irretrievable, and judgment is impending. He in His death met the enmity and the avenger, and now he that believeth in Him hath everlasting life. But though Christ is our life, and He lives in us, there is only power and vigour by His Spirit dwelling in us. Hence He says, “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” It is emerging from the wilderness in divine life that we enter on heavenly

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things, though not yet in the heavenly standing. This is John iii. 12, "If I have told you earthly things [which is new birth], and ye believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" As 1 Peter is confined to the wilderness, so does John's gospel lead us into heavenly life, and fit us for our vocation which the Epistle to the Ephesians unfolds, and the book of Joshua historically typifies. This stage in the journey is, I might say, the most important after conversion. If I am not converted, I am lost. If I am not across the Red Sea, I have no rest of soul. But when I have life in Christ, and the Holy Ghost dwelling in me, I am consciously in the new creation, outside and apart from all the wreck and incompetency of Adam. I have entered on the heavenly life, and it immeasurably helps and suits me to learn that I am called to a heavenly standing on the earth, and this Canaan typifies. However, before the standing is occupied, there is a new power of opposition to be encountered, namely,

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THE DOCTRINE OF BALAAM.

According as we progress we are assailed and opposed in a new way. Satan suits his opposition to our particular state. When we have learned our portion in Christ, have tasted of the new creation, the effort of the enemy is, not now as by Amalek to bar our progress, but now in a much more subtle way. It is by persuading us that we are not avoided and shunned as a very separate and peculiar people, which separation the new creation imperatively imposes on us; but that the world would like our company. We are invited to their feasts, and to eat of things offered to idols; though we be not idol worshippers, we become leavened, and eventually lose our distinct place, and be as one of them.

We have seen how we cannot fight heavenly battles in only a wilderness standing, and we now find that though in the enjoyment of heavenly life, we cannot resist earthly society and the leaven of false worship, unless we are

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in our true calling in Canaan. And here let it be remarked that this doctrine of Balaam which was so successful in beguiling the children of Israel, after they had tasted of the greatness of God's gifts—life and the well of water, in type, life in Christ and the indwelling Spirit, were of the same character with that which led to their being carried captive into Babylon. The only remedy or resource in a case of this kind is the conduct of Phinehas, the priest serving with the sword. He stood up and executed judgment, and the plague was stayed.

JORDAN.

We now come to Canaan; and as we have learned that we are in Christ, and the well of water in us springing up into everlasting life; so now we learn in Jordan that we are dead with Christ. We are practically entering into what has been acquired for us, we do not get title by experimental knowledge, but we make our calling sure as we become acquainted with what has been *given* to us.

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We have seen that the conscious possession in type of the heavenly position does not place a man superior to the fascination of human society here—which was the snare of the doctrine of Balaam. But now because of the susceptibility of the flesh, it is necessary in order that the heavenly man may enjoy a heavenly standing (that which Canaan represents) he must die : and this Jordan typifies. It is plain that if we were in our graves there would be an end to the susceptibility of the flesh. Hence many have interpreted Jordan to be the death of the body. It is perfectly true that there is no way of being or of retaining a heavenly standing on the earth, but as one is dead to what is simply carnal, not merely in a bad sense, but in every sense, and as we could not be heavenly men on the earth if this interpretation were strictly literal, there must needs be another which must meet fully all that the first included because less could not be ; that is, Adam must be dead in order that the heavenly standing may be enjoyed. What force or influ-

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ence would Balaam's doctrine have had on Israel, had they been dead? Hence Jordan is death—our death with Christ; and in it we are introduced into what we gain by dying with Him. What we lose is not the subject at all before us. We are in Jordan passing through the last barrier into Canaan. We are occupied therein with all the blessing which accrues to us, as we become clear of every thing which would bar us from the heavenly place. We learn three great things in Jordan. First, we see Christ in death, glorifying God as the ark of the covenant, and the water all gone, our death all gone, for the One who glorified God, has cleared every thing of judgment quite away, occupying the place to the glory of God; so that death has a new aspect for us. It invites us, and we enter it as a friend, and not as a judgment.

The second thing learned in Jordan is the absolute prominence in which the heart there finds the Saviour, "This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel." When Adam, our

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old state, is sensibly brought to a close, surely Christ then must be magnified and be entirely before us. At the deathbeds of believers we find how simply and exclusively the soul is entranced with Jesus. There is no rival then to claim any of the attention which is so truly due to Him and Him only. And it must be so; for as Christ in His death has freed me of everything as a man which barred me from Him; now that I am sensibly freed through His death, it follows that I am occupied with Him only.

The third thing is the sense of power which is reached at the moment of our greatest weakness as men. What is called a triumphant death exemplifies it: "Hereby shall ye know that the living God is among you; and that he will without fail drive out from before you all your foes." The power of God has reached us in our extremity. In our own death it would have been judgment just and eternal which would have overtaken us. But now, in Christ's death, which is Jordan; we are dead;

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and the power which raised Christ from the dead is toward us to place us in the same elevation ; and it is according as we know the action of this power on our behalf, that we are enabled boldly and assuredly to declare, that this power is more than a match for any and every power or force which can be levelled against us. Thus in Jordan we enter experimentally into our death with Christ, and find every barrier to the heavenly standing gone, because the Adam-state which links us with the other side of it is ended for us in the death of Christ ; so that death, as for Simeon, or Stephen, or Paul, is the door for us into glory, and not as it once was, the dark raging flood of judgment.

(To be continued.)

THOUGHTS ON THE PAULINE EPISTLES.

EPHESIANS.—*Continued.*

When the question of walk is considered, the picture of humanity is

darker than in the other epistles. The devil is the prince and god of the world. In the midst of this darkness, shines out *the new Man*. It is new creation. We are not seen as there, even in Colossians, though “meet” to go thither. The old man is wholly put off and laid aside “as the truth is *in Jesus*.” The new man is in Him created, after God, “in righteousness and true holiness;” righteousness, as in power and place in God, to sustain us in light and glory *where He is*; holiness, because He subsists in heavenly grace and mercy for us there—“the sure mercies of David” centred in Him. Hence, “he that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness and honour” (or glory), Proverbs xxi. 21. Thus we see *our side* of the new Man—as a throne of grace; and *God’s side*, the Fountain of life and righteousness.

In chapter v., as brought to God, I am to move on in the chaos below—once more “without form and void, and darkness upon the face of the deep.” Such is it to me. Man’s world has

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passed away, and God's world is entered by the new Man—we seated there in Him. We are thus above all its evil, children of light; but “Fear and trembling” is needed, as to our walk here, in perfect dependence on our God and Father. He is love and light for us. The touch of this world is contaminating even though it be only the “*unfruitful*” or harmless side of it. Hence, even its philanthropic and reformatory movements I withdraw from entirely. As “light,” I reprove, and nothing does so more *silently* than light. The sun never proclaims what it does (Ps. xix.) and never took anything from man yet. It is a silent giver. Such are the heirs set free, as inside the door, in the house. They come “out from God.” (2 Cor. v. 18–21; Eph. ii. 10.) As in Luke vi., we come, like “the dayspring from on high.” We began “poor” (ver. 20), and lo! we come to earth, “the sons of the Highest,” and hear the message to us, “*Give*, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over,

shall be given into your bosom," (ver. 38) to give again. Dwelling in love, I come as one knowing God's heart even in such a scene around me.

But am I to repudiate everything on earth? Nay, though Satan's world is rampant, (his power and himself annulled) and I have died to sin and the world, the Creator's work is still to be owned. The relationships He has formed for me, or permits, I am fully to acknowledge. Hence, though I am, in spirit, the Lord's free man, every relationship is owned under Him. We shall even find these relationships have their counterparts or similitudes in heaven, and I am to own them below. The child can own the father: I have a Father above. The wife, the husband: the Lord nourishes the church. The servant, the master; the Master is in heaven. But all fictitious orderings of man, I refuse, seeing Satan at the bottom. The creature is still "good," though subject to vanity. (See 1 Tim. iv. 4.) But "the fruit of the light is in all goodness, righteousness and truth."

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In chapter vi., it is not *man's* world in death, darkness, and corruption, and alive in Satan : it is the *spirit*-world of him who probably ruined this very earth, ere it became the abode of, and was reconstructed for man. We not only press *onwards* through the ocean of evil below ; but we rise *upwards* and claim present enjoyment of our place in the heavenlies. We find “wicked spirits” are there, but we have a panoply which Adam never possessed.

The ending of this Epistle is in accordance with the whole. It is “Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility.” True grace is ever in love, but the latter may be mixed with mere sentiment—may seek to know “Christ after flesh” only. Even a Mary of Bethany must have nature sifted. The power of incorruption must test our affections that grace may be with us. Much of the ideality of the pietism of the present day, will be tried, as the “voice” of the One who knocks in Laodicea, is heard, and we “open the door.” The *love* in Phila-

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delphia is tried by the Living One in new-creation *light* in Laodicea. He is “the strength of our heart.”

Thus we see, in this epistle, the sphere where we are set in Christ in new creation. It is the display of the Head, and we in Him, in the light and glory of heaven. I believe even the quickening in this epistle takes in our changed bodies hereafter; *all* is seen accomplished in the One of purpose and counsel. How the cross has triumphed! “The LORD is a MAN of war, the LORD is his name.”

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE HEAVENLY MAN IN THE
WILDERNESS.

THE calling of the saint now is heavenly; but as he is on the earth, his experiences are necessarily how grace forms and separates him from what is simply natural to him, and enables him to be true to his new standing in a scene to which he

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more those who know so much less of the power of the Spirit of God? Everyone, according as he is enlightened, if he walks in the light, would see that he was called to new exercises and that he required help from the Lord in a way unknown before. If he becomes indifferent to these new trials; that is, if they have not the effect of continuing and promoting his dependence, he is allowed to discover his weakness by some open failure. Jacob returns to Canaan, and while he is dependent, is greatly succoured there; but as soon as he is relieved of the presence of Esau, he essays to settle down and enjoy himself, as if the rest had fully come. He is not irreligious, nor does he surrender any truth which he had learned, but he is not dependent; he loses sight of the true way for a heavenly man on the earth, which is continued dependence and not calculating that the day of trial and exercise is over, and that he can now derive everything from the earth. This last is not the way of a heavenly man on the earth, but Jacob so calcu-

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lated, and, in consequence, he was subjected to the deepest sorrow at Shalem. The wickedness of the flesh in its worst forms was disclosed there, and the heavenly man has to exclaim, "I shall be destroyed, I and my father's house." From the depths of weakness and humiliation, he has to cry unto God, and when he has reached Bethel, greater sorrows, but more personal ones, await him. Thus we see, that according as we advance into the greatness of our new position in Christ, the more, as we are really honest and happy therein, are we subjected to trials here, to keep us in dependence which is the true condition for the children of God.

BEARING ABOUT THE DYING OF JESUS.

IN Colossians iii. 3, the fact is stated; "Ye are dead." In Romans vi. 11, the exhortation founded upon this is given. "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead." In 2 Corinthians iv, 10, the doctrine of

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Colossians iii. is fully carried into practice, "always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus." Not here "the Lord Jesus," but the name which marks His lowliness, humiliation, and suffering. The doctrine of Colossians iii. must be received; then comes the reckoning of Romans vi., and this results in the full blessing of 2 Corinthians iv. Faith accepts Colossians iii.; but there is an active principle in Romans vi. "Reckon" is a command to the believer, and when temptation or trial occurs, the mind, heart, thought, all that is within, being acted upon by the Spirit, answers to the injunction, and he passes through all, as one that is dead. In Romans vi. there is through the Spirit, an effort of the mind, but where this effort is made upon every occasion upon which the flesh would act, the character of all that is of the flesh becomes more and more easily discerned, and the judgment of it more and more immediate; hence, the active principle of Romans vi. results in the more passive condition of 2 Corinthians iv. That which required

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the effort of reckoning, becomes the habit of the mind, like as in Hebrews v. 14, those who are of full age or perfect are named as those who by reason of use (or habit) have their senses exercised to discern between good and evil. Things, which as temptations, it may have been necessary for the Christian, when in full health and strength, to withstand, will not only have no power, but will not even affect him when on his death-bed. When in his full strength, it may have been necessary for him to have more actively responded to the injunction in Romans vi.; but that which was a temptation when in health ceases to be such to the dying man.

The fulness of the verse in 2 Corinthians iv. may be in a measure discerned by setting before the mind, the *life* of some very godly separated Christian, and then the death of such a one. If things that tempt most believers had no effect upon such a one in his *life*, what would be the life of any of us, if we were bearing about in our body, not the life, but the dying of such a one? The verse

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however in 2 Corinthians iv. goes far beyond the death-bed of the most separated Christian. It is nothing less than bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus. It was this death working in Paul, that worked for life or blessing to the Corinthians.

“I COME QUICKLY.”

THE conviction grows deeper and deeper upon my soul that the Lord is coming quickly, and that His Father and God is separating a people down here to meet Him at His coming. Happy they who, alive and seeing Him, will be able to say, “This is our God for whom we have waited.” And if I love anyone down here, no wish can be so good for them, as that they may be ready in heart and in their circumstances to welcome Him;—have nothing about them practically inconsistent with the hope, and be inwardly so that they can amalgamate with the scene then open to them. The body will be changed, all its death lost; but besides this, we

“I COME QUICKLY.”

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may be in such a state as to find nothing lost but that which we have curbed and struggled against; selfishness for instance cannot cross the border, nor self-confidence. But these things we may have got the mastery of here, and if so, they are our plague and vexation now (for the root in us ever ready to crop up), but when He comes, no law of sin in our members to be watched against, and kept under. If we are not victors here over these, and everything unlike and contrary to the Lord, humbling will be the first thought (for the power of the presence of Christ must be that); but the second thought, humbling is the folly which had kept us going on still with the old self and allowing it liberty. But besides this readiness being surely the blessing of those for whom He comes, there is another truth; and that is, He ought to have a people waiting for Him, and the Father must think He is worthy of this. The closing of the book of Revelation always leaves the impression on my soul that there is to be such. Some would build on this the needs

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be of a lapse of time between to-day and the time when such a people (not found now on earth) could be found ; but this is a fallacy. If the Lord were coming at one o'clock to-day, His Spirit could awaken thousands who are His in one place even, to the truth,—“ He is coming back,” and that from among those who never thought about it. They would not be at home in the subject, nor practically their lives made ready for it ; but as those who were to be alive and waiting for Him, they might have a childlike joy in expecting Him.

May we go on with the full bright light and joy of being victors through Christ.



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