

A  
VOICE  
TO  
THE FAITHFUL.

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

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VOL. XVIII.

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# A Voice to the Faithful.

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## JOHN'S GOSPEL.

### Chapter xiv. 16-23.

THE presence of the Comforter is the grand actual truth of Christianity: the basis of this is the revelation of the Father in the Son, and then the fulfilment of the work of redemption by the Son; and the fact that Man, in the person of Jesus, has gone into divine glory, has prepared the way for the descent of the Holy Ghost down here, given to believers to dwell with them and in them, that they may know the fulness of this redemption, their relationship with the Father, the fact that they are in Christ, and Christ in them, and the heavenly glory in which they will be made like to Him; and that He may lead them across the desert, having at the same time spiritual intelligence,

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“my Father will love him, and we will make our abode with him.” The Father and the Son come to dwell with the beloved person; and this does not take place merely by the Holy Ghost, as every divine activity; but by the Holy Ghost such a person enjoys the presence of the Father, and of the Son, of their dwelling in him; and the Holy Ghost does not leave him, so that he enjoys constantly in his heart the presence of the Father and of the Son. The nature of this communion, that is, of the realisation of the presence of the Father and the Son, is of all-importance, and gives ineffable repose and joy. We shall dwell in the Father’s house, and we shall find the Son there in glory; but, till then, the Father and the Son come, and reveal themselves to us, and make their abode in us. All is done by the Holy Ghost, but it is the presence of the Father and the Son that makes itself felt in this special character; and the Son is Jesus, who loved us, and gave Himself for us. The Son had revealed the Father, for him who had

## PROFESSION AND PROSPECT

eyes to see ; and now the Holy Ghost gives us to enjoy the presence of the Father and Son (but "*in us*"), if we keep the Saviour's words.

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## PROFESSION AND PROSPECT.

Philippians iii.

It is well known that it is far more difficult to surrender prospects than possessions ; the former we have not as yet proved or tested, they are generally exaggerated in the mind as to their value, and their power to minister to enjoyment and satisfaction of heart ; but the latter have been fully tried in every way, and there can be no doubt as to what they can render in the way of enjoyment and delight.

Now it is not possible to *strip* the heart of present things ; the person may be impoverished to any amount almost, exactions of the greatest rigour accepted, and the heart still goes after its idols : "Keep thy *heart* with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of

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life"—“where your treasure is, *there will your heart be also.*” Now it is of great importance clearly to understand that “the things that were gain to me,” spoken of in this chapter, were not *bad* things in themselves, they were, on the contrary, in a sense, good things—they were advantages pertaining to a man after the flesh, they were connected with earth and time; moreover, they were of such a nature as to retain a fast hold upon the affections and mind of one like Saul of Tarsus; the heart could not be stripped of these in his case, or in ours; legal demands could not displace fleshly advantages then, any more than now; nothing can expel the world from the heart, or keep it out, save its being possessed by a treasure of inconceivable preciousness and value. This Christ alone is, as He possesses the throne of the heart, all rivals are displaced; the weaning of Isaac must be repeated in the history of the soul. (See Gen. xxi.) This was the *possession* which held its triumphant sway over the apostle, it is the only possession which

## PROFESSION AND PROSPECT. 9

can control our hearts. It is very blessed to see the progress there was with him, as the resources of this possession developed, as it were, in his soul. First, it was, "*what things*," these I counted loss on account of Christ. This carries us back to the start of his history, when the Saviour in glory was revealed *in him* on the road to Damascus; but at the time he wrote, "*I count all things loss*," he had passed through every kind of sorrow, suffering, and trial; he was on the eve then of the finish of his journey, and not looking on to an untried future, but looking back over a well-tested past, he says, "*I count all things loss*;" he advances from "*what things*" to "*all things*." Such is the result of the heart and affections being held by a *possession*; it *displaced* at the first what things were gain to him, but it finally engrossed his whole soul, so that he counted all things loss and filth for its excellency. How blessed to see the power of a heavenly Christ in such an one as Saul of Tarsus! And is this not to be witnessed now?



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Has this treasure-possession lost its virtue? Did this displacement and engrossment pertain to other times and days than our own? If not, why is it so little seen now? May each conscience and heart in exercise answer for itself, as before Him.

But not only have we possession set forth here, we have *prospects* also; these are expressed thus—"our commonwealth has its existence in the heavens, from which also we await the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, who shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity to his body of glory," &c. Is it saying too much to assert, that, in proportion to the *possession* being enjoyed, is the *prospect* watched for?

It is well to be reminded of the *entirely heavenly character* of this prospect; it is not, *in any sense*, on earth that we have possession or prospect; a *grave* and *martyrdom* are all that we can expect here in the truth of our calling. Many of us shrink from owning this in doctrine, all of us are very feeble in our expression of it in practice. There is

## PROFESSION AND PROSPECT. 11

a prospect for this earth: it will yet enjoy its sabbath, but *that* is not our prospect; we profess to expect the return to the air for us, of Himself, our Saviour and our Lord. What a prospect! Moreover, we avow constantly our belief in the fact that it may be *at any moment*; but then, how does this consist with our troubles and cares about present things, our plans and positions? Must we not own how little our prospect has influenced our present? And is it to be accounted for by the fact, that treasure in heaven has not so possessed us in the present as to act upon hope for the future? If this be so, may the blessed Lord lead our hearts and affections into present possession in heaven! from which also we may await the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; so that, bounded by nothing below, nothing seen, governed by nothing but Christ, we may press toward the mark for the prize now, at any moment expecting to rise and meet the One who is coming to take us (*παράλῃμψομαι*) unto Himself.

W. T. T.

## “THE OUTLINE OF SOUND WORDS.”

2 Timothy i. 13.

IF anything has characterised the awakening of our day, it is surely the distinctness with which the stupendous truths of Christianity have been brought out and put before the soul.

For many centuries the circle of these great truths had been lost, and even that which in part was known was so little defined, that it is a notorious fact that amongst the very best books of so-called theology, the best religious works, only confused presentations of truth could be found. Take, for example, such a subject as the *Righteousness of God* in the writings of Luther, Calvin, or later divines, and compare it with that which we possess, through God's mercy and grace.

The illustration at once suggests itself, to one accustomed to look at the heavenly bodies through a telescope, of the confused image observed before the instrument has been properly brought

## “THE OUTLINE OF SOUND WORDS.” 13

to a focus. One cannot say positively it is *not* the moon, say, but it might be anything else ; and as the lines become defined and the ridges and peaks traced out clearly on the background, cries of admiration are often raised by those who for the first time behold such a sight.

The effort of the enemy from the beginning was to render the outline of christian revelation indistinct. No enlightened soul has ever read the works of even the early fathers without feeling inclined to blush for their confused style. The church of God, whose position and glory were so clearly taught in Paul's writings, is seen undefined through a misty haze : the *contour* is lost ! The direst tangle as to the separate calling of Israel and the heavenly company ; and the focus gets more and more displaced as time goes on, till at last nothing can be seen but a bewildering figure. Thus gradually was the “*outline\** of sound words,” so insisted upon by Paul to Timothy lost, and the grandest and most blessed truths,

\* ὑποτύψεις

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majestic in their simplicity, reduced to a hopeless maze of undefined lines. O what would that apostle who exhorted his devoted follower to study to present himself to God, a workman not to be ashamed (*cutting in a straight line* the word of truth), have said to the state of things in the middle ages ?

In our day, Christianity has been brought out clearly and distinctly. Truth has been distinguished from error in a general and extensive way ; and the several parts of the truth, the several truths forming the whole, have been defined with marvellous clearness and precision, the work of the Spirit of God by special gift. No one who is spiritual can doubt of the wonderful exactitude with which God has been pleased to set His word before us in these last days.

An all-important question now arises, *Is there not a tendency to spoil the contour at the present moment ? to obliterate the lines that mark these truths so definitely ?* It is well known, even in the affairs of this world, definitions are very difficult to make ; and a man who

“ THE OUTLINE OF SOUND WORDS.” 15

in the ordinary language of life can define things without saying too much or too little, is justly regarded as a useful person. In divine things, as stated above, we believe in the positive action of the Holy Ghost in gift, and in the choice of the teacher's words ; and the danger perhaps we incur in general is rather that of saying *too much*, and so of rendering obscure that which has already been presented with divine clearness. Nothing is more striking than a well-defined inscription, and a traveller in South Italy is astonished to see some of the faces of the milestones along the Appian Way as legible as when the marble was cut in the time of Nerva and Trajan. I have been assured that those who seek to renew a once chiselled stone often succeed in spoiling its distinctness.

Be that as it may, in a day like our own, when we have lost somewhat of the first freshness of recovered truth, and many heads and pens are constantly at work, we may fear lest the grand and fundamental truths, so clearly presented

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to us, and confided as it were to our keeping, be not damaged through our over-desire to develop and explain. The subject is suggestive, and from its very nature demands brevity. Perhaps in many cases there may be a need to study prayerfully what has already been said and written, than to seek oneself to develop it.

May God give us not only to keep to clear and defined lines, but also hearts to appreciate His truth, and to live as men who value it for His sake! Doubtless God is still working in many places, and producing this sincere desire to conform to His mind in many souls.

May our whole strength be expended in this direction !                      E. L. B.

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### THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

“SANCTIFY YOURSELVES.”

THE more distinctly we are here for the Lord, the more absolutely must we be separate from everything unsuited to Him. There are two characteristics for the heavenly warfare, namely, armour

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 17

and prayer (see Eph. vi.): one is practical superiority to evil, Satan baffled by one's conduct; and the other is our assured confidence in God for His people on the earth. The real preparation for battle is above with Christ, and then we are here suitably for Him. In a day like this, surely every true heart will hail any light which would help him to be more for the Lord here.

The first great principle is, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you." Invariably we shall find that, where there is spiritual zeal, the man of God is marked by the distinctness of his separation from mere natural influences, in the first instance. This is his beauty: "Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house, so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty." No one can really stand for Christ here until he has left his own place for Christ's place; and then, because he has been detached from things here, he can resume here really for Him. The true heart, like Rebekah, cannot help itself,



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holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe." If we had no part dark, our bodies would be full of light, there would be no check to the action of the Spirit within us. The dark part is some positive hindrance, and if it be unchecked it will, however secreted, expose itself some day. Barnabas had not merely determined to take Mark, on account of his being his kinsman, but the Jewish tendency, which he had not set aside, as a dark part, now betrayed him. Every one is exposed here, if he is not perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. The servant cannot effectively present the grace which he knows not the power of himself. How can the man with the beam in his own eye, propose to take a mote out of another's eye? He must remove the beam from his own eye, and then he will see clearly to remove the mote from his brother's eye. The servant is not deprived of his gift because he has grieved the Holy Spirit by his ways or association, but the Lord

## MANIFESTATION—WHEN ? 29

must deal with him about it, be he an Isaac or a Moses. One was influenced by his son's venison—small things can warp us—and the other had neglected to circumcise his son, possibly influenced by his wife, and God sought to kill him when he went forth as His servant. James warns us not to be many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. I believe every servant is exposed to the world, when he persists in any unholiness unjudged, and that the leaven of it will render him markedly defective in his ministry, though, if he had judged it, he would have had greater power there.

The Lord lead our hearts to accept the word of exhortation —“ Sanctify yourselves.”

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## MANIFESTATION—WHEN ?

THE manifestation of Christ will be the manifestation of the saints on earth with *Him*. That is the time for show, the *only* time for show ; and that runs

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counter to all human thoughts, and what man likes. The great principle of Christianity is to wait—we *shall* be manifested. The time for show is coming; and then, not only the appearance of the saints, but their garments will be spotless. To think that we shall be suited in everything to the company of the Christ in glory! The great thing is to look at that glory and to be changed into the same even now. That is not looking for the admiration of this world, but waiting for the glory, when we shall be manifested with Christ. Our life is hid with Christ, and we are not to be shown-off now in anything, whether religiously, congregationally, collectively, or locally, or in any other way. The danger of the saint who knows much, is to show himself off; but the secret is to know that this is not the time for it. “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear—be manifested—with him in glory;” that is what we have got to look for. I cannot have anything to show till then, because I should only tarnish

## “ FORWARD ! ”

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it. How it sobers us, and reconciles us to the troublous things around, that we have nothing to do but to wait. Risen with Christ, death behind, Christ waiting, that is our position. Christ is sitting; and the church's attitude is sitting. I mean that as to *being* anything, we are to sit still, and wait for the day of manifestation. He is sitting at the right hand of God: this is the simple position of the saints. We are in the right place, but are we in the right attitude? Can we sit quietly and wait, or are we restless, running hither and thither? Christ is waiting; this will balance our souls till the glory. Let it be ever before us, and the Lord keep us waiting for this, for His name sake.

W. B.

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 “ FORWARD ! ”

WHEN on the long and dreary way,  
 Or at the dawn of breaking day,  
 Or in the damp and chill night-air,  
 Or in the noontide's dusty glare,  
 Lord, as we march, we look to Thee,  
 To lead us on to victory !

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There lie the bowers of repose,  
 There grow the violet and rose ;  
 There the soft tapestry, the bed,  
 Here, pillows for the weary head !  
 Never ! O Lord, we look to Thee  
 To nerve our souls for victory !

When the blest Spirit's unction flows,  
 When the first flush of triumph glows,  
 O who shall guide the ready hand ?  
 So keep us under Thy command—  
 Looking, O Lord, in faith to Thee,  
 To keep us calm in victory !

When gentle friends have turn'd aside,  
 And when the soul is sorely tried, . .  
 As David once, his Ziklag burnt,  
 In sore affliction lessons learnt ;  
 But look'd, O Lord, in faith to Thee\*  
 To lead him on to victory !

Soon shall eternal triumph yield  
 Repose from off the battle-field ;  
 All power of evil trodden down,  
 The waving palm . . . the glittering  
                   crown . . .  
 Then, blessed Lord, we'll shout to Thee  
 Of full and perfect victory !

E. L. B.

\* 1 Samuel xxx. 6

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## JOHN'S GOSPEL.

## Chapter xiv. 23-28.

WE may notice that the scripture employs two different words here: "commandments" and "word." Both have their own import, for the first speaks of authority and obedience, the second of giving heed to what the Lord says. Each has thus a special bearing. To the soul that hath His commandments and keepeth them, the Lord manifests Himself, and this is the fruit of obedience; but the blessing of the dwelling of the Father and Son in the heart is the result of Jesus' word exerting its legitimate influence in the heart. Now he that loveth not Jesus, that is, whose heart is not governed by this personal affection to the Saviour, keepeth not his words; and the word that they heard was not their Master's word, as that of a man, that is of a teacher who spoke on his own account, but the word of the Father who had sent Jesus. All the work of grace is

another thing altogether; because that was taking place, the answer of God in His soul was not the effect of His perfect and blessed presence, but forsaking, according to the perfect opposition of His nature to sin. But in this, we approach those sufferings that no one can fathom.

The Lord does not give as we give anything, and who consequently do not possess it any longer: He brings us into the enjoyment of all that He Himself enjoys: glory, the Father's love, joy. He keeps back nothing for Himself, and in which we have not our part.

The verses that terminate the chapter contain a touching expression of the manner in which Jesus expects the affection of His own. "If ye had loved me, ye would have rejoiced that I go to the Father." (Ver. 28.) If you think of yourselves, it is quite natural that you should be afflicted; but if you were to think of me, it would be your joy to think that I leave this world of sorrow and suffering to go to the Father, in

## “ CHANNELS.”

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taking again my glory and entering again into the land of holiness and peace, there where all my rights are recognised. Thus the Lord places Himself close to us, and desires that we should think of His happiness. What Christian is there that rejoices not at the thought of His glory?

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## “ CHANNELS.”

“In those days, the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them, I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat; and if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way; for divers of them came from far. And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness? And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven. And he commanded the



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people to sit down on the ground; and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people. And they had a few small fishes; and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them. So they did eat, and were filled; and they took up of the broken meat that was left, seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand, and he sent them away." (Mark viii. 1-9.)

The foregoing passage presents a very striking and beautiful illustration of one special feature of the Christian's mission in this world, which the reader will do well to ponder. It is of immense importance, and of universal application. It concerns every child of God. We have each one to remember that we are sent into this world to be a channel of communication between the heart of Christ and every form of need that may cross our path from day to day.

This is an interesting and lovely feature

of the Christian's mission. True, it is only one of the many features, but it is one of exceeding preciousness and beauty. It is pre-eminently practical too, as we shall see.

Of course, it of necessity assumes that I am a Christian. If I do not know that I have eternal life, if I am at all doubtful as to my eternal salvation, if I do not know Christ as my own precious Saviour and Lord—the portion, the object, and the resting-place of my heart—to occupy myself with the Christian's mission, is simply to deceive myself, and blind my eyes to my true condition. A known and enjoyed salvation, and a known and enjoyed Saviour and Lord, are absolutely essential conditions for it.

Having said thus much, to guard the reader against self-deception, as also to guard our subject against any misapprehension, we shall look, for a few moments, at the lovely passage which stands at the head of this paper. May the blessed Spirit open and apply it to our hearts !

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“In those days, the multitude being *very great*, and having *nothing to eat*.” Here was the state of the case—great need, and no apparent resources to meet it. But Jesus was there—blessed be His holy name!—in all the love of His heart, and the almighty power of His hand. He was there who, of old, had fed three millions of people, in a vast howling wilderness, for forty years. Yes, He was there, and, of course, He could at once, and directly, have met the need, without calling His poor unbelieving and self-occupied disciples into the scene at all. He could have summoned angelic messengers from heaven to wait upon those hungry thousands.

But He did neither the one nor the other, because it was His gracious purpose to use His disciples as channels of communication between Himself and that vast hungry multitude. Not merely as instruments of His *power*, which angels might be, but the very expression of His *heart*.

And let us note *how* He did this. Had He merely intended to use them

as instruments of His power, it would have sufficed to put the way and means into their hands. But no; He wanted to make them channels through which the tender compassion of His heart might flow out. And how was this to be done? Thus: “He called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them, *I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat; and if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way; for divers of them came from far.*”

Here, then, we have the true secret of preparation for our high and holy mission. Our blessed Lord first gathers His disciples round Himself, and seeks to fill their hearts with His own feelings and thoughts, ere He fills their hands with the loaves and fishes. It is as if He had said, “I have compassion, and I want you to have it also. I want you to enter into all my thoughts and feelings, to think as I do, and feel as I do. I want you to look with my eyes at this hungry multitude, in order that

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you may be in a moral condition to be my channels."

This is uncommonly fine. A person may say, "I long to be a channel, but it seems quite too high, quite beyond me. How could I ever attain to such a height?" The answer is, Get near enough to Christ to think as He thinks, to feel as He feels. Drink into His spirit. This, be assured of it, is the true, the only way to be a channel of communication. If I say, "I must try and be a channel," I shall make a fool of myself, I shall be a caricature. But if I drink at the fountain of Christ's heart, I shall be filled to overflowing, my whole moral being will be permeated by His spirit, so that I shall be in a fit condition to be used by Him, and I shall be sure to make a right use of—that is, to use for Him—whatever way and means He may put into my hands. If I get my hands full of means, before my heart is full of Christ, I shall not use the means for Him, I shall use them for my own glory, and not for the glory of God.

## “CHANNELS.”

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Brethren, let us ponder this. Let us consider our mission, and the true secret of fulfilling it. It is a grand point to have the heart impressed with the fact that we are called to be channels through which the heart of Christ may flow out to His own, and to a needy world. It is wonderful, it seems too good to be true; but, blessed be God, it is as true as it is wonderful. Let us only seek to take it in—to believe it, to make our own of it. Let us not content ourselves with admiring it as a beautiful theory, but seek to have it wrought into our souls by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit.

But mark how slow the disciples were in responding to the desire of the heart of Christ respecting them. It was His gracious purpose to use them as His channels, to bestow upon them this immense privilege; but they, like ourselves, were little able to appreciate it, simply because they failed to enter into His thoughts, and to apprehend the glory of His Person. “His disciples answered him, *From whence can a man*

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satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness ?” On another occasion they said, “We have here but five loaves and two fishes.” Did they not know, or had they forgotten, that they were in the immediate presence of the Creator and Sustainer of the universe ? True, He was there in the lowly form of Jesus of Nazareth. His divine glory was hidden from nature’s view behind the veil of humanity. But they ought to have known better who and what He was, and how to avail themselves of His glorious presence, and of His unsearchable riches. Surely, had their hearts at all apprehended the glory of His Person, they could never have asked such a question as, “Whence can *a man* satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness ?” Moses, of old, had asked, “Whence should *I* have flesh to give to all this people ?” God is shut out by the poor unbelieving heart. Did Jehovah ask Moses to provide flesh ? Surely not. No mere man could do it. Neither could a mere man feed four thousand in a desert place.

But God was there. Yes, it was God, speaking through human lips, who had said, “I have compassion on the multitude.” It was God who took account of all the circumstances of each individual in that vast multitude of hungry, fainting people. He knew the exact distance each one had travelled, and the exact length of time each one had been fasting. He took account of the sure consequences of their being dismissed without food. It was God who gave utterance to those touching words, “I cannot send them away fasting, lest they faint by the way, for divers of them came from far.”

Yes, God was there, in all the tenderness of a love, which could take account of the most minute details of a creature's weakness, and a creature's necessity. There, too, in His almighty power and exhaustless resources, and there to enable His poor disciples to be the depositaries of His thoughts, the vessels of His goodness, the channels of His grace. And what did they want, in order to be able to fulfil their mis-



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sion? Did they want to be, or to do, anything? No; they simply wanted to see Him, and to use Him. They wanted to exercise that simple faith which counts on God for everything, and finds all its springs in Him.

Thus it was with the disciples, and thus it is with us. If we want to act as the channels of the grace of Christ, we must have to do with Him in the deep secret of our own souls. We must learn of Him; we must feed upon Him; we must know the meaning of communion with His heart; we must be near enough to Him to know the secrets of His mind, and carry out the purposes of His love. If we would reflect Him, we must gaze upon Him. If we would reproduce Him, we must feed upon Him, we must have Him dwelling in our hearts by faith. We may depend upon it, that what is really in our hearts will come out in our lives. We may have a quantity of truth in our heads, and flippantly flowing from our lips, but if we really desire to be channels of communication between His

## “CHANNELS.”

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heart and the needy ones in the scene through which we are passing, we must habitually drink into His love. It cannot possibly be in any other way. “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” (John vii. 38.)

Here lies the grand secret of the whole matter: “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.” If the rivers are to flow, we must drink. It cannot be otherwise. If every member of the church of God were in the power of this great principle, what a very different state of things we should witness! And where lies the hindrance? We are not straitened in our adorable Lord and Saviour. It is His desire to use us, just as He used His disciples on the occasion before us. He gathered them round Himself, and graciously sought to pour into their hearts the compassion of His own heart, in order that they might feel with Him, as the moral qualification for acting *for Him*. We may always feel assured that where

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the heart is full of Christ, the power to act will not be lacking.

But, alas! as it was with the disciples, so is it with us. They failed in appreciating and using the power that was in their midst. They said, "Whence can a man?" when they ought to have said, "We have Christ." They practically ignored Him, and so do we. We make excuses for our poverty, our indolence, our coldness, our indifference, by the plea that we have not got this, and that, and the other; whereas, what we really want is a heart full of Christ,—full of His thoughts, full of His love, full of His kindness, full of His tender consideration for others, full of His beautiful self-forgetfulness. We complain of our want of ways and means, when what we really want is the right condition of soul—the true moral attitude of the heart, and this can only spring from close intimacy with Christ, communion with His mind, and drinking into His spirit.

We would very earnestly press this subject upon the church of God. We

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 51

long to see every member of the body of Christ acting as a channel, through which His precious grace may flow out in living streams to all around—a rivulet flowing on in refreshing virtue, and shedding freshness and verdure in its course, and not a stagnant pool, so strikingly illustrative of a Christian out of communion.

May the Lord stir up all our hearts, and fit us for the discharge of our high and holy mission, as channels of the precious grace of Christ in the midst of a world that has rejected Him.

C. H. M.

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## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

## OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE.

THE terms objective and subjective are used to express on the one hand what God has done in His grace, and on the other, what we are in consequence, or the effect produced by what He has done or given us. His gift is intended to produce an effect, but it exists before

## 64      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

he revived, with renewed depth, the objective; and thus he reminded the Corinthians, when their eyes were opened to their state, of the scope and magnitude of the grace which he now beseeches them not to receive in vain.

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## FRAGMENT.

THERE is a love which you have never yet fully responded to; never fully comprehended. That love encircles you now, and if your heart is free, and ready to take it in, He will give you to know more of its depths and heights. In human love, we long for opportunity to express our poor little atom. Think how His heart must delight in making known the infinite love that has made us its object? “Who *loved me* and gave himself for me.” With what indifference we treat His love! Not intentionally, but from pre-occupation with other things. If we would only let Him fill our hearts, we should go on our way singing—too happy to contain ourselves, and we should answer to His love.

## JOHN'S GOSPEL.

### Chapter xiv. 29-xv. 1-5.

JESUS can still speak, in going on towards Gethsemane, of what His own had possessed in Him, and of the gift of the Holy Ghost, but in reality, His communications in their midst were at an end. The prince of this world was coming: this is the character that the Lord now gives to Satan. The disciples fled away in fear; all the rest of the world united together joyfully to drive out the Son of God, come in grace; they had seen and hated both him and His Father.

It is not all that man has sinned. After his having sinned, God came in, God worked in a world too evil to be any longer borne with. The promise was given to Abraham, called forth from the midst of the idolatry which invaded everything; the law was given; the prophets were sent; last of all the Son came, healing all those who were

sovereign grace by the Son, sent according to that grace. (Compare xiv. 11.) It was in the name of the holy Father that Jesus kept His disciples during His stay down here ; now the Father Himself becomes the husbandman.

This chapter (except the last verses) does not speak of the witness of the Holy Ghost, but of that of the disciples (with the Holy Ghost's help, chap. xiv. 26) ; and here we have the witness not to Christ's glory on high, and the consequences which follow, but to that which He had been, and had revealed whilst He was down here ; that is, to the subjective state of the divine life in a man in this world. This is what the gospels essentially present to us ; the epistles, in general, have the glory as a starting-point.

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## CHRISTIANITY AND ITS PRECURSORS.

No intelligent believer needs to be reminded that he not will find Christianity in the Old Testament. That portion of

## CHRISTIANITY AND ITS PRECURSORS. 73

the word is the revelation of *God*, and of His counsels and ways in respect to an earthly people. But this is not Christianity; it is the record of the rise and development, of the culmination and apostasy of Judaism, or the religion of man in the flesh. So again, if we take up the New Testament and read the gospels, we do not find Christianity there, but we get a new thing, namely, Judaism finally tested and as to its pre-millennial condition, terminated by the revelation of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Four thousand years had rolled by since creation. Looking back to Noah's day we find that in view of the deluge the Lord had said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." Now, however, not one hundred and twenty years merely, but more than one hundred and twenty successive generations of men had passed in the forbearance of God, and then, man's days being numbered, and the fulness of time



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being come, God sets aside for us man in the flesh, superseding the first man by the second, and the first Adam by the last.

In the gospels we have the Lord from heaven as the first-begotten on the earth, the Son of God, and Son of man. And since "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," no such sight had been seen! Nay, surely we may go further and affirm that from everlasting to everlasting, no sight like this had ever been presented to the gaze of any order of intelligent beings, whether angelic or human, in the universe of God, as the revelation of God manifest in the flesh! When the eternal Son of the Father assumed humanity it was a sight that eclipsed the very highest of displayed glories. But even this was not Christianity. The presence of the Lord Jesus on the earth was introductory to it, and His death the foundation of it, but neither, nor the twain, Christianity itself.

Having thus cleared the way a little

## CHRISTIANITY AND ITS PRECURSORS. 75

we will turn to the opening of the Epistle to the Hebrews, pursuing our enquiry there. The character of this Epistle is strikingly stamped upon the opening verses. Who can read the introduction to that wonderful scripture which displaces Moses, Aaron, and the law, superseding and eclipsing that effete economy; and this by the shining forth of the many-coloured moral and official glories of the One who was the effulgence of God's glory, and the express image of His Person, without being arrested and detained in adoring fervour? How sublime is the first of its statements, "God has spoken in the person of the Son!" What can we say in the presence of this new revelation? It is no longer as formerly the many ways in which His mind was made known by the prophets, but God Himself speaking, a divine Person, and that Person the Son! And following this, in verse 3, we have the incarnate Word, and as such, a new Person, accomplishing a new work, and occupying a new place. It is these three new

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things which meet us on the threshold of the epistle, round which all its wonderful and precious truths revolve, and from which they derive their character. A new person, a new work, and a new place are here associated together. What could be put in comparison with the Son of God, the appointed Heir of all things, the One who made the worlds, the effulgence of the glory of God, the exact expression of His essential being, and the upholder of all things by the word of His power? This only begotten Son, the second Man and last Adam, is God's new Person, God's new Man, God manifest in the flesh!

Again consider the incomparably new work which He wrought, the purgation of our sins by the cross, the sacrifice of Himself.

And also the new place taken; He "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." A new place indeed for man to occupy! Surely none but He could ever have title, proper to Himself, to assume and fill the place at "the right hand of the throne of

## CHRISTIANITY AND ITS PRECURSORS. 77

the Majesty in the heavens," (chap. viii. 1), or as we read again (chap. xii. 1), "The right hand of the throne of God!"

But yet once more be it said, this was not Christianity. These three things were the immediate *precursors* of Christianity, in a word, this new and divine Person having entered as a man the glory of God, consequent upon the new and divine work which He had wrought once for all.

It may here be observed how strikingly and how persistently the ascension is insisted upon in the Hebrews. The nation had its centre in Jerusalem, and from David to Christ that centre was of the utmost importance. Bereft of Jerusalem, no matter what his genealogy, or what his possessions, the Jew was a moral ruin. This is totally changed for the Hebrew believer, as a Christian his eye is conducted away from the city of David to the scene of glory at the right hand of God. The Holy Ghost returns to this again and again. He could not wean the Jew

## 78 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

from the beloved city of his fathers, but by eclipsing it to his spiritual vision. Thus in chapter i., "Sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Chapter ii., "Crowned with glory and honour." Chapter iv., "A great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God." Chapter vi., "Within the veil whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Chapter vii., "Made higher than the heavens." Chapter viii., "Set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." Chapter ix., "By a greater and more perfect tabernacle," "He entered in once into the holy place," "Into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Chapter x., "Sat down on the right hand of God." Chapter xii., "Is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

In the synoptical gospels, He reaches through sorrow, and through toil, the summit of the holy mount, and there the excellent glory pertaining to

## CHRISTIANITY AND ITS PRECURSORS. 79

Messiah's kingdom on earth is rehearsed and finds its culmination. Moses and Elias then disappear. They could not pass from glory to glory as He. The valley of humiliation and of suffering, to which only He was equal, lay between. Accordingly He descends, down, down to the deepest depths—the very dust of death, and from this point He begins His new ascent by resurrection, manifestation and exaltation to the throne of God, thus truly passing from glory to glory, having laid a righteous foundation for all by His enduring the cross, and despising the shame. The glory of glories receives Him into its bosom, and thence from and thenceforth Christianity takes its initiation. Thus our Jerusalem is above, our Holy of holies there in the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man, and the Christian apart from conscious association with a glorified Christ is a spiritual ruin.

Christianity, then, when properly understood, is the maintaining, and expression down here, by the new man, of Christ in glory; in other

## 80      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

words the practical answer by the Holy Ghost in and by the members of the Body to their vision of the glory of the Head, and their apprehension of it in the power of the Spirit.

So says the apostle, "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord," and scripture furnishes us an example of each, the living saint living unto the Lord, and the dying saint dying unto the Lord, the former exemplified in Paul, of whose death we read nothing but of his life an ample measure, and the latter in Stephen, whose dying is a picture and an example.

What an expression of living and dying unto the Lord are seen in the two—what a matchless embodiment of true Christianity! As to Paul we need only speak of the Acts, Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, and 2 Timothy, not to name other writings, for the record of his life and his labours, his course and his conflicts; nor can we read them without being humbled and rebuked by their contrast to the

## CHRISTIANITY AND ITS PRECURSORS. 81

Christianity of this day. But I close with Stephen. Who does not exult in those six verses of Acts vii. 55-60? How saliently there stand out therein the features of Christianity in its unsullied loveliness, he who expressed it stooping to no compromise and accepting no quarter! The proto-martyr is 1st. "Full of the Holy Ghost." (Note carefully these features of the new economy, not indeed that all the elements of it are here, but all those which were suitable to the occasion, and each in the freshness and bloom of its beauty.) 2nd. The heavens are opened unto him. 3rd. He beholds the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. 4th. He addresses the glorified Lord. 5th. To Him he commends his spirit. 6th. He prays for his enemies. 7th. He falls asleep.

Every one of these things was absolutely new to the saints of God, and entirely new departure now made from the throne of the Father! The heavenly glory which had received the Lord



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Jesus opened its bosom to the gaze of this faithful witness who was resisting unto blood, and while his face reflects in heavenly beauty the glory of the Lord, his liberated spirit is ushered into His presence—the first trophy of Christianity gathered out of the world, the first Christian who went home to Christ!

May we not fittingly ask, is the glory to us even what, in living and dying, Jerusalem ever was to the Jew—the metropolis of his every interest, the goal of his every effort, and the terminus of his every aspiration?

W. R.

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THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE CHURCH; WHAT IT IS, AND THE  
LOSS WHEN NOT KNOWN.

THE first allusion to the church is in Matthew xvi., where our Lord says to Peter, on his confession that He was “the Christ, the Son of the living God,” “Thou art Peter [a stone], and

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 83

on this rock [what Peter had said] I will build my church," or assembly. The word assembly is not a new word, but the structure the Lord would now build is entirely a new one—one that never existed before. The Rock on which this new assembly was to be built had only now come. Here we have the important truth, that the construction of this new assembly would be Christ's own work. Thus Peter's name — "a stone"—suited the statement, that he would be material for the new structure; because a stone is of the same order of material as a rock, therefore he would be of this new assembly. Thus we have, as the Lord's work, not only that He Himself would be the Builder, but that the material would be of the same order as Himself. Just as, in another place, it is said, "both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one."

Now, in John xx. 19, the first assembly of this order is set forth in pattern. The disciples are constituted for this assembly on the earth. The Lord, risen

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there is a continued effort to be self-commended as a Christian. This is often marked with great fervency and feeling, which is mere religiousness, and from which, as we see in Colossians, the earnest believer, at rest about his soul, is only preserved by the truth of the church, being laid hold of by faith, which leads him to know Christ in him as everything, and in all. Thus it was that "holiness by faith" had its origin, and it is generally betrayed by the way the feelings are acted on.

I might enlarge on these various ways in which the truth of the church is lost, but I merely notice them, and close by referring to another which is more specious, and therefore the more dangerous; I mean when the truth of the Ephesians is held intellectually, which is always the case when the position in which God has set us is *exclusively* spoken of, leaving out the great power which, in His grace, He has attached to this great position.

I need not add more than the assured belief, that if the mystery, as it is in

## A REJECTED CHRIST.

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the mind of God—"the Christ"—were, even in a little measure, the centre of all service, there would be the deepest joy of heart, and power for usefulness.

We should be better evangelists, better teachers, better pastors, better in everything, ever rising to the worship that ascribes to Him "glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

## A REJECTED CHRIST.

LONELY in Thine own creation,  
 Man of sorrows, stranger there!  
 Hope of Israel;—chosen nation,  
 Love alone Thy path could share.  
 None below did walk beside Thee,  
 All of earth refused Thy way;  
 Shame, reproach, were heap'd upon Thee,  
 Scorn, contempt in\* man's small day.

Yet Thy love was never wearied;  
 Patient grace abounded still  
 E'en to man,—Thy proud rejecter,  
 Seeking hearts with rest to fill.

Every weakness, pain, and sorrow,  
 Filling all the scene around;  
 Measured by Thyself, blest Saviour,  
 Who by wearied hearts wast found.

\* 1 Corinthians iv. 3, *ἀνθρωπίνης ἡμέρας*.

Blessèd Lord, so rich in goodness,  
 Yet so\* poor, through all Thy grace ;  
 Speed the moment of Thy glory,  
 Take us up to see Thy face.

Then for ever to be with Thee—  
 Ever in Thy home abide ;  
 Ours,—Thy joy and satisfaction  
 Thine,—to claim and have Thy Bride.  
W. T. T.

\* 2 Corinthians viii. 9.

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## FRAGMENT.

THE seeming close approach of death has been more than blessed to me. I feel in quite a new way that I belong to the other world ; the truths all abide, but my spirit is over the river.

All, even religious services, seem to belong to this world, to be temporary ; but the Father's love, and Christ's, are everything. I believed it before, and in a certain sense acted on it ; but I am in that company now. I always was, but now I seem consciously dependent on God, to live or to die ; what is eternal is our portion, and Christ fills it.

J. N. D.

*November, 1881.*

## JOHN'S GOSPEL.

### Chapter xv. 3-12.

THUS the first three verses give the position as to detail: then follow the exhortations founded upon this. The first one is to abide in Him. Let us remark here that it is always the side of man's responsibility that is set first. It is not: "I will dwell in you, and you shall dwell in me;" but: "Dwell in me, and I in you." The second part of this sentence is the effect of the first: there is no verb in the second part; it is not that which He wishes to do, but the consequence, the effect produced. If a soul dwells in Christ, Christ dwells in that soul. Now a soul dwells in Christ, when it lives in uninterrupted dependence upon Him, and assiduously seeks to realise that which is in Him, that which His presence gives to us, for He is the truth of all that is come to us from the Father, and one lives in this in dwelling in Him. That which is in Him] is communicated to us, as the sap

## 104 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

that as each one lived in dependence and obedience, self-love disappeared. As being the branches, each one drew everything from the stock of the vine; Christ's words were the source of all the thoughts of the heart, in the consciousness of His perfect love.

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## THE VESSEL AND THE GIFT.

THE body is the Lord's, but it is the flesh when man's will rules it. If there had been no perversion of the natural powers of the body it would have been just suited for whatever the Lord had designed it. He designed it for some special mission. The man of God has been under His eye from his birth, and though the flesh has continually interfered with the education to which God has been subjecting him in order to fit him for His own service, yet the vessel is the suited one for the gift which should be deposited there. The blessed God knew the future gift and also the kind of vessel suited to hold it. If the vessel were from birth

## THE VESSEL AND THE GIFT. 105

under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it would be quite suited for the mission for which it was appointed.

We can trace in the history of every servant the peculiar way in which God was preparing him for His service. One servant cannot do all. A Luther in his day may have fulfilled his service as well as an Epaphras in a former day. Moses was fitted for his mission, and Joshua for his. We have to learn that wherever we have allowed the flesh to rule us, there we have raised an obstacle to the full display of the grace given to us. The natural mind is enmity against God; it is "not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." The propensity or taste that sways us most, is the one most to be repressed or set aside, if the grace be working in us; that the mission to which we have been appointed may be truly discharged. It is easy to apprehend that the blessed God has prepared the suited vessel for each gift of His grace, and that every circumstance in which He places us here would only contribute to its develop-



## 106      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

ment ; and yet we see many who are so hindering the gift by the perverseness of their course, that the body is really a hindrance instead of a vessel. We often feel it difficult to account for the continued life-long obstruction to the gift, but it is because of the sensual way in which the body is ruled. When I say sensual, I do not mean what is corrupt in a human sense ; but the position and habits to which it is subjected by the will of man.

Abram could not be a vessel of testimony unless he left country and kindred and father's house, and we see that his answering to this fully, was delayed until his father was dead ; for subsequent to that he came into the land of Canaan. The place his body occupied either compromised or declared the testimony. When he retreated from Canaan to Egypt on account of the famine, fear ruled him and not faith ; his body was not then in service, and it was there he found out that he had been for the time more influenced by his own feelings than by the call of God, and he returned to

## THE VESSEL AND THE GIFT. 107

Canaan. In failure we are taught our feebleness, and how we may be led to withdraw from the place of faith by undue care for the body, and thus be deprived of the honour of being God's vessel. Lot betrayed that the will of the flesh ruled him when he gradually sank into Sodom ; and in his sorrows there he experienced the consequences of being led by the sight of his eyes instead of by faith. His wife betrayed where her heart was in looking back, and her body was changed into a pillar of salt, as a warning against reluctant following. We see in Isaac how he was under the influence of Esau because he did eat of his venison. We suffer in the body in order that there might be a check to the failure to which self-gratification leads. When Isaac saw the failure from which he had escaped, he "trembled very exceedingly." Selfishness was now giving place to the word of God in his soul, and he exclaims : "I have blessed him, yea he shall be blest." In this case we see how through a love for venison—the mis-

## 108 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

rule of the body, he was on the verge of diverting God's blessing and His grace from the right object. We know God could not allow it, but as far as Isaac was concerned he had failed, because he had blessed Jacob thinking he was Esau.

Now Jacob was very active with regard to his own advantages, seeking to secure them in his own way; therefore when God blesses him, before He vouchsafes to him a new history, He cripples him—his natural activity ceases. The man of great energy on his own behalf, halts when the sun is up. Thus was he in his body more fitted for God's service.

In another day Joseph was fitted for his mission. While loved of his father he was ill-treated by his brethren, and when prosperous as a slave he was imprisoned because of righteousness; and from the prison he comes prepared of God for the service to which He had called him in Egypt. One might have thought that there could have been sufficient exercise in his conscience and

## THE VESSEL AND THE GIFT. 109

mind, without bodily suffering in so many varieties, but it is in the suffering that the vessel becomes divested of the lusts—the working of the will. As a prisoner Joseph learned God, and therefore when he came to rule, he could recall how the Lord cheered him when helpless and a prisoner. It was not as the ruler that he had best known Him, but as the prisoner; when the body was, as it were, a cage instead of being a centre and object.

Moses had the right zeal, but he has to be made a suited vessel for carrying it out. He trusts too much to the power of his hands, and his education in the land of Midian is for this lesson, that he must not trust in himself to do God's work. The time of exile was to effect this. Bodily suffering was the means adopted to teach him that he must not count on his own strength in doing God's work. At the burning bush he learns the nature of God in His grace, and as long as he acts according to it, all is happy and prosperous with him; but when he returns to the power of

## 110 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

his own hands as at Meribah, he forfeits the land. Wherever my flesh is ready to act, there the check must come, and always where naturally it is most encouraged (be it for good or for evil) it is most ready to assert itself; and there, there is the greatest difficulty in checking it, though as I walk in the Spirit there is the most distinct contrast to it, because Christ is then the first and greatest desire of the heart.

Where the natural tendencies are not over-borne, there is a hindrance to the gift, and when there is a reiterated breaking forth of the natural defect, there will be no confidence in the servant. The greatest Pharisee—Paul, was the greatest contrast through the grace of God. The proudest man in the world would be the humblest man in the church. Wherever the word of God has been ineffectual, in detaching me from any defect, there the word spoken by me would be minus the force or virtue which would have corrected me. If I had learned of its virtue in correcting myself, I could insist very

## THE VESSEL AND THE GIFT. 111

sensibly on its effect ; but if it were not in operation in myself, I could not insist on what it would do for others. Paul warns Timothy to be an example to believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity, and he speaks of himself thus—"we were ensamples unto you to follow us." Every one gifted for the church is chosen by Christ—the Head in heaven, and the more he is sanctified practically, the more effective he is in the exercise of his gift, so that it is not only the gift, but the person who is chosen by Christ. And as he is divested of confidence in the flesh, and more in His life and nature (see 1 Cor. xiii.), the more exemplary is he as His servant.

It is of all importance to see how the dark part hinders the true and effective expression of the gift. Constantly one hears of gifts in Christians who are still in the world. Surely if they were more separate from the world they would be more effective servants of Christ. And alas ! how often the most spiritual are hindered in their service by an un-

## 112 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

expected contact or influence of the world. Let a servant of God visit his worldly relations, and then watch how the key and tone of his ministry have degenerated. If there be much conscience there will be confession, and always an effort to contrast the things of God as to superiority with the things of the world; whereas, if one had not been soiled, the gift would have sped on its course in the full flow of its divine message. But if there be any secret leaven or evil allowed, we may rest assured that the poison which has perverted the vessel is conveyed through the teaching. The gift, to be effective, must effect in me first that which it would effect in another. The banks of the river must gain from the river that irrigates the dry and desert land, or where is its virtue? If I have not myself the good of what I present, where is the proof of its goodness? A servant always has weight who can present in himself the effect of his teaching. "The armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 113

left." The body, the vessel is the Lord's, and the gift is His. May we all submit ourselves more to Him that His pure gift to us may not be hindered, but rendered effective, because our bodies are full of light, for His name's sake.

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## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

## A FULL-GROWN MAN IN CHRIST: HIS HISTORY AND HIS SNARES.

THE first state, and ever the one increasing in depth and fulness in the soul, is what is called conversion. My eyes opened, turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. The work of Christ, in His death and resurrection, must be known, before there can be any advance in stature or growth. Often years are spent in reaching the state of the "babe." Babes know the Father. There is no lower stage, historically, than a babe. Saul of Tarsus reached it in three days; but the deepest exercise is necessarily en-



## AWAKE !

WAKEN ! ye souls that are carelessly  
    slumbering,  
    Still sounds the voice that the Bridegroom  
        is nigh ;  
Daily that voice grows more clear and  
    harmonious,  
Wake ! for it tells a vocation on high.

Though ye have lain 'mid the cinders of  
    pottery,  
    Though in the dust of the furnace have  
        roll'd ;  
Silvery bright as the dove shall your pinions  
    be,  
Cover'd with feathers of glittering gold !

Fair as the Carmel, and white as the Lebanon,  
    Models of exquisite grace every one :  
Wake ! to form part of that heavenly company,  
    Call'd by the Spirit to wait for the Son !

Still He comes on, and the music sounds  
    joyfully,  
    Torches shine out in the midst of the  
        night !  
Soon shall we join in that stately processional  
    Leading to chambers of endless delight.

There ev'ry grace of the Father known  
    perfectly ;  
Ever the Son all His glory displays,

## FRAGMENTS.

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Waiting without for an endless eternity,  
 Endless within is the rapturous praise.

Waken ye souls that are carelessly slumbering,  
 Still sounds the voice that the Bridegroom  
 is nigh!

Daily that voice sounds with force irresistible,  
 Wake! for He calls to His glory on high.  
 E. L. B.

## FRAGMENTS.

AFTER tracing out those lineaments of the new creation, as the apostle does in Ephesians v., he comes down to a sort of testing of our hearts in circumstances where we are, and he says, Now let joy abound in your hearts. Let the joy of the Lord be your strength. (Ver. 16.) "Singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord." The mind of man is one-sided. It will go into great joys, and forget other things. "Rejoice evermore, and again I say rejoice." Now that is a test for what you are really. Down there in the wilderness can you give thanks always for all things? It is

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a test really of the grace in its purity in us. The workmanship of God can bear that test. "Rejoice evermore." God is my joy, and I am for Him. Christ is my exceeding great reward. God looks upon Christ. All His own fulness is in Him. Though He remove *real* blessings from us, as He often does, we are to give thanks always for all things. Have I not enough to rejoice in? Not only when He barks the fig-tree, and lays bare the vines, but in spiritual conflicts, in temptations that bring out our weakness, "giving thanks always for all things, unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." That is a part of the privilege of the Christian, according to the new nature God has given to us.—G. V. W.

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Looking at ourselves in service there would be nothing but despair; but the moment that Christ Himself is manifested, there comes a joy which neither my light, nor my darkness, can dim.

G. V. W.

## JOHN'S GOSPEL.

## Chapter xvi. 13.

Now if His life had been the continual expression of this love, His death was a still greater one. He could have no greater love than to die for them. Notice here that it is not the love of God to poor sinners, a love purely divine and sovereign, but the love of Christ for His friends. It is no longer Christ who is the Friend here, but His disciples who are His friends, those in whom He trusts: "Ye are my friends, if ye do all things that I command you." We communicate to a friend all that we have upon the heart, for we count upon the interest he bears to us. Christ had communicated to the disciples all that He had heard from the Father. There is the action of the human mediator, the vine with the branches. We should remark that He does not here bring His disciples into His own relationship with the Father—that will be developed later on—but He communicated to them as

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be said to take the Lord's place. In chapter xv., the Saviour speaks of the testimony that the Holy Ghost would bear. The apostles, with His help, should bear witness to what Jesus had been down here. They could not be eye-witnesses of what He is above. The testimony they should bear to His life down here was to be of a much more living character, more sustained, than a pure revelation from on high would have been, on account of the relationships they had been in with Him, although they had not been intelligent. But it was a part of His life down here *not* to be understood by anybody.

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## THOUGHTS ON THE HOLY CITY.

REVELATION XXI. 9, ETC.

“AND there came unto me one of the seven angels . . . . and talked with me, saying, Come hither, and I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed

## THOUGHTS ON THE HOLY CITY. 169

me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God."

All of it is of God, and comes from Him. It is very simple, and wants no explanation; when we are holy we can understand. We cannot tell about anything unless we possess it. If we possess, we know; other knowledge only puffs up.

It is holy all through, from one end to the other. The fuller the revelation of God, the more His holiness comes out; thus, more of it comes out in the New Testament than in the Old. We see here what the bride will be toward the world, and what the church ought to be now in moral characteristics.

When the church got under the power of the world, she was no longer giving to it, but receiving from it. This city receives nothing from the world. How is it with us? Have we been helped by anything of the world? We are in a world of man's systems. Are we outside it? Let us keep outside it, in deed and in truth. If we are outside the camp, we are in the brightest spot on earth—the only clean place, the place

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where the ashes are, where all has been burnt up, the judgment having fallen on the Victim. There, and there only is the blue sky. We could not face outside the camp unless Christ had gone there first, for there is only reproach there. Would that we had more of it, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on such. If we are truly outside the camp, and not only talking about it, we must bring down the glory to our every-day life, in church or out of church. (See Rom. xv. 7, &c.) Begin at the breakfast-table. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God." This connects every little thing with the glory of God. We cannot lead two lives. The glory is given you for every-day use. How are you furnished?

Verse 11.—"Having the glory of God, and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper-stone, clear as crystal." On Christ's side the bride has the same purity as Himself: "Like a jasper-stone, clear as crystal." In chapter iv. the jasper is the divine

## THOUGHTS ON THE HOLY CITY. 171

glory. How does the bride get this divine glory? In *Christ*. We shall share the glory with Him (not the God-head glory). All in this city is "clear as crystal," transparent purity. We ought to be this for Him now—clear to the world that we are epistles of Christ. We should be clear enough to be read as epistles of Christ; every thought should be in captivity to the obedience of Christ; all in us subject, so that God could write His thoughts on us, as on a blank sheet of paper; so that we should set forth God's thoughts, not our own.

Verse 12.—"And had a wall, great and high, and twelve gates," &c.

The wall shews it is exclusive; it keeps out evil, nothing that defileth could enter into it, the gates, that it is receptive: "Receive ye one another, as Christ has received us, to the glory of God." The wall, in man's hand, is down—almost anything comes in now. We are obliged to come into a corner to keep it a little clean. That is why we cannot go on with all Christians; but if we had more width of heart, there



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would be more open doors for us. There is nothing insurmountable to love. To be a good Churchman, my heart must be as wide as Christ's. I may have a tight rope for my feet, but my heart should be as large as Christ's. The bride's heart is as large as Christ's, she says, "Let him that is athirst, come; and *whosoever* will, let him come." That is the gates . . . . three gates on each side. How receptive the holy city is! "And every several gate was of one pearl." The hymn puts it—"Thy golden gates appear." But we are told that the gates are of pearl—all Christ. The church is the pearl of great price; but it is Christ's beauty that is seen in her. These gates of pearl shew the great beauty of the church in Christ's sight. He is proud of her. She is like Himself. He likes to shew her—He likes to express His delight in her. These gates are also administrative. The disciples had to give out what they had received from Christ. They could not give without having received. Are we receiving from Christ? Your hands

## THOUGHTS ON THE HOLY CITY. 173

will be full then. Are they full now, and giving out what you have received from Christ ?

“ And he that talked with me had a golden reed, to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.” He measures the city and the wall, according to the measure of a Man. That is God’s measure. It is a cube, perfect in all its proportions. All is according to the measure of Christ. Do we measure up to this ? We are in Christ ! That is the measure for each of us, or we are nothing at all. We are marked out for this, and ought not to be content with being anything less than being like Christ. We never shall be perfectly like Him here, but we must have no lower standard. (See John ii.) When the Father’s house had been made a den of thieves, Jesus sets forth a verse out of the Old Testament. “ The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” The disciples remembered it afterwards. Could anything less mark *Him* ? And are *we* to give up because all is ruined ? The more things are

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gone to the bad, the more faith holds fast what God has given. Naboth would not give up his possession to Ahab. If you feed on bad things, on faults, you will be most faulty. If you feed on Christ, you will be like Christ.

Verses 18, 19.—“The building of the wall was of jasper, and the foundations garnished with all manner of precious stones.” If you study Christ, you will find out what the precious stones are—they are all the graces of Christ. Are we so like Christ? Take every stone separately—each has its own beauty. Peter tells you what are your ornaments—you will find them in no jeweller’s palace. Look at Babylon (chap. xviii.); what is her furnishing?

The jewellery—gold, silver, precious stones. The wardrobe—fine linen, purple, silk, scarlet. The drawing-room—thyine wood, vessels of ivory. The kitchen and outside places—wood, brass, and iron. The perfumery—odours and ointments. The equipage—chariots and horses. There is all the order, every section of it. Well! is

## THOUGHTS ON THE HOLY CITY. 175

not the heavenly city more attractive? It has no need of the sun or of the moon, that is, of the best things below. "The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." The Lamb—the light. We know Him, and He is the Light; all the glory is shining out in the face of a Man in the glory. Christ glorified God. All the glory of the Godhead is in Him, in the compass of a Man. This is so marvellous! Have we walked about to-day in the sense that we do not need earth's best things? If we are much taken up with a person, we do not find it any trouble to think of him. If we minister to the taste, the taste will increase.

"And I saw no temple therein." We began with no temple. (John iv.) Jerusalem will not do; Samaria will not do; we worship God in spirit. The temple light was a dim light. A little of the glory was on the mercy-seat. We are *in the* light. To go into temple-light would be like going into darkness.

"The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." All the

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glory of God is concentrated there. The Gentiles bring their glory and honour to it (ver. 26), owning to whom it belongs. It is wonderful what this city will be! There will be a time when the church will answer to Christ's heart, and the nations shall walk in the light of it. There will be the heavenly and the earthly touching one another, as it were, not far apart, as it is now; as we see in Matthew xvii. and Luke ix., when Christ and Moses and Elias are heard speaking together. There is the Father's house on earth, and the Father's house in heaven. "Every family in heaven and earth," as we read in Ephesians iii. 15. It is beautiful to contemplate that the church will be a blessing to the world, however she has failed in it now. God says to Abraham, "I will make you a blessing." But when he denied his relationship, he brought judgment on Pharaoh. So the church has denied her relationship to Christ; and is she a blessing to the world? Quite the reverse—individuals are.

Then there is the water of life flow-

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ing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In Ezekiel the holy waters issue from the side of the altar, but this river flows from God and the Lamb. In John vii. our hearts are the channels of it. Have we opened our hearts to take it in? "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Keep the channel clear; you will not have one drop for another until it flows over from you. If you are only full, there will be none for others—you must *run over*. Study Christ, and you will have something to tell of Him to others. Enter into His heart, that will take you out of yourself. Think of His love, not of your own, and yours will come.

May we view this city, not as a mere beautiful object, but as what we shall be then, and what we should be morally now. Let us not look at failure, but at what the church is to Christ, that our affections may run in the same channel. May we use the glory for this—for our practice in every-day life. All our blessings are in Christ—out of Him, none.

W. T.

“IN A MOMENT.”

(1 Cor. xv. 52.)

A MOMENT more and I may be  
Caught up in glory, Lord, with Thee ;  
And rapturous sight, Thy beauty see,  
For evermore !

A moment more—Thy chariot-cloud,  
Thy voice of pow'r, Thy summons loud ;  
Ah ! then the vault of heaven shall crowd  
With myriad saints !

A moment more—earth left behind,  
Our bodies their redemption find,  
Our souls the prize for which they pined  
With great desire !

A moment more—what joy to wear  
Thy likeness, Saviour, and to share  
With Thee the place prepared there,  
Where Thou art gone !

A moment more—upon Thy throne,  
Thy place by right, then made our own ;  
Thou wilt not fill that seat alone,  
But with Thy saints !

A moment more—Thy faultless bride,  
In Thine own beauty glorified—  
Thenceforth for ever at Thy side,  
To crown Thy joy !

A moment more—Ah ! can it be  
One moment brings such joys to me ?  
Yea, joy of joys, yield them *to Thee*,  
Our Saviour, Lord ! W. R.

## JOHN'S GOSPEL.

## Chapter xvi. 1-4.

THE testimony they have given to us is merely that of the Holy Ghost (chap. xiv. 26), who chose the incidents fitted to communicate the Saviour's true character, that is the divine life in Him. But the grace which manifested itself in Him, acted every day towards them, or at least in their midst. Always Himself, in a life that He lived by the Father, He adapted Himself nevertheless (and this He could do because His life was inseparable from the Father) to all the disciples, to all that grace required from Him. It was not purely and simply a divine testimony, but as a divine Person, never losing its divine perfection. His unchangeable purity took all the colours that the circumstances which surrounded Him gave to this life in His grace. The account is a perfectly divine one, but expresses itself, in that which it relates, by human hearts who have passed through these



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the old ones, judging at the same time superstitions; but faith in the old ones, which make up our own glory, is not a touch-stone for the state of soul, although we are to maintain these old truths carefully.

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“THE INHERITANCE, AND HOW  
IT IS TREATED.”

THE desire of the apostle's heart in the end of Ephesians i. was, that the saints might know three things. 1st. “What is the hope of his [God's] calling.” 2nd. “What the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.” 3rd. “What the exceeding greatness of his mighty power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand,” &c. In chapter ii. that power is seen “quicken- ing us, raising us, and seating us in the heavenly places in Christ,” and blessing us with all spiritual blessing *there*. As

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likewise in chapter iii. 20, it is seen working *in* us.

Now this is of immense importance to each of God's saints. For while it is true that every saint alike *is there* and blessed *there*, and therefore it is not a question of attainment on our part, but God's power *putting us there*; at the same time the question is, have our souls really accepted this? Are we in the enjoyment of it? And how do we value it?

Heavenly places then, are for the Christian what *the land* was for an Israelite. It is where the Christian finds His inheritance. Moreover, he receives it as the direct consequence of God's great *love*, and the working of His *mighty power*. And the spiritual blessings *in Christ*, in that sphere are the fruits of the land which yield him sweetness and joy.

Moreover it is the spot which Satan contests most. Where he brings all his energies, whether in force or cunning, to bear against the Christian, to hinder him first of all from entering his

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possessions ; secondly from enjoying them. It is the place where he contests every inch of ground, and uses all his wiles and craft to cause the saint to give it up ; and we need to be alive to this. It is being stolen away from us far more than many imagine. The devices of the devil are succeeding only too well, and many are giving up the heavenly truth.

There are different ways in which saints treat their inheritance, and we might look at three illustrations in the Old Testament. They have their counterpart too in the New, but we shall only look at the Old.

1st. Naboth held fast that which he had, and would not give it up even to the king, and lost his life for his faithfulness. (1 Kings xxi.) Now this is a very fine action on the part of Naboth. "The Lord forbid it," said he, "that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee." He valued it. It had come from God to his fathers, and was now his. It was a *vineyard* too. The spot which yielded him sweetness

## “THE INHERITANCE,” ETC. 171

and joy : and how could he give it up, and see it become an *herb-garden*? *Vines* speak of *the land*, but *herbs* are *Egyptian* food. Moreover, anything the king could give him, could never compensate for the loss of the vineyard which was his inheritance by birthright.

Surely this picture of a true-hearted Israelite, says to each of us whom God has blessed with “all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,” and whom Satan seeks to rob, in language unmistakeable ; “that which ye have already, *hold fast* till I come.” (Rev. ii. 25, iii. 11.)

2nd. Jabez not only held fast what he had, but he prayed for more—an enlargement of his coast, and the suited conduct befitting the place to continue in the enjoyment of it. (1 Chron. iv.) This signalled him as “more honourable than his brethren.” He looked on the land as Jehovah’s land, and prayed for more because it was His. He could not have too much of what was the Lord’s if he gave the suited state to enjoy it. A lovely picture of the two

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prayers in Ephesians i. and iii. Are we satisfied with present attainments? or is it the fixed purpose of our hearts, and our continuous prayer to God, that we may know and enjoy more and more of what He has made ours in Christ? Be assured, that the more our coast is enlarged and the suited state of soul produced in us by the Holy Ghost, the more we shall delight in seeking to lead others into the enjoyment of the same "large and wealthy place."

3rd. Elimelech gave all up. His action shews the little value he set upon his inheritance. He left the house of bread (Bethlehem Judah) because a test had come, and went down to Moab, and died under the chastening hand of God for his faithlessness. (Ruth i.) He gave all up, Esau like. Alas! how many followed his example!

It is easy to find the counterpart of these men in the New Testament. We only need to look at the history of Stephen, Paul, and such as Demas, to find it. But instead of looking at those, we might just ask ourselves where am I

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in it all? Am I holding fast, longing and praying for more, or gradually giving up one truth after another?

Saints are scarcely aware how Satan is attacking the truth. And how the highest and brightest truths—the best part of our inheritance, which yields us our deepest joy, is being stolen from us; and how saints are giving it up! May we be found, not merely like Naboth, holding fast; but distinguishing ourselves like Jabez. And the good Lord save us from giving it up like Elimelech. We need to be on the watch, and beware of falling among thieves. Herb-gardens may suit Egyptian tastes; but vines belong to the land, and yield their sweetness and joy to those who  *dwell there*. W. E.

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## THE TESTIMONY TO THE EXALTED CHRIST.

IN the Epistle to the Ephesians we get the exaltation of Jesus Christ, not simply that He is glorified, as in 2

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Corinthians iii. ; there He is the Saviour only, while in Ephesians He is raised "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." He is head over all things to the church, which is His body. It is as He is up there, that determines the testimony now. Surely no one could be as He is up there, that would not act in every thing down here as He acted. He was always the heavenly Man in the smallest detail of human life down here. But He is now exalted, and in every way unfettered in boundless power, and it is to Him thus exalted, that the church is united ; united to Him where He is, but acting for Him down here where He is not. We start from Him in His exaltation. We necessarily must act as He did in His humiliation, when we are in the circumstances, but as united to Him, we are called to a testimony greater than any that has been. We are to display a heavenly Man, not only in the limits of a man in flesh and blood

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down here, great as that is, but we are to display by His power, practical superiority to flesh and blood. We are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ here, and make no provision for the flesh ; and we are to do more ; we are to express the power of the exalted Man in this very spot where He has been rejected. The Man Christ Jesus is in quite a new place—a place which He did not occupy when down here. And while He gives me grace to walk here even as He walked, He calls me to stand here for Him in His own power, not only above flesh in the armour of light ; but superior to all the force of Satan. Consequently we begin by being seated in heavenly places in Him ; my union is of no value unless it puts me where He is.

Now the power which puts me there is the power I am to walk in down here, and in this connection the power is in the end of chapter iii. As has been said, some do not connect the power with the church. It is to be connected with it ; and by this power, we are now to maintain the pleasure of our exalted



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Head in heaven. It is to be borne in mind that it is only consequent on His ascension that we have received the Holy Ghost ; and without the Spirit of Christ we could not act here among men as He acted. Our blessed Lord carried the divine or heavenly way into every detail of human life ; but He is now exalted ; and in the power in which He went up to God's right hand, we are brought up also, we are seated in heavenly places in Him. He had not been raised up from the dead as a man, when He was down here. He is now, and therefore He is in entirely different circumstances. He is the divinely perfect One in both order of circumstances, but we now know Him no more after the flesh ; we are united to Him as the exalted Man ; we are one new man ; we are His body ; and we are called to act for Him as He is now. We are not only as to our individual state here, as He is there, but we are to express Him as He desires us, in a way He was not expressed when He was here as the humbled Man. He was perfect as the

## TESTIMONY TO THE EXALTED CHRIST. 177

humbled Man ; but He is now glorified, and He has obtained the Holy Ghost for us, that we may not only walk in our daily life as He walked, but also set forth a new order of things here in connection with His present position. As individuals we receive grace from Him to act here as He acted, but as His body, the church, we are called to act here now as He desires, and as He the glorified One requires.

As the humbled One, He was not in the same range of power as He is in now as the glorified One ; and we are united to Him, as He is now, not as He was. The church is now to be the exponent of Him exalted to God's right hand. The power which raised Him raised us ; we are the one new man, His own body ; we have through Him access by one Spirit to the Father ; we are growing to an holy temple in the Lord ; we are God's habitation here through the Spirit ; all this is new, and never existed before the ascension of Christ ; in this grace we are set in this new position, and as we are true to

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our calling, we present an expression of Christ derived from Him glorified; while His life and ways in humiliation are for our comfort and help in our own circumstances; but when we are for Him here, it is as He is now, and this is our corporate responsibility. We have to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. It is not whether there was power to carry out this before, but it is plain that it never was carried out before.

It is important to recognise what especially is now required to be set forth as expressive of the exalted Man. Gifts are given, pastors chosen by the ascended Lord, who has led captivity captive. This never occurred before. The time or the opportunity for it had not come till He ascended. He was not head of the body until then. Each saint is to endeavour to keep a unity that had never existed before, so there are gifts from the exalted Head, for the perfecting of the saints with a view to this ministry, with a view to the perfecting of the body, which had never existed

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until now. An entirely new expression of power and service was now called out.

The church is the body of the exalted Man, Head of it over all things. It is deeply interesting to dwell on the new things which came out consequent on this glorifying of Christ. As He says, "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee." The glorifying after this order could not be effected until Christ was glorified. This bears no resemblance to the Spirit being given, consequent on Christ being glorified. This is to place us here as He was here; but the question before us is the nature and manner of the testimony to an exalted Christ. When it is said of the Comforter: "He shall testify of me," that is as the exalted One, and not as He was down here. Hence it is added, "He shall glorify me, He shall take of mine, and shew it unto you; all things the Father hath are mine, therefore said I, He shall take of mine and shew it unto you."

I need not add; I merely desire to

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awaken an interest in this subject in order that we may the more fully enter into our Lord's mind and pleasure at this time.

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## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

## GOING ON TO PERFECTION.

THE beginning of everything necessarily refers to its finish or completion. If the beginning is not right, the end cannot be right; "That which is crooked cannot be made straight." Hence the Nazarite when he failed, had to begin over again. From the hand of God everything has had a good beginning, and if there had been no obstruction to its full development, each thing would have reached perfection of its kind. But everything here has suffered through the perverseness of man. Hence in every period when there was real reviving of the heart to God, there was a return to the beginning, as God has first presented it; but the return to the beginning was not with the intention

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of continuing at the beginning, but of going on to perfection. It is but too evident that if the beginning is the limit to one's aim, then that which was necessary as a true start becomes a snare; and the immatured beginning is a dwarf or reproach, instead of a testimony to the praise of God.

Joshua felt this with regard to Israel when they were discomfited before their enemies, lest the nations should say that God was not able to bring them in. Even as it is said of men: "This man began to build, but was not able to finish."

When the beginning is of God, the same power which produced the beginning can alone effect maturity; and when the Lord is not hindered, it must be so. It is no new thing to be said, "Ye did run well, who did hinder you?"

In every time the greatest favour from God was when He led one or more of His people to return to the old paths; and surely it has been an unequalled favour, that He has been pleased to revive the truth of the Church in these

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the Father is not in him ;” and that “the friendship of the world is enmity against God.” Now these new relationships are kept up by the Spirit in these earthen vessels ; later on, those who possess this Spirit shall be glorified with the Lord Himself. Later on, when the judgment shall have been executed, this same grace towards man will establish the Lord, according to what is due to Him according to God’s eternal counsels over a blessed world, where the enemy’s power will not be exercised. But this is not our subject here.

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## THE ARTIFICES OF SATAN.

“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong ; let all your things be done with charity.”—1 Corinthians xvi. 13, 14.

WE read in Jude concerning the angels who sinned, that they “had not kept their own original state, but had abandoned their own dwelling” (New translation). In keeping with this, we find

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that Satan tempted the first human pair to leave the place (morally) in which divine goodness had set them—the ground of confidence, obedience, and dependence. This marked their original state, but they failed to keep it, and, in result, they had to leave their dwelling, for the state and the place are correlative. Thus Satan sought to take reprisals from God for casting down him and his associates; and the character of the temptation which he then, and ever since, has presented, bears evident affinity to the sin which these wicked spirits had committed, and by which they fell from their estate.

Abram's going down into Egypt; Lot's wife, in heart, returning to Sodom; the two and a half tribes returning to "the other side Jordan;" David's numbering the people—at once suggest themselves; while the Israelites, seeking a captain to conduct them to Egypt, afterwards a king, that they might be like the other nations, and ultimately relapsing, after a thousand years' knowledge of the true and living God, into



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that idolatry from which their father Abram had been translated—are but leading instances from the Old Testament of the consistency and persistency with which Satan perpetuated among men, yea, amongst those who were at least nominally the people of God, that primeval offence which wicked spirits had inaugurated.

In the New Testament era he starts afresh in the same course. The second Man, the Lord from heaven, is upon the scene; is led by the energy of the Holy Ghost into the wilderness, and there becomes an hungered. Satan tempts Him to abandon that ground, to turn the desert into a fruitful field, the stones into bread; again, to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple; and lastly, to take the kingdoms of this world, without the asking and the giving of Psalm ii.; in a word, to force God's hand, and to relinquish the ground of perfect humanity—confidence, obedience, and dependence. But he is vanquished by the sword of the Spirit—finding no response from Him to whom

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his mightiest temptations were addressed.

In Gethsemane, again, the analogy may be clearly traced. The Lord had entered the vestibule of death; the gall, the curse, the wrath were looming before Him. Satan seeks now to terrify Him into a breach of those divine counsels He had undertaken to fulfil. "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." But the prince of this world found nothing in Him—eternal glory be to His name! But at the cross, how evident was the contrast between the disciples and the Master; tempted to desert Him, they all forsook Him, and fled; tempted to come down from the cross, He was as one who heard it not—blessed, precious Saviour!

After the resurrection Peter goes a fishing; the divine ground is clearly vacated; and "we also go with thee" tells its own tale of the common defection.

After Pentecost, when the saints had entered upon a new order of things of

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exceeding moral beauty, Ananias and Sapphira fall victims, so far as this life is involved, to a renewal of the old type of temptation ; while, on the other hand, Barnabas is divinely distinguished as meeting the mind of the Spirit, the central figure in that lovely picture which Satan so speedily marred. John Mark's abandonment of the path of service and testimony to which the Spirit had called him, and the contention of Barnabas with Paul concerning him, clearly denote the enemy's success in that page of the history of Christianity. Peter's drawing back from eating with the Gentiles, Paul's going up to Jerusalem, and his appealing to Cæsar, are again instances as notable as obvious ; while the turning away of "all they which are in Asia," fills up the full measure of evidence of Satan's success in this way.

The address of the Spirit of God to the church at Philadelphia supplies the sequel. The overcomer stands out as the one who holds fast that which he has, that he may not be despoiled of

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his crown ; and his reward is, that he is made an everlasting pillar in the temple of God. Permanency and stability in a divine position, where His presence and glory are concentrated and displayed, become the overcomer's portion thenceforth for ever. Because he had held fast, where others all around were slipping away, he is himself, when the glory is entered upon, held fast in the heavenly temple ; for the solidity of its foundation, and the weight of its superstructure, combine to hold a pillar in the position in which it has been established. It is in evident accord with this that Paul in his epistles so constantly gives exhortation to the saints to stand, or stand fast. (See Romans ; Corinthians i., ii. ; Galatians ; Ephesians ; Philippians ; Colossians ; Thessalonians i., ii.) Ephesians, for instance, after the wonderful height and scope of its truth have been unfolded, concludes with an admonition to put on the panoply, or complete armour, of God, that he may be able to stand against the artifices of the devil. Then the

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peculiar reason for this is adduced : our struggle is for the maintenance (not, I apprehend, for the acquirement) of our heavenly portion and position, of which Satan and his emissaries are determinedly seeking to dispossess us. For this reason we are to be clad *cap-à-pie* in God's panoply, that we may successfully "withstand" the shock of Satanic opposition, and, in spite of it, may "stand," in full possession and enjoyment of the ground we occupy according to divine counsels. Then, for the third time, the Spirit of God uses the word "stand," adding, "therefore"—by this indicating the force of that reason which had been adduced for our assuming complete armour, including the shield of faith. Thus armed, we are proof, and thus only are we proof, against Satan's inflamed or envenomed shafts, which otherwise will surely harass and distress whomsoever they pierce.

So equipped with full defensive armour, we may well be inspired with *confidence*. Then comes the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God—

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the only weapon of offence, and that which the Lord used alone against the adversary, and in which He exhibited perfect *obedience*. Lastly, there is perpetual prayer, or constant, habitual *dependence*. By these alone, which man gave up in Eden, the first creation, and which new creation gives back, the Lord Himself exemplifying them in perfection, can we hold our ground in the heavenlies. And, as our human progenitors were no sooner set in Eden, than exposed to Satanic effort to dislodge them; so now, no sooner does a saint seek experimentally to maintain his ground in the heavenlies as a conscious position and possession for faith's present enjoyment, than he proves how exposed he is to the opposition of the adversary, and how powerless to cope with the assault, unless equipped in the panoply of God.

In like manner, as to the truth of the church of God. Satan would exult in weakening our sense of the one body, that he may bring about its practical denial.

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These are current dangers, yet they constitute but new forms and phases of an old-world temptation. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." May the language of all our hearts be—"Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually." (Ps. cxix. 117.) W. R.

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## PATIENCE AND WISDOM.

JAMES I. 3-5.

THE Christian is seen by James in trying circumstances, the common lot of FAITH in this world. The desired effect to be produced by God's thus dealing with him is "*patience*." But it is to be patience *in continuance* and not else can it be said to have its "perfect work" in him. Here Job failed; I learn patience by having my own will broken, and to this end the trials are allowed. I learn the wondrous fact that God is *for me* (in them) in order that I

should, my own will broken, be content with and do *His* will.

But while patience must be thus learnt because it is according to God, and we have to act on earth for HIM, and patience is simply waiting on *His* will: yet it does not suppose indifference or inactivity. When it is a question of His will for me in everything, I know that His way must be right. Hence I learn patience or a ceasing from my own will. And then comes in another thing. I need *wisdom* in my daily path (for I must avoid sloth), so that in all I do I may be wise, that is, just doing as He would have me do in the circumstances of my daily life. "If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God." It supposes patience *first*, as a thing already learnt, and subjection to His will, to what He is doing; and then needing instruction, I ask what am *I* to do? Here comes in the need of *wisdom*, given to me liberally, if I ask *with no will of my own in exercise*. If I have my own will in exercise—that is active, I am a double-minded man: "Let not that man think



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that he shall receive anything of the Lord."

Finally, as to "patience" and "wisdom," to be so much desired by and for us all as Christians, I would add that I believe that no "*impatient*" man will ever be found to be a "*wise*" man, either in his own things or in the Church. These things must not be taken out of their divine order. But, on the other hand, there is every hope and every prospect that a "patient" Christian man, however humble (and the more humble the more happy), will be found some day, at some trying moment perhaps, to have become to the surprise of some, a "wise" man; for this is divine order—first "*patience*," then "*wisdom*."

H. C. A.

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## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

### THE ASSEMBLY; ITS USE AND OBJECT.

OUR blessed Lord, taking His place in the midst of His own on the day of His resurrection, and there and then form-

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ing the assembly for the first time on the earth, would of itself convey to us the gravity and importance of it. The disciples ("the eleven, and they that were with them,") were gathered into a room, with closed doors, the Lord Himself the one paramount Object before their hearts. He comes into their midst, and He now forms the assembly. He first fits the disciples for it, assures them of peace—the state belonging to the new ground—that of divine righteousness, in which He now sets them. He confers life in the power of the Holy Ghost. He sends them as missionaries into the world, and He announces to them their responsibility, in the words, "whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."

The assembly is now shewn in pattern. I do not say that it commenced then, but I submit that the pattern of it was given then. The value of a pattern is, that we have in it the essential parts of the thing described. The Lord, on the first day of

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(1 Cor. xiv. 24.) This great blessing was not effected by the assembly being the habitation of God through the Spirit, but by the present energy of the Spirit, through the members of the body of Christ.

The Lord grant that we may apprehend a little more clearly the use and object of the assembly as it is in His mind.

One word more as to the mystery—the church as one great structure on the earth, of which Christ is the Head in heaven. I speak of it now, not merely convened, as in 1 Corinthians xii., but as we get in Ephesians iv. 15, 16. “But holding the truth in love, may grow up to him in all things, who is the Head—the Christ; from whom the whole body, fitted together, and connected by every joint of supply, according to the working, in its measure, of each one part, works for itself the increase of the body, to its self-building up in love.” Each one of us, however, apart, is called to promote the benefit and progress of the whole body. And

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to effect this there are two great ministries ; one—gifts from the ascended Head in heaven, which are exercised in relation to His members here (the evangelists to pick them as diamonds out of the mire, and the pastors and teachers to set them in their proper settings, to the glory of God) ; and the other—the joints, the individual exercise in the Spirit to promote the health and vigour of one another, unto the edifying of itself in love.

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## FROM BENEATH AND FROM ABOVE.

WITH wings as the wings of a dove,  
 We flee from the strife and sin,  
 To the peace and the stillness of love,  
 In the house of the Father above,  
 To the welcome that waits within.

And from thence with wondering eyes,  
 Beneath in the desert bare,  
 We see with a strange surprise,  
 Where the camp of the murmurers lies,  
 That God in His grace is there.

From the glory around the throne,  
 We look on the host below ;

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The people that dwelleth alone,  
By man unreckon'd, unknown ;  
Whom God doth reckon and know

We see not the pilgrim band,  
The feet for the desert shod,  
But those who in triumph stand,  
At rest in the goodly land,  
Their last end ! home with God—

We see not the stain and blot,  
The ways of perverseness wild,  
For He who from Egypt brought  
The people His blood had bought,  
He seeth them undefiled.

And Him do our eyes behold  
In their midst where'er they roam  
For they are His house of gold,  
His palace of price untold,  
His fair everlasting home.

And their goodly tents we see,  
Spread forth as the valley gleams,  
As the gardens where rivers be,  
As the Lord's lign-aloe tree,  
As cedars by forest-streams

No more in the desert glare,  
O'er the grief and the shame to weep,  
But with Thee Thy joy to share,  
And from heights of victory there,  
The watch of the Lord to keep.

E. F. J

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

### THE CHRISTIAN STANDING.

THE christian standing is where the blessed God puts the believer. The measure and greatness of it can only be found out in proportion as God Himself is known. The knowledge of God is necessary, in order to form any idea of the standing in which He sets the believer. The believer may know that he is justified—that he is in liberty—but he has no idea of the measure or greatness of it but as he knows the One who has put him in this nearness to Himself. This is the first thing. The next is, that no amount of relief or satisfaction to my own heart can define or describe the nature of my standing. A child has a standing with his parent, but he cannot define or measure it by his own satisfaction with it. The parent has placed him in it, and no one, but the parent himself, can define the measure of his *will*. If I place myself in relation to any one superior to my-

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highest, on earth peace, good 'pleasure in men,' has been responded to here, and the least and the lowest have been, through Thy grace, made to inherit the throne of glory; and in the Spirit of Thy Son to echo and swell it in the deepest praise and worship.

To sum up: Jesus as the *sin-offering* suffered without the gate — terrible moment, beyond all human conception! And His blood is sprinkled on the mercy-seat, which was the first thing Moses was directed to make, thus indicating that the first and chief object in the heart of God—Christ Himself, is the place His people will occupy. Christ, as the *burnt offering*, was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. Hence the believer is now in Him according to all His value and acceptance — a sweet-smelling savour; and thus justified,\* the Holy Ghost is given to us; we

\* There could not be justification according to God until the old man was judicially annulled, and the accepted man was before God to His entire satisfaction; otherwise the old man would be justified.

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are not in the flesh, we are in the Spirit—  
 sons of God. This is christian standing.  
 Once in the far country, now in the  
 Father's house. Once at the distance of  
 exceedingly fearing; now in the holiest.  
 Once dead; now quickened together  
 with Christ and raised to heaven in  
 Christ. These, one and all, corroborate  
 the magnitude of the believer's standing.

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ONCE in darkness, guilt and distance,  
 Now accepted and brought nigh,  
 In the grace of the Beloved—  
 To the Father's house on high,  
 For the Father's heart and pleasure,—  
 Nothing less could satisfy.

Once in death, and under judgment,  
 Now in righteousness divine;  
 Graced in Him,—the Great Accepted—  
 Where His God's full glories shine.  
 He,—the measure of our nearness;  
 Oh how wondrous God's design!

He,—the Head of new creation,  
 We in Him the new-born race;  
 "*All of one*" in life and nature;  
 Meet for Him, and for His place,—  
 To the joy of God the Father,  
 Through the riches of His grace.



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Once—the Son, alone begotten,  
 He alone would not abide ;  
 First-born now ! To glory bringing  
 Many sons ; and by His side,—  
 Meet for Him in closest union,—  
 God the Father sees the Bride.

All the love that rests complacent,—  
 On His well-belovèd Son,—  
 Who fulfilled His will and counsel,  
 And through death His treasure won —  
 Rests on *her*, in all its fulness,  
 For with Him she's ever One.

All is gone that had impeded  
 That great love in mighty flow  
 All of man swept off for ever,  
 Death has silenced every foe.  
 Love divine, in its full volume—  
 Neither let nor check can know.

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All praise to our God most holy !  
 Who counselled ere time began,  
 Spared not the Son of Thy bosom,  
 To work out Thy wondrous plan,  
 To have in Thy presence for ever—  
 Pure, perfect, the *One New Man*.

All praise to Thee, glorious Saviour !  
 Who bore the cross and the shame  
 Who suffered our awful distance--  
 For us, Thy nearness to gain.  
 At home with the Father for ever  
 We'll praise and adore Thy name.

## JOHN'S GOSPEL.

### Chapter xvi. 1-16.

Now we have to do with the second Adam who is from heaven, with the glorified Son of man. That which exists is a complete rupture between the world and God, and a heavenly Christ who has accomplished redemption. But the testimony borne by the Holy Ghost, the truth of which it is the proof, is double, and divides itself here. What we have gone through is the testimony that His presence down here bears to the world ; that which follows is what He should do for the disciples amongst whom He was.

What a solemn judgment we have just been considering, coming from the Lord's own mouth ! The whole world lying in sin by its refusal to receive the Saviour come in grace ; righteousness according to God only to be found upon the throne on high, where it had placed Him whom the world had rejected, and in the fact that the world would see

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and attributes. Thus it is that we here tread our way, "through scenes of strife," indeed, "and desert life;" for "He left us an example that we should follow his steps."

And not this alone, great and glorious as it is. As individuals we are here on earth walking in the Spirit, and learning the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, but it is when we enter into our new place in heaven, as members of His body, that we sensibly enter into the actualities of the new man; and here there is a new order of works; and the practical life of a heavenly man, entirely apart from flesh and blood. Everything is of a new order, and of a heavenly character, derived from our Head, the exalted Man in heaven;—(and here Christianity is fully displayed,) an order unknown, save in the Church. May we have grace to walk according to it.

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## OUR HOPE—ITS PRACTICAL EFFECT.

IF my heart is set on that bright moment when I shall see the Lord, I shall seek to be practically free from all that would detain me here. The heart will not get freed from earth by *trying* to be so ; but the more it deepens in acquaintance with Christ, the more it will long to see Him and to be found suitable to Him.

It is interesting the different aspects in which His return is set forth in the different epistles. Peter gives us the day star in our hearts, but he says, remember everything here has to go ; all will be burned up—all these things will be dissolved ; and if I am to be connected with the Lord, what manner of person am I to be ? So in chapter i. : “ Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation [or apocalypse] of Jesus Christ.”

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Paul writes to the Thessalonians of the rapture. The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a gathering shout, the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, announcing the amazing fact that He is returning; the dead in Christ rise first; every believer—not only the church; the living saints changed, and *every one*, caught up in that momentous rapture!

In Ephesians we do not get His coming. There we are in heavenly places in Christ, and He dwells in the *heart*; but the more we know of that, the more we shall long to see Him; the One who has brought us to Himself, and has got a place for us where He is. The greater the correspondence between your soul and Him, the more you want to see Him; the more constant the communication, the greater the longing; we all know this is the case with absent friends. The Lord tells His disciples: "In that day you shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." If the heart is true to Him it cannot bear to lose Him;

that is what the bride in Canticles v. feels ; she does not know union with Him, and the more she loves Him the more she mourns when she loses Him ; or like Mary Magdalene, who said “ they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.” Disciples cannot comfort her, angels cannot pacify her, till she sees Him ; and when He says, “ I ascend to my Father and your Father, my God and your God,” then the whole thing dawns on her—the new inseparable relationship in which she stands to Him. It was but a few words that He spake to her, but she went off quite tranquillised ; divine light had shone into her heart : now she can leave Him to do His bidding, because she knows how she stands in relation to Him. It is relationship which alone satisfies affection, and if you do not know your relationship with Him there cannot be activity of affection.

In Philippians we have His coming in another aspect. (See chap. iii. 20, 21.) It suits the heart that nothing should be perfect till He comes. Our citizenship

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is in the place He comes from ; our politics, all that concern us, belong to that country *from whence* we look for the Saviour. It is the *Saviour* for whom I look. One from whom I have already received incalculable benefits ; and what more is He going to do for me now ? He is going to “change this vile body and make it like unto His own glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” When He comes, the first wave of His power will act on the bodies of His people, to fashion them all (the dead and the living) into glorious bodies like His own.

James looks at the coming as relief from the pressure of this world. In 1 John iii. 2, it is those who are now sons of God, are expecting to be like Him, and when they are like Him they see Him AS HE IS ; therefore everyone who has this hope purifies himself, seeking to be fit for Him. John looks to be ready for Him. If I want to be suitable to Him I drop this and that, because it will not suit

Him. If the Bride is going to see Him, she must have everything according to His taste. If the servants expect their Lord's return everything must be ready; loins girt, lights burning;—first love and first works. Watching for Him is the character of first love; the watcher does not go to sleep, he is watching all night, expecting Him to come; this is the real attitude of the servant.

So in chapter ii. 28, the apostle exhorts them to abide in Him, in order that he may have confidence when the Lord appears, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. Oh, to be servants like that! seeking to do the work well, that we may not be ashamed of our work, but be able to count on a *full* reward; as Paul says, "I have espoused you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

Do you ever ponder on the immense blessedness of seeing the Lord? The Spirit and the bride say, Come. If your hearts are right, your lamps trimmed, your feet will be right; "the King's daughter is all glorious within, she shall be brought to the



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King in raiment of needlework ;” not woven, but stitch by stitch—practical suitability. We are going to see Him as He is, and where is the soul that is sensible of being united to Him, and is enjoying every expression of His love and interest, that does not long to see His face? He counts on our love. He says, “I am the bright and morning star.”

And now, how do you cultivate the affection that will make you long to see Him? By studying what He is to you, by learning His interest in you? A parent does not ask his child to love him, but he wins the love by the way he seeks the child’s welfare. The Lord seeks my true interest; He first gave Himself for me, but His love never ceases. He thinks of and serves me for ever. It is the desire of His heart that I should be in communion with Himself.

May our souls deepen in acquaintance with Him, that our hearts may long for the day when we shall see Him and be with Him for ever.

## JOHN'S GOSPEL.

## Chap. xvi. 16-38.

THESE words then (ver. 16, &c.), although their entire fulfilment will only take place when Christ comes back, refer to all important events which shewed, in His death and resurrection, what He was and what He was doing, characteristically. First of all, He was going to leave His own, and to put an end by death to all God's relationships with Israel and with man: "A little time, and ye shall not see me"—He was going to die. "And again a little time, and ye shall see me." He was not going to stay in the dust of death, like other men; He would be with them again. But again they should not see Him, for He was not coming to be a Messiah upon earth, but He was going to His Father who had all power over death, and who, after having raised Him from the dead, according to His glory, would take Him to Himself in the glory that was His. It was a series

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His name, this would bring persecutions upon them. In this world they should have tribulation, but in Him they should have peace. Blessed thought! In the circumstances and things that happen here, they would have troubles, painful no doubt, but which would detach them from the world, and make them feel the difference between what was of the world and their position. Inwardly they should have peace, divine peace in Him who manifested Himself to them spiritually, yea, who should dwell in them.

Then He had overcome the world. This, indeed, gives us courage, to think that what we have to overcome is an enemy already conquered; it is a blessed word for our souls. He went before us in the battle, and has gained the victory. As I said, the Lord's discourses to His disciples terminate here; but this brings us into a still more blessed place. It is given to us not only to hear the divine words of Jesus, who was thinking of us with a love that knew no bounds, with a devotedness which makes us know

## FAITH COUNTS ON GOD, ETC. 295

what love is (1 John iii. 16); words of grace, words of truth, words of God Himself, but which were adapted to man (John iii.); words whence we derive the knowledge of what God is for us: it is given to us, I say, not only to hear and to meditate these words, but now we are allowed to hear Jesus open His heart into the Father's bosom, and to understand that we are an object of common interest to the Father and Son: this is the subject of chapter xvii.

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FAITH COUNTS ON GOD IN AN  
EVIL DAY.

(2 TIM. II. 15-26.)

THERE has been a sense awakened in us lately of the wondrous position we are in, in the house of God, the blessedness and the seriousness of the house of God. In 1 Timothy the servant is instructed how to behave, when it was in divine order. God speaks to us to-day as to where things really are. God, in

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grace, as ever has gone before us. He has given us 2 Timothy, where the house of God is no longer seen as Timothy saw it in 1 Tim. iii. 5, but when it is like a "great house," and we have instructions as to how we are to behave in the house as it is now. God has not left us without a path in the present state of things. Surely it is a solemn thing to be examining the merits and demerits of certain places and associations; I shall never forget the effect that verse had on me, when I first saw it, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

The state of things in the house to-day is not unforeseen by God. He has foreseen and provided for it. Saints get troubled when they see the evil and confusion, and say, "How can God provide for this?" God does not provide for the evil, but He provides a path for His own in the midst of the evil; a path which takes them right out of it all to Himself. There are some who are not clear of the idea that we are reformers. We are not reformers. We are not setting the church of God

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to rights. We have not to improve things.

In 2 Chronicles xxxiv. we read of Josiah's zeal for the Lord; how everything that was unsuited to Him was put away—the passover kept, &c., . . . . and the one thing that God specially marked in Josiah, as fitting him to be His servant was, that his heart was tender. He rent his clothes when he found how contrary Israel was to what was found in the law. It was a very blessed state of things, but that was reformation.

Farther on in Ezra's time I find what will help *us*. Ezra returns with a few, and begins with the altar. He did not come as a reformer. It is beautiful how you get in Nehemiah that word, "they found written in the law." If any one had challenged them why they did this, and that, and the other, it would have been quite out of the question. There was the word—the guidance for them. *We* are not told in any sense to put things right—to be reformers; we are told to put *ourselves* right, and that

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not according to our own thoughts, but according to His thoughts.

The Lord looks down (see 2 Tim. ii. 19), and He knows everything that is His, and if there is separation, it is a vessel meet for the Master's use, prepared for every good work. There is more than this held out to Timothy (chap. iii. 17), he was to be "furnished unto all good works."

What one feels to-day is this—that it is in the very things we are apt to think we know best, practically our hearts are to feel that those are the very things we break down in. The Lord has provided for this present state of things. He awakens conscience as to it. There is a path which is definitely of God, and one ought to be exercised to get it. If we can awaken souls to this, we have done a great service. We are surrounded with what is contrary to God, and souls get troubled about it, because in the midst of the confusion they see God working in His sovereignty. I would not silence a single exercise about it ; but I would

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say, "Get before the Lord and settle with Him about it." Sometimes one has been asked, What do you look for in those wishing to take their place in separation? I desire to find faith and conscience. I look for faith in those wishing to take their place at the Lord's table. I do not mean that they are believers, or that they are walking by faith for outward sustenance, but faith which really counts on the Lord. I feel solemnly when I see those who are gathered to the Lord, to count on Him for His sufficiency, disappointed and sorrowful.

Numbers x. 33, shews what God was for His people—for Israel; going every step of the way before them. If it was a question of moving on, the ark went before to find a resting-place for them. If it was resting, the ark returned into their midst. God brought His people into the very circumstances that would make them value the manna, and yet their hearts said, "Our soul loatheth this light bread." When one really comes out to the Lord, it is to turn the



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back on everything, and to know what is in Him.

In 1 Corinthians xii. I get the power and activities of the Holy Ghost in the church, it was God accrediting the church before the world. But in Ephesians iv., everything is from the heart of Christ—the glorious triumphant Christ; His own heart supplying them: “till we all come,” &c. Thank God that is where we are to-day. It is not God accrediting the Church before the world now, but the heart of Christ for His own.

There is a lovely scripture which says: “Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart.” He does not refuse us aught. That which He awakens in our hearts He satisfies. There are perplexities, but God has provided for them. He knows the real difficulties and trials, but He has provided a path for us. What a solemn thing to know how to behave ourselves in the house of God! We are to be characterised and come together as members of the body

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of Christ. The behaviour is to be that of a member of the body of Christ.

Just turn to the end of Jacob's path, Genesis xlviii. 18, 19, and the reference to it in Hebrews xi. Jacob is in the mind of God as to Ephraim and Manasseh. Joseph, the best man on the earth, did not understand, and would seek to put him right ; Jacob's calm settled answer is beautiful. In plain words, it is : " I know what I am doing ;" and that is faith. How Jacob reached such a definite point in his history, Hebrews xi. 21 tells us—" *By faith.*" There you get the whole secret of it. He could say, " I know it, I know it." That is faith. That is where we are brought to.

If God comes to instruct us when the house has come to its present state, He calls us to our responsibility in naming the name of the Lord, and departing from iniquity. Then as to the company, " Follow righteousness, faith, &c., with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Many may say, " I quite accept that scripture." Well, if so, and if it be the voice of God, is it not our place,

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our privilege in rest of heart, to say like Jacob, "I know it, I know it"? 'That is very easy,' you say. I do not believe it is. I believe there is immense exercise to reach it. It is easy when you get with God. Then you *will* be able really to say, "I know it."

The great point is to set myself right, and then to walk, understanding what the will of the Lord is; knowing how to deal with those outside. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather [reprove them]." That does not mean denounce them. No! the light in you exposes them. You may pass on without an unkind word. You would not then have to ask, Why cannot I go here or there? Like Nehemiah, when invited to the plain of Ono, say: "Why should the work of the Lord cease whilst I leave it and come down to you?" The works of darkness would be exposed by the light.

In Hebrews xii. we read: "Make straight paths for your feet, let that which is lame be turned out of the

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 303

way." They were hesitating, and the danger was the effect this would have on others. Surely we cannot go on without His smile; "proving what is acceptable to the Lord."

May He use this scripture to shew that there is a path which is definitely marked out by God for the soul to follow.

J. B.

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

## CHRISTIAN STATE.

CHRISTIAN state is the consequence of christian standing. My standing is a place, or position, given me by God; and my state is the result of this; while my practice is my manner of life, contingent on my state. The standing describes where I am placed, while the state, which results from and corresponds to it, discloses the real nature and value of the standing.

In the Epistle to the Romans there is a twofold state—the state consequent on justification, and the state conse-

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grace, by faith, the Saviour that He was to preach to others, he received life, for Christ is our life. But, as I have already said, it is the name of Father that is the key to this chapter. God is always the same ; but neither the name of Almighty, nor that of Jehovah, nor that of Most High, carries life in itself. We must have life to know God thus, but the Father sent the Son that we might live through Him, and he that hath the Son, hath life, and he only. But the Son has fully manifested the Father ; so that the Son being received, the Father is received too ; and the life is developed in this knowledge, faith in the mission of the Son, and by Him, faith in the Father as having sent the Son, in love, as Saviour. Christ's own glory will be the full manifestation of this life, and we shall have our part in it, we shall be like Him. Still it is an inward life, real and divine, by which we live, although we possess it in these poor earthen vessels. It is not we that live, but Christ that lives in us. Infinite and eternal blessing which belongs to us

## TO ACT FOR GOD, ETC. 327

already as life, according to the words :  
 “ He that hath the Son, hath life.”  
 But this sets us also in the place of  
 sons now, and will bring us, later on,  
 to bear Christ’s image.

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TO ACT FOR GOD I MUST BE  
 WITH HIM.

As it is impossible to form a correct estimate of evil, apart from communion with Him who is Light, so can we never at any time act rightly with reference to evil unless the springs of motive within are divine ; otherwise, however sincere our intentions may be, we shall fail to give expression by our acts to what the Lord’s mind is in the matter in question.

In Numbers xx. we have recorded the murmuring of the children of Israel in the wilderness of Zin, towards the close of their forty years’ wanderings, because they wanted water, and Jehovah meets them in absolute grace, as He was able to

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do righteously in virtue of the provision He had already made in chapter xvii. 10, where Aaron's rod that budded, blossomed, and yielded almonds, was commanded "to be laid up before the Lord in the tabernacle of witness, to be kept for a token against the rebels . . . . that they may not die," figuring to us, I need hardly say, the priesthood founded upon the grace of God which brings life out of death.

Now Jehovah here speaks to Moses, and says: "take *the* rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and *speak* ye unto the rock before their eyes, and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock. And Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as he had commanded him." (Vers. 8, 9.) But did Moses do as he was told? Nothing of the kind. Thinking only of the way in which the rebellion of the people affected himself and his authority, he loses sight of what is due to God and of the value of *the* rod in his hand, and

smites the rock with *his* rod, speaking at the same time, not to the rock as he was bidden, but to the people, and that in words which at once betray the temper of his mind: "Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?" thus intruding himself and his brother where Jehovah should have been sanctified in the midst of His people. This did not prevent God from sanctifying Himself and acting in His purposed grace towards His rebellious people, in virtue of that rod which had been laid up in the tabernacle of witness; but Moses's conduct, while manifesting abhorrence of evil in others, neither maintained the glory of God, nor expressed what was in His mind towards His people, and so he displeased God and brought judgment upon himself.

All this came about because the springs of his action were wrong, and "he spake unadvisedly with his lips." There was no excuse for the people, for they angered God, and provoked the spirit of Moses; but God's glory can only be maintained in His own way;



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and however sincere and loyal our motives, flesh cannot, and must not have a place in the vindication of His rights, or the maintenance of His glory.

This is of deep interest and importance for ourselves, for the principle involved is of the widest application. What we have to fear and watch against is the intrusion of self and its ways upon holy ground, an intrusion which takes place too often in ways, and at times least suspected by us. Who would have supposed that the one who thus spake unadvisedly with his lips, was the one who but the moment before had gone in dependence "from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle, and fell upon his face"? But is it not often thus, that the very sense of support which we have acquired in the Lord's presence, is, if we are not watchful, turned into a ground for self-importance when we go forth to meet the evil? So it was with Moses, and so it may be with ourselves; and therefore it behoves us to bear ever in mind that while nothing can be more distinct

and clear than our responsibility to "abhor that which is evil," and to judge and put it away when once manifested, nothing on the other hand requires such self-judgment and careful following and dependence upon the Lord as the exercise of pastoral care or discipline with respect to it, in order that human energy and temper may not transgress the limits of divine patience and grace.

On the other hand, the history as given in the Book of Revelation of the church in responsibility, presents us with an example of the sad results of lack of faithfulness to God, in dealing with evil when discovered and hated as such. In its first phase (Ephesus) we find they hated the works of the Nicolaitanes, as also did He "who walked in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;" but having left their first love, and as a consequence lost the only divine motive spring of action, not only was all that the Lord could own as right, lacking in that which gives each its true value in His sight, but the very thing which was

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abhorred and hated for its own sake, was evidently spared in the exercise of misguided leniency towards the persons who practised it; and so in the third place (Pergamos) we are startled to find, that among other allowed evils they "had also them that held the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing" the Lord says, "I hate:" but He can no longer say, as in the case of Ephesus, "which thou hatest." The failure to deal with evil works, though hated, had culminated in an indifference which could allow evil doctrine to be there, and unjudged too; and so things went on from bad to worse, until the consequences of loss of first love, predicted by divine foresight in the case of Ephesus, find their realisation in the final removal of the candlestick in Laodicea.

The Lord Himself give us grace, amid ever increasing difficulties and sorrows, to seek to know His mind and how to act for His glory. J. G. H.

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## A FEW THOUGHTS ON ROMANS AND EPHESIANS.

I WOULD remark the contrast between the Epistle to the Romans and, as a whole, the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is very simple. In the Epistle to the Romans, we get man down here, looked at by God; the first Adam utterly failing; and in the very scene in which he is allowed to remain on earth, God makes him the witness of His eternal power and Godhead. No man on earth knows the eternal power and Godhead. Proved by the light man has, and afterwards by the law, man is an entire wreck. The whole family of the first Adam is utterly, completely, lost and ruined; and this is told to us, as bringing out the force of one word in the first chapter, where it speaks of the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. And in all the abundance of bad works which are spoken of, there is

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just found the occasion for God to let the last Adam be revealed ; and the last Adam wins glory to Himself, in the midst of all the ruin of man, shewing how God can be “just and a justifier.” Thus the righteousness of God is declared through the blood of His dear Son.

In the opening of the Epistle, quite consistently with this, as it is the history of man, we have first of all the gospel—“the gospel of God”—spoken of as fore-promised, “concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David.” The sure mercies of David in His own Person, and that according to all the glory of His Person, as He had come out here in connection with the man in ruin ; declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness in resurrection from the dead. The whole bearing of the Epistle to the Romans seems to trace out what was true of the first Adam in ruin, and how the last Adam came in in grace, to secure blessing upon earth ; even blessing for Israel

## ON ROMANS AND EPHESIANS. 335

in the latter day. All the sure mercies of God shine forth in blessing for us who are here in the wilderness. Delivered from the land of captivity—the house of bondage, perfectly sure that we are going on to glory, still we are in the wilderness, everything in the scene partaking of the ruin the first Adam brought in.

Now, in the Epistle to the Ephesians the apostle does not begin with the promises made afore by His prophets in the holy scriptures. He goes right back to the counsels of God about a certain Son. Not only the Son come in by the only key, to get Himself glory, meeting the bad works of men; but He Himself, the Object of God's counsel in glory, taking up a people to be the complement of His own happiness up there. From the time the flood-gates of wickedness were opened, sin and sorrow covered the first family, and there was no one who could possibly glorify God in connection with man thus ruined, save the Son of God. That we have set forth in

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Romans. But that is an immensely different thing from going back (as here in the Ephesians) into the eternal counsels of God, when God the Father, purposing the glory of His eternal Son, chose a people to be in Him, holy and without blame before Him in love; and to get children for Himself according to the good-pleasure of His will.

Both are true of man; only in the first, it is man a ruined creature down here, the last Adam coming in to meet all the ruin man had wrought; in the last, it is the One who is the Man at God's right hand, the object of God's counsels, His eternal Son.

G. V. W.

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THE more we think of the cross, the more we shall find that there is nothing like it throughout eternity: everything in good and evil came to an issue there.

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## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

### IN CHRIST.

It is plain enough to every one that, naturally, we are in Adam, and the consequences of being in him we have all experienced. The question of deepest interest, is,—When is the believer in Christ? [and—When, in the work of divine grace, is he in Christ? It is evident, at the start, that, so long as Adam is responsibly before God, no one in Adam can be in Christ; that is, that Adam must historically have come to an end before any one of us can cease to be of him, and really to be in Christ.

This, plainly, is one part of our subject, even 'that the first man's history is closed; the other part is, that the One with whom we are dead, is our life. "The Son of man must be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." Hence, in the sin-offering, the carcase was burnt outside the camp, figuratively



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spirit of the man that is in him; and "no man knoweth the things of God, but the Spirit of God." "In that day," in the Spirit's day, "ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." It is not here how I am in Him, but that I may know the greatness of the life and nature which I have in Him; as it is said, "these things have I written to you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life who believe on the name of the Son of God." (1 John iv. 13.) We know the greatness of it; and it is thus that "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall come to pass to you." (John xv. 7.) Thus we arrive at a "full knowledge of the mystery of God." Thus we "may be able to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge; that ye may be filled even to all the fulness of God." (Eph. iii. 18, 19.) I need not add more. The Lord lead us more and more into this vast field of glory and beauty.

## EXTRACTS AND FRAGMENTS.

BUT now comes God's work for the sinner. He who knew no sin is made sin for us. He drinks graciously and willingly the cup given Him to drink. He lays down the life in which He bore the sin. He gives it up, and all is gone with it. The very life our sin was borne in on the cross was given up—His blood shed. He suffered for the sins of every believer, by the sacrifice of Himself He has perfected them for ever. He that is dead is freed from sin. But Christ died. He then is freed from sin. But whose? Ours who believe in Him. It is all gone; gone with the life to which it was attached, in which He bore it. The death of Christ has closed for faith the existence of the old man, the flesh, the first Adam-life in which we stood as responsible before God, and whose place Christ took for us in grace. What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His only Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,

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and for sin condemned sin in the flesh. In that He died He died unto sin once, in that He liveth He liveth unto God. . . . The whole thing is done away with for the believer on the cross—He is crucified with Christ, nevertheless lives, yet not he but Christ lives in him. . . . The life is gone . . . for Christ has died, willingly no doubt, but by the judicial dealing of God with the sin which He bore for us. If we are alive, we are alive now, on a new footing before God, alive in Christ. The old things are passed away, there is a new creation. We are created again in Christ Jesus.

J. N. D.

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CHRIST has glorified God as to the first Adam's state, but has died to it; not that He was ever in any of the sin of it, save as bearing it, but as with us here below, as man, in like manner taking part of flesh and blood with the children in the likeness of sinful flesh, and made sin for us on the cross, when fully manifested as in that state, knowing no sin.

J. N. D.

## THE SONG AT THE WELL.

“Then Israel sang this song: Spring up, O well.”  
NUMBERS XXI. 17.

JESUS, Lord ! we look to Thee,  
Now the journey's ending ;  
Soon Thy glorious face to see  
On the cloud descending.

Wandering footsteps many a day  
In the desert dreary :  
Selfish thoughts along the way,  
Sad, repining, weary.

Yet would we Thy mercy tell  
In a chant resounding :  
Sing to it : “ Spring up, O well ! ”  
Loyal hearts surrounding !

There before our wond'ring gaze  
Lies the golden city,  
Where the Lamb His light displays—  
Heart of love and pity.

Seen by Seers and Prophets blest,  
In the distance paling,  
As a sunset in the west,  
When the tints are failing.

Seen by us in brighter sheen,  
The horizon filling ;  
Cloud nor mist can come between,  
Warmer colours chilling.

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Crystal street and jasper wall,  
City of salvation ;  
Soft and low our voices fall,  
Hush'd in admiration !

Round the limpid, living, well,  
Round the water springing,  
Higher still our note shall swell,  
Full deliverance singing.

Jesus, Lord, we look to Thee,  
Now the journey's ending ;  
Give us, ere Thyself we see  
On the cloud descending,—

Lighter steps along the way,  
Smart of suffering slighted :  
Children of eternal day,  
All in Thee united.

Saints of God in every land,  
Swell our sacred chorus ;  
Wake, arise ! join heart and hand,  
Glory lies before us !

E. L. B.

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TO MY READERS.

READ for “maintained” in page 276,  
3rd line, of *September Voice*, “ex-  
hibited.”—EDITOR.

## JOHN'S GOSPEL.

Chap. xvii. 3-8.

NOTICE also that all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Christ bodily. Still this is not what is taught here, but God's ways in grace as Father, and source of all blessing; it is the Father who sends the Son. (Compare 1 John iv. 14.) No doubt, it is the Holy Ghost that leads us to know the Father thus, and capacitates us to have communion with Him, and with His Son Jesus Christ. In this development of grace, He is the power that acts in us. The Father, who thought in grace, to send His Son into the world, and who indeed has sent Him, and the Son thus sent, in whom this grace is known; these are the persons whom we know. The Father, in His divine and eternal counsels, is the source of all this infinite grace, and the Son is the One in whom these thoughts are accomplished, who gave Himself to do everything, and that we might have our part in all. He gave Himself, in order to accomplish all that

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might be their degree of intelligence, He placed them in the same relationship.

But He did more ; He communicated to them all the privileges, which coming from the Father, belonged to Himself upon the earth ; the privileges belonging to His position of Son down here. It was no longer a question of the glory and royal honour that the Messiah was to receive from Jehovah ; they had understood that what He possessed was the Son's portion, that is, the portion of that Son who had emptied Himself, and had descended to a state of abasement and humiliation down here, to shew forth all the glory of God's power in goodness, not yet taking away sin, but all the miseries that were the fruit of it. They had understood that that which Jesus had received from the Father was the whole of what belonged to the Son of God, as Son of man upon earth.

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FRAGMENT.

It is not only that Christ did great things for us, but He *gave Himself*. Beyond this, love could not go.

## THE THRONE OF GOD AND THE CHRISTIAN.

THERE is nothing plainer than that all government comes from God. "This have I heard twice that power belongeth unto thee." "Thou art the God even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth!" "The throne is established by righteousness." "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" The necessity for its exercise is the existence of a contrariety to its rights and claims. When this necessity does not exist, "God shall be all in all." There must be the throne in exercise until "He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power." "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. xv. 24, 28.)

"In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His



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train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim : each one had six wings ; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly." (Isa. vi. 1, 2.) Here we have the prophet brought in sight of the throne, and he tells us the effect that it had upon him ; he felt undone. "Then said I, Woe is me ! for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips : for mine eyes have seen the king, the LORD of hosts." (Ver. 5.) But grace comes in ; and from where the fear came, the relief comes ; so that he fears no longer. From the throne he was relieved of everything that made him fear the throne ; so that the throne of judgment is turned for him into a throne of grace. This is of course figurative, but it is typical. The place most feared by an awakened soul, becomes, through ineffable grace, the one of the greatest mercy and blessing. I do not look at the throne now as one of judgment ; all power is given to my Saviour, who

is the source of all blessing to me. The more I apprehend God's majesty and unbounded sway in eternal right, the deeper the sense I have of the grace which issues to me from Him, at God's right hand, crowned with glory and honour. The grace not only comes to me with unspeakable value intrinsically, but it is consistent with all that the throne is, and is thus assured to me by the highest corroboration that God could give. Not only the greatest gift, but given in the most glorious way. The gift to relieve the needy one; the manner in which it was given to declare the delight of the Giver. The ministration of righteousness exceeds in glory.

God sends His Son, and through Him, who met every claim of the throne, He rends the veil, and now He sets Him forth, "a mercy-seat, through faith in his blood." The One who offered Himself for us, is the Mercy-seat; the glory has its throne in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The unapproachable throne of God is now

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for the believer, the spot of unequalled bliss. The Offerer is the Mercy-seat. The throne has been vindicated and glorified by a Man; by Him now God effects everything for us. He does not now approach us from a throne, but by the One, who as a Man glorified Him as to righteousness, love, majesty and glory. The man that was under judgment is not only exculpated by his Substitute, but the Substitute is henceforward the Judge. Marvellous revolution! The believer henceforward has no judge but his Saviour. All judgment is committed unto Him "because he is the Son of man." He has borne our judgment. God has been glorified, and that in a Man. Man had been driven from the presence of God. The second Man having borne the judgment which the first man incurred, has been raised from the dead and set in glory, because as man He so glorified God in the place of judgment, "where all that God is, came out perfectly, in love, light, righteousness, truth, majesty." Where God had been dishonoured by

## THE THRONE OF GOD. 365

man He was glorified by Man, and the One who glorified Him was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father. Our Saviour, once down in the lowest place for us, is now set on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, eventually to reduce everything to divine order. "He has set a day in which he is going to judge the habitable earth in righteousness, by the man whom he has appointed, giving proof of it to all in having raised him from among the dead."

Through grace, I, the one who had been an offence to the throne of God and was shut out from His presence, so terrible that at the sight of it, Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake," now find there, instead of an exaction of righteousness, a ministration of righteousness, through the One who glorified God under my judgment; so that I am able to look up into the glory of God, not only without a fear, but to be transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit. As Christ took my

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depth, I have now His acceptance in glory; "As he is, so are we in this world." He is there for us, for by Him, when in our place, God has been perfectly glorified. He is set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. He is now waiting for "the day of His power."

But Christ shall yet sit upon His throne. "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet, and when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." The throne has effectually subdued all things unto God, and God is all in all. Our relation to Christ in the kingdom, when He shall sit on His throne, will be determined by the way we respect His rights now. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men." "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." "If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him." "Through

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 367

much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God." Our walk here refers to the kingdom, we do not suffer for heaven. It is now "that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God for which ye also suffer." The more I know that, consistently with all God's glory, I am as Christ is in this world (amazing transition for me!) the more do I seek to maintain in everything here what is due to God, whose boundless sway will one day be established to the entire removal of everything contrary to it.

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## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

## DELIVERANCE AND ITS RESULTS.

It is essential both for testimony and for our own happiness that deliverance should be possessed. If I am not "free from the law of sin and death," I cannot be in any practical power. I am free from it when I am sensibly in the life of Christ, free and apart from the rule of the flesh which I loathe and abhor. "The spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath

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*“ They that wait upon the Lord shall renew  
their strength ; they shall mount up with  
wings as eagles ; they shall run and not be  
weary ; they shall walk and not faint.”*

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E'EN as the eagle leads her young—  
With tender care to soar on high ;  
To look upon the noonday sun  
    With fix'd and steady eye.  
To bathe their wings in dazzling light,  
Then swoop to scour the darker plain,  
And then to win with rapid flight,  
    Their home of light again.

So may our souls Thy glory know—  
That glory brighter than the sun ;  
Then stoop to shed in scenes below,  
    The light our souls have won.  
And oft retreat to that bright place,  
Unknown, unsought by mortal eye,  
To bow our hearts before Thy face,  
    Our secret home of joy.



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