

THE
PRESENT TESTIMONY,
AND
Original Christian Witness Reviewed.
IN WHICH
THE CHURCH'S PORTION
AND
THE HOPE OF THE KINGDOM,
ETC.
ARE SOUGHT TO BE DEVELOPED FROM SCRIPTURE.

לֹא בַחִיל וְלֹא בִכְחַ כִּי אִם־בְּרוּחַי
Zechariah iv. 6.

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CONTENTS OF VOL. VII.

NO.	PAGE
I. Synopsis of the Books of the Bible—Matthew . . .	1
II. The Intercession of the Spirit	143
III. Observations on the Kingdoms in Daniel . . .	150
IV. On Ordinances	152
V. Babylon and the Beast	155
VI. "He that descended"	157
VII. 1 Samuel xiv.	166
VIII. The Present Testimony	176
IX. The Church of God	181
X. Remarks on Rev. i. 1, 2	189
XI. A Word in Season	204
XII. Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father	207
XIII. Observations upon the Epistle to the Ephesians . . .	224
XIV. Synopsis of the Books of the Bible—Mark . . .	229
XV. Thoughts on Divine Guidance	277
XVI. The Seven Churches	284
XVII. The Word of Exhortation	290
XVIII. "Able to Stand—Stand"	301
XIX. Now and Then; or, Time and Eternity	305
XX. The Three Vines	328
XXI. Synopsis of the Books of the Bible—Luke . . .	349
XXII. Partaking of Christ (<i>A Review</i>).	448

CONTENTS.

VARIETIES:—

	PAGE
Fragments	175, 223, 228, 289, 304, 347, 447, 463
God is God	180
Thoughts	188
The Mind of Heaven	203 and 206
Heads of Psalms	276
The Blessing of the Tribes by Jacob	300
“Prayer and Fasting”	346

THE PRESENT TESTIMONY,

ETC., ETC.

N. I.

MATTHEW.

IN pursuing these Scripture studies, it is with a certain kind of fear that I approach the New Testament, great as may be the blessing attendant on so doing. The concentration of divine light in this precious gift of God; the immense reach of the truths contained in it; the infinite variety of the aspects and true applications of one and the same passage, and of its relations with the whole circle of divine truths; the immense importance of these truths, whether considered in themselves, or with reference to the glory of God, or in relation to the need of man; the manner in which they reveal God, and meet that need:—all these considerations, which I can but imperfectly express, would cause any humble-minded person to retire from the pretension of giving a true and (in principle) adequate idea of the purpose of the Holy Ghost in the books of the New Testament. And the more is truth itself revealed, the more true light shines, the more one's incapacity to speak of it must be felt, and the more one must fear to darken that which is perfect. The more pure the truth is with which we have to do—and here it is truth itself—the more difficult it is to endeavour to lay it before others, without in some respect injuring its purity; and the more fatal also is this injury. In meditating on such or such a passage, we may communicate the measure of light granted us for the profit of others. But in attempting to give an idea of the book as a whole, all the perfection of the truth itself, and the universality of the purpose of God in the revelation He has made of it, present themselves to the mind; and one trembles at the

VOL. VII. PT. I.

1

preaching, by placing the soldiers there. The women by their visit the evening before, and in the morning when the angel spoke to them, received a full assurance to faith, of the fact of His resurrection. All that is presented here, are these facts. The women had been there in the evening. The intervention of the angel certified to the soldiers the true character of His coming forth from the tomb; and the visit of the women in the morning, established the fact of His resurrection as an object of faith to themselves. They go and announce it to the disciples, who—so far from having done that which the Jews imputed to them—did not even believe the assertions of the women. Jesus himself appears to the women who were returning from the sepulchre, having believed the words of the angel. As I have already said, Jesus connects Himself with His former work among the poor of the flock, afar from the seat of Jewish tradition, and from the temple, and from all that linked the people with God according to the old covenant. He appoints His disciples to meet Him there, and there they find Him and recognise Him; and it is there, in this former scene of the labours of Christ, according to Isa. viii., ix., that they receive their commission from Him. All power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth, and their commission, accordingly, extends to all nations. In them they were to proclaim His rights.

It was not, however, the name of the Lord only, nor in connection with His throne at Jerusalem. Lord of heaven and earth, His disciples were to proclaim Him throughout all nations, founding their doctrine on the confession of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. They were to teach, not the law, but the precepts of Jesus. He would be with them, with the disciples who thus confessed Him, unto the end of the world. It is this which connects all that will be accomplished until Christ sits upon the great white throne, with the testimony that He Himself rendered on the earth in the midst of Israel. It is the testimony of the kingdom, and of its Head, once rejected by a people that knew Him not.

N^o II.

THE INTERCESSION OF THE SPIRIT.

ROMANS VIII.

It has pleased God to reveal that standing in grace into which faith in Christ gives us introduction; and He shews us, to our comfort, how that standing is always maintained for us in righteousness by the intercession of Christ. It is not the way of the Spirit of God to present truth to us theoretically, but rather in a way to meet the exercises of conscience, both with respect to our sinfulness and God's holiness. An abstract doctrine, however true, will not meet the need of an exercised soul. Such a soul is sensitive both as to the holiness of God and the evil of sin, and needs to know the present living active ministry of Christ as engaged on its behalf. It is with the intercession of Christ that the apostle closes the wonderful climax (Rom. viii. 31—34). None can lay anything to the charge of God's elect, for God Himself has justified them—none can condemn them without impugning the value of Christ's death. But Christ is risen again, and is even at the right hand of God; and *there* He is actively engaged on our behalf; "He also maketh intercession for us." It is thus that God has provided for the maintenance of His holiness, and prevented even our failings from displacing us from that nearness to Him, whereunto we are brought by the blood of Christ.

What the value of the intercession of Jesus was to Peter, the same is it to every believer. Had Peter's faith in Jesus failed, on the discovery of the turpitude of his conduct to his Master, how exquisite would have been his misery. But when he was turned from fleshly confidence to look only to Jesus, he not only knew that he was "kept by the power of God," but he was also "strengthened." It is thus that we are kept in that grace wherein we stand; and our standing before God

through Jesus is "holy, and unblameable, and unrebukeable."

But God is pleased to consider our actual circumstances, and to provide for us accordingly. This is infinite condescension, and the way in which we especially learn divine sympathy. "He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are but as dust." The apostle in Rom. viii. speaks of "sufferings," "groanings," and "infirmities," as making part of the actual condition of the saints; and it is well to notice, that if we do not recognise the gracious way in which God considers our actual condition, we are liable to fall into mysticism or reckless fatalism. Over against "the sufferings of the present time" the apostle sets "the glory to be revealed in us"—over against "the groanings" "the redemption of the body" (see also 2 Cor. v.). But in meeting "the infirmities" the apostle introduces "the intercession of the Spirit." But what are the infirmities of which the apostle speaks? These are sufficiently defined; for whilst they result from our being still in the flesh and in the world, they are infirmities which are not common to man as man, but characteristic of "the saints." "*We know*," says the apostle, "that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now"; and not *only it*, but *ourselves also*, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, "the redemption of the body." Here "ourselves" stands in contrast with "the whole creation." It groans, and we groan. True it is that we groan with it, as having sympathy with it, because we are connected with "the first man, who is of the earth, earthy." But we groan "within ourselves," because of our possession of the Spirit; by that Spirit we are linked to another creation, of which Jesus, not Adam, is the Head. *In* and of one creation for a time, but belonging to another creation essentially and for ever, we groan by reason of the strangeness of our actual condition.

The spiritual man, knowing that he is presented before God as in the spirit, and not in the flesh, is at the same time made very sensible of what it is to "groan in this tabernacle, being burdened." But even were he exempt

The Intercession of the Spirit.

145

from personal trials, he sees all around him contrary to Christ; he sees the great mass, although outwardly acknowledging Christ, yet strangers to His grace, and either setting aside or resisting "the truth." Jesus himself, for there is none perfect but the Lord, was necessarily, in this world, "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," exhibiting divine sympathy in full intelligence of the extent of human misery. He was "grieved at the hardness of the heart" of those around Him, Mark iii. 5. When a case of human misery was presented before Him, in one deaf, and who had an impediment in his speech, "He sighed, and saith unto him 'Ephphatha,' that is, Be opened." So again, at witnessing the deeper misery of those who sought a sign from heaven; "He sighed deeply in His spirit." He wept over Jerusalem, when He saw her reckless of impending visitation. He wept at the grave of Lazarus, when He witnessed the inevitable disruption of the fondest human affections. In our measure the reality of human misery, moral and physical, must often produce the secret sigh, alloyed, indeed, in us, by selfishness, which had no place in Jesus. Even where there is allowed human joy, as in the outflowing of family affection, the sigh will escape, or the tear roll down, in the certain knowledge of its transiency. But whilst our actual condition necessitates as it were this inward groaning, there are exercises of the soul, which (although not sinful in themselves, yet resulting from our actual condition) become most perplexing. Such exercises the apostle here calls "infirmities," and it is in reference to these infirmities that the apostle presents to us the doctrine of "the intercession of the Spirit." "Likewise, also, the Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we *know not* what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered, and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to God." "*But we know* that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." One special "infirmity" arising from our actual condi-

tion, is, that because of that condition we are unable intelligently to ask God to meet our need. We are perplexed and drawn different ways. The soul may labour to pour itself out before God, and yet know not how to utter its complaint, or what to ask for. Here the Spirit comes in to our help, and by means of a groan, or a sigh, unintelligent to us, maketh intercession for us. But, although unintelligent to us, it is not unintelligent in heaven, for "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit." He knows what the real need is, and what the right remedy is; for the intercession of the Spirit is according to God's perfect understanding of our case, and not according to our ignorance. This is a doctrine of solid comfort to the soul. The Lord had made known of old how that he put "all the tears of His saints in His bottle," as well as that "in all their afflictions He was afflicted." But till redemption was actually accomplished by the work of Christ on the cross, the doctrine of the intercession of the Spirit could not be announced. Till Jesus was glorified, the Holy Ghost could not come down from heaven to dwell in the church as the other comforter, and to take this place of intercession. It is only when the irreconcilable variance between the flesh and the spirit is truly acknowledged, and we have learnt to judge the flesh according to the extent of its meaning, as set forth in the word of God, that we discover that there may be intelligence with God in a sigh or a groan. The doctrine may be exemplified by Jesus himself, the perfect one.

The scene at the grave of Lazarus brought out from Jesus what seemed only an unintelligent groan; but that groan was intelligible to the Father, and it was answered. "When Jesus, therefore, saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping, which came with her, He *groaned in the spirit*, and was troubled. . . . Jesus therefore again *groaning in Himself*, cometh to the grave. . . . Then they took away the stone where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, 'Father, I thank thee *that thou hast heard me*'" (John xi. 33, 38, 41). This illustrates the doctrine. Prayer was not uttered, but the groan in the spirit was heard and answered.

The Intercession of the Spirit.

147

The Apostle Paul, in the statement of his experience (Phil. i. 21—24), furnishes us with an instance of an “infirmity” to which we are subject by reason of our present condition. His perplexity was speedily resolved, but the perplexity itself sprang from an infirmity, because his personal spiritual feelings drew him one way, and his spiritual judgment another. There was nothing sinful in the conflict; it was infirmity. However holy and pure his personal feeling—a feeling only possible for one born of God—even this feeling needed to be lost in the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God. One only could perfectly say, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.” We must, indeed, take perfection as our example; but in our case, personal feelings have often to be crossed, and always to be exercised, in order to bring us into approval of and delight in the will of God. “To me,” says the apostle, “to live, is Christ, and to die, is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: *yet what I shall choose I wot not, for I am in a strait between two.*” The sum of human life is, in the case of many, nothing more than a choice between two evils; and unfaithfulness often brings Christians themselves into a like perplexity. But in the case of the apostle, it was a choice between two blessed things: his own personal joy, in being with the Lord, and his service to the Lord in serving the saints. To be thrown into “a strait betwixt two,” is a token of infirmity arising from the condition in which we are. The unfallen angels cannot be supposed to be in such a state. Their glory is, that however “they excel in strength, they do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word.” The glory of the redeemed also is obedience to the will of God; but they not being dependant on direct mandate, as angels; but, led of the Spirit into exercise of conscience in order to obedience, discover their infirmity, and are often in such a strait as not to know what to choose, or what to ask for, as they ought. Hence they sigh and groan; but in this exercise, the Spirit maketh intercession for them according to God. When we look at “the Son” Himself, we see the difference between Him and “men having infirmity”—between the Master and His servant.

In the servant there was "infirmity," hence his strait, his not knowing what to choose.

The Master also was "straitened" but not "between two." There was no place in Him for such infirmity. He had one single object before Him. "My meat," says He, "is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." "That work was before Him," and "when the time was come that He should be received up, He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." But He knew the reality of that which awaited Him there, and said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I *straitened* till it be accomplished." Deep were the exercises of His soul in approaching this marvellous work. His perfect knowledge of the evil of sin, as well as of the wrath of God about to light on Him, before He was "received up," "straitened" His spirit. But in the deepest exercise of His soul in *anticipation* of the cross (for when the moment came He was led as a lamb to the slaughter) He was never "in a strait betwixt two." His one object, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God," was always conspicuous. "How is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name." In His agony in the garden of Gethsemane, His one object is made more prominent by the depth of the soul-exercise through which He was passing. "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done." We have the fullest assurance that in Jesus, "we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." He can throw Himself into our case in all the power of divine sympathy, but He "needed not," as we do, to be led by a process of discipline into acquiescence with the will of God, because to do that will was His single paramount object. We are often in a "strait between two," not knowing what to choose, or what to pray for as we ought. But the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us according to God, by a sigh or a groan. The perplexity is cleared away, and acquiescence in the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God is brought about. For the statement of

The Intercession of the Spirit.

149

the apostle, that "we do know that all things work together for good to them that love God, the called according to His purpose," is closely connected with the doctrine of the intercession of the Spirit. The apostle states what "we do not know," and what "we do know." "We know not what to pray for as we ought," "but we do know that all things work together for good to them that love God." This statement comes in to meet the need of an exercised soul, and not as an abstract doctrine. It is through perplexities and difficulties, in proving what is the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God, that the soul is led to leave all things in His hand, rather than choose for itself; and to rest in holy confidence, that under His wise master-hand all things are working together for good, although it may not know what to pray for.

In illustration of what these infirmities are, which the Spirit helps by what is to us an intelligent sigh or groan; let us take the case of a Christian father of a family laid on a bed of sickness. His own gain would be to depart and be with Christ, but he sees those around him whom he is bringing up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and his anxiety is for them. Shall he plead to be raised up for their sakes? He is in a strait, conflicting thoughts rise within; he is deeply exercised, he knows not what to pray for; he feels almost as though he could not pray; he groans inwardly. Here is the intercession of the Spirit. The conflict ends. His times are in the hands of the Lord. If God takes him, He can "turn His hand on the little ones." God can take better care of them than the father, and He will not take away the father without supplying the father's place Himself. Such an exercise of soul therefore, under God's hand, is working together with other things for good; it brings out into prominence God's covenant promises as blessed realities, and leading the soul to look unto Jesus, as the perfect pattern, to say humbly, yet sincerely, "Not my will, but Thine be done."

PRESBUTES.

N^o. III.OBSERVATIONS ON THE KINGDOMS SPOKEN
OF IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL.

THE history of the kingdoms of this world has been given to us in scripture, as well as everything in which we can be instructed in righteousness.

Everything that is revealed in scripture is for our instruction; but we cannot go away from scripture to get instruction anywhere else.

If you go to the writings of natural men to learn the history of the kingdoms of this world, you will there see the purposes of man brought forward by them, but not the purposes of God.

Natural men do not know the beginning or the ending of the things about which they speak, but God has revealed both the beginning and the ending; and those who know the mind of God are instructed thus.

Any one who is taught of God in the history of the kingdoms of this world, will see that the nation of Israel is the chief of all the nations in the mind of God.

“When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord’s portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.”

The children of Israel, with their twelve tribes, are the chief of all the nations of this earth, and their land is called “*Immanuel’s land*.” It is the most important part of the whole earth in connection with the purposes of God; and it is so in the minds of His people having faith in God as to His purposes. The faith of Joseph is thus marked in scripture: “By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.” Heb. xi. 22.

The Kingdoms in Daniel.

151

If Joseph was walking *by sight*, and *not by faith*, then he would have made no mention of the departing of the children of Israel, and he would have given no commandment concerning his bones, because there was *no appearance* of the departing of the children of Israel at the time when Joseph died; but *the word of God said that they were to depart*, and therefore it was by faith that Joseph made mention of their departure.

In Gen. xv. we read the word of God which was upon the heart of Joseph at the time when he was dying. God had then said unto Abram, "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance."

A natural man might say to Joseph, when on his death-bed, "Why do you talk of the departing of the children of Israel? Do you not expect that they and their children will have a comfortable home in Egypt; everything has been so prosperous there for you and for them?" Joseph in faith would answer to this, "O no. I know of a surety, that they will be but strangers here in a land that is not theirs." The natural man again might say, "But surely you and they have had such kindly treatment from Pharaoh, and from the Egyptians, that you need not dread for the future." But again Joseph in faith would say, "O the Egyptians will afflict my people, and will evil entreat them". And again this natural man might say, "What then are you saying about their departure? How do you know they will be able to go away?" To this Joseph in faith would again answer, "Because God will judge this nation, whom they shall serve, and after they shall come out with great substance."

It is thus that one taught of God knows the history of the kingdoms of this world, and of everything else of which God has spoken; as Joseph knew the history of Egypt and of Israel, not by the deceptive appearance of changing circumstances, but by the unchanging word of God who cannot lie.

Natural men, in the present day, can know as little of the closing history of the kingdoms of this world, as a natural man, in the time of Joseph, could know what was about to take place with regard to Israel and Egypt. Joseph knew it by faith, because the word of God was in his heart.

Until the days of Nebuchadnezzar no nation, except Israel, was set up above the other nations. If Israel had not provoked the Lord, Israel would still be exalted above the other nations, but God humbled them in judgment, and in judgment exalted the Gentiles above them. This took place in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

N^o. IV.

ON ORDINANCES.

ORDINANCES spoken of with reference to the contrast between the state of the Jews in times past and the church now.

“Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in *ordinances* (*ἐν δογμασι*); for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace” (Eph. ii. 15).

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.” (Col. ii. 14).

“The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings and carnal ordinances (*δικαιώμασι σαρκὸς*), imposed on them until the time of reformation.”

In the first and last of those passages two important statements about those ordinances are made. 1st. They separate those who have them from those who have them not; they were a middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile; but Christ took it down, and *in Himself* made *one new man*; not by ordinances, but in Himself.

On Ordinances.

153

2nd. They have no power as regards the conscience. Conscience is not exercised as to moral power when ordinances are rested in.

We have both these evils witnessed against in 1 Cor. xi. 1st. Where they came together and that all had not a common part in the supper, then there were divisions among them; and therefore it was "tarry one for another," for they being "many were one bread" and one body, for all were "partakers of that one bread." When their common participation was broken through, then division ensued. 2nd. When the Lord's body was not discerned, then it was not the Lord's supper at all; for this is not a dispensation of ordinances but of power. "We have the mind of Christ."

Whenever baptism is spoken of in the epistles, it is connected with power, not as an ordinance: in 1 Cor. xii. 13. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one spirit." Our associations with the baptized here, are with those whom the Spirit of God has quickened into the body of Christ. In Rom. vi. the apostle speaks of baptism as connected with the power of our life. "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound. What shall we say then, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein. Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." No one who knows the Lord will connect these great results with an ordinance; nor will they deny them to those who, as dead with Christ and risen with Him, are walking in newness of life. This is the power of obedience to the word of Christ, and to be maintained as such, rather than urging persons to be rebaptized, and that in a dispensation that has failed, and in the days of the form of godliness without the power, when ordinances will easily be the way of obedience to the word of Christ.

In Col. ii. the saints are told of their circumcision with the circumcision not made with hands, but in Christ, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; "buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him"; but how is this, that in baptism they are buried with Christ and risen with Him? Not through an ordinance; but "**THROUGH FAITH of the operation of God**, who hath raised Him from the dead."

In 1 Pet. iii. we read, that in correspondence with the type of the ark, that "baptism saves us," but not by an ordinance, but *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*. Not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.

In these passages—1st. Baptism is by the Spirit. 2nd. The obedience resulting from it is, "walking in newness of life." The liberty of salvation by it is, "the answer of a good conscience toward God." In all these the saints are led from the form to the power of godliness.

In Eph. iv. 5. "There is one baptism." In this passage the saints are besought to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; and the apostle leading them away from all that would divide, lays before them what should hold them together because of being one. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

All these are one, and we cannot divide them; and there is one baptism; we die with Christ once, and with none but Him, and we live with Him for evermore, and there is one baptism.

There is one passage, at least, in which he speaks of the form of baptism; "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius, lest any should say, that I had baptized in my own name." He here presses on the saints the power, not of their act in being baptized, but of the name they were baptized in; "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" When Paul is thankful to God that he baptized none of them, he does not mean

Babylon and the Beast.

155

that they were not baptized, but that his power from Christ was to preach the gospel; by this the power of baptism would be realized in them, and this was his ministry of power; and his association with the baptized afterwards, was with those in whom the word of the truth of the gospel had entrance with power. To preach the gospel was a greater work for the apostle than to baptize. It has its place, but should not be put out of its place.

The passage in which the word "baptisms" occurs in Heb. vi. is a different word in the Greek.

Nº. V.

BABYLON AND THE BEAST.

BABYLON is a great system in the earth by which men's hearts are drawn away from God. It supplies them with something to have natural enjoyment in besides joy in God. In this Babylon is the great whore drawing out corrupt affections. She is supported by the great power of the earth; but power is not what is presented in Babylon, but the withdrawal of affection from God to have it spent on what ministers to natural lust. There are the kings of the earth, the merchants of the earth, and all nations brought in as acted on by Babylon. She ministers to the enjoyment of kings, to the wealth of merchants, and to the excitement of the nations: she is borne by the beast whose character is blaspheming power; but she, by corrupt fascinations, rules over the kings of the earth. When she is judged then the beast will rule by blaspheming power, drawing out the wonder of the whole world, and their worship too: but before the beast comes to rule, he supports the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. Open blasphemy is not the character of prevailing evil in the present day: neither is it an astonishing display of combined power, because the beast still carries the harlot. But the evil of the present day is enjoyment in the world, not in Christ; riches in the world, not in Christ; and the excitement of these things intoxicating men's minds, that all engagement in the things of Christ are out of mind. All this may be under a profession of the truth; because it is the beast that is

the blasphemer, who, before he himself rules, supports the mother of harlots—the parent of all who draw affection from God to the things of the world.

The woman is drunken with the blood of the saints; but the inhabitants of the earth are drunken with the wine of her fornication. When the saints are persecuted, then the spirit that draws the heart away from God becomes excited: it takes fresh stimulus from this to present with attraction its sinful gratifications; and then these abominations act on the spirit of the inhabitants of the earth, and excite them. The kings, as the great ones of the earth, commit fornication with her: the inhabitants, as the common people of the world, are excited by it. If there is a wicked show in a town, it acts thus doubly. The rich people pay for going in and enjoy the show: the poor people crowd outside the door under the excitement of it. Both are acted on by the evil.

The beast was full of names of blasphemy; but the woman had a cup full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: the effort of the woman is not to make you an open blasphemer, but to live in sin; she will leave you the form of godliness, but the power thereof she will make you deny. The beast has not even the form of godliness, he is full of names of blasphemy; but he is not ruling, he only supports the woman who does rule.

“The beast which thou sawest was and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition.”

The beast in its first constitution is seen in Dan. vii., thus it was—but it has declined and ceased to exhibit itself; but in its revival it will assume a new feature as coming out of the bottomless pit. Its constituted strength was not this, but its restored is. That which has its source in wickedness, and its end in judgment, revealed to the servants, will have its importance lowered before them in some little moment of boast; but they who have not the mind of God, and walk by sight, are altogether dazzled by this display; and so, they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

N^o. VI.

"HE THAT DESCENDED."

EPHES. IV. 10.

"My thoughts are not your thoughts; neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Is. lv. 8, 9).

SUCH is one great oracle of God. "The word of God is living." It is the word of Him who "knows what is in man." "With God there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," but among the great variety of the human family, savage or civilized, bond or free, religious or philosophical (the Jew and the Greek of the Apostle), man is found in contrariety to God both in his thoughts and in his ways.

Let us take the thoughts and ways of man in reference to the very end of his being. His end and object is himself. He thinks and acts from himself and for himself. But is this God's object in creating man; or, indeed, any creature? Is it not that God may be glorified—that the Creator, who is blessed for ever, may be seen—not that the creature should rob Him of His glory? This end, indeed, has not, in the case of man, been secured by creation, but it is secured by redemption. He who is redeemed to God acknowledges the glory of God as Creator, just as he who is justified freely by grace acknowledges the integrity, sanctity, and righteousness of the law. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. iv).

The contrariety between God and man was conspicuously shown when, the Lord Jesus, God manifest in the flesh, walked and conversed with men on this earth. "He was a sign spoken against, that the thoughts of

many hearts might be revealed;" and as He furnished the occasion for bringing out the thoughts of the hearts of men, so He took the opportunity of setting over against them the thoughts of God. There was an inveterate thought in the hearts even of His own disciples, with respect to greatness. At one time they asked him plainly, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" At another time, "They disputed among themselves who should be the greatest." On a third occasion, two of them sought of Jesus the honoured place of sitting on His right-hand and on his left, in glory (Mark x. 35—45). These several instances furnish the occasion of bringing out the thoughts of God with respect to greatness. The "little child" is set in the midst of the disciples, as the embodiment of the thoughts of God with respect to greatness. The doctrine is taught that "the chiefest among them shall be servant of all." The doctrine is confirmed by the example. "For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

The leading thought of the day is the elevation of man. Whatever may be the fact, the thought is not that of a few leading minds controlling all others, but such an elevation of the common mind as shall control all things. Is this the thought of God? Is this the way of God for the real exaltation of man? Is this the way of God for man to attain happiness? On the contrary, it is the subversion of the way of God; it is antagonism to the thought of God in the Gospel of His grace; it is the prelude to the last grand Anti-Christian confederacy, resulting in visible discomfiture, "by the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

As Jesus Himself, in His ministry, was repeatedly contradicting the thought of greatness which His disciples entertained, so the doctrine of the humiliation of the Son of God is presented to us both as the law and example of real greatness. Self-exaltation is the thought of man as to greatness, and the way in which he seeks happiness. "He that descended," is the thought of God; it is through Him "that descended" that the alone way is found to real greatness, even to the highest

exaltation to which it is possible for God to elevate a moral and intelligent creature.

“He that descended.” “I am the Lord: that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another.” This is not less true with respect to the glory due to Him, as “He that descended,” than it is with respect to the glory due to Him as the alone object of worship. This glory is singular—it belongs to One alone. The archangel cannot trench on this prerogative glory of the Lord Jesus Christ; for He is as essentially separated from Him that created Him as man Himself. The archangel could not stoop to take on him “the form of a servant,” because the condition of a servant was the condition of his being. Such a stooping was only in the power of one “in the form of God.” This was His glory—“He that descended.” On this point Jesus largely insists in His teaching; a rich sample of which we find in the sixth chapter of John’s Gospel.

The Lord graciously seeks, from the miracle of the loaves, to find a way to their hearts for the reception of that bread which endureth unto eternal life, of which the manna which sustained their fathers in the wilderness, was a beautiful, yet but faint shadow: “Verily, verily I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you *the true bread from heaven*. For the bread of God is *He which cometh down from heaven*, and giveth life unto the world.” Again, “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out, *for I came down from heaven*, not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me.” The Jews then murmured at him, because he said: “I am the bread which *came down* from heaven.” They stumbled at the doctrine of the first stage in his humiliation: “He that descended.” They thought they knew as much of His birth and bringing up as they did of Moses. They could not see the glory of his humiliation; “There was no beauty in Him that they should desire him.” The doctrine is dismissed by the thought: “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?” But

Jesus leads them on in His doctrine to another stage in His humiliation; its crowning glory; reiterating the doctrine that "He descended," but connecting it with eating His flesh and drinking his blood, which led not only the Jews to strive, but to the turning back of some of His own followers. "I am the living bread *which came down from heaven*; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever, and the bread that I will give is *my flesh*, which I will give for the life of the world." But in teaching this other step in His descent, He connects it with His ascent. "When Jesus knew in himself, that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them: Doth this offend you? What, and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before." "He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all heavens, that He might fill all things."

It was at the moment Judas went out, and the cross was vividly before Him, that Jesus said: "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." He was about to enter on a glory counselled and settled in eternity, but manifested in a moment of time; a glory only discernible by the persons of the Godhead till it was actually accomplished, and then only seen by those taught of the Holy Ghost, the glorifier of Jesus. This glory Jesus cannot give to another, neither dare any other take it to himself. It is only regarded as a disgrace rather than a glory, till the Spirit reveals its truth to the soul. But it is a glory which of necessity implies His own proper underived personal glory. Who but the Son of the living God, one essentially divine, could say, "and the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world"? Apart from the divinity of His person, it was only reasonable for the Jews to say: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Again, who but one truly divine could say: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father"? It was the glory of Jesus having life in Himself, and able to

"He that descended."

161

impart it to others; to descend under the power of death, that He might rescue others from its power, and shew that it was impossible for Him to be holden of death. Nor is this all, He laid down His life in obedience to the will of His Father, and there was in the death of Jesus that singular and distinctive glory, that independence and obedience met together in it. "I lay it down of myself." "This commandment have I received of my Father." "Angels that excel in strength, do the commandment of the Lord, hearkening unto the voice of His word." This indeed is their glory. But angels are not independent beings; they are upheld as creatures, and obedience is necessary to their condition. But obedience is that into which the Son humbled Himself. It was His glory to do so, and God was glorified in Him. It is the glory of His humiliation which reached its utmost limit in the cross, which brings forth in such prominence the name of Jesus, "the *only* name under heaven given among men wherein there is salvation," and at the same time "the name above every name in heaven," the honour of which all must eventually acknowledge, if not in salvation, assuredly in judgment. It is as the only Saviour, that Jesus says: "For mine own sake, even for mine own sake will I do it: for how should my name be polluted! and I will not give my glory to another." The Holy Ghost glorifies Jesus in testifying to His sufferings and the glories which followed them. The true doctrine of the cross is inseparably connected with the essential glory of the Person of the Son; but it is very possible to maintain a true confession of His Person, apart from the true doctrine of the cross. It is to this doctrine the Spirit testifies, and invests the familiar fact of the crucifixion of Christ with such a meaning and interest, that it may justly be said of it, "what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into man's heart to conceive, God has revealed to us by His Spirit." The acknowledgment of the fact of the cross apart from the doctrine of the cross, is as truly a subversion of the gospel, as the denial of the true divinity of the Lord Jesus. He will not receive the acknowledgment of the glory of His Person, save to exercise judgment, where the glory of His

humiliation is not acknowledged. The preaching of the cross not only sets forth the only way by which a sinner may find remission of sins, peace with God and access to God, but is so essentially connected with the glory of Jesus, that contempt of it is treated as trampling under foot the Son of God. The doctrine of the cross is the special test of our standing before God—to the religious after the Jewish caste, it is “a stumbling-block”; to the philosophical, after the Grecian school, it is “foolishness,” but “to the called, it is the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”

“The heavens declare the glory of God”; they set forth to our senses the power of God and the wisdom of God; and were it not for sin, which has alienated the mind from God, they would carry universally the demonstration of God’s eternal power and Godhead. But man, as a sinner, needs another kind of demonstration, even “the demonstration of the Spirit,” who shows to an awakened conscience, “the power and the wisdom of God” in the humiliation of Jesus. Until there be such demonstration of the Spirit, however clearly it may be supposed that God is read in His works, He is not known as the Creator, “*blessed for ever.*”

The difference between the apostle’s determination to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and *Him crucified*, and the popular creed that Christ *was* crucified, is an essential difference. In the last, credit is given to a well-attested historical fact, but the apostle’s expression comprises the wide range of the thoughts and ways of God. And when these thoughts and ways are brought out in their great results, it is in the triumph of “Him that descended”; it is in the victory of the Lamb slain. “Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood.”

When once the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, as “He that descended,” is perceived, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that there must be a new thought, a new way, and a new order of greatness, corresponding with the glory of the humiliation of Jesus. The human order of greatness is an ascending order. It is the development of the power of mind over matter, so that men

"He that descended."

163.

themselves are startled at the greatness of their achievements. Every step in advance only makes way for further progress. Men think, speak, and act, as though impossibility was to be blotted out of their vocabulary; but their thoughts and ways are in direct antagonism to the thoughts and ways of God. They are "labouring in the fire, and wearying themselves for very vanity, for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." It is not the glory of man, but the glory of God, which is to prevail. In vain are men contending against the purpose and counsel of God; for "the Lord of hosts hath purposed to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth." It is a fearful thing to be found striving against God. We may have marvelled at the stout-heartedness of Pharaoh in refusing to humble himself before God. But when men refuse to submit to the righteousness of God, by going about to establish their own righteousness, it is only another form of stout-heartedness and of insubjection to God. And if God has declared, "Every good and perfect gift is *from above and cometh down* from the Father of Lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," and men are seeking good and perfection by exalting themselves, the issue of such a conflict between God and man, must be as terrible as it is certain. It is to such an issue that all things are now rapidly tending.

There is a wisdom, "earthly" in its origin, and a wisdom "that descendeth from above." The earthly wisdom "has sought out many inventions," but nothing "perfect" results from it. It does not satisfy the craving of man, as a creature; it cannot pacify the conscience of man, as a sinner. It is "the good and perfect gift, that cometh down from above," which alone effects these ends. It is Jesus Himself, the unspeakable gift of God, comprehending in Himself, and in that which He has wrought, that which satisfies the soul, gives peace to the conscience, and access with confidence into the presence of God. It is He who testified, "I am from above, ye are from beneath," who alone could say, "He that cometh to me

shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” This is the divine order—the perfect one *coming from above*—this is the alone order of exaltation. According to this order, “he that exalteth himself shall be abased.” He that exalts himself is traversing the divine order; he is spurning the good and perfect gift; he stands before God as a sinner, under the increased condemnation of “sitting in the seat of the scornful.” He is still attempting to attain blessedness by the *ascending* line, when the coming down of the Son from heaven, and His further humiliation in the death of the cross, declares that it can only be attained in the *descending* line. The peril of the age is that men are turning upside down the gospel of Christ, in order to exalt themselves.

One feature of corruption noticed by the Apostle Jude is that “in those things which men know naturally as brute beasts, they corrupt themselves.” Such a natural knowledge, even of the leading truths of the gospel, is found among professing Christians. There is a natural knowledge of the mercy of God, a natural knowledge of Christ dying for sinners, which men only use to corrupt themselves, by assuming, on the very ground of it, a more proud and independent standing before God than those who are without such knowledge. Such is the fearful aspect before our eyes—man exalting himself by means of the very light which should humble him and lead him to magnify the Lord. Surely “the light is become darkness, and how great is that darkness?”

“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Infidelity and superstition are spreading, and God’s hand lifted up in judgment, and yet men “will not see.” This is, indeed, alarming. But this is not all; the most alarming feature is that of man advancing himself into independence of God, by means of the very light which sets forth “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” This, it is to be feared, is the true character of vaunted Christian civilisation.

There is nothing so dark in the picture of “the perilous days,” portrayed by the apostle Paul, as to alarm

our fears. He does not present us with desolating wars, appalling famine, or ravaging pestilence, but with selfishness, gain and pleasure, under the form of godliness. If this peril is not perceived, if even real Christians have thought that, by mingling with the world, they could elevate and improve it, and by the attempt have lost their own savour—(“wherewithal shall it be salted?”) Christians themselves are not the only sufferers. “A woe is come on *the world*,” because of the offences of Christians. Christians have failed to glory only in the cross of Christ; and thus, instead of “holding forth the word of life in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation,” they have helped on the delusion of the world. The Christian of this favoured land, although a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, may well weep over the actual condition of his country. He sees before him the antagonism of selfishness, capital arrayed against labour, and labour against capital, and the efforts of the wisest powerless to adjust these conflicting claims. He sees gain and godliness almost become convertible terms; and national legislation, and even religion itself, made to bow to the low principle of human convenience. But it belongs not to the Christian to speculate on the decline of nations, except so far as to show the church the magnitude of its sin. “Judgment must begin at the house of God.” Such is the divine order. Let Christians then judge from their own selves what is right. And, if they have helped on human selfishness by failing to exhibit the glory of the humiliation of Jesus, let them at once stand forth in the confession of His name before men, not only for their own souls’ blessing, but for the good of others. We cannot correct selfishness by counter-selfishness, but by testifying to the unselfish love of Jesus, taking up the cross and following Him. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”

PRESBUTES.

[See also Phil. ii. 5-10.—ED.]

Nº. VII.

I SAMUEL XIV.

THE Word of God abounds with instances of the display of God's sovereign mercy. The Old and the New Testaments both illustrate the fact, "He delighteth in mercy." God has His own time to bless; and He chooses that in which most blessing is needed. What lessons do we learn from Israel's history! But, alas! notwithstanding we have all through Scripture our way-marks—our guide-posts—our warnings: we seldom learn till we do so by experience. It matters not that we see examples of God's way of teaching; we must taste the bitter cup ere we thoroughly take heed to our ways.

But it is here we learn, too, the unfailing grace of our God; the grace which unweariedly attends us even in our wanderings, and restores to us the joys of God's salvation.

The period in Israel's history when the mercy of God was shown, which we now purpose giving a few thoughts upon, was that in which the people were proving the value of their course in choosing a king. How certain is that word, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap!" We cannot alter this rule—God's rule. In the change that Israel had effected when they made choice of Saul, doubtless many things, apparently, had been in their favour. They had rid themselves of much that had, in their low state, become irksome and painful; they were in a better position to meet the Philistines, having a visible head and leader; but all they had gained was more than counterbalanced by what they had lost. How poor and feeble were they really, as seen in the thirteenth chapter. The branch that is severed from the tree does not all at once show the signs of death. For a while the leaves retain their verdure; but they soon wither, and the branch soon dies. The splendour of

1 *Samuel* xiv.

167

Saul's first days had already become subdued, and the reality of poverty was taking its place. This was an opportunity to let Israel feel their sin, and know its bitterness in reaping the harvest they had sown; but God, who is rich in mercy, can prevent our full overthrow. When Jonah had fled from the presence of the Lord, and had been proved to be the cause of trouble to the ship's crew; and, in consequence, was thrown overboard, God prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. There are depths, deeper still, that God saves us from; and well would it be for us if one lesson of experience would suffice. "They soon forgot his works;" "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."

In the history before us we see how God's grace will find a channel. If Saul had failed, God could use Jonathan. This He ever does. He is at no loss to make a way for His mercy. In the strait into which Israel had run, and when, to all appearance, help had failed, God uses one who had not been looked up to, and from whom no help had been expected. "Now it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan, the son of Saul, said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison that is on the other side. But he told not his father" (ver. 1). This is one of the happy instances of individual faith accomplishing great things for Israel. David, the man after God's own heart, was not yet in the field. But when is the time in which God cannot bless? All around was withered and dead; but here, in this man, we find that which met Israel's need—a heart not to be held in by circumstances—a heart set upon Israel's good—a heart that could prove God. The danger was great—the courage that was needed great too; but there it was. Impatient under the calamity, Jonathan waited not till others moved; and, unrestrained by the fear of Saul, he acts for God. He brings God into the scene, and he is made bold thereby. His faith was but: "It may be that the Lord will work for us, for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." Still it was the faith of God. It cleared away the clouds, and brought in God. We want more of this: we want to lay hold

on God. Such a faith must have results. It was given to be used; and, being used, it found blessing: "The honey from the rock; the finest of the wheat."

His armour-bearer said unto him, "Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee, behold I am with thee according to thy heart" (ver. 7). Now, I am sure we here find one who, though not possessing the faith of Jonathan—not the faith which makes the start—nevertheless, made a good second to Jonathan. There was the willingness, the courage, the self-denial, to back up the service of the man who had the faith; no despicable qualities. Though he had not originated the work, his heart failed not. How many such are to be found willing to go up to the Philistines' garrison, free to serve God according to their strength. "Two are better than one." Communion in service has much value. Jonathan could now say, "Behold we will now pass over unto these men; and we will discover ourselves unto them." "In the day when every man's work shall be tried, every man will have his reward, according as his work shall be:" Jonathan his; his armour-bearer his, too. Jonathan represents the few; his armour-bearer, the many. The result was victory, still in the same order, for "they fell before Jonathan; and his armour-bearer slew after him" (ver. 13).

"Behold, I have set before thee an open door; and no man can shut it." When we work with God, or rather when God uses us, "the little one becomes a thousand; the small one a strong nation." The "sling and the stone" in the hands of David are better than Saul and his men of war. This was the brilliant day of Jonathan's life. We read in his history of no other like it. Afterwards, linked with Saul, though acknowledging David's claims, he fell with Saul too. A bright beginning does not insure a lasting brightness; alas for us! Still, God will not forget "the climbing up upon hands and feet" to face the enemy when every man's heart failed him. Jonathan had fought on God's side; and it stands on record. To have been used to carry the bread of life to the hungry soul, to have refreshed the thirsty, is recorded in the book of life. It is well when we can say, *now* as well as *then*; and to realise that even now, though

1 *Samuel* xiv.

169

feeble, we are on the same errand as heretofore, is a great mercy. The hands often wax feeble, and the heart grows weary; nevertheless, God keeps in recollection the by-gone labours of his people. "That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armour-bearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were a half-acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plough" (ver. 14). But He who had begun to bless would not stop here. "There was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling" (ver. 15).

Jonathan's faith was honoured. "There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." Let the heart trust in God—bring in God, and who can tell the result? Have we not lost sight of this? What, "Though the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall: yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." May the Lord re-animate those who once did run well! Many strong men have fallen; and it may be that their first strokes of faith were their last. Be it so; "God is not unrighteous to forget their work and labour of love"; but it is much better to be able to say, "Though faint, yet pursuing."

Hitherto the victory had been known only to those who were the valiant men that had fought for it; but soon "Saul and all the people that were with him assembled themselves, and they came to the battle; and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was a very great discomfiture" (ver. 20).

It is important to see, how first one, and then another, felt the value of this day of faith and blessing; and none would be more happy to watch its extended results than those who had gone out almost single-handed and braved the storm. This characterises true faith. "The elder brother" might be angry, and refuse to go in where grace was shining forth in its full glory; still the Father could say, "It was meet that we should make merry

and be glad." It did not redound to the credit of Saul and his men to come up at the time when the battle was well nigh over; still they were welcome to the spoil.

"Moreover the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp from the country round about, even they also turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan" (ver. 21).

There is nothing like a day of blessing for making crooked things straight, and rough places plain. When the sun shines in its strength the plant opens, and the flower spreads itself to catch the rays; but when the chill evening blast comes on, they shrink before it. When the heyday of blessing is on, there is no time for Satan; it is when that is passed that he seeks to renew his hold. In this day of faith, the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time could be recovered. Testimony against evil is a cold thing, and often a very powerless thing, for recovery; but grace—one day of grace—will bring back many a wandering sheep. A famine in the land of Israel *drove away* Naomi; but when she had heard that the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread, she arose that she might return from the country of Moab. Blessing is God's power of attraction.

Again, "Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in mount Ephraim, when they had heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in the battle."

This was a wondrous day; a day of strange things. It brought together the scattered sheep of Israel; and even those that had hid themselves could, in that day, follow hard after the Philistines in the battle.

Jonah was exceedingly glad of the gourd, because, while under its shadow, he might see what would become of Nineveh. But when it was taken away, and the sun beat upon his head he fainted, and wished, in himself, to die; and said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

"Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him!"

We have seen the happy results of Jonathan's faith, in not only his own case but in that of many; and may the Lord renew His former mercies, and give us to taste yet

1 *Samuel* xiv.

171

much of His love: glad for ourselves, and glad for all who are brought thereby to know His love; and, like Jonathan, with unselfish hearts may we rejoice with them that are honoured. Many of us may find here what has been our lot in the day of God's blessing. Some have climbed on hands and feet to face the garrison of the Philistines; and the victory was the reward of their faith. No small victory either; for God was reached—truth recovered—and spoil taken. Others, like Saul and his men, late in the field, from a state of inaction, nevertheless have found a share in it all. Others, from among the Philistines, have gathered to the fight, and have had their portion in God's salvation. And, last of all, those who aforetime had hid themselves, have known a fresh start, and have shown courage to follow hard after the Philistines in the battle. When God redeemed Israel out of the hands of Pharaoh "There was not a feeble person in their tribes." Not so much as a dog moved his tongue against them.

We come now to a painful part of the narrative, and to see how different a thing it is to hold fast that which we have. God's mercies bring with them fresh responsibilities; and it is here that we almost always prove our failure. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh."

"The men of Israel were distressed that day; for Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of Israel tasted any food" (ver. 24).

Saul had been chosen king, and he had undertaken to be the shepherd of Israel; but alas! how constantly do we find him hindering blessing. He saw in this day a day to *avenge himself* of his enemies. God saw in it a day of *salvation for Israel*. His heart, alienated from God, could have no fellowship with His thoughts. I take it that the real apostasy of Christendom consists in this, that it has perverted the right ways of the Lord, and that it has marred the gospel of God's grace—spoiled the remedy so far as in it lies. It is true, that in every way, practically, there is a departure from God; for worldliness, pride, unholiness in all forms, dwell in the

great house. But the worst feature of all is, that God having sent His only begotten Son into the world, and made him to be sin for us who knew no sin;—that this great love should have been by man supplanted—and that the forms and rites and sacraments, etc., of human appointment should have been made to supply its place. It is the contrariety of man's heart to God's love to man, and an apostate Christianity that has set itself to hide God and His grace. "The men of Israel were distressed that day."

The proper state of a soul now under God's grace is peace with God; joy in God; the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father! "It is a day of good tidings."—Man has made it, under the name of Christianity, the very opposite. A true Israelite's heart, in the times of refreshment such as this, and other deliverances, was infinitely happier than the heart of man now under the blighting effect of a false gospel.—Saul has stepped in to stop the joy.

There was one, however, who, away in service to God, was out of the reach of this interference. There was one who could and did put forth his hand and dip his rod into the honeycomb. It was Jonathan. True simple service to God in faith has its blessing in many ways. It carries a man off from the bondage of human systems; and his heart is free while others may be bound. He has his own personal joys, as well as those resulting from being used of God in making others happy. I am sure that he who is found laying himself out to do good to others will lack no good thing. The Lord, under the gospel, does not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Alas for Saul, that he should thus have marred the happiness of that day! Jonathan could say—"How much more if haply the people had eaten freely to-day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines? And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon, and the people were very faint" (ver. 30, 31).

There is a solemn responsibility to retain the blessing

when given; and to follow it out to its full results. Few, perhaps, have attained to this. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." I have often dreaded the position of Saul, as seen in this chapter, lest one should by any means obstruct the channel of mercy to others, and cut short a day of good things. "These sheep, what have they done?"

Confusion was the result. "The people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep and oxen and calves, and slew them upon the ground, and the people did eat them with the blood" (ver. 32).

The faith and courage of heart in Jonathan were equal to the war with the Philistines; and were equal to the bringing of Israel together to join in the victory and to share the spoil; but all this could be marred and spoiled by the act of Saul, who had no fellowship with God. A hard unbroken heart is often stricter in its forms, less irregular, more apparently straightforward, and even consistent, than the man of faith, who knows not what human restraint means, but who, like Jonathan, walks in happy ignorance of the bonds that enslave others.

Saul enquires of God—but He answers him not that day. There is a cause somewhere. He applies himself to seek it out. No burden weighed on his own conscience; no sense of his own failure. There is a cause, but, alas! he saw not where the evil lay. So Ahab, when he met Elijah, said, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" His own hand had wrought the evil.

This you find constantly in Saul. He is the last to say, "I am the man." But, indeed, it is the failure of human nature; and who is free from it? Grace does, indeed, overrule it, and the surest proof of God's work upon the heart is found in true open confession of our sins. After Jonathan was taken by lot, "Saul said to Jonathan, What hast thou done? And he said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and lo I must die. And Saul answered, God do so and more also, for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan" (ver. 43, 44).

I think we have here an important principle. I am at

a loss to express my thoughts; apparently, Saul was in the right. He had adjured the people, and the curse was upon the head of Jonathan. Consistency required his death. If you stand where Saul stands, you can only see that Jonathan must die. But remove your ground. Look from the point where Jonathan's faith had carried him. See him climbing upon his hands and his feet in the exercise of that faith which "waxes valiant in fight and puts to flight the armies of the aliens," and then ask whether or not, in the hour of such blessing, Saul's adjuring of the people chimed in with the glory of that day? Spiritual discernment would have kept him from such an act at such a time; and nothing could be more inappropriate than that the one who, early in the morning, had fought on the side of God, should fall a victim to Saul's oath. Still, Saul did not see it. He would have put to death the man that had wrought with God that day. The Lord deliver us from that cold-hearted systematic adjustment of right and wrong, which would thus make the tasting of a little honey, at such a time, an unpardonable sin!—On the other hand, may he save us from calling evil good—from a carelessness which would make light of the practical precepts of God's word!

"And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid; as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground, for he hath wrought with God this day" (ver. 45).

Such an outburst of true-heartedness to Jonathan speaks well for the people. But Saul was out of communion with God; and consequently every act was perverse. The people had been brought to know and own God and his servant. This is beyond all precept. I have before remarked, as to the fact of this being the brilliant day of Jonathan's life. The influence of Saul upon him, necessarily strong, seems to have paralysed him. If he loved David, he must do it in disguise, and he must hide it from Saul. The cold grasp of Saul could chill the heart of the one who flinched not before a garrison of Philistines. Samson, who could rend a lion

as he would have rent a kid—who could burst the cords that were upon his arms as though they had been flax burnt with fire—under the enticings of Delilah, became as another man. We need to be preserved on every hand; we need the same grace, the same heart of love, that could say to Peter, “I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.”

M.

FRAGMENT.

IF any one thought they knew how to measure Eve's blessedness and position, and only measured it by her relationship to Adam as an *individual*—the help meet for him, they would give *short measure*, far shorter than the measure given by another whose line and cord took in both the *whereabouts* of Adam's position in a garden of delights, fashioned for him by God, etc., and the *who* and the *what* Adam was as connected with the Maker of Adam and of those scenes. Just so: sweet as it is to the heart and mind to feel, I am part of a body, the Church, which is to be the companion of Christ—which has His heart's love poured out upon it, and who looks for a return to it—I need to remember the *where* this Blessed One is to be displayed, and the *who* and *what* He is, if I would at all enter into the blessedness of being a member of this Church. He is the channel, and centre, and end of every display which God has made for Himself by His various attributes—the Son and Revealer of the Father—the opener of His blessed house.

And such is this Son, that when none, of men, clave to Him as Son of man here on earth, the Father glorified Him with the glory which He had with Him before the world was; and in the Church will be found God's paradise or garden of delights, all that will meet His mind and Christ's—the very expression of His own thought.

N^o. VIII.

THE PRESENT TESTIMONY.

THE thoughts of many, at the present moment, about the testimony of God, appear to me to savour rather of the personal considerations, as to *where they have been*, and *what they have been doing*, than to present a fair expression of what is true as to *God* and *His* present testimony.

The grace of God, in the last of these days, found us all, whom indeed it has found, dwelling in a moral Babylon; and there the cry was heard, "Come out of her, my people!" And who, that has replied to the call, "I come, Lord," has not found both the inextricable character of the labyrinth, out of which, through grace, he desired to escape, and his own complicity, alas! with the evil of the place?

To move from one street to another in that mystic city is readily allowed; and it is comparatively easy, if expensive, so to do. But none, except He who is stronger than the lord of that city, can bring clean out of it any of those who have been born there, and have thus become "dwellers upon the earth":—"dwellers upon the earth" in *avowed* obedience to the name of Christ, and holders of citizenship "where Satan's seat is," *professedly* in the fear of the Lord.

Speaking as a man, I might say, the Roman circus—the Grecian quadrangle—the Seven-dials of Protestantism—the colleges, schools, and triangle of Non-conformity—the model buildings of Separatism—the All-Saints Hall of the Evangelical Alliance, which goes not beyond "a Pandect;" present not one of them a "Pella," or a "Zoar," in regard to Babylon. What outward place does? True: and yet, if a man has heard a cry, "Come out of her, my people"; and that by a voice whose call is *never in vain*; he must be cautious, and get out, lest he be lost in the confusions of the place. And the more caution will be needed, with minds like ours,

so prone to self-deception in the things of God. Alas! when one has been roused to action, how frequently does the heart confound the thought, "I have done something," with "I have done thy will, O God." But who needs be told that these are often far from being equivalent?

I do not press the applicability of the doctrine of the Babylon of "Revelation;" yet I note *the fact*, that the Spirit of God has commonly used it on consciences, when he has been leading His people to reform themselves. See, for example, in the days of Luther, and of the Nonconformists, and the movement of to-day.

But a word as to the so-called present testimony. I will state in simplicity, for myself individually, what *I* mean by the present testimony, in which, and of which, I desire grace to be found; and, at the same time I must say, I deeply deplore that many beloved children of God either do not see its existence, or make light of it altogether.

No better introduction of my subject occurs to me than the well-known but much abused catechismal term—"THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH."

While God was teaching earthly truths and *government*, the Jew was His subject: but, when heavenly truth became the theme, Christ and His grace in the church became the subject.

God *established* upon earth the counterpart and witness of what was in his counsel for the heavens—a church; and the word of God's grace was about that church; see Paul's conversion. In connection with the church, the individual believer found his *position*, his privileges, and his responsibilities. It was to be on earth as a widow, Christ-expectant, and serving the living and true God until the Saviour and Lord came back.

I do not go into the question, what is the church? All I assert is, God did establish one; and I ask, Where is it?

Chef d'œuvre of God's workmanship, it came out to light when the Son of man, rejected by all from earth, had found His seat at the right hand of the Father. His God and Father has not changed His truth, nor recalled

it yet to give it another form; nor has He changed the place of the Son of man upon the Father's throne.

The "chaste virgin" on earth, espoused to a Heavenly Lord, as a widow waiting—where is she? Nay; all is changed here, in her appearance, from what once it was; and because of man's utter unfaithfulness we were found, if found by grace at all, in Babylon. But found *by whom*, except by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who retains Him still as Son of man upon the Father's throne. The position and revelation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are not changed; nor will change (blessed be God) to please us and our narrow thoughts. Divine and heavenly truth about the Son and His church, is still the standing form of God's present display of Himself.

Now what I want is, to be broken down in myself, and in all that I have and am, by this divine and fatherly love, and to be made to realize, and to exhibit, in the midst of the ruin and wreck of the church here below; that the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ is still acting down here upon earth as the God and Father of the Son of man, who is at His right hand in the glory which He had with Him before the world was, and *who has a body down here*. The claims of God, and the blessing of my own soul, require this.

It is clear *I cannot*, if I would, break up the truth given to me as one here below;—I cannot, because I cannot change God's revelation of Himself, nor the position which His Christ holds, until the church is all gathered at the Father's right hand.

The discovery of this truth tells me *where I am not*, and *what I am not*. It tells of man's utter failure, and of circumstances so changed down here, partly the effects of our wickedness, and partly the effects of the moral judgment of God thereon,—that one finds it is God alone can soften one down to the platform of His grace;—a platform where all the heavenly divine light of the Son of man, upon the Father's throne, meets the conscience of a member of His body in a place where all is confusion and sin.

"The obedience of faith" how precious in such a

The Present Testimony.

179

position! The knowledge of which involves that God and His truth are not changed; and if the circumstances down here proper to it are changed, God will accept the integrity which seeks to find and to do His will, and He will give guidance to such; though He may leave to their own wisdom those who, because they have failed themselves want to make out, either that He is also changed; or that, if not changed in Himself or in His truth, He is not, as the living God, *acting upon that truth now*. No measure short of Christ and the church is our *gospel*; and God is acting upon that truth, and I do most simply, therefore, ask that I may find grace in his sight, not only to know Himself and His truth, but to know myself livingly associated with Him as the living God in His present action. Blessed also is the truth to such a one of the Lordship of Jesus: *i. e.* that He is not Saviour only, but Lord of All also.

I believe it to be a very great sin, and a grief and a dishonour to the Holy Ghost, to deny the church of the living God, and a corrupting of the gospel. To make little of what God is doing, as the living God, is a sin too; and this is what they are guilty of who make little of present association with Him as the God so acting. Who would turn back from "the Father," and "the Son of man upon the Father's throne;" the Father acting for the members of the body of that Son—to grace and mercy as fitted for a soul itself in *its* dangers and needs? Blessed is the gospel which calls a sinner, and the grace which suits a saint; but I am speaking of the *responsibility* of unexampled infinite grace.

I believe it to be horrid dishonour put upon *oneself* to be thinking merely of one's own soul, or even of the souls of poor sinners and saints around one, if it be to the forgetting of the central truth; GOD's central truth—of His delight in Christ and His church.

I need hardly say, I do not sanction any disparagement of any babe's attainment in thus speaking. I speak not of such; but I speak of those who, professing to be "somewhat," and to be making progress into a fuller light and liberty, would set the gospel as their more

excellent employment ; or who would put aside the thought of a "present testimony" for the gospel's sake.

Now my assertion is clear—the man of God, who has to do individually with the living God in *His* gospel, knows that gospel to be about Christ and the church ; and that, much as man has failed, God, as the living God, holds to that gospel ; and holds men of God to see their failure ; and if walking with Him as the living God, to own the scope of the truth first given, and to seek from God power to live out, amid all the wreck and ruin, as integral parts of that body, the Head of which is in heaven, and so to be associated, and consistently associated, with God's present testimony for Himself. And all I would say is, that if God is ready to vindicate Himself against man and Satan in upholding a few individuals after that sort—may I be one !

GOD IS GOD.

YEs, be the world ever so godless,—God is God still ; be the professing church ever so ungodly, God is God still ; be the people of God ever so little godly, still God is God. This *mere* truism, then, that "God is God," is a very practical truth for us where we are. And it has a whole volume of truth in it, not only as to man's walk in the wilderness, but as being at the very root, and forming the very core, of the gospel itself.

Nº. IX.

THE CHURCH OF GOD.

Is it by accident (an accident of no importance) that the term (which is become in our days almost the sole designation for the church, namely, the church *of Christ*) is nowhere to be found in the New Testament; whereas the very expression, “the church of God” is met with seven times? This does not imply that the church is not Christ’s, as well as God’s. That it is so, is too plain to require a proof. Though it would be established, if doubted, by what is written in John xvii. 9, 10; and xvi. 15.

But it is of all importance, in a time such as the present, to weigh deliberately the very words of God (*ipsissima verba*); especially upon such a subject as that of *the church*. Now, according to the word, there is something special as to the kind of relationship of Christ with the church, which can only be understood by entering into the scriptural force of the expression, “The church of *God*.”

When the Spirit speaks of the church as belonging to Christ, He is most careful to set forth this truth in *such* a way as to make us see that the church has for Christ all the savour of His Father’s name upon it; and that, as to ourselves, never should we think of it without remembering its close and inseparable relationship with Him as the Son of God. To say the church is Christ’s would be too feeble an expression. What the Spirit of God desires is, that the nature and closeness of the relationship should be recognised as well as its existence. Communion and mutual sympathy are expressed by both of these. The Spirit speaks of the church as the “body of Christ”; “the Lamb’s wife”; or as that which belongs to Christ because it belongs to His Father, etc.

This is seen by the following passages: Eph. i. 22, 23; v. 24—32; Col. i. 18, 24; Apoc. xxi. and xxii., etc.; but never once is the expression “the church of Christ” employed. When the church is spoken of as belonging

to Christ, it is as "the body" which is absolutely necessary to the Head; as "the wife" which expresses a relationship necessarily existing where there is a husband, etc. The following are the seven passages in which the Spirit speaks to us of the church as being the church of God:—

"Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers, to feed the church of God" (Acts xx. 28).

"Paul . . . to the *church of God* . . . to them that are sanctified in Jesus . . . Grace . . ." (1 Cor. i. 2).

"Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the *church of God*." (1 Cor. x. 32.)

"Despise ye the *church of God*?" (1 Cor. xi. 22.)

"I am the least of the apostles, which am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted *the church of God*." (1 Cor. xv. 9.)

"Beyond measure I persecuted *the church of God*." (Gal. i. 13.)

"If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?"^a (1 Tim. iii. 5.)

"The house of God, which is *the church of the living God*, the pillar and ground of the truth. And, without

^a Another remark may be added. That the scripture, in speaking of the churches (or gatherings) in different places, makes use of the following expressions:—

"The churches of God (1 Cor. xi. 16);—of God, which are in Christ Jesus (1 Thess. ii. 14, and 2 Thess. i. 4);—of the saints (1 Cor. xiv. 33);—which were in Christ (Gal. i. 22); and the churches of Christ" (Rom. xvi. 16).

I do not know of the Lord Jesus once saying, "MY CHURCH," except it be in the following passage, "And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter [*Petros*, in Greek], and on this rock [*Petra*, in Greek] I will build *my* church." But here (Matt. xvi. 16) it is rather speaking of a testimony to be given to the world, and upon earth, than of anything else. He whose title is King of kings for the earth has been rejected by the Jews, the subjects of His kingdom here below: but there, at the right hand of God, His title of King is acknowledged; and it is most evident also in this world to those who are the friends of the King. For though the subjects of the King are in rebellion against Him, and though He has been driven out of the world, He has friends who love Him and who own His title. He admits them into

The Church of God.

183

controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. iii. 15.)

Many things are disclosed to us in this last verse. "Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh; justified in the Spirit; seen of angels; preached unto the Gentiles; believed on in the world; and received up into glory." The words "God was manifest in the flesh," do not give the meaning of the "mystery of godliness" if they are separated from what follows. Though many do so read them and would have it so; as though the expression, "the mystery of godliness" were synonymous with the person of the God-man, and as though that which is intended by the one expression were the same as that which is intended by the other. If it were so, the child Jesus in the cradle, or Jesus on the cross, would present to us the meaning of this expression, "the mystery of godliness." But in the verse which is now before us, there are, after the expression "God was manifest in the flesh," five other characteristic terms, namely, 1. "justified in the Spirit;" 2. "seen of angels"; 3. "preached unto the Gentiles"; 4. "believed on in the world"; and 5. "received up into glory." That is to say, the God-man, in *His present position*, is the meaning of this mystery. The God-man has now been received up into a certain glory. The Word teaches us that many things are waiting for Him to do when He leaves this His present position. But He is now received up into glory. "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory." Without a question, it is Christ that is spoken of here; but Christ in such a manifestation of Him as supposes the church; the church as that which God has formed of Him, by Him, and for Him.

His counsels, and He strengthens and encourages them. There is that which one has well named, "The kingdom in mystery"; and it is the church under this point of view, as the church bound up with the government of the heavens, which is brought before us here.

All things are, in a sense,^a of Him, by Him, and for Him (Rom. xi. 36); but the church is so in a way peculiar to itself. There is a relationship between God in *His eternal state*, in that eternity which belongs to Him, and the church, which distinguishes it in a way peculiarly its own. Of not one of the divine works besides, is it said in the word that it is the expression of His counsel *before the world was*; of His election *before the foundation of the world*. Whilst beyond all controversy it is so stated of the church; but, I repeat it, *of it alone*.^b

In the following passages, Exodus ii. 22—25; iii. 15; vi. 3—8; Lev. xxvi. 42; Deut. xxx. 20; Neh. ix. 7; Ps. cv. 8—10; Ez. xvi. 60; and especially Rom. xi. 28; we see that God, when speaking of the blessing of the Jews, hardly^c ever goes further back than to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with whom He had formed a covenant which the wickedness of the nation could not disannul. Abraham was called to turn from idolatry to walk with the true God (Gen. xii.; Deut. vi. 4; Isa. xliii. 12; Jer. xxiv. 15); and God shows His faithfulness to the call which He Himself addressed to Abraham. Nevertheless we are never told of the blessing of the Jews as being the result of a divine counsel and choice formed before the world was, and as such to be looked upon by us.

Again, as to the nations, we see the faithfulness of God in His *providential* arrangements; for we find the

^b Perhaps we might go even further. For, if I am right, the eternal counsel, which preceded, without doubt, the things which are for the earth, though never openly declared, is nevertheless *found* where these things on earth are found, at the close, in the presence of the church glorified. For example, never were the Jews plainly told that the ark of the tabernacle of witness, of Moses, Jerusalem, the twelve patriarchs, were the expressions of God's counsel before the world was—of His choice before the foundation of the world. Never was such a thing openly declared. Nevertheless, in the Apocalypse, when the glory of the church is brought out, we find the ark (xi. 19), the twelve patriarchs (xxi. 12), Jerusalem (xxi. and xxii.), all in unison with the church, which church was the expression of His counsel formed before the foundation of the world.

^c I say, "*hardly ever*" because of Deut. xxxii. 8, which goes back as far as Noah.

The Church of God.

185

very same distribution which He made of the nations in the day of Noah (Gen. x.) again in Ezekiel; and in like manner the providence of God is ever bearing Him witness (Ps. xix.; Matt. v. 45); nevertheless, His providence is never spoken of to us as being the result of His divine counsel and choice before the world was, and as such to be looked upon by us.

Again, the world is that which bears witness to the creative power of God (according to Rom. i.). The way in which God introduces the history of the creation is this: "In the beginning God created," etc.; nevertheless this creation is never held out to us as being the recognised result of the divine counsel and choice before the world was, and as such to be looked upon by us. But it is not so with the church. When desiring to set before us what is the power and the blessedness^d distinctive to the church, God begins thus:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [This is plainly before Gen. i. 1, as the Creator is before his creation.] All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father."

"And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace (*χαρις αντι χαριτος*)^e. Grace and truth came

^d 2 Tim. i. 10. Life and immortality were brought to light through the gospel.

^e "Grace for grace."—This sentence can be translated word for word: "Grace for grace;" but the import of *αντι* is such that it might be translated in either of two ways—1st. For every grace that is found in Him, He imparts to us a corresponding grace; that is to say, that the eternal life and the divine nature which He communicates to us have a correspondence to the eternal life and the divine nature which He Himself possesses, in some such way as a new-born babe has a life and nature corresponding to those of its parent. 2dly, Taking *αντι* in its other sense, the same sentence may be rendered "Grace upon, or following, grace"; that is to say, that grace is the character of all the communications which God makes to His people. I prefer the first of these two meanings.

by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the Only Begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John i. 1—4, 14, 16—18).

We find ourselves then here in quite another sphere, whether we consider the sphere of the creation (including all created things); or, again, that of providence (with its ordinances for the seasons, etc.); or, even that of the family of Abraham, who was upon earth the individual whom God had chosen and set apart for Himself from amongst idolators. What we have in the opening of John's gospel, as cited, is the glory of God shewn to us as in His own self, eternal life in Him through whom God alone has ever revealed it; and this life declared to be communicable to whomsoever God wills. It is the fountain of living water whose source is in God, and which pours itself forth through the church. It is then, impossible to find any beginning for the church without going back to Him who was in the beginning. It is His glory which John is shewing to us in the three first verses of his first epistle.

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life; for the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and do shew unto you that Eternal Life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us; that which we have heard and seen declare we unto you; that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

This is the way, peculiarly its own, in which the church is OF GOD. It has its beginning in Him who was from the beginning: for as the body could not exist without the head, as there would be no meaning in a bride without a bridegroom, so the church could have no existence without Him who is the Son of God.

If I am right, it seems to me that here is the reason why the counsels of God, formed before the world was, are so naturally brought in the moment that the church appears.

The Church of God.

187

“Before the foundation of the world,” is declared, or said, of the love which the Father bore to the Son (John xvii. 24); and (Eph. i. 4.) it is also said of our election in Christ; and (1 Pet. i. 20.) of the Lamb the Redeemer, or the Head of redemption.

Perhaps some explanation of the difference in the four cases of which we have spoken, may be found in the truths contained in the different names under which God reveals Himself. First of all we find Elohim, the name of God, in the first chapter of Genesis, and it is Elohim who reveals Himself as Creator through the means of the creation. These are the things which are seen, and it is by their means that the Creator reveals Himself to us. Next, He makes himself known as Jehovah, the God of providence, by the care which He has for His own. We see this in His way of acting after Noah left the ark, He revealed His name in the system which He set up. And, lastly, the name by which God reveals Himself to Abraham is El-Shaddai, the God whose bosom contains every blessing for His people, then only an earthly people.

In the kingdom of creation as well as that of providence, we have, it is true, blessed and glorious testimonies to the divine attributes; but it is God revealing Himself by His attributes in the things which He Himself has *created*, and which must ever remain entirely below Himself and His own state of blessedness.

In the name of God, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (the nursing-place as well as the birth-place of the church), there is a difference which distinguishes it from every other. The value of this name is eternal and divine; it is before all creation, and even before all revelation. It expresses relationship within the bosom of Divinity itself—the Word was with God and was God.

In the Divine foreknowledge all was foreseen. It is needless to repeat it; as it is said in Acts xv. 18, “Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.”

God, when bringing before us creation, providence, and the call of the Jews, saw it good to do so in the light of His actions; but the church it was His good pleasure to

present to us in the light of His choice and His counsels. Now, it is our wisdom to look upon everything, even to the least detail, in the manner in which God has taught it to us; for surely His way is wiser than our's. But, in order to enter into the height and depth of this truth (that the church is of God), we must meditate upon John xvii.; Rom. viii.; Eph. i., ii., iii.; Col. i., ii., iii., and 1 John, etc.

May God bless us graciously, and open our hearts more and more to these precious truths!

THOUGHTS.

THE expression of a thought always tells what the holder of it is.

God, Satan, and man, may express each one his thoughts upon a given subject. Each of them would, as certainly as the thought was expressed, reveal himself in the thought so expressed, and not only the measure (correct or incorrect) of that about which the expression is.

We see God's, Satan's, and men's thoughts about Job, in the book of that name; and Job's own, too, about himself.

God's alone were according to truth, and infallible; and all the rest were wrong, or only partially right. But God's thoughts revealed the character of the speaker, as much as did Satan's his character, and of men, each his own.

Moses gave his thoughts about Israel, once and again. So did God give his, and Satan his, and Israel its own. Each speaker, at least showed out himself;—though only one told the truth perfectly, according to divine light.

What a different thing a saint is as thought of by Christ, by Satan, by the world, by himself.

And what a contrast between John xvii. and Rev. xii. in this connection. Christ talking to His Father about His disciples, and Satan accusing the brethren!

Nº. X.

REMARKS ON REV. I. 1, 2.

THE name by which many, if not most, commonly designate this book is that of "The Revelations."^a That there are several revelations in the book may be true enough; but the use of the term in the plural (The Revelations) as the name of the book, is calculated to mislead, and seems unhappy, seeing that Divine Wisdom has judged it right to begin the book with the words, if not designation, "The revelation of Jesus Christ, (i. 1) which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass," etc.

There is something very definite and distinct in this expression: "The revelation of Jesus Christ" (which God gave unto Him to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass), which is lost and veiled by the use of the other more vague name of "The Revelations."

The expression, "The revelation of Jesus Christ," whether in English or in Greek, may mean either of two things, viz.: The revelation *of* (in the sense of "about, concerning") Jesus Christ—the manifestation of the person of Christ somewhere; or (if *of* is taken in such a sense as "belonging to, made through, connected with") the revelation which belongs to Jesus Christ.

^a The extent to which this name is accepted, and is in common use, is remarkable. The origin of its adoption is not so easy to find out. Wicliff's edition of 1380, as also the Rheims of 1582, uses the word Apocalypse; Tyndale (1534), Cranmer (1539), Geneva (1557), and the Authorized Version (1611) have "Revelation." Most modern Bibles have (as some of the above also) "The Revelation of John the Divine,"—a title as objectionable, or nearly so, as that of "The Revelations." Of those near me, "The Critical New Testament, Greek and English," *alone* gives "Revelations" as the heading or running name of it.

I am not aware that anything can be built upon the meaning of the word as found in Greek, *apokalupsis*,^b or of the word *apokalupto*, to the which *apokalupsis* is related. Both are used to express *the showing forth*

^b For the facility of reference I give the occurrences of both the words; setting an asterisk before those in which the word, as a matter of fact, is spoken as of a person. I build nothing thereon myself.

- Matt. 10 : 26 that shall not *be revealed*;
 11 : 25 *hath revealed* them unto babes.
 27 to whomsoever the Son will *reveal* (him)
 16 : 17 flesh and blood hath not *revealed* (it)
- Luke 2 : 35 of many hearts may be *revealed*;
 10 : 21 *hath revealed* them unto babes
 22 to whom the Son will *reveal* (him).
 12 : 2 covered, that shall not be *revealed* ;
- * 17 : 30 when the Son of Man *is revealed*.*
- John 12 : 38 arm of the Lord been *revealed* ?
- Rom. 1 : 17 is the righteousness of God *revealed* from faith
 18 the wrath of God is *revealed* from heaven
 8 : 18 Glory which shall *be revealed* in us.
- 1 Cor. 2 : 10 God *hath revealed* (them) to us
 3 : 13 it shall *be revealed* by fire ;
 14 : 30 If (anything) *be revealed* to another
- Gal. 1 : 16 To *reveal* His Son in me, that I might preach
 Him among the heathen.
 3 : 23 which should afterward *be revealed*.
- Eph. 3 : 5 as it is now *revealed* unto His holy Apostles
- Phil. 3 : 15 God shall *reveal* even this unto you
- * 2 Thess. 2 : 3 that man of sin *be revealed* ;*
- * 6 that He might *be revealed* in His own time *
- * 8 then shall that wicked *be revealed* ;*
- 1 Pet. 1 : 5 ready to *be revealed* in the last
 12 unto whom it *was revealed*,
 5 : 1 The glory which shall *be revealed* :
- Apokalupsis.*
- Luke 2 : 32 a light to *lighten* (*i. e. reveal*) the Gentiles. [The
 idea here is not that they *received light*, but
 were themselves *brought to light*.]
- Rom. 2 : 5 *revelation* of the righteous judgment
- * 8 : 19 *manifestation* of the sons of God.*
- 16 : 25 the *revelation* of the mystery.
- * 1 Cor. 1 : 7 waiting for *the coming* of our Lord
 14 : 6 speak to you either by *revelation*
 26 hath a tongue, hath a *revelation*
- 2 Cor. 12 : 1 visions and *revelations* of the Lord.
 7 abundance of the *revelations*
- Gal. 1 : 12 by the *revelation* of Jesus Christ

Remarks on Rev. i. 1, 2.

191

plainly, or, in an *uncovered way*—in a way in which there is *no veil*—doctrine, truth, thoughts, events, righteousness, glory, wrath, persons, etc. *Taking the cover from, uncovering, discovering* being the primary idea.

The question arises as to the expression, “The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass,” (as much in the English as in the Greek,) what is “the revelation” or “uncovering”? 1stly. Is it an uncovering or discovering of some position, or of some service of the person of the Lord Himself, which God gave Him to make known to His servants? 2ndly. Or, Is it the revelation of certain things which God gave Him to communicate? 3rdly. Or, As the whole unravelling of things to come, which are not known, hangs upon the positions and services of the person of the Lord, is it both the one and the other? The statement contained in the last suggestion, is at all events I conceive true, and there is an absolute connection of all the *things which must shortly come to pass* with certain *positions* and certain *services* of the Lord Himself, the presenting without a veil of which positions and services, as being held by the Lord Jesus, enters very largely into that which is distinctively peculiar to this book.

Whether it be the uncovering (presenting without a veil) of His person, in certain positions and services, which God gave to Him to show; or, whether it be the uncovering (presenting without a veil) of certain things connected with certain positions and services He is found in, in this book—two things seem to me clear. First, the expression, “*which God gave to Him to show,*” is

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|------------|-------|--|
| Gal. | 2: 2 | I went up by <i>revelation</i> , |
| Eph. | 1: 17 | the Spirit of wisdom and <i>revelation</i> . |
| | 3: 3 | by <i>revelation</i> He made known |
| * 2 Thess. | 1: 7 | when the Lord Jesus <i>shall be revealed</i> * |
| * 1 Pet. | 1: 7 | glory at <i>the appearing</i> of Jesus * |
| * | 13 | at <i>the revelation</i> of Jesus Christ * |
| | 4: 13 | when His glory shall be <i>revealed</i> |
| Rev. | 1: 1 | The <i>revelation</i> of Jesus Christ |

a most remarkable one—one which is hardly consistent with the quiet assumption that this book (however much it may have in common with the Old Testament prophecies, or with revelations made in the New Testament Epistles) has nothing distinctively peculiar to itself, and *new* as its matter. Second, the tenor of the book does present much altogether peculiar, and which I think I may safely say was unknown previously.

Who knew, for instance, of the Saviour Jah, the Anointed (Jesus Christ), as walking amid the candlesticks? Who knew Him (the churches ready to be spued out of His mouth) seated in heaven, and all that was God's secure in Him there, as Himself the centre, spring and regulator of the arrangements both for Israel's preparation, trials, and finding again, and for the breaking up of Gentilism, etc. God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, and God's ways are not as our ways.

The law was not the Gospel; and yet the Giver of the Law had, as it were, the Gospel ever in His mind, and before Him in His conduct. And every fragment of the law and its testimony confirms to him who knows the gospel the gospel's Divine origin and our need of it. So again, the revelation of *the mystery* through Paul, was a putting into our hands of a key which had a gap here, and a gap there—a wall here and a wall there—which found their corresponding counter walls and gaps in the Old Testament scriptures; though the mystery itself had never been revealed previously; but as there is a glory terrestrial and a glory celestial, so both of these having but one centre, viz., the person of the Lord, they answer the one to the other; and the more recently revealed part in no way sets aside the other. New it is in revelation, yet, by revelation, found to be old; for without it the earthly glory never could be set up.

I cannot but think the Apocalypse, in somewhat similar manner, contains matter (its own distinctive, peculiar matter), which was altogether new to John in Patmos. And I conceive it needs but little attention, under divine teaching, to see that while certain things were most clearly announced in the epistles as coming to pass, "*the how* these things were to be" was left *in enigma* until

John was in Patmos. Samson's abstractedly put "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness,"—was received by the Philistines as a truth—but who of *them* could say, "What is sweeter than honey, what stronger than a lion?" until they had ploughed with his heifer. Who of us could have traced from epistles or from previously given scripture, the truths revealed in the Apocalypse.

Let any one examine Rom. xi., for instance, and 1 Cor. x. 1,^c and he will find that he is debtor to the Lord, through another than Paul, for the power to trace out *the order* in which things spoken of in these two portions would come to pass. And where, in Paul's writings, would any of us find the display of the person of Christ in services and offices connected with the transition from one state of things to another as in the Apocalypse?

No; this unveiling, this uncovering, as we have it *here*, God gave unto Jesus Christ that He might shew unto His servants things which must quickly come to pass. At the time of communicating, through Paul, things were not ripe for the revelation which we have here given to us through John. Not only, as I judge, was Paul chosen for another testimony, but also the time was not come for the testimony in Paul's day. The word could still flow forth fresh, addressed "to the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus," but the time would come when (all that Paul has written being still left for the obedience of faith and for the church of Christ, which should never fail, but would be manifested in its parts here below, through the whole progress of time), churches, as such, would come into judgment, and would even be set aside; and then a fresh-given word might

^c See Rom. xi. The topic is the *channel* of testimony. The Jew had been the channel of testimony—others were so at that day. The Jew should again become so, and the uttermost parts of the earth should be blest with him. In 1 Cor. x., it is (alas!) the testimony raised from among the believing Jews and Gentiles, ending in failure, as the Jews had. In Rev. ii. and iii. it is the churches as such, candlesticks, coming into judgment. These distinctions are important, though, in a sense, one end is common to them all.

take this form, as addressed through "a servant" (His servant John) to "servants,"—"To him that hath an ear to hear," etc. Those that were called out to be saints and faithful in Christ Jesus, might, in Paul's day, form churches in various places; churches which had a responsibility in testimony and light-giving, of which they could not divest themselves. Clearly, to be one of such a place, a part of such a thing, while God was holding it responsible and was present to help it, was a very different position from that of one whose lot might be cast in a day when the churches were looked upon as falling or fallen, and when, consequently, instead of the shelter of a formed church, owned of God, each of the servants, each one that had an ear to hear must withdraw himself from all evil, and realise what measure of communion he could with those who still really served God. Now it is just with the calling in question of the churches as churches that the book opens; and the visit of the Lord to His suffering servant John, in Patmos, seems to me something new, over and above what we find in the epistles.

And mark it, separation, through the faith, was at the first unto obedience. God revealed what would separate unto Himself and produce fruits of obedience. When a large mass has taken up the profession of being so separated through faith, but their works denied it—the pressing of this serving the living and true God—the raising the questions, "Who is a servant?" "Who hath an ear to hear?" became a test. And it was a very solemn one, as to the churches themselves, for it was urged, not merely upon individuals merely inside a church, but in connection with the churches still standing as candlesticks but about to be removed.

The possession of eternal life; the occupation of a position of testimony, to the which position many a privilege attached, and the serving of God, the living and true God, were three things which, though unhappily possible to separate, were most naturally and happily united in one in the early Christians. When the churches were failing, and in principle failed, Christ in whom were the spring and claims, as to these three things, came

in afresh. As having set up a testimony for God, he was responsible to judge. A sort of analytical process follows. *He* was what *He ever* had been for his people. The springs in Him were unchoked—the claims for a return to God of what He gave were as sure, in Him, as was His zeal towards God, as His love to His people.

At the end of the book, we see his announced return bearing, alas! then differently on the holder of the warning (Rev. xxii. 6, 7), on the place of profession (ver. 10—15), and on his own bride (ver. 17). At the beginning, the holder of His word, the professing people, and the privileged ones, were but three epithets for one and the same class. The privileges and responsibilities of each quality flowed from what was in Him, and could never fail. Alas! man fails in all that is committed *to him*, and when tried he is found to have failed. But Christ would not fail, even amid man's failure, to prove His competency and to keep unto eternal life His people. But where eternal life dwells, there there is the spirit of obedience; and where Christ preserves a people to Himself, He does so by giving them the hearing ear, that they may receive the word which is a quickening word. It is this which gives the peculiar force of the address being to *servants, to readers, to treasurers up of the word* in this book; enforced as, of course, it is by judgment being now at the very door on account of entire failure. The question is not about taking forth "the vile from the precious," which was the ultimate step of sanative discipline, in the church; it was too late for that: it is not, either, the question of taking forth "the precious from the vile" which connects itself with restorations and with final dooms; it is rather the question as to a mass standing in outward privilege and profession (but which did not meet the claims of divine glory), as to what part in it had at least a heart and mind to respond to God; while all around had failed, yet was spared in mercy, and its doom mercifully postponed, who below could yet be a channel for the Lord of testimony? What a God is ours! Because He is God and not man, we are not consumed. Oh, for more of the hearing ear, and the power to appreciate and hold fast the word of His tes-

timony. His faithful love and gracious forethought has, in this book, traced before his servants the whole outline of the wilderness path from John's day down to the close. Thus has He shewn His sympathy towards His servants, and, while preventing them from being taken unawares by difficulties, thus has He given to them the power of connecting each difficulty of the way with the God who had premonished them of it, and the Lord Jesus, whose positions in service are connected with things that pass in the wilderness, God would *shew* to His servants what must shortly come. The "must" in the verse is also to be noticed as emphatic; all was under divine guidance, and the end was quickly to be brought in.

Another has remarked upon the peculiar character of the mode of revealing in this book. This is not according to the mode found in the rest of the New Testament, but more in harmony with the mode of Old Testament times. This is just; and it may be well to consider the full bearing of the remark. It would seem to me to be more extensive in application than at first sight we might think.

Thus, when the testimony was in a candlestick upon earth connected with outside things, as in Jewish circumstances,—the divine mode of communicating truth was from outside: there was a vision, a communication from God above, and the prophets had to search what and what manner of time, etc., etc.

At Pentecost, the testimony was through the renewed man in the servant; but it was of those who had kept company with the Lord all through his course here below, and were eye-witnesses of all these things (see John xv. and Acts i. and ii.) The candlestick had its corresponding peculiarity, as also had the place of its standing.

Paul's testimony was from an ascended Lord; and the candlesticks were set up in the truth and responsibility of his place on high. The testimony flowed through Paul; and, according to what Christ was up there, they should have been heavenly and divine, though as such seen upon earth and a testimony.

The church could not fail as the body of which Christ

Remarks on Rev. i. 1, 2.

197

was the Head. If the churches ceased to be that, they sank to the level of what was merely an earthly witness, and as such must sink. And a voice calling John to write things that he saw became an adequate and divinely suitable mode of testimony.

I suggest this for consideration.

“Which must *shortly* come to pass.” It may be well to pause and try the state of one’s heart, by seeing how far that which to God is “shortly,” “quickly,” “a little while—how little, how little,” is so likewise to us. If we are living near Him and walking in His light it will be so; alas! if dwelling in Sodom or walking carelessly, it will not be so. If heart and mind are where the Spirit would have them, this world is a desert in which God’s presence refreshes, and which by contrast enhances the preciousness of a glory close at hand. If heart and mind are divided, one above and the other below, there must be inward conflict and mental doubts or disappointed affections. If we are lower still, and walk as men, we shall find ourselves, as did Lot, in the presence of judgment and not without fears.

To God, the while is *little*, and so is it to those who dwell near Him.

The challenge to our hearts is evidently fair, in that the things which must come to pass shortly are all the things written in the book, and not merely the judgment of the churches as recorded in chaps. iii. and iv. It as much applies to the contents of chaps. xix. or xx., or xxi and xxii, as to the contents of chaps. ii. and iii. The “quickly” is quickly to God, and *felt* to be quickly too to those that walk in the secret of His presence.

In the second part of Rev. i. 1 there are several expressions which suggest inquiry: inquiry, too, which connects itself with the whole contents of the book and their interpretation, and not merely with the words in the sentence or with its grammatical construction.

Καὶ ἐσήμανεν ἀποστείλας διὰ τοῦ ἀγγέλου, κ.τ.λ.
“And he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.”

It might be asked, 1st., Who sent? and 2nd, Which is the angel referred to?

The word *angel* being a word signifying the office of "bearing" a message (*angelia* 1 John iii. 11) it is not necessarily or properly limited in its use to any order or class of beings. It is true, that there is an order of beings called angels (created, perhaps, to be messengers of the throne of God), some of whom are now fallen from their first estate (Jude 6), as having sinned (2 Pet. ii. 4), and some are elect (1 Tim. v. 21). But the word is not limited in its use to them. The mighty angel of Rev. x. 1 and 5 is evidently Christ, who is the angel of the covenant also; and who else but He (1 Tim. ii. 5) is that other "*angel*" of Rev. viii. 3 who offers up to God the prayers of all saints. It is used also of John Baptist (Matt. xi. 10; Mark i. 2); as also of his *messengers* (Luke vii. 24); of Christ's *messengers* (Luke ix. 52); of Paul's thorn, a *messenger* of Satan (2 Cor. xii. 7); of the spies (James ii. 25), etc., etc.

The description of the communication in chap. i. gives us these details, "I John was in the isle that is called Patmos (ver. 9). I was in the spirit on the Lord's-day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, What thou seest write in a book, and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia (ver. 11). And I turned to see the voice that spake with me" (ver. 12), etc. The scene is laid in Patmos. Christ comes down there, as the apocalypse was given to Him that he might show, etc., he is here displayed in *servant* character. When John saw Him he fell at His feet as dead, and then tasted the Divine fulness of the grace and power of this messenger of God who visited him.

Differing from this, in chap. iv. John is caught up into heaven. Is it thence, or is the scene shifted; and is he (John) again on earth when, in chap. x., he sees a mighty angel, the description of whose personal glory and actings mark Him off as Christ alone, who is here again, to John, the medium from God of communication of things to come.

In chap. xxi. 9, we read, "there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come

hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife," etc. This angel is not the Lord, and avows he is not in chap. 22, ver. 8. But this angel, while he is the means of leading John into a more intimate acquaintance with that which had been revealed, to what extent is he the medium of any new revelation? He shews John, it is true, not only the details of the bride the Lamb's wife, but (most precious to us) her connection with the millennium; for, when she is first revealed (chap. xxi. 1—8) it is in connection with the final post-millennial glory the revelation presents her. So that one could quite admit, that there was here, also, in a sense, an uncovering of things shortly coming to pass. Yet, perhaps, to shew unto his servants "things which must shortly come to pass." ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει would mean "to show *what* must come to pass," rather than "to show either in detail, or in application, coming things. Still, the making known what is internal to the heavenly glory is most clearly found here.

Where the Lord Himself is the angel He is sent by God—comes in the power of what God had given to Him to show, and is, in *servant* character, though hidden to sense, and glorified: the chiefest of God's messengers holding a place in the book which again brings angelic agency into unveiled prominence—prominency out of which it had dropped when Christ, as the centre of heavenly plans (and the Church), had become the topic but which is resumed directly, the church's judgment recorded, Christ as the centre of all God's providential plans for the earth, for Israel, and for the Gentile is taken up again as in this book. The angel who shows John the bride, etc., seems to be a subordinate messenger connected with the execution of that which is God's judgment in favour of Christ: first, in judgment on what opposes, and then in blessing, on what is subject to Christ. As to the mere translation of chap. i. ver. 1, the word *God* is that to which *he* in "he sent" most naturally refers. "God gave to him, and signified, having sent through his angel to his servant John."

Summary of the Changes of SCENE which take place in the Apocalypse.

In the first chapter John is in Patmos, and the Lord Jesus comes in there.

In the fourth chapter, John is caught up into heaven, where he finds the Lord Jesus as the Lamb in the midst of the throne. From whom, as being there, certain actions flow, and in connection with whom various scenes are shown as about to take place both in heaven and on earth.

In the tenth chapter, the Lord, as the Mighty Angel, comes down from heaven, and He sets His right foot upon the sea, and His left upon the earth. The work is for John, viz., to prophesy again before men; and in the next chapter the scene is in Jerusalem; although the chapter ends with the opening of the temple of God in heaven, and the ark of His covenant; which connects itself, probably, with what follows, for—

In the twelfth chapter, counsels in heaven lead to war in the heavenlies, and to the ejection therefrom of Satan and his angels, whose labour is now and henceforth limited to the earth.

But the Lord is not brought forward in person again until the fourteenth chapter; and then, in the heavenlies, as a Lamb on the Mount Sion, and with Him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads.

So, again (ver. 6), the scene is not above; but the angel flies through the midst of heaven, "having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying, Fear God," etc.

So again (ver. 8), another angel announces Babylon is fallen.

Then again (ver. 9), a third angel warns as to what is upon earth, and the locality is marked (ver. 13), a voice from heaven declaring the blessedness of those that die in the Lord.

But in the fourteenth verse, the Son of Man is seen upon a cloud, and a voice out of the temple cries to Him

Remarks on Rev. i. 1, 2.

201

to thrust in His sickle (ver. 15) and reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

So in verses 17—20 we have an angel coming out of the temple which is in heaven, and another coming out from the altar: the latter of whom invokes the vintage of the earth.

Chapter xv. gives scenes in heaven, which issue in heaven-sent judgments recorded in chaps. xvi., xvii., xviii.

In chapter xix. we first get a scene perfectly heavenly and in heaven—the marriage of the Lamb; and this is followed, secondly, by the Lord coming forth to take vengeance on His enemies, to bind Satan and to establish His reign.

Thus, in brief, we have—1st. ON EARTH, Christ and John, and the Churches (in chaps. i.—iii.). 2nd. IN HEAVEN, Christ and John, and actings of Divine Providence from springs hidden, and for motives and objects known only in heaven, chap. iv.—ix. The Lamb being still on the throne, and the scene of testimony in heaven. 3rd. More open actings in the heavenly and earthly places, Christ connecting Himself therewith, and showing Himself therein, x.—xix.

Rev. i. 2. “John¹ who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.”

The more literal rendering would be—“John who

¹ Thus rendered by the old translations :—

Wiclif, 1380.—“Ioon,¹ whiche bare witnessynge to the word of God: witnessynge of Ihesus Crist in thes thingis what euer thingis he saie.”

Tyndale, 1534.—“Iohn,¹ which bare recorde of the worde of God, and of the testimony of Iesus Christe, and of all thinges that he sawe.”

Cranmer, 1539.—“Iohn,¹ which bare recorde of the worde of God, and of the testimony of Iesus Christ, and of all thynges that he sawe.”

Geneva, 1557.—“Iohn,¹ who bare recorde of the worde of God, and of the testimonie of IESUS Christ, and of all thinges that he sawe.”

Rheims, 1582.—“Iohn,¹ vvho hath given testimonie to the word of God, and the testimonie of IESUS Christ, vvhat things soever he hath seen.”

testified the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ," etc.

John is here presented more *as a servant* in testimony of revealed truth than (as in his gospel and epistles) as a quiet communicator of revelation. There are at least two subjects of testimony also here given, viz., the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ. The former is much more comprehensive in its range than the latter. It includes creation, providence, etc., subjects which were displays of the glory of Him who is Jesus Christ, even God the Son; though not necessarily in the position of, or revealed as, Jesus Christ. He testified the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

The word "testified"—"bare record of"—ought not to be passed over without notice. It is the verb of the word "martyr," and certainly has a distinctive force of its own. We read of "confessing Christ,"—"professing the faith,"—"holding forth the word of life,"—"preaching the gospel," etc., etc.; but none of these acts have the same strength or force as this word for being a witness of or to. Our English word *martyr* is of too narrow a meaning, being, in its common use, limited to those who lay down their lives for the faith's sake: "bearing record of," "being a witness to," are also expressions too wanting in energy to represent it. "Solemnly testified and recorded" might give the sense.

Of the six English translations that of Wicklif alone leaves out the disputed "τε" rendered "*and*," in the expression, "and of all things that he saw." The critics do so also.

In considering this verse, however, it is not a critical apparatus which decides *the sense* after all. For, first, one has to weigh how far the expression, "Bare record of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus," was said of John, as descriptive of his general service, at this date; or, on the contrary, as distinctively limited to this present service of giving forth the Apocalypse. That the bearing record was a peculiar service, I conceive would be admitted by most. Another question, also, may be weighed, and that is, how far it is true or not,

that the book before us contained nothing but that which John *saw*:—his visions.

But, secondly; the peculiarly abstract character of mind and manner of the communication is remarkable, and must be observed; it leads me myself to take the verse as giving a characteristic description of John; and it seems to me to predicate these three things of his solemn testimony: viz., the word of God—the testimony of Jesus—visions.

THE MIND OF HEAVEN.

MARK the seven or eight times in which *heaven* in the New Testament is said to be *opened*.

1. At the baptism of Jesus, the God of heaven had found, and would own "*who*" and "*what*" have *rest* on earth:—viz., Christ and His service (Mat. iii. 16; Luke iii. 21).

2. The heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

Time will be, when, He upholding blessing upon earth, not only the God of heaven shall set His seal upon Him, but heaven's previous, and then present hosts shall wait upon Him—Blessor of the earth (John i. 51).

3. Heaven opened on Stephen in martyrdom. The Son of man, in heaven, lets His suffering servant know His sympathy, and sustainment, in the period that earth can hold no testimony for God (Acts vii. 56).

(Ended at page 206.)

Nº. XI.

A WORD IN SEASON.

THIS is the time of the world's *manhood*. All its elements are putting on strength, and taking their full form. The civil and the ecclesiastical thing is asserting its manhood or full age. Vigour marks the progress of the Church of Rome, and of the commercial spirit; governments linking themselves with the one for their support, and the people imbibing and breathing the other for their advancement.

The world is thus stirring itself and playing the man. But Christ is still the *rejected* Christ, and faith has to own a *weak* cause in the presence of an advancing world, and of strengthened apostasies.

Thus is it, I judge, at this moment, and thus will it be. But judgment is to fall on the strong thing in the hour of its pride and vigour, and a glory (still hidden, but trusted and waited for) is to receive, to enshrine, and beautify, and gladden, that which now walks on as the despised and feeble companion of a rejected Lord.

All this may be serious to the thoughts of our natural hearts; but it is plain in the judgment of faith. It is the will of the Lord to let these apostasies grow up to manhood strength. *The Apocalypse presents them to the eye in that form and condition, just when judgment overtakes them.* The woman, or the ecclesiastical apostasy, is *riding*, just at the moment of her overthrow; and the beast is holding and managing the *whole world*, just as he is met in the day of the Lord. The Apocalypse in no wise shews us a weakened or depreciated condition of these great agents of the course of this world; but exhibits them in surpassing strength, and bloom, and honour, just at the end. We are not in the days of the Apocalypse, it is true, but we witness the energies (which play their part there in all this vigour and pride of manhood) getting

themselves ready, and preparing to take their appointed place.

The heart of the children of men is not aware of the true character of all this. *Progress* is desirable, as they judge. Man in his social place is advanced; and all his welfare in the human system around, with its securities, and peace, and refinement, and morals, and religion, is served. But what is there of God in all this? Were I to adopt the world's boast, and go on with its expectations, I should be strengthening my securities; but I should, with that, be losing my companionship with the heart and mind of Christ, which is our only true dignity this side the manifested glory of the kingdom. God gives all spiritual blessings now, peace, and joy, and liberty, with promise upon promise. But He is not re-gaining the earth to its circumstances for our enjoyment. Judgment must do that. *Judgment is to make way for glory in the world, and peace on earth.*

This tries our hearts. We cannot but feel that it does. All things are not now disposed by Christ, though He is in the place and title of all power and authority. He does not affect so to speak, to have all that the heart or nature values at His present disposal. His present kingdom does not actually reach so far, though in title His authority is over all things. He does not speak of making us happy in *circumstances*; and it is for us to count the cost of this. It is for us to acquaint ourselves with what He is dispensing, and then to ask ourselves, Can we value it? And it is *faith only* that values it. Nature cannot; the heart cannot. What Jesus now dispenses is exactly what faith, but what faith alone, can understand and appreciate.

May we lay this to heart; and, in the midst of all the alarms and forebodings of this serious solemn moment in the history of the world, say to our souls, The Lord is gathering out His elect, and leaving the great material around us for judgment—this is the way of His wisdom, and it promises us no security in present things, but will work out, for faith and hope, all their brightest thoughts and expectations.

Might we, in the real power of our souls, say with another—

“His wisdom ever waketh;
His sight is never dim;
He knows the path He taketh,
And I will walk with Him.”

I call this “A Word in Season,” not through presumption; but desiring that it should be found to be so, and believing that it is fitted to be so. The force of it is, alas! feebly felt in one’s own soul.

THE MIND OF HEAVEN.

(Continued from page 203.)

4. The sheet let down out of heaven.

The church has no connection with earthly dispensations. It is something that comes down out of heaven, and is drawn up again into heaven, and never gets a rest upon earth; you must look into it from above (Acts x. 11).

5. Heaven opened to John—the suffering servant—and the Lord God Almighty upon the throne found to be the spring, whence the Lamb draws for his servants, when the churches are judged, all needed blessing. All upon the throne is secure (Rev. iv. 1).

6. The security of Israel’s blessing in the day of its affliction shown (Rev. xi. 19).

7. The security of the remnant—and the certainty of judgment (Rev. xv. 5—8).

8. The mission of God’s Champion to introduce and establish God’s power upon earth (Rev. xix. 11).

. If 6. and 7. are separate, then there are eight openings; if they are the same opening, then there are seven.

Nº. XII.

JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF THE FATHER.

THE CHURCH IN CHRIST,—THE SON OF
THE FATHER.

“God who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has blessed us IN CHRIST, according as He has chosen us IN HIM.” (Eph. i. 4).

“In that day ye shall know, that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you” (John xiv. 20).

WHITHER are we led, if we trace upward the river of eternal life which flows in the channel of the church to its source? The church is *of God, but it is in Christ the Son, in God.*

We must, then, leave the bounds of time, and go back, be it only in thought, to the glory which was before the foundation of the world. Here, doubtless, it becomes us to take our shoes from off our feet and to worship. God alone is from eternity and to eternity; and He alone is in Himself ETERNAL. It is, then, He alone who can instruct us in the truths which belong to eternity. Now, in His grace, He has already given to us His word; and this word shows us two great blessings which belong to the church; both of them are as wonderful as the truth, the fact, that the first thought of the church was found in God, in His counsels before the foundation of the world. And both these turn (as the wheel on its pivot) around the Son. He is the centre of their action. They proceed, indeed, from what God saw in Him. Oh, how this precious Saviour is all glorious in Himself, and how happy is God to have such a Son!

The two blessings of which I speak are, first, being blessed by God as *the Father*; and, second, that our blessing is in *His Christ* (Eph. i. 3). Now our Lord is the Son of the Father; and He is the Servant, the Anointed One of God. How plainly do we see this at

the moment He declares Himself through Mary to His disciples (John xx. 17). Jesus saith to her, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say to them; I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God."

Supposing I say to any one "My father," it is evident I take the place of a child towards the one to whom I so speak. In this relationship, the word *child* is correlative with the word *father*; and the name *father* is correlative with that of *child*. The names *father* and *child* are correlative terms. There is a reciprocal, a corresponding relationship between the two positions as to nearness, between the two ideas conveyed by the names *father* and *son*.

I may be the only child of my father, really his child; or, perhaps, I am only an adopted child, a captive taken in war, the son of an implacable enemy of the one to whom I give the name of "my father." Nevertheless, the moment I call any one by the name of father I put myself in the position towards him of being his "child"; for the name father, the thought conveyed by this name, places me towards him in the relationship of child. In this relationship it is not wages given by the one who is the superior to the one who is the inferior which unites them together (though such might be given and received without destroying the relationship); no, there is a closeness of relationship; one of the highest degree between the two. Liberty in love reigns between them, and the interest of the one is the interest of the other. The one is the head and the protector. The other is in the place of protected and dependant. The service is both mutual and one of love. The service of him who is a son and heir is free, and not like the service of him who is a slave and serves because he is forced to it. My only son is my second self. I do not give to him as I do to a slave, to a mere hireling. Supposing I have slaves, upon the principle of self-interest I might give to them, looking upon them as part of my property, it becomes my own interest to take care of them: or, perhaps, I do not like that any one dependent on me should be seen to want while I have more than enough. If I have hired

Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father.

209

servants, the motives which influence me in my conduct towards them may be justice, or the relations which I feel ought to exist between man and man in a free country. But with regard to my son it is quite another thing: it does not become me as father to act towards my son upon the same principles which govern my conduct towards my slaves or hired servants. It would be *my* shame to do so—my heart would revolt from it; and the same holds good as to my son's conduct, it would be shameful for him to act towards me upon the same motives on which a hireling would act towards his master.

Now to turn to the thoughts which we find in scripture connected with the name "the Son of God."

1. The scripture calls Adam the *son of God*. "Jesus being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli . . . son of Seth, son of Adam, son of God" (Luke iii. 38).

2. When it was the purpose of God to deliver Israel out of Egypt, he first began to work in their behalf by providence (Ex. i. 17, 20; ii.). Then, He heard their groanings, and He remembered the covenant which He had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Thus He had pity on the children of Israel and remembered their estate. Afterwards He revealed Himself to Moses in the midst of the bush (iii. 6), saying to him, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;" and (ver. 7) he says, "I have seen the affliction of my *people* which is in Egypt," etc.; but, not long afterwards, He calls them by another name, "Israel is *my son*, my first-born. And I said to thee, Let *my son* go that he may serve me; but if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy first-born" (iv. 22, 23).

3. Solomon, the king, is called by God "*my son*" (2 Sam. viii. 14; xxii. 10; xxviii. 6). God had before given to him the name of Jedidiah (Beloved of Jah). The meaning of Solomon is PEACE; blessed name of Him whose type he was, who shall establish *peace*! The "Prince of Peace" is Jesus the Son of God.*

* There is a distinction to be observed when this word *son* is used in the sense of privilege, whether speaking of Solomon, or

If I were writing about Israel as a type of Jesus, I could hardly forbear from dwelling at length upon one passage, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt" (Hosea xi. 1; and Mat. ii. 15). But now I must content myself with observing, that it proves that both the nation Israel, and the child Jesus, are called by God "my son" in one and the same passage.

4. The Lord Jesus is called "Son".

Before presenting a few verses on this subject, I desire to turn to a passage containing a warning as to the spirit in which we should come to search the scriptures on this precious doctrine; precious in itself, and precious to us, because it is united (as we shall soon see) with all the blessing of the church.

"All things have been delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Mat. xi. 27).

What is said here is most plain. No one (*οὐδεὶς*) knoweth the Son but the Father. What heresies! What errors! have there not arisen from the neglect of this short sentence.

of the nation Israel, or of any individual in particular. It is this—sometimes it is said, "He is my son," and sometimes, "He shall be to me *for* a son." Sometimes we find, "I am (or I will be) his father;" sometimes "I am (or I will be) *for* a father." I desire that attention should be paid to this little word *for* (*ב* in Hebrew: *εἰς* in Greek); for it gives a turn to the sentence which alters the whole meaning. For example, in the fifth verse of the 1st of Hebrews, there are two quotations: of these two, the one taken from the 2nd Psalm declares, concerning the One spoken of, that He is *the son* of Jehovah; and the other declares that God will act towards the one spoken of as a father would act towards his child, and that the individual shall be treated *as* a son. The first establishes the relationship of Father and Son; whether it be in suffering, or in glory, it makes no difference. He is the Son. The second promises to him a position in open manifestation worthy of this name of Son.

There is the same contrast between the 16th and 18th verses of the 6th chapter of the second epistle to the Corinthians (ver. 16) "I will be their God"; (ver. 17) "*Wherefore* (*διὸ*), be ye separate from the evil"; and (ver. 18) "I will show myself openly as your Father."

Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father.

211

The Son reveals, makes known, the Father: but no one save the Father knoweth the Son. But though we cannot know the Son; nevertheless, that which is written is for us, and we find there much revealed to us concerning Him whom no one knoweth but the Father:—truths without the revelation of which, perhaps, the Son could not have revealed the Father. To study these things is, without doubt, our duty if only done in the spirit of dependence.

I remark then first, that the Jews evidently knew and connected the name of Son of David and Son of Abraham with the Messiah* whom they were looking for.

Jesus was hailed (at least by those who believed on Him in His day) as "Son of David."

For example (Mat. ix. 27; xii. 23; xv. 22; xx. 28, 30.) Read the two following passages. "And the multitudes cried, saying: Hosanna (*save, we beseech thee*) to the son of David! Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the Highest"

The children cried in the temple, saying:—

"Hosanna to the son of David!" (Mat. xxi. 9, 15.)

Jesus said to the Pharisees:—

"What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He? They say unto Him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in Spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, How is He then His son?" (xxii. 42—45.)

I notice here, that the unconverted Jews boasted of being the children of Abraham: "We be Abraham's seed (John viii. 33); Abraham is our Father" (39). "Think not to say within yourselves: We have Abraham to our Father. For I say unto you, that God is able even of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Luke iii. 8; see also Mat. viii. 11). Again in Luke xvi. 22—24.

Father Abraham, was said by the rich man three times out of the depth of Hell; see also John viii. 52, 56. Now that He who was son of David was necessarily also son

* The word Messiah in Hebrew answers to the word Christ in Greek and to the Anointed in Latin.

212 *Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father.*

of Abraham is plain: but though Jesus is declared by the Spirit of God in the Gospels to be son of Abraham as well as son of David (Mat. i. 1 etc.); yet, though the receiving of this truth is of faith, I do not see that believing Jews *ever* hailed Jesus as "the seed of Abraham," as they did as "son of David."

2. The name by which the Lord always called Himself was Son of man (see Mat. viii. 20; ix. 6; x. 23; xi. 19; xii. 8, 32, 40; xiii. 37—41; xvi. 13, 27, 28; xvii. 9, 12, 22; xviii. 11; xix. 28; xx. 18, 28; xxvi. 2, 24). As Redeemer, it is the name peculiar to Himself. I quote the epistle to the Hebrews ii. 8—10, as explaining the meaning of this name. "We see not yet all things put under Him; but we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became Him for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." This is the reason which God pleases to give us, for such or such a thing—His *why*. "It becomes Me"; higher we cannot go. But we may well observe, that if the Son of God became Son of man because we were such, and became also the chief one in suffering, crucified through weakness, this name, "Son of Man" has also for him quite another aspect—that, namely, of glory. And through means of it, His Glory becomes likewise ours. The glory in the Transfiguration pre-figured the coming glory of the Son of Man (Mat. xvi. 27, 28; xix. 28; xxiv. 27, 37, 39, 40, 44; xxv. 13, 31.)

3. This name "Son of Man," is often joined to another, "the Son of God." Take for example (Matt. xxvi. 63, 64); the high priest adjures Him, "by the Living God, that thou tell us if thou be *the Christ, the Son of God*. Jesus saith to him: Thou hast said. I say to thee, that hereafter ye shall see *the Son of man* sitting on the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of Heaven" (agreeing with Dan. vii.), see also John i. 52.

Here I would remark, that it is evident that the high priest acknowledged that the Christ or Messiah whom

Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father.

213

they expected was the *the Son of God*. He says not "Son of the Father," but, "Son of God."

And further, Jesus was honoured as the Son of God by the God of Israel. Both at His baptism and transfiguration, He owned Him to be "my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5; Mark ix. 7; Luke iii. 22; ix. 35).

John the Baptist (John i. 34), Nathanael (i. 50), Satan and those possessed by him (Matt. viii. 29; Mark iii. 11; v. 7).—They who were in the ship with Him (Matt. xiv. 33); Peter (Matt. xvi. 16); the centurion at the cross (Matt. xxvii. 54); all united to own this Glory of Son of God to be His.

And, moreover, He claimed for Himself the right as the Son of man who is in Heaven (John iii. 16); to be Lord of the Sabbath (Mark ii. 28); and to have power upon earth to forgive sins (Luke v. 24); that is to say, to have the same power as God Himself (see also John iii. 16, 17, 18, 35, 36).

And here let it be repeated what has been said already, that the high priest acknowledged that *the Messiah* must be none other but *the Son of God* Himself; and Jesus in His character of God's witness to Israel was distinguished and owned in divers ways to be the Son of God.

As to this title of the Lord Jesus, there are two things which I would desire to point out. First, it is most plain that this name was given expressly to the seed of the Virgin (Luke i. 31, 32, 33, 35). "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and thou shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give to Him the throne of His Father David: And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end. Then Mary said how shall this thing be, seeing I know not a man? And the Angel said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also *that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called THE SON OF GOD.*" This passage is of the utmost importance, whether we consider the child Jesus or the man Jesus. But on the other hand

214 *Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father.*

let it never be forgotten that this name "Son of God" belonged BEFORE *the World* was to Him who we know became "Jesus." The evidence in support of this truth is as perfect as its importance is inexpressible. To deny it would be to destroy (though perhaps without knowing what one was doing, still it would be doing so) the whole work of redemption and to nullify salvation by grace.—The Glory of the "Son of God" is distinctly recognised in Proverbs, chap.viii., as likewise in the same book, chap. xxx. It is not the child, the man of Nazareth which is here described, but it is He who, being Son of God before the world was, stooped to become the Son of the Virgin—the Son of man.—There are three things which it would seem to me are true of all that is, in its most positive sense, eternal. It is not only eternal, first, as to what is to come, but it is so likewise, secondly, as to that which is past. It never had a beginning, and, as there is none but God of whom this can be said, it has necessarily, thirdly, the *character* of the eternal. The body of our adorable Master (blessed be God that it is so!) has an eternal future, as also *our* glorified bodies shall have. *His* human body was always perfect, never knew any thing but perfection; alas! it is not so with ours!—But God was not manifest in the flesh, until "The Holy Ghost came upon the Virgin Mary, and the power of the Highest over-shadowed her"; and then it could be said, "therefore also that *Holy Thing which shall be born* of her shall be called *the Son of God*" (Luke i.); but God who was manifest in flesh (1 Tim. iii. 16), is THE SON (as we shall see); and so there is at least a double application of this name of Son of God to the Lord Jesus.

In the eighth chapter of the Proverbs, we find "Wisdom Divine" as the subject of it; and Christ is "the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i. 30), "for in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii. 3). "22. The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. 23. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning or ever the earth was. 24. When there were no depths I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. 25. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills

Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father.

215

was I brought forth. 26. While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. 27. When He prepared the heavens I was there, when He set a compass upon the face of the depth. 28. When He stablished the clouds above: when He strengthened the fountains of the deep: 29. When He gave to the sea His decree, that the water should not pass His commandment: when He appointed the foundations of the earth: 30. Then I was by Him as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; 31. Rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth, and my delights were with the sons of men. 32. Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children; for blessed are they that keep my ways. 33. Hear instruction and be wise, and refuse it not. 34. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. 35. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. 36. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death."

What a beautiful description this is! I passingly remark, that I should prefer to render ver. 23, "I was anointed from everlasting, from the beginning or ever the world was" [Gentil renders it thus—"I received the anointing from everlasting, from the beginning or ever the world was"]; and it is absolutely necessary that "*I was there*" (אני שם) should be put in after "the heavens" in ver. 27, if the Hebrew is faithfully rendered. Some translators omit it.

It is not my wish to reason about these verses, nor even to analyse them in detail. When the glory of God passed before Moses, hidden in the rock (Ex. xxxiii. and xxxiv.), Moses hasted and bowed his head to the earth and worshipped. Light, when it shines, is its own evidence, at least for those who have eyes and see (2 Cor. iv. 3—6). As to boasted *Reason*, I have but one observation to add; namely, that as well to it as to him who wrote the scriptures do we give the lie, if vivid descriptions which, necessarily pre-suppose a *person* to whom they belong, and giving us the thoughts, the words, the acts, the reasonings of that person, are looked upon

merely as descriptive of some attribute or quality, or some feature of character.

The Jews, in the time of Christ, never thought of so despising the glory of their nation, as to deny that their expected Messiah was to be Son of God as well as Son of Man. I know that they *now* deny both. But what then can this people understand by such passages as the following; for instance, these two as to the name of Son of Man (Gen. xviii. and Dan. vii.)

The worship which Abraham rendered to *one alone* of his three visitors, how will they explain that; or, this name of Adonai, by which Abraham calls Him? They dare not say that this name may be given to any other than to Him to whom the Tetragrammaton belongs (even יהוה). Do they then dare to accuse *Abraham* of lightness, profaneness, or ignorance? No: Abraham was right; it is they who call themselves his children that are wrong. Abraham worshipped, Abraham addressed Him who was before him under the form of a man as Jehovah. And what is meant by the Son of Man in Daniel (chap. vii.) The Son of Man who came with the clouds of heaven, and he came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before Him; and there was given to Him a kingdom and glory and dominion, and all people, nations, and tongues shall serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom that which shall not pass away (13, 14).

But infidelity finds no difficulties. It can pass over every thing, it fears nothing, unless to be blessed by grace.

And as to the name "Son of God": Who is the Son of God who walked with the three children of the faith of Abraham in the fiery furnace. "Behold, I see four men^b bound, walking in the midst of the fire, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God?" (Dan. iii. 25).

Who is He who has ascended up into heaven, or descended? (comp. Deut. xxx. 13, 14, and Rom. x. 6, 7). Who is He that hath gathered the winds in his fists, who hath bound the waters in a garment, who hath established

^b This word "men" may be perhaps even better rendered "Mighty ones"; and who is "*the Son*"? (Prov. xxx. 4).

Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father.

217

all the bounds of the earth? (comp. Job xxxviii. 41) What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if thou knowest it? (Prov. xxx. 4).

And how do the Jews explain Jehovah being sold in His temple for thirty pieces? (Zech. x. 12, 13). The pieces which were cast to the potter? And who is this One with the wounds in His hands, wounds which he received in the house of His friends? Nevertheless, it is to Him that this wonderful address is made, which we read in Zech. xiii. 7, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts; for it is written, Smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn my hand upon the little ones." The history of the life of Jesus is a master-key which opens all these difficult passages. Who is there who will find a second key to them?

We have now looked at four different applications of this name, "the Son of God." First, as to Adam in his place in the kingdom of the *creation*; then to Israel in its place as a nation in the kingdom of Divine *Providence* upon the earth; then to Jesus the Saviour, first as to His *human body*, and secondly to *Himself* as God over all. From eternity Son, and in Himself, He is eternal; eternal and from eternity and to eternity. It is God alone that can say "I am"—and Jesus said so of Himself.

It has been well said, as to the Bible, that the best principle for understanding it is by the context. This is always the case, whether it be in the sacred scriptures, or in human productions; but this principle is much more applicable to the word of God, by reason of one thing which distinguishes it as the word of God from every thing which merely proceeds from a creature. God is infinite; He sees every thing as it is in itself, but in its relationship with Himself who is infinite. When then He presents His thoughts to us (and the Bible is the book in which He does so) we have the exact thoughts of Him who is infinite about things which, though they be in themselves finite, are nevertheless seen in their relation-

ships with Him who is infinite. When it is a man who speaks to us, or that we have to do with the words of man, he does not shew us things just as they are—he wants to shew us things as he sees them; he gives us his definitions of them. By reason of infirmity he must necessarily do so, and he can only look at them as in a limited sphere, because he himself is finite.

Who is able to bring down the divine thoughts found in the scriptures, so as to present them correctly in a human dictionary. We have only to make the trial with this name, “the Son of God,” or with this expression, “Thou art my Son, to-day I have begotten thee” (found in Acts xiii. 32, 33; Heb. i. 5 and v. 5), or with this other (in Hab. ii. 4), “The just shall live by faith,” quoted in Rom. i. 17, Gal. iii. 11, and Heb. x. 38, and what, say you, will be the result of the effort? The result, I say, will be one of two things—either you will find yourself powerless in the presence of the truth which judges you, and which will force you to feel that you are not capable of judging it (for it is the word of Him who is infinite), or else you will lower down the word of God, who is infinite, to the limits of the capacity of one, not merely finite, but a sinner. That word which is enough for God, as the expression of His thoughts, who is infinite, must be enough for me. It addresses itself plainly enough to my conscience, in all my littleness, to shew me my state of separation from God and to condemn me. If I have faith, then I have also the Spirit of God; and thus this word becomes the life eternal of my soul, my food; but, as to understanding it, as to the thought of bringing it down to the limits of the mind of man; I do not look upon myself as capable of attempting even to do so. Much sooner should I think of comprehensively grasping, or of bringing down to the bounds of man, the physical atmosphere of our globe.

The reception of the word, according to the purpose of God in giving it to us, and the reception of it to use it for our own lusts, are two things directly opposite:—the first is faith’s use of it, the second is proud reason’s, and has been the source of every heresy.

Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father.

219

But there is yet another expression which we have to consider; and it is this, "the Son of the Father." A revelation which God the Father in His grace has made to us, and which stands in contrast with the glory promised to His people Israel. There is not, that I know of, a single expression in the gospels which would lead us to suppose that any Jew as such had even an idea of the glory of the Son of the Father, which nevertheless belongs to Him who is the Second Adam, the Son of Man, the God-man, the Son of God as Man; and Son of God, according to the glory of His person as God.

The Son of the Father.

John i. 18. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father He hath declared Him."

Chap. v. 17. Jesus said: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His father, making Himself equal with God. Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do; for what thing soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will shew Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him. . . . As the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself."

Chap. vi. 27. "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you; for Him hath God the Father sealed."

Ver. 44. "No man can come to me, except the Father

which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."

But our best instruction in this so deep subject, is found in the Lord's own words in chaps. xiv. and xvii. of the gospel of John. In chap. xiv., Jesus is speaking to His disciples, whom He was about to leave; but the prayer in chap. xvii. was addressed to the Father, though it was uttered in the presence of the eleven disciples. Chap. xiii. of the Gospel of St. John is a description of the wilderness and the sorrows which there await the faithful disciple—it is in contrast with the picture of the Father's house and the blessings inside it of chap. xiv. In the wilderness, the glory of Him who is of God is to be servant, and to be so of His own choice; and the humiliation of each one is according to the measure of his rank.

The One, who is Head of all, as to His personal glory, is the one who was chiefest of all in humiliation and suffering (as the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief). The smallest measure of affliction and of suffering is for the least of the servants; and this principle, which ordains for the wilderness, that the glory of a servant should be inseparably linked with humiliation and suffering, holds good in all the degrees which lie between these two extremes; that is, to say, the same rule applies to every degree between the first and the last of the servants. According to the balance of the sanctuary, humiliation in service is the counterbalance in the scale of the rank of each individual. The one balances against the other. The service of the disciples is one of humiliation—it is to wash one another's feet; and it is one likewise of deep sorrow; perils of false brethren (such as Judas); afflictions which spring up from true brethren (such as Peter) when the flesh is not judged, as well as the world, Satan, and the flesh to harass us. In contrast with this, chap. xiv. speaks of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit; and the scene opened before us is the Father's house with the blessings, positions and happiness of the children inside it.

But upon this second subject, it is not difficult to see that no one had knowledge save the Master Himself.

Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father.

221

The disciples could not understand His instructions,—the subject was quite new to them, He met with no response within them. It was not so (as we have seen) when it related to the title of the Son of God belonging to their Master. No; as Jews, they well knew that the Messiah must be no other than the Son of God; but the moment that Jesus begins to speak to them of “my Father” and the glory which belonged to Him as Son of the Father, they were completely puzzled. When Jesus said, “I go to my Father’s house,” Thomas wishes to be taught the way to it. Philip, a little after, asks, “Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.” When Jesus was speaking of Himself as the Son of God, was Thomas ignorant of the way to God, or then could Philip have said, “Shew us God.” No; all in the category of divine glory was too well known to them to allow of their asking so ignorant a question: but the heavenly Father of Jesus was a thought quite new to them—they understood nothing about it. Chap. xiv. of John is the heavenly Father’s house and the blessings which belong to His adopted children; chap. xv. is this family standing in face of the world. The Father seeks for Himself fruit from those who are shewn to the world as inseparably united with the true vine. Chap. xvi. tells us of the strength which abides with this family, even the power of God opposed to the world. And chap. xvii. lets us into the thoughts of the Lord about His own, and these thoughts poured forth in the presence of His Father.

It is the heart of the Son of the Father which is shewn to us in this chapter, regarding those whom the Father had given to Him. He had moulded His conduct towards His disciples by the love which God had towards Himself and them; but all through, it is the glory of Jesus as the Son of the Father which we find here.

Perhaps the attention of some one may be struck by another thought. The glory of the Father is evidently the glory of God, but the glory of God is not necessarily the glory of the Father. The name of God is applicable to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and so to every manifestation of glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, whether in heaven or on earth, whether

the manifestation supposed is moral or physical, in heaven or on earth, it does not matter. It is the manifestation of God. But take the statement the other way; and it is not sufficient to prove that such or such a glory is of God, in order to be able therefore to say that it is the glory of the Father. There are most glorious manifestations of God, such as that in creation, that in providence, that of Sinai, and even that which is to come upon the earth,—which are not manifestations of the glory of the Father—which are not revelations of His glory as the Father of the Lord Jesus.

I have said enough to present my thoughts. The Spirit of God must act upon the heart through means of the word, for His truth to find entrance into the soul of each one individually. When the Lord Jesus said “My God,” He took the place of the servant of God: when He said “My Father,” He took the place of the Son of the Father, according to the glory which He had with Him before the world was. “O Father, glorify thou me with thine ownself with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” He has given us to say (what the world cannot say), “His God is our God.” But likewise by His grace we can say that His Father is our Father. The glory of the Father and of the Father’s house is infinitely more precious in itself than that of any other; and let it be well observed, that, in the divine wisdom, it has been reserved for Jesus Himself to be the one who reveals to us the Father.

The prayer of the apostle Paul at the close of the first chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, is based upon the name “God of our Lord Jesus Christ” (chap. i. 16).

But His prayer in chap. iii. is addressed to God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (ver. 14—21).

In the first we have the *things* which we must learn if we would take the place of an intelligent disciple, such as the hope of His calling; the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and the exceeding greatness of His power in the saints.

In the second, we see what are the relationships beyond all our power to measure existing between each member of the church and the Spirit, Christ and Him who is the father of Christ.

Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father. 223

May God grant to us to feel on the one hand what is the length and breadth and depth and height of which He tells us in this prayer: and on the other, all the condescension of that grace which has added (in the 20th) that all is according to the power which already worketh in us.

FRAGMENT.

WHEN faith lags, God sometimes breaks up circumstances to hasten our steps—"Then they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." The care of all the churches, also, kept Paul from having too much leisure.

This was better for him than the drawing of his natural heart toward Jerusalem, which so often warped Paul in his course; better was it, too, than being carried away by a zeal without knowledge, as Paul was upon the stairs.

It is remarkable, how his natural zeal for Israel, won for Paul the reward of being the one by whom God cast Israel out of his lap. See last chapter of Acts.

N^o. XIII.OBSERVATIONS UPON THE EPISTLE TO
THE EPHESIANS.

THE contrast between what is found in the opening and in the closing of this epistle is worthy of special notice.

The opening truth is God, in his own eternity, choosing us in Christ, before the world was, and giving us, (for the sole sake of the manifestation of his own glory) the place of Sons and the blessing of all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.—Such, the body of gracious light from God in heaven shining downwards upon us.

In contrast with this, the close of the epistle gives us the church on earth holding its ground in spite of Satan and standing as acting upon the blessings. The armour in detail—the enemies—the conflict: but faith in all things, more than conqueror.

I do not doubt but that these two scenes are links of one chain.—And that it is the same mercy and grace which shines in one way in the former part which shines (the very same grace), in another way in the latter part in both places all is in keeping with the circumstances. Privilege, to be enjoyed, must be privilege acted out. I might say more—for, as I think we shall see, the intermediate connecting links which unite these two extremes—these termini, are traceable.

We know, we realise but little as to what the church is.—This is the more sad, because it is God's *present* truth, our *present* responsibility.

I have thought that my own mind has realized help upon this subject by a comparison between the epistle to the Ephesians and the three first chapters of Genesis.

And this is natural because the God of creation is the God of redemption. And not only, are His ways even, but with Him the end was known from the beginning;

The Epistle to the Ephesians.

225

and redemption (which was the display of the hidden riches of his character), was more precious to Him and took the lead, the place of mould and of pattern, to Him in the creation of this world, which was but the first display of attributes previously known.

I would suggest, rather than teach, one or two things under these feelings.

In the first chapter of the book called Genesis, we have, 1stly, the account of *the bringing into existence* of a certain system *as a whole*: "in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

2ndly, the recital in detail of the creating of the various parts of the system—the how of its appearing.

3rdly, there is a speciality of care shown with regard to one part of this creation, man—who (this comes in chap. ii.) was to be the centre of the system, its ruler and possessor; in whom it stood in, or fell from, the presence of God as the Blessor.

4thly, in chapter two, we find God's connection with it—His rest; and then, that as the Lord God He set Himself in a speciality of relationship to man, for whom He planted and arranged a garden of delights and into whose hands He gave power and dominion. And out of whom and for whom, He prepared a help-meet. The scene was a display—the vessel as it were—in which was shown out the name of Elohim; and the inner part was that, in which the compound name of Jehovah-Elohim got *its* display.

The histories (chap. i. 26—31 and chap. ii. 8—25) of man's creation and of man's being placed, when created, as the centre of a system, both suppose the pre-existence of other things, and a plan and counsel, fraught and laden with purpose. Just so redemption and the higher and brighter circle of it in the church in Ephesians.

In Ephesians, the recital begins, therefore, with eternity and God's choice and plans, there and then for His own glory, through the church.

To show forth the glory of His grace and the riches of His grace, we were chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world—for *this* Man, also, was to be the centre of a system—and *this* One was to link up to

God all that should remain in heaven and on earth, all, was to be headed up *in Him*. The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, purposed to show "what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints."

We have, I would suggest, in Ephesians (chapter i. 1—18): first, the system proposed; and, secondly, the outline of its plan.

From chap. i. 18 to end of chap. ii. 6, we have the *whence* and the *how* of our getting into the blessing.

Then, next, comes the use of the blessed as displaying God. This church was to be the vessel in which the name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost would be displayed first. And here two things are remarkable. 1stly, when brought to the Father (18) it is still the name of *God* with which we have to do in 16, 19, 22, thus reconciled unto God; the household of God; an habitation for God.

But then, 2ndly, though we get, in chap. iii., the church as the mystery, looked at first as connected with *God* (2, 7, 9, 10), that is, as the expression, in contrast with other outward things, of a Divine perfection *which was hidden*; yet, in the close of the chapter, we must remark the way in which it was the vessel, in the which this name of *the Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ, gets a special display and development. And here it is not glory *around* God and the church brought therein as at the close of chap. i. But it is the church itself wondrously used as the scene of Divine communion. The Father granting—according to the riches of his glory, such an internal, mighty strengthening by the Spirit that there might be both the indwelling of Christ in the heart by faith, and a comprehending of the breadth and length, and depth and height—and a knowledge of what passes knowledge, Christ's love; unto the filling with all the fullness of God. This clearly is above all comprehension and power *in us* to ask for or think of; but it is according to the power of the Father already known to us to be working in us.

Man's duty in Eden is defined in Genesis ii.—and his present service there to the One that had placed Him there. And Ephesians, chapter iv. begins with the church's service and duty to her blessed.

the Epistle to the Ephesians.

227

The three main points are to be a channel through which the full stream of spiritual power and privilege — life — flows; 2ndly, association in *character*—walk with God; 3rdly, in joy.

This brings us down to the earthly relationships of the heavenly family:—these are shown to point us to Christ and to God.—In the first of them—that of wife and husband—the church is looked at in the speciality of being a something for Christ's ownself.

It is not here, as before, looked at from the outside, but as the special object which was to be Christ's own.

“Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word, that He might present it to Himself, a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

Out of this speciality of her separation unto Himself flows, as I judge, that which follows: if He holds her one with himself for love; Satan holds her one with Christ, for hatred. Satan's hatred is ever against Christ: and, the enemy of all that pertains to Christ, he is most emphatically the enemy of the Saints, and that in order to prevent them living now as in present possession of the good blessings in heavenly places given to them in Christ.—But there is armour sufficient for the war; and if they quit themselves like men, the details of their panoply will prove the forethought of the Captain of their salvation; and consistency with the possession of the blessing will be their joy.

It is not Israel in pilgrimage through the wilderness, which is the question here, but the anticipation of Israel in possession of the land of promise?

Many a Christian understands *pilgrimage*; few understand the call that is upon them to act consistently with the faith in present *possession* in Christ of all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Him.

Now, as man's position, recorded in the second chapter of Genesis, cannot be justly apprehended, without seeing its connection with the glory of the display made in chapter one: nor the folly of man's conduct, as recorded in the third chapter, be correctly measured, apart from the

bright light that thus formed the back ground of the picture; so I judge, that the importance and responsibilities of our position, marked in the sixth chapter of Ephesians, and the strength provided for those who will stand fast to the blessings given them in Christ, and act worthily of all that God has given to them in Christ, cannot be seen, if the bright light *above*, with which the Epistle opens, is not seen to be, indeed, an all-glorious, Divine and eternal light, which casts the light of its blessing upon the church militant here below.

The main truth which I have desired to suggest is plain enough; and it is (as I think) truth that is needed *to-day*. It is simply this, that the doctrine of "the church" has various points of view in which it may be considered, and not merely that *one* to which so many incline to narrow it, in the which Christ will present the church to himself. That I have myself feebly apprehended the Divine plan and counsel about the church—how God uses it for the display of hidden treasures of His wisdom and grace, how it serves a purpose as to the display of the name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, etc., none *ought* to be more ready to admit than myself: but still I see that there are fields of inquiry open to us. And, if I judge that those who would merge all God's dealings as to man in "a church" to be wrong; so likewise would I stir up those who look upon the church—with the mystery and the heavenly calling—to be *our* measure of blessing, to see to it that (not self but) God and His Christ form the centre of the church of their view, as most certainly they do the centre of the view of that church of which the Spirit writes and teaches.

FRAGMENT.

There is such a thing as being made partaker of blessing, in order that one may suffer and give up our all, and do the will of God; and there is such a thing as suffering, giving up our all and doing the will of God, in order that we may be made partakers: but, in both cases, we are made partakers of that which is in Christ—is Christ's—is His alone to give—Himself the alone giver.

Life in and from Christ with death in ourselves and as to the world—and death in ourselves and to the world dying with life in and from Christ are both true.

Nº. XIV.

MARK.

THE Gospel according to Mark has a character that differs in certain respects from all the others. Each Gospel, as we have seen, has its own character; each is occupied with the person of the Lord in a different point of view. As the Son of God, as the Son of man, as the Son of David, the Messiah presented to the Jews. But Mark is occupied with none of these titles. It is *the Servant* we find here—and in particular His service as bearing the word—the active service of Christ in the Gospel. The glory of His divine person shows itself, it is true, in a remarkable manner through His service, and, as it were, in spite of Himself, so that He avoids its consequences. But still service is the subject of the book. Doubtless we shall find the character of His teaching developing itself (and truth consequently shaking off the Jewish forms under which it had been held), as well as the account of His death, on which all depended for the establishment of faith. But that which distinguishes this Gospel, is the character of service and of Servant that is attached to the life of Jesus: the work that He came to accomplish personally as living on the earth. On this account, the history of His birth is not found in Mark. It opens with the announcement of the beginning of the Gospel. John the Baptist is the herald, the fore-runner, of Him who brought this good news to man.

The message is new—at least in the absolute and complete character it assumes, and in its direct and immediate application. It was not the Jewish privileges which should be obtained by repenting and returning to the Lord. The Lord was coming according to His promise. To prepare His way before Him, John was preaching

on Mark. Never will this subject be exhausted; it is as vast as the person and the work of Christ must be; blessed be God for it! But I follow the order of thought which the Gospel sets before me, and it appears to me that with regard to the crucifixion of Christ, it is the accomplishment of His service that the evangelist has in view. His great subject was the prophet. He must needs relate His history unto the end, and we possess in a brief narrative a very complete picture of the events that mark the end of the Lord's life—of that which He had to fulfil as the servant of His Father. I have followed this order of the Gospel.

HEADS OF PSALMS.

PSALM XI.

FAITHFUL endurance, in the day of such manifest weakness that the enemy scoffs, as despising the oppressed righteous; but in that day He confesses the Lord as His trust, and triumphs in spirit, in the deep and blessed intelligence of the things to follow after—such the actings of the Spirit of Christ.

PSALM XII.

THE poor and the needy, in the midst of abounding and prevailing evil, turns to the Lord for help, and in Him finds relief; His pure words to sustain the heart, in place of words of vanity that grieve, that vex a righteous soul; and in this peaceful repose of faith all is blessed triumph for the afflicted and poor people: such was the patient endurance of Christ in the day of His humiliation, and such the spirit of faith, in the saints now sustained by Him, who suffered, being tempted.

Nº. XV.

THOUGHTS ON DIVINE GUIDANCE.

I SAMUEL XXIII. AND XXIV.

THE subject of divine guidance, in its application to the details of our every-day life and conduct, is evidently one of great importance; and it is one on which the minds of many saints are often greatly exercised. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps"; but there is One of whom it is written, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." There are important epochs in the life of each, when the need of divine guidance cannot but be felt. But the word is not, "acknowledge Him at such times as these," but, "in *all* thy ways, acknowledge Him." Habitual reference to the Lord in all the details of life, makes it easy to confide in Him when any great crisis arrives; whereas, if in general we pass on without acknowledging Him, though the heart may feel, when in straits and difficulties, the need of light from above not being practised in consulting God, or familiar with His ways of guiding His people, it little knows how to cast itself upon Him, or even to avail itself of such guidance as He vouchsafes. And though the Lord may, and often does, exceed His promise, and guide when in extremities those who do not habitually acknowledge Him, the promise is, "In *all* thy ways acknowledge Him, and" then, when difficulties occur, "He shall direct thy paths." It is not that we need always be asking, "What must I do?" There are things in which we know the Lord would have us to be engaged; but He is to be acknowledged in these things as well as in inquiring of Him when uncertain as to our path. "It is God that worketh in you to will and to do." "For Thou also hast wrought all our works in us." "Without me ye can do nothing."

One thing we must never forget—that if we are to have practical guidance from God, it must be in a path which is itself according to His mind and will. A vast deal of the uncertainty felt by Christians as to the details of their path arises from the fact, that they look for guidance as to details, when their entire position is such as God cannot own. It is contrary to His word. Suppose my child to be bent on a course which he knows, or ought to know, to be contrary to his father's wishes; if in the prosecution of his design he meets with difficulties which are quite insuperable, and asks me for instruction how to extricate himself therefrom, what am I to do? Should his father's interposition be requisite for his safety, that would be another case. Any father would then exert himself for his child, though the child's wilfulness alone had involved him in the danger from which he had to be rescued. But what father would help his child to disobey him? Can we expect God to help and guide us in a path which is throughout contrary to His revealed will? The difficulties which we meet in such a path, are the thorns by which God is hedging up our way, in order that we may relinquish it altogether; and the first step towards the enjoyment of divine guidance in such a case, is to forsake the position and manner of life *out of which*, not *in which*, the Lord would lead us. It is our privilege to know that our position and manner of life as a whole are according to God. There may still be difficulties, and there doubtless will be; but we may then, in simple confidence, reckon on the Lord's wisdom to guide us through them all.

David's path, at the time to which our chapters refer, was one of extreme difficulty. His circumstances were scarcely two days together alike. He had to conceal himself first in one fastness, then in another. But the path he trod was one in which the Lord had set him. His position was according to God's mind. It was the path of faith; and in all simplicity of faith, he reckoned on God's guidance in that path.

"Then they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshing floors." Here was a new circumstance in David's path.

Thoughts on Divine Guidance.

279

He was at the moment concealing himself from the envy and rage of Saul; but his position had respect to the Philistines as well as Saul. The Lord had raised up Saul, and anointed him captain over His people Israel, that he might save His people out of the hands of the Philistines (see ix. 16). Saul had entirely failed in this. He had proved himself faithless and disobedient, and hence, when arrayed against the Philistines (xiv., xvii.), he had shrunk from the unequal contest. David, having been anointed in his stead (xvi.), had really in faith taken the place of Israel's shepherd; and while the ostensible shepherd proved himself a hireling, who, when the wolf cometh, flees, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep, David stood in the gap, and delivered the trembling affrighted flock out of the jaws of the destroyer. That was a day of triumph and of glory for Israel; a day on which it was seen, "that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear," but that His people's battle is His own. It was a day of renown for David too, the daughters of Israel singing with tabrets and dances, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." Affairs had changed since that day, and David was now an outcast and a wanderer—hunted by Saul, like a partridge on the mountains. But has this alienated his heart from Israel, or rendered him indifferent to their sufferings? When he hears of the Philistines having plundered Keilah, does he say, "Well, if I am to suffer thus at the hands of Israel's king, he and his people may defend themselves against the Philistines—what have I to do with their affairs? No, he is as ready to gird on his weapons and hasten to the conflict, as though Saul had appreciated and rewarded all his previous services. But though ready to go thus to the rescue of the men of Keilah, does he, on the other hand, rush on the undertaking in the energy of his own will—the mere natural impetuosity of a man of war? No, he inquires of the Lord, "Shall I go and smite these Philistines?" He does not use many words, as we so often do in our prayers. With the simplicity of a child, he asks a question of Him whom he knows to be alone able to answer it. And the answer is as direct and simple as the inquiry.

“Shall I go?” “And the Lord said, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.”

A new difficulty, however, now presents itself. David is not alone, but at the head of a band of men who had from various motives attached themselves to his person, but who do not walk in the same simplicity of faith as himself. Spiritually, they are far behind him. “Behold, we be afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?” Feeling themselves unable to cope with the lesser difficulties, they shrink from encountering the greater. What now is David’s course? Does he, on the one side, despise the check he has received by the remonstrances of his men? or does he, on the other, blindly follow their timid counsels, and give up the light he had received from God? No; finding himself in new circumstances, *he inquires afresh of the Lord*. When he first inquired, he evidently had no doubt as to the allegiance of his men; but now, when the Lord has said “Go,” and his men hold back, David applies to his former resource, and inquires *again* of the Lord. To David’s faith, the command to go was, no doubt, equivalent to a promise that the Philistines should be delivered into his hand; but now, in consideration of his timid followers, inquiring a second time of the Lord, the Lord repeats to him the direction to go, and accompanies it with the express promise, “for I will deliver the Philistines into thy hand.” This overcomes the reluctance of his men; they go down to Keilah; and a great slaughter of the Philistines ensues. “So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.”

Verses 6—13 suggest considerations of the deepest interest. “And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, that he came down with an ephod in his hand.” Now the ephod was that part of the priests’ garments in which the Urim and Thummim, by which guidance from the Lord was obtained, were placed. This was the appointed, established mode of seeking counsel from God. What claims attention here is, that when the ephod is to be had, David uses it; when it is not there, he can consult God without

Thoughts on Divine Guidance.

281

it. He despises not the ordered way when it is available; nor is he so dependent upon the ordered means as to be unable, when they are out of his reach, to consult God without them. When the ephod is not there, he enquires directly of God, as we have seen; when Abiathar is there with the ephod he says, "Bring hither the ephod." Surely there is instruction here for us all. We have means, advantages, helps, afforded us of God; and when He does afford them, they are not to be despised, but diligently and faithfully used. But neither are we so dependent on these, as in their absence to be unable to have to do immediately with God Himself. What a precious boon is God's written word! How impossible, if we neglect it, to receive guidance from the Lord! Who that believes it to be God's word, and is conversant with it, can find language in which to express its value. But suppose we should lose our sight, or be imprisoned for the truth, and refused the use of the Bible, should we necessarily be deprived of instruction or counsel from the Lord? God forbid. Its effect, when we have it and use it, is to place us in His presence, and declare to us His mind. Deprived of it, as has been supposed, we should find Him better to us than the book. Diligent in the use of means when vouchsafed, faith can reckon upon God Himself when they are withheld, well knowing that He never withdraws the means, except when He would cause the soul to know His sufficiency above and beyond, and, when it pleases Him, even apart from them all.

David's enquiries of the Lord served him better than any number of scouts and spies, to watch the movements of his enemy and pursuer. "Will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard?" "And the Lord said, He will come down." "Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?" "And the Lord said, They will deliver thee up." Thus he escapes, as a bird from the snare of the fowler.

Verses 14—18 may not strictly bear on the subject before us, that of Divine Guidance; but they are too touching and instructive to pass without notice. David was aware that Saul sought him every day; he needed

comfort and encouragement; the Lord also knew his need, and sent Jonathan, Saul's son, to supply it. A messenger from Saul's own house strengthens David's hand in God. "Fear not," says Jonathan, "for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth." Alas for Jonathan! He was correct in all his anticipations save one. Saul's hand never did find David, David did become king over Israel; but he himself, instead of being next to David, fell ingloriously with Saul on the mountains of Gilboa! Nothing could be more beautiful than Jonathan's love to David; but it never broke the links which actually united him to his father's house. It never led him away from his kindred and his home to be the companion of David's exile; and adhering thus to Saul, with Saul he perished by the hand of the Philistines.

Verses 19—29 disclose to us the plotting of the Ziphites to deliver David into Saul's hand. When they offer to do this, Saul says, "Blessed be ye of the Lord; for ye have compassion on me." Saul could use the name of the Lord as well as David; and when this is the case, very simple faith is needed—faith which looks directly to the Lord. In the present day you will often hear it said—"There are so many parties, all claiming the sanction of the Lord's name, and of God's word, while differing among themselves, that we know not which path to take." What is the remedy in such a case? Nothing but the faith which puts the conscience in the Lord's presence, as having to do immediately with Himself. Saul may *talk* about the Lord; but David had to *do* with Him. And when the plots and treachery of his enemies seemed ripe for success,—Saul on one side of the mountain, David on the other, and David fleeing for fear of Saul,—just at this juncture a message is brought to Saul, that the Philistines have invaded the land, and he is obliged to let go his prey. This was not divine guidance of David's course; but it was divine interposition on behalf of the one who had sought divine guidance as to each detail of his path—a path in which we are thus led of the Lord may *seem* to terminate in

Thoughts on Divine Guidance.

283

difficulties from which nothing can extricate us. But it is in appearance only. If there be no way through the circumstances, the Lord can act in providence and remove the circumstances altogether. Happy indeed to be under His care!

But while it is for our comfort to see how God can thus use providential circumstances, let us beware of taking providence for our guide. A most important lesson as to this is afforded by chap. xxiv. Providence places Saul completely in David's power. David's men would have had him regard this as guidance from the Lord—"Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayst do to him as it shall seem good unto thee." How often is this argument employed! How often do Satan, worldly-minded friends, and our own worldly-minded hearts say—"See, the Lord has now given you the opportunity to do so and so." But let us beware. Providence had given David the opportunity to destroy Saul, as his men thought; but what was the estimate David's faith formed of the circumstances? *He read them aright. He saw in them the opportunity for faith to forego the opportunity of fighting his own battle, or delivering himself by his own hand.* Precious and solemn lesson for us! The opportunity to do anything is no indication of its being the Lord's will that we should do it. It may, or may not, be the Lord's will. His word, understood by His Spirit's aid and teaching, must settle that. The opportunity of doing it may be, and often is, the opportunity for Faith to say—"No; it is not my Lord's will; it would not be for my Lord's glory; and no opportunity shall tempt me away from the path of simple obedience to Him."

The Lord make us wiser in all *His* ways! And let us not forget His word—"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." Amen.

Nº. XVI.

THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

THE depths of that which was indited of God is always affording something further for the heart and life before God. Having found the bitter waters made sweet by the tree on which Jesus hung, we pass on to the twelve wells of God and the shade of His instructions in the desert. We learn both new and old; and if what is last fills up the measure of the revelations of God towards us, we shall certainly be unstable if we bring not with us our early steps, or, rather the early steps of God in the path by which He leads us. Some have taught us much on the truth of the Seven Churches, and there remains yet something to observe; and we hardly ever enter on such a subject with others but that what we have substantiated opens a vista of further learning. So with the momentous truths of the second and third chapters of the Apocalypse.

It is exceedingly necessary to distinguish between the apostasy of dispensation, and the failure of testimony, and confession in the churches. The apostasy of the dispensation carries with it the failure of confession and of testimony, but the last is in the Seven Churches; at least in six, if not necessary in all, but is not spued out till it fails to serve Christ nothing; and that which is rejected is thrown out into the world to be judged with it in the judgments of God, while the warning given in the successive phases of the churches will, if taken, be the avoidance of those things coming on the earth whatever time, and specially at the last. God's judgments are manifest in a germinating fulfilment; from the last of which, *i. e.* on the apostasy, there is neither recovery nor evasion.

To apprehend the point of failure is most needful. Its moral characteristics would apply to its conduct

The Seven Churches.

285

and sufficiency of testimony as such; but there is ever an under-stratum manifest, to the mind that is touched, in the harmony of God's ways that is full of warning. An observation made in a former number has fallen in, in a striking manner, with these considerations; but still is beside of the aim of these remarks; what agrees with it is, that "the testimony was connected with outside things" (page 196, of No. XXVIII). What is here said is intended to bring the truth of this to bear on the failure of being a true witness to heavenly things; for what is outside to heavenly things need not be outside to a present necessary position, and conscience as to God, and without which the higher testimony must greatly fail.

What I desire to bring to the hearts of brethren is this, that the failure of the churches was grounded on the non-apprehension of the *kingdom*, and a failure in the mass of professing Christians of walking in it as rejected. I am sure many will be surprised at hearing that it is that unto which we have been called, and unto its glory—and its glory is never apart from rejection and suffering. Paul enumerates, in the twentieth of Acts, the grace of God—the kingdom of God—and the church of God, as the whole counsel of God. Paul's peculiar revelation was the church and its privileges: he writes the Epistle to the Hebrews, perhaps, out of his province, and we have not his name. It *was* Peter's province, and we have his name, and not the doctrine of the church. The church, or the assembly, is not gathered on this ground, but in heavenly places in Christ, baptised by one spirit into one body; and the weakness of non-apprehension of this is disastrous to internal blessing, and highly injurious to their confession. We observe, however, that even in the passage (John xvii. 21), that *separation* to God is the ground-work, as may be seen in the preceding verses of the chapter.

It is very likely to have happened, that, in the recovery of the truth of the church in the heavenlies and its hope, that a truth, such as the truth of the kingdom should have been passed by too rapidly, and the mind been solely directed to the church, and the gift left with it,

as the union also of the members in the body was less thrown on the divine life than on the peculiarity of the unity of the church by the Holy Ghost, as beyond the question of simply divine life.

In the Epistle to the Thessalonians, the church of God, the Father, and of Jesus Christ, is said to be called unto the kingdom and glory. If it is, it must be *of it* now, not in the method of Israel who are cast out for the time, nor as partaking of its restoration in glory with them, but embraced in the glory of that which shall belong to Christ, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance as co-heirs—but suffering and glory is the title of the heirship—in fact, confession of the rejected Head. Christ did not suffer as the head of the church, but as head of the kingdom which He claimed as Son of the Father. They killed, and we own, Him, for while on earth we walk in all the earthly things that become His authority in the world, and we walk in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. *Not to have done so I believe to be the manifest failure of six* of the churches, and must be of the seven. It is palpably so in Pergamos. The Balaam teachers had begun to seduce on this very ground. Smyrna was meant to be saved from this in finding such bitterness in the thought of ease and enlargement, met by persecution from the Lord of the world.^a The evil went on, and being where Satan's throne was, it had also its faithful martyr. The kingdom of this world and its spirit, and union with it in many marred its testimony. The mass was not yet corrupt, individuals (for the kingdom is so confessed), were seduced to give up the confession of the rejected kingdom and head, and thus the testimony of THE CHURCH was marred. We have here, too, the reward of the kingdom—the *hidden manna*—Christ in glory and unseen; and intimacy of personal communion is added to faithfulness.

In Thyatira, the evil, as to the word, is not brought

^a I thought, till the other day, that, "but thou art rich" was "rich before God" in the midst of poverty and hardship; but the interpretation, given in the sense of reproof, is fully carried out by the best reading, *αλλα πλουσιος ει—πλουσιος δε ει* would have signified their richness with God (*αλλα*) the reverse.

The Seven Churches.

287

forward in its accusation by the Lord, but false worship, even to the worship of false Gods. Romish idolatry cannot but be present to our minds. It is on the surface to observe to a student that the character of the judge is according to the evil, and the reward according to the nature of the departure overcome. Well, we find the evil in the reward, though not in the accusation—with corruption of worship in Rome, we find side by side, the claim of power over the nations. Now the reward of perseverance unto the end (and what perseverance is can be well understood), is the very thing confessed against, which is authority in the things of this world, nay, over the world, deposing of kings, etc. This at once unveils the secret working of more than denial of the rejected kingdom. It claims to rule that which rejected Christ. Their testimony is therefore rejected, though they are not spued out of the Lord's mouth. The other reward is the Lord promised, as the morning star, the church's hope. In fact, it seems that there is a reserved reward according to a higher communion in both these churches.

Sardis is *quiet settlement* in the world with a name to live while dead; it might have been presently Laodicea, but the Lord graciously interposes Philadelphia. But what is the whitener of the undefiled garment? Garments undefiled of the evil, and in such circumstances how rare. The warning is, that the Lord will come on the unfaithful servant as a *thief in the night*. Philadelphia can be described as a people conscious of what the church is and appreciated of the Lord, the testimony, in His grace valued, a door kept for its testimony—His word, His name—but *little strength*—great weakness but no denial—the word of expectation too;—why little strength? The church is all that is confessed and the *kingdom* forgotten. Is not there a sense of much complacency as shown in the Lord's mind in the description of His regard for Philadelphia. Is not, however, the description in accordance with the absence of a confession of the kingdom? The church and its truth, its union with its Head, its hope and joy confessed, is lovely in all moral loveliness, but it is not all the Lord left.

The want of the force of the lowly frame keeps in no strength. The proper earthly confession is wanting; nay, it is too fine a thing for its rough dwelling-place, and how can it master rough spirits within? Has not there been manifestly failure here? They have gone out, and if put out how often have they come in again? The church could well manage suffering strangers. It is weak. Ah! too, if I am anxious to know the power of Christ's resurrection, it is not built on conformity to His death. How ready I am to take reproof even from an enemy, though I may say, "let not their precious balms break my head." Church motive is sweet; but does not obedience to it in the drawings of the Spirit come more sweetly and more rightly in with the confession of a *kingdom* not of this world. The church is above, so far it agrees, but its proper character is more positive than negative. The *assembly* of the church is not in the kingdom, it is beyond it. It is the place of the rest of its spirit. It is the place of its praises—of its worship. Its strength for all that is arduous in confession amidst rejection, is found from the sources known there in the presence of the Father, whose children are not of this world by the life they have received of Him. It is a different confession, though in blessed harmony. Who then are those that overcame? The Jachins and Boazes of the new Jerusalem. Surely, they are stronger than the weak, and support the temple. As to Laodicea, little need be said. It is rich and glorious *in the world*. The confession of the kingdom is *quite* lost, and the world, for a while, content with it; but its fate is the fate of the fruitless branch. It is cut off, and its judgment begins. The connection between this and the subsequent parts of the Apocalypse is evident. Laodicea is now become part of the world without, and dealt with accordingly, not chastened but judged. The reward of those who open to the Lord's knocking is much the same in character as in the case of the confession against Thyatira.

That the failure has the bearing I have shown, is much manifested by the application to the conscience of *individuals*. "*He that hath an ear.*"

The Seven Churches.

289

The condition of the church as a witness that Jesus is of the Father, depends on a oneness in divine life by communion with God. It is their divine oneness. Shaken together by one grace is no connection of the body. There is, indeed, a oneness in the death by which every class stands together, but *church* oneness is in the Holy Ghost, and they look to God in His ways, while waiting for their Head as Head of the body from heaven, to gather them to Himself. I beseech the Lord to make this thought more felt, leaving however the purpose of this paper on the conscience of *each one*, being assured that the beloved disciple would not have been directed to describe himself in the *kingdom and patience* of Jesus Christ, if his subject had not been in accordance.

 FRAGMENT.

It was decline of the faith and acting the *plan of the kingdom* (into which we have been called and its glory)—that became the *ruin of the church*. Who should worship in the divine and heavenly assembly (and of whom, indeed, should it be composed), but those who were separate out of a world still guilty of the death of Christ and to be judged for final unbelief and resistance to Him?

As to the seven churches.

“But thou art rich” marks the declension in Smyrna. Then Balaam.—Then promise to the faithful in Thyatira to have power over the *nations* which showed the gist of her ambition. Next the quiet settlement of Sardis. The church in a mild and godly trust in Christ’s name and word and the kingdom forgotten in Philadelphia. And Laodicea rich in this world and the world well pleased, and then she spued out.

What a difference between the apostasy of the *dispensation* and the failure of the *Testimony*.

Nº. XVII.

THE WORD OF EXHORTATION;

OR, ACCEPTANCE THROUGH GRACE BEFORE WORKS.

THE Book of Hebrews is called by the apostle "the word of exhortation." Now, as the harmonious adaptation of the chords of an instrument elicit that peculiar sensation which makes music at once so exhilarating and attractive, so shall we find that it is the true adjustment of truth, as recorded in this epistle, which entitle it to the designation of "the word of exhortation or comfort"; and it depends on our lending our ear attentively to all the notes or sentiments in this piece of divine teaching, whether or not we shall feel rightly or fully the peculiar consolation which flows from them. And in addition, perhaps, one may say that at no time was the truth in this word so needed as now, when a systematic effort is made by men—enlightened men—to impose on the conscience the need of certain bodily exercises, to ensure it acceptance with God, of which the word of exhortation or comfort takes no notice; and hence we may argue *à priori*, that if the word or account of consolation detailed in this epistle makes no reference to such acts, then consolation can be secured without them, for in the word or account of consolation there is not the remotest allusion to them. In the first chapter we get in one verse the whole of Christ's service summed up—"When He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." In those words are concentrated all the blessings He achieved for us; and as we rightly and fully understand them, do we comprehend the extent and fulness of the blessing? It is how He effected what is thus so succinctly described that supplies materials for the word of exhortation, and which in order is brought before us in this epistle. The sins are purged, and by Himself; and, purged, He is no longer in the

The Word of Exhortation.

291

circumstances of them or of their influence—He is above all principality and power, and in full acceptable association with the Majesty on high, by which He has been declared the Son of God with power. Now, as Jesus Christ the righteous, though once bearing sins for us, yet He by Himself has purged them, and in the righteousness of God, having accomplished this wonderful service, and unaffected by it, save as manifesting forth more especial glory, He sits down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. It is, I might say, the text of the Book, dividing itself into two heads—1st. His work, and the perfectness of it; and 2ndly, Where He is, and where He maintains the perfectness of this work.

In chap. ii. 3 “salvation,” not the hope of it, is what we are warned not to neglect; and this cannot be too much insisted on, for it secures the perfectness of Christ’s work, as well as the only basis for true peace to our souls. But He is now crowned with glory and honour, perfect through sufferings; that is, exalted above them, though passing through them. And this touches a point deeply interesting to us, that forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Death was the penalty of our sin. He submitted to it, and challenged its power *when in* it, exhausting it *when under* it, entering the prison-house to burst all its bolts and bars, hitherto detaining in bondage the sons of men; but, fatal to the devil’s power, He is imprisoned there; and He not only delivers Himself, for He could not be holden, but destroys him who had the power, and henceforth retains Himself the keys of hades and the grave. But not only so, but as a Man He has gone above, a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. He has presented Himself as the spotless lamb to God, having shed His blood in bearing our judgment, and wresting us from the bondage of death, in which till now we were righteously held. This is one cheering note in the word of

exhortation, which the apostle beseeches us to suffer. Christ is now above, having liberated us from the bondage we were judicially subject to *here*, and thither we follow Him, as fellows or partakers of the heavenly calling; for all our hopes are staked in Him, who of Himself has undertaken all for us. And we are His house (iii. 6), if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. Not if we attain to anything, or manifest any act, but if we retain the sense of emancipation, the rejoicing of the hope which His work has secured and confirmed, then we are His house; that is, He dwells where and with whom the simple fact of His work is the ground of their liberty and rejoicing of hope. How could He dwell where the effect of His work, the joy of God, could not be acknowledged—where His victory over all enemies could not be proclaimed with unerring certainty and joy—where His reception at the right hand was only at best but a wish and a doubt? Christ could have no house there! The question of morals is not spoken of here, the foundation of them and the characteristics of Christ's house are first insisted on; and a little lower in the chapter we are told that we are fellows or partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. There is nothing here of good works or services of any kind. It is demanded of me to ensure the highest blessing, even to be a partaker of Christ, that I hold the beginning of my confidence—in whom or in what?—surely in Christ's work, firm unto the end; that is, as I retain the foundation for my soul in the work of Christ, I shall know the sustainment of Himself. As I honour in the first step, so will He enlarge me on the truth acknowledged. His work is owned, and He will maintain before my soul the *proof* of His power, seeing that I own that He is the Redeemer and the Guardian of it.

And here Israel failed. They refused to go up and possess the land, not on the ground of their moral unfitness, but they did not retain any confidence in the sufficiency of God to lead them; and here Caleb excelled them, and could say of God "He will surely bring us in." The word of God with them was not mixed with faith.

The Word of Exhortation.

293

It was God and His power they disparaged, and thus forfeited blessing! It was not that they sinned in this or that; immoral ways may have *led* to this unbelief; but still it was distrust of God's resources, and not their own proper unfitness, which closed Canaan against them. The word of God surely tests us, and is the measure of our confidence in Him; and while doing so, exposes the multiplied hindrances in us to the reception of it or submission to it.

But all this has its blessing for us; for thus, to the exercised soul, the obstacles are discovered. We ourselves are brought to light by it; but though convicted of many an unbelieving spirit, we are not condemned to turn again into the wilderness, like Israel in the moment of their unbelief; but we are exhorted to *look up*, as having a great High Priest, who is passed into the heavens—Jesus, the Son of God: let us hold fast our profession. Christ has surmounted all the difficulties, why should we be discouraged? and if we doubt, it is not our own ability but His we call in question! for if *anything* has to be overcome therein, Christ has not triumphed; but if in everything He has overcome, then there is nothing for us; and if we doubt, it is not in our own person we doubt, but the fact of the *extent* of His. But He is in this exalted place, not only as we have seen a priest making reconciliation for the sins of the people, which He *has* done; and in the power and grace by which He was sustained on the way to it, does He succour all now on the same road. As He was tempted in His course, He is able to succour those who are following in the *same* course. But not only so, as we see in the passage before us; but He is a High Priest touched with the feeling of our infirmities, who was tempted in all points, like as we are, apart from sin. He knows our difficulties; and though He was exposed to them, He passed sinless through them; and now above the reach of them, and beside the throne of grace, dispensing the benefits of His own work, He awaits us to come in boldly (the same word as is translated "confidence" in chap. iii.), in order that we may obtain the fruits of His service in our behalf.

There is nothing here said of supplication or prayer; nay, rather, the exhortation is, that we should, in the sense of liberty—the effect of emancipation, come to the throne of grace, the present order of power, to obtain and find what our need requires, that we may secure seasonable assistance. The real point brought before us here is the full provision that is with Christ for us, and no act required on our part to secure it, but coming in the sense of what His work has already entitled us to. Still more enforcing, that our blessing depends not on our actings in any respect, but on our sense and acknowledgment of His. We are to come with a sense of title confessed, and to a *throne* or source of power where favour is dispensed—not to merit, but according to the purpose of His own love, which is grace. Thus we have Him not only a High Priest going up to God for us, having destroyed the power of bondage in which we were held, and succouring us as we follow and know the difficulties of His path, but also He is a great High Priest for us, as touched with our infirmities, because He passed through the trials, but untouched by sin. Where a throne of grace is for us, when we come in boldly in the happy sense of His work, to supply us with both mercy and grace for seasonable assistance; that is, that Christ is not only succouring those who are following on in the path He has trod Himself, but also He is a Priest above for us, to minister suited mercy and grace to us needy and infirm ones, if we but admit His right to be such a minister to us. To come in this spirit is all that is required; the moral fitness, *when we come*, He supplies.

We pass on now to the end of chap. vi., where we find the assurance of hope in God's promise confirmed, on the ground that Jesus has entered within the veil. Christ, a forerunner, has passed all the obstacles—He has opened the way—cleared the course—and is at the right hand of God, a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. Not only Christ's work on earth, but His service and use to us at the right hand of God, is declared to us; but there as such, the promises of God are secured to us by Him after the Melchisedec order.

First being by interpretation King of Righteousness.

The Word of Exhortation.

295

This is the *first* point: Christ has sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, not only as having purged our sins, but as King of Righteousness, and called to this of God—from the scene too of His sorrowing service down here. It is the first point, and is the more distinctively of the order of priesthood, in which Jesus is now—a comforter with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; therefore it is rather by interpretation than as an official King—that is, one finds it out as belonging to Him, rather than as one exercising rule because of it. But next, or after that, He is a King, manifesting and exercising rule in a kingdom, and that kingdom is PEACE—He brought in peace—He made peace—He announces peace as the first fruits of His resurrection. His first salutation to His disciples after His resurrection was, “Peace be unto you;” enemies are all vanquished—hostilities are at an end. God has no longer any strife with man—the debt has been discharged—the judgment executed; God has been satisfied, and with Him there is peace, and He preaches it by Jesus Christ, who has sat down at His right hand as King of Peace, *priestly* exercising the government of it; that is, that it is still as a Priest He is King of Peace, because our infirmity so needs it. Now again, here the confidence of our hope does not depend on anything we can attain to, but on the simplicity with which we acknowledge the wondrous doings of Christ Himself; and this is all our difficulty, because it is our unbelief in the love and power which accomplished them. This whole passage only tells of what He has done and what He is—a forerunner attaining the highest point, and *then* by interpretation King of Righteousness, and again exercising rule as King of Peace, and yet both in priestly office, because suited to our infirmity.

The sum of all (see chap. viii.) is, that we have such a High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens—a Minister of holy things (see marginal reading), and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man. Not merely that having purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty “on high,” or “in the highest,” but as there for us the word “throne” *now* is introduced, as

also "the heavens," as descriptive of the power and place to which He is gone—and where He is a Minister of holy things. How many and varied notes thrill our hearts, as we run over the different yet harmonious chords of His love; surely His love is better than wine; it cheers indeed, and we may well "suffer the word of exhortation," which is only a copiously flowing stream of it. But it is His love does all. Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end. And it is equal to our need—for Christ is not above merely as having accomplished redemption, but He is there preparing a place for us—preparing us for the place—for His love has given Him a direct interest in us; and hence it is not merely, nor in one sense at all, as the high priest under the law offering for sin. He has purged our sins, and becomes as such the channel through which God supplies mercy and grace for us, for seasonable assistance; but He is leading us on and up to yet future things; we have not only present boldness, but we have rejoicing of hope also; hence He is a High Priest of good things to come. He will yet present us to Himself a glorious church, and thus give a character to the testament; that is, that not only are the transgressions under the first redeemed, but eternal inheritance is *now* secured for us in the presence of God. Therefore Christ is in heaven itself, and thus the heavenly places are purified by better sacrifices than the figures of the true; and as He has put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and having done so instead of judgment awaiting man, He will appear to them who wait for Him without sin unto salvation; that is, salvation and not the consequence of sin in judgment awaits us, when Christ appears the second time. Thus are confidence and rejoicing of hope assured—the latter confirmed, as the former, our present position, is established.

Confidence (which is the same as boldness) and the rejoicing of the hope, are the two great results flowing to us from a true appreciation of what Christ's services, past and present, have accomplished for us. In chap. x., the insufficiency of the law to purge the conscience is insisted on; for if there had been purgation, would there not have been a cessation of offerings? for if the offerings continue, the remembrance of sin is also continued; and,

The Word of Exhortation.

297

moreover, they could not take away sin, but Christ in a prepared body comes to do the will of God, and which will done, we are sanctified through the once offering of the body of Christ. He offered one sacrifice for sins *for ever* (as referring to the limit of the benefits of the sacrifice), and having done so, sat down at the right hand of God; and as there is but one sacrifice, and as its benefits continue for ever, so also he that is sanctified is perfected for ever; that is, the perfection lasts as long as the sacrifice. The sanctifying describes the mode in which we are *placed* to appropriate these blessings—as drawn of the Father unto Jesus—and as *within His reach*, because Jesus has done His will.

But there being a remission of sins, there is no more offering for sin. Christ having effected what the Holy Ghost is *witness* of, that our sins and iniquities God will remember no more. Therefore, as a necessary consequence, we have boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus; our title is established—our self-possessed assumption of it proves we believe so! we only adopt the manner of one who is assured of the great and glorious fact. It is not expecting or requiring anything to be done, or as feeling our need of it, but imbued with a sense of the efficacy of Christ's work, as one would enter the house of an assured friend, not cautiously to discover what your reception would be, but boldly, because your confidence in him puts you above even questioning the manner of it; and still more satisfied, that according to his means everything would be suitable for you—all the result of the large conception you had formed of your friend, and which of course his character entitled you to entertain; no credit to you nor *no demand* on you either, but simply to own and ascribe to him his desert, and as doing so to act on it.

I have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus—by the open and living way which he has made for me through the veil, that is, His flesh. I pass into the holiest by the blood; but that flowed from the broken body—the rent veil—which, when broken, not only discharged the sin lying against me, but disclosed to me the light of the knowledge of the glory of God; for then the darkness was dislodged, and the true light

then shone abroad. In this light we are never distressed, for there is there a *great* Priest over the house of God. The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin; there is One there who sustains us in all comfort of being faultless before the presence of His glory. Thus His love takes care, for He loves His own which are in the world unto the end; and therefore we may draw nigh, and as prodigals now in the Father's presence, have a true heart, in full assurance of faith—that is, no misgiving in His acceptance, for our hearts having been sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies having been washed with pure water, let us hold fast the profession of our *hope*^a without wavering, for He is faithful that promised. So that boldness, or the sense of liberty, because of Christ's work, leads us not only into all the blessed fruits of it, but promotes and feeds us with an unwavering hope; not only is Christ our life, but Christ in us the hope of glory—we pass from one to know and enjoy the other. Faith in Him leads me into confidence, as owning my title on account of Him, and in confidence my soul is enlarged into the rejoicing of the hope, because properly we rejoice in hope of the glory of God—and also we are of His own goodness to the praise of His glory.

The highest point of blessing is now reached by the soul, but we have to fulfil our course here; having done the will of God, we have need of patience, but the patience is only during the expectancy of Christ's coming, for He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. And while waiting for Him who is the centre of our hope, we are sustained here by the *very same* faith which has realised to us the saving of our soul; a great moral truth! that the faith that assures of justification by the work of another, even God's dear Son, is so divine and suitable to us, that it transacts through us all the activities which our course demands, and which Christ has already traversed; for "when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth *before* them and the sheep follow Him"—He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. In believing in Jesus, I not only apprehend how truly and fully His work has set me with God, touching all that was against me, so that it, that is, my sins, no longer

^a So in the original.

The Word of Exhortation.

299

engage me, but the uprising of the hope in the full display of God's love as yet to come, and that this is now my proper occupation, so that one can say, this one thing I do, "forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto the things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

This faith sustains me in the race—but it is the faith of Jesus. By the same principle of life by which I apprehend acceptance, am I sustained in power to walk acceptably; the heart having learned the preciousness of Jesus for its own solid and eternal comfort—set in an evil world, finds out its place of testimony for Him by going forth unto Him without the camp—bearing His reproach. Having once found out our living and perfect union with Him, because of His love, displace us by distance or difficulty as much as possible, the tendency is to re-unite; and this tendency the more vigorous the better, declares our identity with Him, and is our testimony for Him passing from the distance, and thus the difficulties. Here works and all self-sacrifices find their place—running in the race, it is looking for Him who loved us; our love for Him is the only mettle, and we love Him as we know He first loved us—we work not, we serve not as Martha, to gain the notice or sympathy of our Lord; if we do, our service will be a wearisome one—we serve because we have sat at His feet and heard His word, and hence know the service which will please Him. Unless the soul is established in the perfectness and value of Christ's love, our service will be always reluctant and unsatisfactory, and therefore the word of exhortation first traces for you in the most touching way, the greatness, value and extent of His love, and then calls on you to tread on patiently through this evil scene till He shall come again—not to see you and enter into death for you, but for you to see Him, and to enter into glory and be like Him.

"Now may the God of *peace*, that brought again from the dead, our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight,

through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

THE BLESSING OF THE TRIBES BY JACOB.

It seems to me that we have the whole moral history of Israel, the purposes of God, and the accomplishment of them in Christ as regards this people, in the blessing of Jacob, in Gen. xlix. I can only briefly set it forth here. First, Israel as it was, and its moral failure in Reuben, Simeon, and Levi. The universal characters of the development of sin are given. Corruption and violence. Defiling and instruments of cruelty. God in the testimony of the Spirit rejects their assembly. The violent passions are the latter form. The beast is destroyed after Babylon. God's purposes are in Judah. The King, the Lawgiver is there; the gathering of the peoples is to be to Him. But we know when presented to the responsibility of Israel He was rejected. There was no gathering of the peoples. The staves of Beauty and Bands were broken. Those by which the peoples were to be gathered and the two divisions of Israel united in one under one head. Then in Zebulun and Issachar, Israel is presented as mixed up with the world like Tyre in Ezekiel, and content to be subject to strangers for ease, as if they were not God's people at all. Dan is still, in spite of all, owned, and represents Israel recognised as God's portion in spite of all, but at the same time points out the apostasy and power of Satan in Israel. The remnant taught of God look beyond the whole position of the people to God's own salvation who cannot but be faithful to His word. Thereupon we have unmingled blessing crowned with the heavenly and earthly glory of a rejected Christ—channel of all the resources of God's blessing to His people beyond all previous knowledge of blessing. Israel had been overcome, but overcomes at the last. Asher (not like Zebulun) has his fatness in his own pastures, and royal dainties are there. In Naphtali is joyful liberty—the liberty God has given, and full of goodly words. Then comes the crown of all. The rejected one of his brethren sorely tried and shot at; Christ personally considered the Shepherd the Stone of Israel made strong by the power of God, exalted when rejected to be at the King's right hand, and Head over the Gentiles, is the exhaustless source of every divine blessing with which the heart of man can be made glad, all richly coming from God are upon the crown of the head of Him that was separated from His brethren. Such is Christ as rejected and glorified, and the medium as partaking of heavenly glory of all divinely given blessings which are to His glory who was separated from his brethren. In Benjamin, finally, we have the royal strength a kingly power in Israel and of the people when Christ is returned as King amongst them, and makes Judah His goodly horse in the day of battle, and fills His bow with Ephraim. Such in general is the prospect of which the outlines seem to me to be given in this prophecy.

Your affectionate brother in Christ, J. N. D.

Nº. XVIII.

“ABLE TO STAND—STAND.”

EPHESIANS VI.

WHEN Israel was in Egypt, it was not in the desert; and when it was in the desert, it was not in Canaan. God was teaching *then* according to what man was; and man had to learn the varied truths in succeeding chapters—no two of which existed at the same time. But *now* God is teaching in another way, according to what Christ is; and this changes all in that which is *most real* of all things. Christ alone is out of Egypt, and those that, through faith, are in Him: they are as much out *in reality* as He is—so far indeed as they are in Him. Faith may be strong, and the soul may repose simply upon what God has done for us in Christ, and then *we know that we are not of the world, even as He is not of the world.* Or faith may be weak, and instead of our taking God's testimony about Christ, with a “let God be true and every man a liar,” we may be occupying ourselves in part with what God is to do in us, if He has saved us; and in our minds confounding what is to be done in the saved, with the saving which precedes the results which flow from it. If so, it is with us no wonder if we hardly know whether we are in or out of Egypt. If thus weak, let us turn to God's testimony about His Son, and rest upon that, and acknowledge that which God tells us of the blessedness of those who rest upon His grace in Christ—Christ and His work finished for us—a Christ now in heaven, made ours by God, is the sole Exodus of an individual soul. Mark it—Christ and His work made ours through the grace and mercy of God; “God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus.”

That light is its own evidence. If I have it I am not of Egypt; I am out of Egypt, and am not blinded as Satan blinds them that perish.

But though I myself be out of Egypt, my feet are in the wilderness; and all that I can say as to *it*, whether in the daily gleaning of experience through unbelief, or in the spiritual teachings of faith to the inner man is,—“In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

Many a Christian cleaves to pilgrimage-character, according to the experiences of nature: such cannot hope, I think, to get better fare than Lot did in Sodom,—if they are cleaving to the world,—or Jacob at Jabbok, if they are seeking to gather back to the path of faith. There is, however, another way of going to work, and that is that of Abraham, who walked according to the call and promises of God. This will not turn the wilderness to a garden—it will make them rather taste the more (because after a divine and heavenly mode and taste) what the wilderness itself is—and I might here say, what none dare question, that none ever tasted what the wilderness was, like Him whose whole being, and heart, and mind, and soul were divine and heavenly. To Him, the blessed Lord Jesus, it was the wilderness indeed.

But then, while our feet are in the wilderness—while we tread the earth, and are in the world, though not of it, we have not to wait to cross Jordan ere tasting Canaan’s corn, and the milk, and the honey of that good land.

Heaven is open upon us already, and a Christ full of blessing is there already known and tasted as our blessing. Neither, again, have *we*, like Israel, to fight our way into the land; nor, when in the land, to make good the claims God has given to us of blessing.

If I am striving to fight my way into the land of promise, I do not recognise that my Head is in possession of what commands it all. I am occupied with striving to take possession (which Christ alone can do), and not striving to act consistently with the possession of blessing already given to me in Christ.

Neither am I trying to make good the claims to the

blessing which God has given me—that is, if I act consistently. No; but to act consistently with a possession given in Christ, which has "yet a little while" added to it as the link that connects my soul with the entrance from below into the field of blessing, into which Christ will enter from above at the divinely-appointed moment, for His beginning to enjoy and to act upon the blessings which are His.

Many, I conceive, lose much by confusion on this point; they think they have to fight their way into the promise, or that they have to make good their claims to the promised blessing. Self and its energy get a wrong place and a wrong direction. They must be wrong, for the blessings are already all treasured up in Christ; and there is but One that can make good the claims to the enjoyment of the blessings, even Christ. Their mistake herein leads many to strive amiss; and instead of saying, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth;" instead of owning—"O how little taught in the blessing!" they are for a doing and a striving which flows from a zeal without knowledge.

What would I have them do? What would I have you do? Why this "Act, hourly, in all the difficulties which come upon you from the wilderness around you, as being indeed and already a living member of the body, whose Head, the Man Christ Jesus, sits in heaven, crowned with honour and glory. That is one thing I would have you do and suffer. Another is like it. Namely, Do and suffer here below in all the trials which flow down upon you from Satan's possession of the heavenlies, as the living member of the Christ of God should suffer.

And, if I added a third word, it would be this: In order that it may be so, be sure to look up from the wilderness where your feet are fast, the spot held by evil spirits in the heavenlies, to where Christ is at the right hand of the Father.

O if men knew what Christ's thoughts to-day are about the spiritual wickednesses in heavenly places and about this world that rejected Him, they would well understand, that being counted by Him as members of His body, one spirit with the Lord, the exhortations to

stand fast, at the close of the Ephesians, are not without force.

But who of us really counts himself as so looked upon by God and Christ, and proves that he counts it so by acting thereupon in all the details of his walk here below?

FRAGMENT.

OUR CITIZENSHIP IN HEAVEN.

THAT our citizenship is in heaven is a precious truth. He who is the God of heaven has made good to us the precious privilege, writing our names on the heart of Him who is the Heir of Heaven. Yet, alas! how little heavenly in practice are we, and how daily do we more and more discover this even one to another. The war in the east has caused many a spot of earthly politics to appear on the surface, in some, who seemed quite freed from the politics of this earth. But where, a year or two since, there was no interest in England's arrangements—(What had we to do with the honour of England? Who were we, to be interested in the wisdom of her measures?)—there, in many cases, a back current has washed from the bottom that which the forward current of pure truth had laid in the bed of the stream. Have we seen such feelings as these? “How is our country humbled before the whole world, in the Crimea!” Have we not heard, where the heart has been torn by the thoughts of brothers and kindred dear dying in the Crimea, “What a shame for us that our Government should have shown its inferiority to the French!” etc., etc. Let saints of God look to it that they be not caught by sorrow, where joy did not succeed against them. Be it that the world is unmasking itself, and that he who is a murderer and a liar from the beginning has shown himself in his own colours, and shown what his service really is, still a heavenly man, and man of heaven (be he Russian, Turk, French, or English), has to look down on it all as Christ looks upon it in its connection with God and His testimony, and not as a mere inhabitant of this or that land. T.

No. XIX.

NOW AND THEN; OR, TIME AND ETERNITY.

THE SUBSTANCE OF A LECTURE ON LUKE XII.

THE principles of truth laid down in this chapter are of the most solemn and searching character. Their practical bearing is such as to render them, in a day like the present, of the very last importance. Worldly-mindedness and carnality cannot live in the light of the truth here set forth. They are withered up by the roots. If one were asked to give a brief and comprehensive title to this most precious section of inspiration, it might be entitled "Time in the light of eternity." The Lord evidently designed to set his disciples in the light of that world where everything is the direct opposite of that which obtains here—to bring their hearts under the holy influence of unseen things, and their lives under the power and authority of heavenly principles. Such being the faithful purpose of the Divine Teacher, He lays the solid foundation for His superstructure of doctrine with these searching words, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy." There must be no undercurrent in the soul. The deep springs of thought must be laid bare. We must allow the pure beams of heaven's light to penetrate the most profound depths of our moral being. We must not have any discrepancy between the hidden judgment of the soul, and the style of our phraseology; between the bent of the life, and the profession of the lips. In a word, we specially need the grace of "an honest and a good heart," in order to profit by this wondrous compendium of practical truth. We are too apt to give an indifferent hearing, or a cold assent, to *home truth*. We do not like it. We prefer interesting speculations about the mere letter of Scripture, points of doctrine, or questions of prophecy, because we can

indulge these in immediate connexion with all sorts of worldly-mindedness, covetous practices, and self-indulgence. But ponderous principles of truth, bearing down upon the conscience in all their magnitude and flesh-cutting power, who can bear, save those, who, through grace, are seeking to purge themselves from "the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy!" This leaven is of a most specious character, takes various shapes, and is, therefore, most dangerous. Indeed, wherever it exists, there is a most positive and insurmountable barrier placed before the soul in its progress in experimental knowledge and practical holiness. If I do not expose my *whole soul* to the action of divine truth—if I am closing up some corner or crevice from the light thereof—if I am cherishing some secret reserve—if I am dishonestly seeking to accommodate the truth to my own standard of practice, or parry its keen edge from my conscience—then, assuredly, I am defiled by the leaven of hypocrisy; and my growth in likeness to Christ is a moral impossibility. Hence, therefore, it is imperative upon every disciple of Christ to search, and see that nothing of this abominable leaven is allowed in the secret chambers of his heart. Let us, by the grace of God, put and keep it far away, so that we may be able, on all occasions, to say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."^a

But, not only is hypocrisy utterly subversive of spiritual progress, it also entirely fails in attaining the object which it proposes to itself; "for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known." Every man will find his level; and every thought will be brought to light. What the truth would do *now*,

^a The meaning which is generally attached to hypocrisy is a false profession of religion. It assuredly means this; but it means much more. A tacit assent to principles which do not govern the conduct deserves the appellation of hypocrisy. Looking at the subject in this point of view, we may all find occasion of deep humiliation before the Lord. How often do we hearken to truth, and give an apparently full assent thereto, and yet there is no exhibition of the power of it in the life; it does not govern the conduct. If this be not morally connected with the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy, it is, at least, a serious evil, and entirely hostile to our progress in the divine life. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

the judgment seat will do *then*. Every grade and shade of hypocrisy will be unmasked by the light which shall shine forth from the judgment-seat of Christ. Nothing will be allowed to escape. All will be reality *then*, though there is so much fallacy *now*. Moreover, everything will get its proper name, then, though it be misnamed now. Worldly-mindedness is called prudence; a grasping, covetous spirit is called foresight; and self-indulgence and personal aggrandisement are called judicious management and laudable diligence in business. Thus it is *now*; but *then* it will be quite the reverse. All these things will be seen in their true colours, and called by their true names, before the judgment-seat. Wherefore, it is the wisdom of the disciple to act in the light of that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed. As to this, he is placed on a vantage ground, for, says the apostle, "we must all (saints and sinners—though not at the same time, nor on the same ground) be manifested (*φανερωθηναι*) before the judgment-seat of Christ." Should this disturb the disciple's mind? Assuredly not, if his heart be so purged of the leaven of hypocrisy, and his soul so thoroughly grounded, by the teaching of God the Holy Ghost, in the great foundation-truth set forth in this very chapter (2 Cor. v.), namely, that Christ is his life, and Christ his righteousness; that he can say, "we are manifested (*πεφανερωμεθα*, an inflection of the same word as is used at ver. 10), unto God, and I trust also are manifested in your consciences." But if he be deficient in this peace of conscience, and transparent honesty of heart, there is no doubt but that the thought of the judgment-seat will disturb his spirit. Hence we see that in the Lord's teaching, in Luke xii., He sets the consciences of His disciples directly in the light of the judgment-seat. "And I say unto you, *my friends*, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him." "The fear of man bringeth a snare," and is closely connected with "the leaven of the Pharisees." But "the fear of

the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and causes a man always so to carry himself—so to think, speak, and act—as in the full blaze of the light of Christ's judgment-seat. This would impart immense dignity and elevation to the character, while it would effectually nip, in the earliest bud, the spirit of haughty independence, by keeping the soul under the searching power of divine light, the effect of which is to make everything, and every one, manifest. There is nothing which so tends to rob the disciple of Christ of the proper dignity of his discipleship as walking before the eyes or the thoughts of men. So long as we are doing so, we cannot be unshackled followers of our heavenly Master. Moreover, the evil of walking before men is morally allied with the evil of seeking to hide our ways from God. Both partake of "the leaven of the Pharisees," and both will find their proper place before the judgment-seat. Why should we fear men? Why should we regard their opinions? If their opinions will not bear to be tried in His presence, who has power to cast into hell, they are worth nothing; for it is with Him we have to do. "With me, it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment." Man may have a judgment seat, *now*, but he will not have it *then*. He may set up his tribunal in time, but he will have no tribunal in eternity. Why, therefore, should we shape our way in reference to a tribunal so frail and evanescent? Oh! let us challenge our hearts as to this. God grant us grace to act *now*, in reference to *then*—to carry ourselves here with our eye on hereafter—to look at time in the light of eternity.

The poor unbelieving heart may, however, enquire, "If I thus rise above human thoughts and human opinions, how shall I get on in a scene where those very thoughts and opinions prevail?" This is a very natural question; but it meets its full and satisfactory answer from the Master's lips; yea, it would even seem as though He had graciously anticipated this rising element of unbelief, when, having carried his disciples above the hazy mists of time, and set them in the clear, searching, powerful light of eternity, He added, "Are not five

Time and Eternity.

309

sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows" (vers. 6, 7). Here the heart is taught not only to *fear* God; but also to *confide* in Him—it is not only warned, but also tranquillised. "Fear," and "fear not," may seem a paradox to flesh and blood; but to faith it is no paradox. The man who fears God most will fear circumstances least. The man of faith is, at once, the most dependent and independent man in the world—dependent upon God—independent upon circumstances. The latter is the consequence of the former; real dependence produces real independence. And mark the ground of the believer's peace. The One who has power to cast into hell, the only One whom he is to fear, has actually taken the trouble to count the hairs of his head. He surely has not taken this trouble for the purpose of letting him perish either here or hereafter. By no means. The minuteness of our Father's care should silence every doubt that might arise in our hearts. There is nothing too small, and there can be nothing too great for Him. The countless orbs that move through infinite space, and a falling sparrow, are alike to Him. His infinite mind can take in, with equal facility, the course of everlasting ages, and the hairs of our head. This is the stable foundation on which Christ founds His "fear not," and "take no thought." We frequently fail in the practical application of this divine principle. We may admire it as a principle; but it is only in the application of it that its real beauty is seen or felt. If we do not put it in practice, we are but painting sunbeams on canvass, while we famish beneath the chilling influences of our own unbelief.

Now, we find, in this Scripture before us, that bold and uncompromising testimony for Christ is connected with this holy elevation above men's thoughts, and this calm reliance upon our Father's minute and tender care. If my heart is lifted above the influence of the fear of man, and sweetly tranquillized by the assurance that God takes account of the hairs of my head, then I am in a condition of soul to confess Christ before men (see

vers. 8—10). Nor need I be careful as to the result of this confession, for so long as God wants me here He will maintain me here. "And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say." The only proper ground of testimony for Christ is to be fully delivered from human influence, and established in unqualified confidence in God. So far as I am influenced by or a debtor to men, so far am I disqualified for being a servant of Christ; but I can only be effectually delivered from human influence by a lively faith in God. When God fills the heart, there is no room for the creature; and we may be perfectly sure of this, that no man has ever taken the trouble to count the hairs of our head; we have not even taken that trouble ourselves; but God has, and therefore I can trust God more than any one. God is perfectly sufficient for every exigency, great or small, and we only want to trust Him to know that He is. True, He may and does use men as instruments; but if we lean on men instead of God—if we lean on instruments instead of on the Hand that uses them, we bring down a curse upon us, for it is written, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord" (Jer. xvii. 5). The Lord used the ravens to feed Elijah; but Elijah never thought of trusting in the ravens. Thus it should be ever. Faith leans on God, counts on Him, clings to Him, trusts in Him, waits for Him, ever leaves a clear stage for Him to act on, does not obstruct His glorious path by any creature-confidence, allows Him to display Himself in all the glorious reality of what He is, leaves everything to Him; and, moreover, if it gets into deep and rough waters, it will always be seen upon the crest of the loftiest billow, and from thence gazing in perfect repose, upon God and His powerful actings. Such is faith—that precious principle—the only thing in this world that gives God and man their respective places.

While the Lord Jesus was in the act of pouring forth these unearthly principles, a true child of earth intrudes

Time and Eternity.

311

upon Him with a question about property. "And one of the company said unto Him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me." How marvellously little did he know of the true character of that heavenly Man who stood before him! He knew nothing of the profound mystery of His being, nor the object of His heavenly mission. He surely had not come from the bosom of the Father to settle lawsuits about property, nor to arbitrate between two covetous men. The spirit of covetousness was manifestly in the whole affair. Both defendant and plaintiff were governed by covetousness. One wanted to grasp, and the other wanted to keep; what was this but covetousness? "And He said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" It was not a question of which was right, or which was wrong as to the property. According to Christ's pure and heavenly doctrine, they were both wrong. In the light of eternity, a few acres of land were little worth; and, as to Christ Himself, He was not only teaching principles entirely hostile to all questions of earthly possession, but, in His own person and character. He set an example of the very opposite. He did not go to law about the inheritance. He was "Heir of all things." The land of Israel, the throne of David, and all creation belonged to Him; but man would not own Him, nor give Him possession. "The husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir, come let us kill him, and seize on the inheritance." To this the Heir submitted in perfect patience, but—eternal homage to His glorious name!—by submitting unto death He crushed the enemy's power, and brought "many sons to glory." Thus we see, in the doctrine and practice of the Heavenly Man, the true exhibition of the principles of the kingdom of God. He would not arbitrate, but yet He taught truth which would entirely do away with the need of arbitration. If the principles of the kingdom of God were dominant, there would be no need for courts of law: for inasmuch as people would not be wronged of their rights, they could have no wrongs to be righted. This will be admitted by all. But then the Christian, being in the kingdom, is bound to be governed by the

principles of the kingdom, and to carry them out at all cost; for, in the exact proportion that he fails to exhibit those principles, he is robbing his own soul of blessing, and marring his testimony. Hence, then, a person going to law is not governed in so doing by the principles of the kingdom of God, but by the principles of the kingdom of Satan, who is the prince of this world. It is not a question as to his being a Christian, but simply a question as to the principle by which he is governed in the act of going to law, under any circumstances.^b I say nothing of the moral instincts of the divine nature, which would surely lead one to apprehend with accuracy the gross inconsistency of a man who professes to be saved by *grace* going to *law* with a fellow man — of one who, while he owns that if he had his *right* from the hand of God, he would be burning in hell, nevertheless insists upon extracting his rights from his fellow man — of one who has been forgiven ten thousand talents, but yet seizes his fellow by the throat for a paltry hundred pence. Upon these things I shall not dwell. I merely look at the question of going to law in the light of the kingdom, in the light of eternity; and if it be true that in the kingdom of God there is no need for courts of law, then I press it solemnly upon my reader's conscience, in the presence of God, that he, as a subject of that kingdom, is totally wrong in going to law. True, it will lead to loss and suffering; but who is "worthy of the kingdom of God" who is not prepared to "suffer for it"? Let those who are governed by the things of *time* go to law; but the Christian is, or ought, to be governed by the things of *eternity*. People go to law *now*; but it will not be so *then*; and the Christian is to act *now* as if it were *then*. He belongs to the kingdom; and it is just because the kingdom of God is not dominant, but the King rejected, that the subjects of the kingdom are called to suffer. Righteousness "suffers" now; it will "reign" in the millennium; and it will "dwell" in the new heavens and the new earth. Now in going to law, the Christian

^b How often, alas! does it happen, that people go to law to be *righted* of their *wrongs*, and, in the end, find themselves *wronged* of their *rights*.

Time and Eternity.

313

anticipates the millennial age. He is going before his Master in the assertion of his rights. He is called to suffer patiently all sorts of wrongs and injuries. To resent them is to deny the truth of that kingdom to which he professes to belong. I press this principle upon my reader's conscience. I earnestly implore his serious attention thereto. Let it have its full weight upon his conscience. Let him not trifle with its truth. There is nothing which tends so to hinder the freshness and power, growth and prosperity of the kingdom of God in the heart, as the refusal to carry out the principles of that kingdom in the conduct.^c

But some may say, that it is bringing us down from the high ground of the Church, as set forth in Paul's epistles, to press, thus, the principles of the kingdom. By no means. We belong to the Church, but we are in the kingdom; and while we must never confound the

^c The Christian should be governed by the principles of the kingdom in everything. If he is engaged in business, he should conduct his business as a child of God, and a servant of Christ. He should not have a Christian character on Lord's day, and a commercial character on Monday. I should have the Lord with me in my shop, my warehouse, and my counting-house. It is my privilege to depend upon God in my business; but, in order to depend upon Him, my business must be of such a nature, and conducted upon such a principle as He can own. If I say, "I must do business as others do business," I abandon true Christian ground, and get into the current of the world's thoughts. If, for example, I resort to placards, newspaper advertisements, and all such means of puffing and pushing, I am evidently not working in simple dependance upon God, but rather depending upon the world's principle. But some will say, "How am I to get on in business?" I reply by putting another question, namely, "What is your object? Is it food and raiment, or to hoard up?" "If the former, God has promised it; so that if you are in the way of His appointment, you have only to depend upon Him. Faith always puts the soul on a totally different ground from that occupied by the world, no matter what our calling may be. Take, for example, David in the valley of Elah. Why did he not fight like other men? Because he was on the ground of faith. So also Hezekiah; why did he put on sackcloth when other men put on armour? Because he was on the ground of simple dependance upon God. Just so in the case of a man in trade, he must carry on his trade as a Christian, else he will mar the testimony, and rob his own soul of blessing.

two, it is perfectly plain that the ethics—the moral habits and ways—of the Church can never be below those of the kingdom. If it be contrary to the spirit and principles of the kingdom to assert my rights and go to law, it must, if possible, be still more contrary to the spirit and principles of the Church. This cannot be questioned. The higher my position, the higher should be my code of ethics, and tone of character. I fully believe, and desire firmly to hold, experimentally to enter into, and practically to exhibit the truth of the Church as the body and bride of Christ—the possessor of a heavenly standing, and the expectant of heavenly glory, by virtue of her oneness with Christ; but I cannot see how my being a member of that highly privileged body can make my practice lower than if I were merely a subject or member of the kingdom. What is the difference, as regards present conduct and character, between belonging to the body of a rejected Head, and belonging to the kingdom of a rejected king? Assuredly it cannot be to lower the tone in the former case. The higher and more intimate my relationship to the rejected One, the more intense should be my separation from that which rejects Him, and the more complete should be my assimilation to His character, and the more precise and accurate my walk in His footsteps, in the midst of that scene from which He is rejected. But, the simple fact is, **WE WANT CONSCIENCE.** Yes, beloved reader, a tender, exercised, honest conscience, which will truly and accurately respond to the appeals of God's pure and holy Word is, I verily believe, the grand desideratum—the pressing want of the present moment. It is not so much principles we want, as the grace, the energy, the holy decision that will carry them out, cost what it may. We admit the truth of principles, which most plainly cut at the very things which we ourselves are either directly or indirectly doing. We admit the principle of grace, and yet we live by the strict maintenance of righteousness. For example, how often does it happen that persons are preaching, teaching, and professing to enjoy grace, while at that very moment they are insisting upon their rights in reference to their tenants; and, either

Time and Eternity.

315

directly themselves, or indirectly by means of their agents, dispossessing poor people, unroofing their houses, and sending them out, in destitution and misery, upon a cold, heartless world. This is a plain palpable case, of which, alas! there have been too many painful illustrations in the world within the last ten years. And why such cases? Because one finds such melancholy deficiency in sensibility of conscience, at the present day, that unless the thing is brought home plainly to oneself it will not be understood. Like David, our indignation is wrought up to the highest pitch by a picture of moral turpitude, so long as we do not see *self* in that picture. It needs some Nathan to sound in our ears "Thou art the man," in order to prostrate us in the dust, with a smitten conscience, and in true self-abhorrence. Thus, at the present day, eloquent sermons are preached, eloquent lectures delivered, and elaborate treatises written about the principles of grace, and yet the courts of law are frequented, attorneys, lawyers, sheriffs, agents, and sub-agents, are called into requisition, with all their terrible machinery, in order to assert our rights; but we feel it not, because we are not present to witness the distress, and hear the groans and execrations of houseless mothers and children. Need we wonder, therefore, that true, practical Christianity is at a low ebb amongst us? Is it any marvel that leanness, barrenness, drought, and poverty, coldness and deadness, darkness, ignorance and spiritual depression should be found amongst us? What else could be expected when the principles of the kingdom of God are openly violated? But is it unrighteous to seek to get our own, and to make use of the machinery within our reach, in order to do so? Surely not. What is here maintained is, that no matter how well defined and clearly established the right may be, the assertion thereof is diametrically opposed to the kingdom of God. The servant, in Matt. xviii., was called "a wicked servant," and "delivered to the tormentors" not because he acted unrighteously in enforcing the payment of a lawful debt, but because he did not act in grace and remit that debt. Let this fact be solemnly weighed. A man who fails to act in grace will lose the sense of grace

—a man who fails to carry out the principles of the kingdom of God will lose the enjoyment of those principles in his own soul. This is the moral of the wicked servant. Well, therefore, might the Lord Jesus sound in His disciples' ears this warning voice, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

But how difficult to define this "covetousness!" How hard to bring it home to the conscience. It is as some one has said of worldliness, "shaded off gradually from white to jet black;" so that it is only as we are imbued with the spirit and mind of heaven, and thoroughly schooled in the principles of eternity, that we shall be able to detect its working. And not only so, but our hearts must, in this also, be purged from the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. The Pharisees were covetous, and could only turn Christ's doctrine into ridicule (see Luke xvi. 14); and so will it be with all those who are tainted by their leaven. They *will* not see the just application of truth, either as to covetousness or anything else. They will seek to define it in such a way as will suit themselves. They will interpret, modify, pare down, accommodate, until they have fully succeeded in getting their conscience from under the edge of God's truth; and thus they get into the power and under the influence of the enemy. I must either be governed by the pure truth of the Word, or by the impure principles of the world, which, as we very well know, are forged in Satan's workshop, and brought into the world to be used in doing his work.

In the parable of the rich man, which the Lord here puts forth, in illustration of covetousness, we see a character which the world respects and admires. But in this, as in everything else brought forward in this searching chapter, we see the difference between *now* and *then*—between "time and eternity." All depends upon the light in which you look at men and things. If you merely look at them *now*, it may be all very well to get on in trade, and enlarge one's concerns, and make provision for the future. The man who does this is counted

Time and Eternity.

317

wise, *now*; but he will be a "fool," *then*. Title-deeds, debentures, bank receipts, insurance policies, are current coin, *now*; but they will be rejected *then*; they are genuine *now*; they will be spurious *then*. Thus it is; and, my reader, let us remember, that we must make God's *then* to be our *now*; we must look at the things of time in the light of eternity; the things of earth in the light of heaven. This is true wisdom which does not confine the heart to that system of things which obtains "under the sun," but conducts it into the light, and leaves it under the power of "that (unseen) world" where the principles of the kingdom of God bear sway. What should we think of courts of law, banks, and insurance offices, if we look at them in the light of eternity?^a These things do very well for men who are only governed by *now*; but the disciple of Christ is to be governed by *then*. This makes all the difference; and truly it is a serious difference. "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully." What sin is there in being a successful agriculturist, or merchant? If God bless a man's labour, should he not rejoice? Truly so; but mark the moral progress of a covetous heart. "He thought *within himself*." He did not think in the presence of God; he did not think under the mighty influences of the eternal world. No; "he thought

^a It should be a serious question with a child of God, ere he avails himself of an insurance company, whether in the matter of fire or life, "Am I, hereby, distrusting God? or, am I seeking by human agency to counteract divine visitations?" There is something sadly anomalous in a Christian's insuring his life. He professes to be *dead*, and that Christ is his *life*; why then talk of insuring his life? But many will say, "We cannot bring Christianity into such things." I ask, Where are we to leave it? Is Christianity a convenient sort of garment, which we put on on Lord's day, and at the close of that day take it off, fold it carefully up, and lay it on the shelf till the following Lord's day? It is too often thus. People have two characters; and what is this but the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy? Insurance offices are all very well for the men of this world, who should certainly avail themselves of them, inasmuch as everything around and within is so uncertain. But to the child of God, *all is sure*. God has insured his life for ever; and, hence, he should regard insurance offices as so many *depôts* of unbelief.

within himself"—within the narrow compass of his selfish heart. Such was his range; and, therefore, we need not marvel at his practical conclusion. "What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?" What! Was there no way of using his resources with a view to God's future? Alas! no. Man has a future, or thinks he has, on which he counts, and for which he makes provision; but self is the only object which figures in that future,—self, whether in my own person, or that of my wife or child, which is, morally, the same thing. The grand object in God's future is Christ; and true wisdom will lead us to fix our eye on Him and make Him our undivided object for time and eternity, *now*, and *then*. But this, in the judgment of a worldly man, is nonsense. Yes, heaven's wisdom is nonsense in the judgment of earth. Hearken to the wisdom of earth, and the wisdom of those who are under the influence of earthly maxims and habits. "And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and *there* will I bestow *all* my fruits and my goods." Thus we have what he "thought," what he "said," and what he "did"; and there is a melancholy consistency between his thoughts, his words, and his acts. "*There*" in my self-built storehouse, "will I bestow *all*." Miserable treasure-house to contain the "all" of an immortal soul! God was not an item in the catalogue. God was neither his treasury nor his treasure. This is plain; and it is always thus with a mere man of the world. "And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." Thus we see that a worldly man's provision is only "for many years." Make the best of it, it cannot go beyond that narrow limit. It cannot, even in his own thought about it, reach into that boundless eternity, which stretches beyond this contracted span of time. And this provision he offers to his never-dying soul, as the basis of its "ease and merriment." Miserable fatuity! Senseless calculation! How different is the address which a believer may present to his soul! He, too, may say to his soul, "Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry; eat of the fatness of God's storehouse, and drink of the river of His pleasures, and of the wine of His kingdom; and be glad in His

accomplished salvation; for thou hast much goods, yea, unsearchable riches, untold wealth, laid up, not merely for many years, but for eternity. Christ's finished work is the ground of thine eternal peace, and His coming glory the sure and certain object of thy hope." This is a different character of address, my reader. This shows the difference between *now* and *then*. It is a fatal mistake not to make Christ the Crucified, Christ the Risen, Christ the Glorified, the Alpha and the Omega of all our calculations. To paint a future, and not to place Christ in the foreground, is extravagance of the wildest character; for the moment God enters the scene, the picture is hopelessly marred. "But God said unto him, Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee: **THEN** whose shall those things be which thou hast provided"? And, then, mark the moral of all this. "So is he," no matter who, saint or sinner, "that layeth up *treasure for himself*, and is not rich toward God." The man who hoards up is virtually making a God of his hoard. His mind is tranquillised as to the future when he thinks of his hoard, for if he had not that hoard he would be uneasy. It is sufficient to put a natural man entirely out of his reason to give him nought but God to depend upon. Anything but that for him. Give him old pieces of parchment in the shape of title-deeds, in which some clever lawyer will finally pick a hole, and prove worthless. He will lean on them, yea, die in peace, if he can leave such to his heirs. Give him an insurance-policy,—anything, in short, but God, for the natural heart. **ALL IS REALITY, SAVE THE ONLY REALITY**, in the judgment of nature. This proves what nature's true condition is. It cannot trust God. It *talks* about Him, but it cannot *trust* Him. The very basis of man's moral constitution is distrust of God; and one of the fairest fruits of regeneration is the capacity to confide in God for everything. "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee." None else can.

However, my main object in this paper, is to deal with Christian conscience. I ask the Christian reader, therefore, in plain terms, is it in keeping with Christ's doctrine, as set forth in the gospel, for His disciples to lay up for

themselves treasure on the earth? It would seem almost an absurdity to put such a question in the face of Luke xii. and parallel scriptures. "Lay not up for yourselves treasure on the earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal." This is plain enough, and only wants an honest conscience to apply it, in order to produce its proper results. It is directly contrary to the doctrine of the kingdom of God, and perfectly incompatible with true discipleship, to lay up "treasure," in any shape or form, "on the earth." In this, as in the matter of going to law, we have only to remember that we are in the kingdom of God, in order to know how we should act. The principles of that kingdom are eternal, and binding upon every disciple of Christ. "And He said unto His disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment." Observe, "take NO thought." This needs no interpretation or accommodation. Persons may say, it means "anxious thought," but there is nothing about "anxious" in the passage. It is simply said, "no thought"; and that, too, in reference to all that man can really want, namely, food and raiment, in both of which the ravens and the lilies are set before us as an example; for the former are fed, and the latter are clothed, without thought. If the Lord Jesus meant "anxious thought," He would have said so. Nor is this merely true in reference to those who are only in the kingdom; it is also true as to the members of the Church. "Be careful for nothing," says the Spirit by the apostle. Why? Because God is caring for you. There is no use in two thinking about the same thing, when One can do everything, and the other can do nothing. "In everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall garrison (*φρουρησει*) your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus." This is the solid foundation of peace of heart,

Time and Eternity.

321

which so few really enjoy. Many have gotten peace of conscience through faith in the sufficiency of Christ's work, who do not enjoy peace of heart through faith in the sufficiency of God's care. And oftentimes we go to pray about our difficulties and trials, and we rise from our knees as troubled as we knelt down. We profess to put our affairs into the hands of God, but we have no notion of *leaving them* there; and, consequently, we do not enjoy peace of heart. Thus it was with Jacob, in Gen. xxxii. He asked God to deliver him from the hand of Esau; but, no sooner did he rise from his knees than he set forth the real ground of his soul's dependance, by saying, "I will appease him by a present." It is clear he had much more confidence in the "present" than in God. This is a common error amongst the children of God. We profess to be looking to the Eternal Fountain; but the eye of the soul is askance upon some creature stream. Thus God is practically shut out; our souls are not delivered, and we have not got peace of heart. The apostle then goes on, in the 8th verse of Philip. iv., to give a catalogue of those things about which we ought to think; and we find that *self*, or its affairs, are not once alluded to. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are venerable (*σεμνα*), whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. And the God of peace shall be with you." Thus, when I know and believe that God is thinking about me, I have "*the peace of God*"; and when I am thinking about Him and the things belonging to Him, I have "*the God of peace*." This, as might be expected, harmonises precisely with Christ's doctrine in Luke xii. After relieving the minds of His disciples in reference to present supplies and future treasure, He says, "But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you." That is, I am not to seek the kingdom with the latent thought in my mind that my wants will be supplied in consequence. That would not be true discipleship. A true disciple never thinks of aught but the Master and His kingdom; and the Master will

assuredly think of him and his wants. Thus it stands, my beloved reader, between a faithful servant, and an All-powerful and All-gracious Master. That servant may, therefore, be free—perfectly free from care.

But there is another ground on which we are exhorted to be free from care, and that is, the utter worthlessness of that care. “Which of you, with taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?” We gain nothing by our care; and by indulging therein, we only unfit ourselves for seeking the kingdom of God, and place a barrier, by our unbelief, in the way of His acting for us. It is always true in reference to us, “He could there do no mighty work, because of their unbelief.” Unbelief is the great hindrance to the display of God’s mighty works on our behalf. If we take our affairs into our own hands, it is clear we do not want God. Thus we are left to the depressing influence of our own perplexing thoughts, and, finally, we take refuge in some human resource, and make shipwreck of faith. It is important to understand that we are either leaning on God, or on circumstances. It will not do, by any means, to say we are leaning on God *and* circumstances. It must be God *only*, or not at all. It is all very well to talk of faith when our hearts are, in reality, leaning on the creature, in some shape or form. We should sift and try our ways closely as to this; for, inasmuch as absolute dependance upon God is one of the special characteristics of the divine life, and one of the fundamental principles of the kingdom, it surely becomes us to look well to it, that we are not presenting any barrier to our progress in that heavenly quality. True, it is most trying to flesh and blood to have no settled thing to lean upon. The heart will quiver as we stand upon the shore of circumstances, and look forth upon that unknown ocean—unknown to all but faith, and where nought but simple faith can live for an hour. We may feel disposed, like Lot, to cry out, “Is it not a little one? and my soul shall live.” The heart longs for some shred of the creature, some plank from the raft of circumstances, anything but absolute dependance upon God. But, oh!

Time and Eternity.

323

let God only be known, and He must be trusted; let Him be trusted, and He must be known. Still the poor heart will yearn after something settled, something tangible. If it be a question of maintenance, it will earnestly desire some settled income, a certain sum in the funds, a certain amount of landed property, or a fixed jointure or annuity of some kind or other. Then, if it be a question of public testimony or ministry of any kind, it will be the same thing. If a man is going to preach or lecture, he will like to have something to lean upon: if not a written sermon, at least, some notes, or some kind of previous preparation; anything but unqualified, self-emptying dependance upon God. Hence it is that worldliness prevails to such a fearful extent amongst Christians. Faith alone can overcome the world, and purify the heart. It brings the soul from under the influence of time, and keeps it habitually in the light of eternity. It is occupied not with *now*, but with *then*; not with *here*, but *hereafter*; not with earth, but with heaven. Thus it overcomes the world, and purifies the heart. It hears and believes Christ's word, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Now, if "the kingdom" fills my soul's vision, I have no room for aught beside. I can let go present shadows in the prospect of future realities. I can give up an evanescent *now*, in the prospect of an eternal *then*. Wherefore, the Lord immediately adds, "Sell that ye have, and give alms: provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that fadeth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For, where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." If I have treasure on earth, no matter in what shape, my *heart* will be there also, and I shall be a downright worldly man. How shall I most effectually empty my heart of the world? By getting it filled with Christ. He is the true treasure which neither the world's "bags," nor its "storehouses" can contain. The world has its "barns" and its "bags," in which it hoards its "goods"; but its barns will fall, and its bags will wax old; and then, what will become of the treasure? Truly, "they build too low that build beneath the skies." Yet, people will

build and hoard up, if not for themselves, at least for their children; or, in other words, their second selves. If I hoard for my children, I am hoarding for myself; and not only so, but in numberless cases, the hoard, in place of proving a blessing, proves a positive curse to the child, by taking him off the proper ground appointed for him, as well as for all, in God's moral government, namely, "working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have (not to hoard up for himself, or his second self, but) to give to him that needeth." This is God's appointed ground for every man; and, therefore, if I hoard for my child, I am taking both myself and him off the divine ground, and the consequence will be a forfeiture of blessing. Do I taste the surpassing sweetness of obedience to, and dependance upon, God, and shall I deprive my child thereof? Shall I not rob him, virtually, and so far as in me lies, of God, and give Him, as a substitute, a few "old bags," an insurance-policy, or some musty parchments? Would this be acting a father's part? Surely not. It would be selling *then* for *now*. It would be like the profane and sensual Esau, selling the birthright for a morsel of meat; it would be giving up God's future for man's present. But why need I hoard up for my children? If I can trust God for myself, why not trust Him for them likewise? Cannot the One who has fed and clothed me, feed and clothe them also? Is His hand shortened, or His treasury exhausted? Shall I make them idlers, or give them money instead of God? Ah! my reader, let us bear in mind this simple fact, that if we *cannot* trust God for our little ones, we *do not* trust Him for ourselves. The moment I begin to hoard up a sixpence I have, in principle, departed from the life of faith. I may call my hoard by all the fair names that were ever invented by worldly minds or unbelieving hearts; but the unvarnished truth of the matter is this, MY HOARD IS MY GOD. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Let not the truth be misunderstood or misinterpreted. I am bound, by the powerful obligations of the word and example of God, to provide for my own; for, "if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the

faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Tim. v. 8). This is plain enough. And, moreover, I am bound to fit my children, so far as God's principles admit, and my province extends, for any service to which He may be graciously pleased to call them. But I am nowhere instructed in the Word of God to give my children a hoard in place of an honest occupation, with simple dependance upon a Heavenly Father. As a matter of actual fact, few children ever thank their fathers for inherited wealth; whereas they will ever remember, with gratitude and veneration, having been led, by parental care and management, into a godly course of action for themselves.

I do not, however, forget a passage which has often been used, or rather abused, to defend the worldly, unbelieving practice of hoarding up. I allude to 2 Cor. xii. 14. "Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children." How glad people are when they get a semblance of Scripture authority for their worldliness! In this passage it is but a semblance of authority; for the apostle is certainly not teaching Christians to hoard up—he is not teaching heavenly men to lay up treasure upon the earth, for any object. He simply refers to a common practice, *in the world*, and to a common feeling *in nature*, in order to illustrate his own mode of dealing with the Corinthians, who were his children in the faith. He had not burdened them, and he would not burden them, for he was the parent. Now, if the saints of God are satisfied to go back to the world and its maxims, to nature and its ways, then let them hoard up with all diligence—let them "heap treasure together for the last days;" but let them remember that the moth, the canker-worm, and the rust, will be the end of it all. Oh! for a heart to value those immortal "bags" in which faith lays up its "unfading treasure" those heavenly storehouses where faith "bestows all its fruits and its goods." Then shall we pursue a holy and an elevated path through this present evil world—then, too, shall we be lifted upon faith's

vigorous pinion above the dark atmosphere which enwraps this Christ-rejecting, God-hating world, and which is impregnated and polluted by those two elements, namely, *hatred of God, and love of gold.*

I shall only add, ere closing this paper, that the Lord Jesus—the Adorable, the Divine, the Heavenly Teacher, having sought to raise, by His unearthly principles, the thoughts and affections of His disciples to their proper centre and level, gives them two things to do; and these two things may be expressed in the words of the Holy Ghost, “to serve the living and true God; and wait for His Son from heaven.” The entire of the teaching of Luke xii. from verse 35 to the end, may be ranged under the above comprehensive heads, to which I call the Christian reader’s prayerful attention. We have no one else to serve but “the living God;” and nothing to wait for—nothing worth waiting for, but “His Son.” May the Holy Ghost clothe His own word with heavenly power, so that it may come home to the heart and conscience, and tell upon the life of every child of God, that the name of the Lord Christ may be magnified, and His truth vindicated in the conduct of those that belong to Him. May the grace of an honest heart, and a tender, upright, well-adjusted conscience, be largely ministered to each and all of us, so that we may be like a well-tuned instrument, yielding a true tone when touched by the Master’s hand, and harmonising with His heavenly voice.

Finally, if this paper should fall into the hands of one who has not yet found rest of conscience in the perfected atonement of the Son of God, I would say to such a one, you will surely lay this paper down, and say, “This is a hard saying, who can hear it?” You may be disposed to ask, “What would the world come to, if such principles were universally dominant?” I reply, it would cease to be governed by Satan, and would be “the kingdom of God.” But let me ask you, my friend, “To which kingdom do you belong? Which is it—*now* or *then*—with you? Are you living for time or eternity, earth or heaven, Satan or Christ?” Do, I affectionately implore of you, be thoroughly honest with yourself in

Time and Eternity.

327

the presence of God. Remember, "there is *nothing* covered, that shall not be revealed." The judgment-seat will bring *all* to light. Therefore, I say, be honest with yourself, and now ask your heart, "Where am I? How do I stand? What is the ground of my peace? What are my prospects for eternity?" Do not imagine that God wants *you* to buy heaven with a surrender of earth. No; He points you to Christ, who, by bearing sin in His own body on the cross, has opened a way for the believing sinner to come into the presence of God, in the power of divine righteousness. You are not asked to do or to be anything; but the Gospel tells you what Jesus is, and what He has done; and, if you believe this in your heart, and confess it with your mouth, you shall be saved. Christ—God's Eternal Son—God manifest in the flesh—co-equal with the Father, being conceived by the Holy Ghost, was born of a woman, took upon Him a body prepared by the power of the Highest—and thus became A REAL MAN—very God, and very man—He, having lived a life of perfect obedience, died upon the cross, being made sin and a curse, and having exhausted the cup of Jehovah's righteous wrath, endured the sting of death, spoiled the grave of its victory, and destroyed him that had the power of death, He went up into heaven, and took His seat at the right hand of God. Such is the infinite merit of His perfect sacrifice, that all who believe are justified from ALL THINGS—yea, are accepted in Him—stand in His acceptableness before God, and can never come into condemnation, but have passed from death into life. This is the Gospel—the glad tidings of salvation which God the Holy Ghost came down from heaven to preach to every creature. My reader, let me exhort you, in this concluding line, to "behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." BELIEVE AND LIVE.

C. H. M.

Nº. XX.

THE THREE VINES.

It is among the varied ways of divine teaching to set things before us in the way of contrast. The believer in Christ is "a doer of truth;" he "comes to the light" himself, and brings everything to the light; and it is by knowing the truth that he is alone kept from falling into the most fearful errors and delusions. Men trust to natural sagacity to discover and keep themselves from imposture. But they reckon not on the sagacity of Satan. He has his "devices," and he knows how so to dress up error in the garb of truth, that those alone who not only know but also "love the truth," will be kept from his capital delusion. The believer finds his need of "the whole armour of God to enable him to stand against the wiles of the devil."

The characteristic of the vine is fruitfulness (Psa. cxxviii. 3), other trees may be valuable for their timber, but if the vine be not fruitful it is worthless. "What is the vine-tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest? Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. Is it meet for any work? Behold, when it was whole, it was meet for no work: how much less shall it be meet yet for any work, when the fire hath devoured it, and it is burned?" (Ezek. xv. 2—5).

The vine first in order to notice is Israel. The whole history of Israel, from their deliverance out of Egypt to the coming of the Messiah among them, is presented to us under this emblem. Let us turn to Psa. lxxx.: "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: Thou hast cast out

The Three Vines.

329

the heathen and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river." Beautiful picture, but speedily to pass away. "Israel was holiness unto the Lord, the first-fruits of His increase" (Jer. ii. 3). The nations trembled at the manifested presence of Jehovah in the midst of Israel. "And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, that He had done for Israel" (Josh. xxiv. 31). But the Book of Judges tells us of Israel's declension, corruption and idolatry, and that this corruption increased from generation to generation (Judges ii. 19). There were revivals through God's pitiful mercy, and a bright gleam when God so remarkably visited His people as to fill the house which Solomon had built for Him with His glory. But if God had profaned Israel's priesthood in the days of Samuel, it was soon followed by corruption in the kings, who either tolerated idolatry or took the lead in it, till "the whole head was sick, and the whole heart was faint;" and the continuous strain of prophetic testimony was against the Vine, "till there was no remedy," but it must be rooted up and burned. To return to Psa. lxxx. The Holy Ghost leads at once from the fruitfulness of the vine to its burning and destruction; as if the moment it ceased to be fruitful it was destroyed. "Why hast Thou broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it. Return, we beseech Thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven and behold, and visit this vine, and the vineyard which Thy right hand hath planted, and the branch which thou madest strong for Thyself. It is burned with fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of Thy countenance." But what is the answer to this pleading? What is the remedy for this "wasted" vine? Shall they "dig about it and dung it," and re-fence it? Nothing shall be wanting in this way—the

patient grace of God shall try every remedy; but the Holy Ghost points to something beyond this—another vine—"the true vine," as that alone which would be a suited answer to the complaint. "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself. So will we not go back from Thee: quicken us and we will call upon Thy name. Turn us again, O Lord God of Hosts, cause Thy face to shine and we shall be saved."

But let us listen to the Lord's own complaint against the vine, which he had brought out of Egypt. The godly among men might see its wasted appearance, and that it lacked a fence against the inroads of the beasts of the field; but the Lord shows the cause of its deplorable condition. "Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry" (Is. v. 1—7). The Lord looked for grapes; but He only found sour grapes. The multitude of sacrifices and burnt offerings, the blood of bullocks and rams, the observance of new moons and sabbaths (Is. i. 10—15), the very ordinances He had prescribed

The Three Vines.

331

to them were but as sour grapes to Him, "a weariness," "an abomination" used by them to veil over the iniquity of their hearts in which there was neither the fear of God, nor just regard for men. They were covetously adding field to field, giving themselves up to strong drink, whiling away their time by the viol and tabret in their feasts, "but they regarded not the work of the Lord, neither considered the operation of his hands." They rejected the knowledge of the Lord, were "wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight." "They put darkness for light, and light for darkness," and, therefore, was the Lord's anger kindled against them. The Lord had given them statutes, and ordinances, and judgments, that all nations might know that the nation whose God was Jehovah, was a wise and understanding nation. But they corrupted themselves, and through their corruption the very name of Jehovah was blasphemed among the Gentiles.

But even after the ministry of the prophets, by which the Lord had "hewed them" (Hos. vi. 5), but to no purpose, it pleased him again "to visit this vine and the vineyard which his right hand had planted." "Having yet, therefore, one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son" Mark xii. 1—12. The vineyard to all appearance was well fenced, and the vine apparently flourishing. Never, in Israel's history, were the ordinances more regularly observed—never was there more activity displayed by doctors of the law. Jehosaphat, in days of old, had sent "his princes, and with them the Levites and the priests. And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people" (2 Chron. xvii. 7—9). But in the days when God sent His Well-beloved Son to visit His vineyard, religious teachers abounded; "there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come *out of every town* of Galilee, and Judea and Jerusalem" (Luke v. 17). But they taught not out of the law, although they professed to be teachers of the law, because they "taught for doctrines the commandments of men, and

made the Word of God of none effect by their traditions." It was against the accredited religious teachers that our Lord uttered the most withering woes. *They* were the great hindrance to divine truth. They had taken away the key of knowledge, they entered not themselves into the kingdom of God, and hindered those who were entering. Religious corruption had made rapid advance since the days of the prophets, notwithstanding the fair show and religious decorum at the time our Lord came seeking for fruit. Their fathers had persecuted the prophets; they were about to cast the Son out of the vineyard, and to slay Him. For "three years" the Lord Himself, had patiently sought fruit from "the fig tree planted in his vineyard, and found none" (Luke xiii. 6—9). A brief respite was given, another year's trial accorded but still fruit there was none. There were leaves in abundance so as to promise fruit, but none was to be found—"there was no remedy"—the sentence can be no longer deferred, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever" (Matt. xxi. 17—22).

The above is a faint outline of the vine of God's planting, which He had brought out of Egypt, so carefully fenced, and so patiently watched over. It was fruitless. It was fit for no use; but only to be burned. "Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself" (Hos. x. 1). There is deep instruction to be gathered from this history. Israel, a holy nation, by reason of the ordinances God Himself had given it—Israel, a nation which Jehovah Himself owned as His nation, of which He was the God and King—Israel, which had the oracles of God committed to their keeping—Israel, whose early history had been a series of most astonishing miracles, whose later history had been marked by the raising up of a succession of prophets—brought forth no fruit to God. No nation had before, or has since, been placed under such advantages, but these advantages instead of being used for the glory of God, had been misused for their own glory; and the evil was, that "through the means of this highly-favoured people the name of Jehovah was blasphemed among the Gentiles." What must we say to these things? "The flesh profiteth

The Three Vines.

333

nothing;" the flesh, under the greatest advantages, given by God Himself, fails of bringing forth fruit to God. (Compare Rom. vii. 5.)

From this consideration, it is easy and natural to turn to "the true vine." It was after Judas had left the Lord and His other disciples, that the Lord opens out His heart and thoughts to them, as if relieved by the departure of the traitor, in that memorable discourse which commencing John xiii. 31, terminates with one slight break at the close of chap. xvii. But this slight break it is well to notice. It occurs at the end of chap. xiv.: "Arise, let us go hence." In chap. xiv., the Lord makes provision for the sustainment of the souls of His disciples, on the announcement that He would remain with them but a little while longer; and He adds, "Whither I go ye cannot come" (xiii. 33), His two chief topics of sustainment are His promise to come to receive them unto Himself, into the mansions He would prepare for them; and the promise of the other Comforter, the Holy Ghost, who should abide with them for ever, and in virtue of whose indwelling the Father and the Son would take up their mansion with them (xiv. 23). Thus far we are left in perfect repose of soul. There is no intimation of failure, because it is not the responsibility of disciples which is the point, but the gracious provision of the Lord for His disciples during His personal absence from them. But the moment the Lord has announced Himself as the true Vine, the question of responsibility comes in as to fruit-bearing. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (John xv. 1, 2). Hence the importance of the break; although as to time the Lord gave this instruction within a brief interval to that which is recorded in chap. xiv., yet the place was different. "Arise, let us go hence." The fourteenth chapter of John is one to which weak, tried, and sick Christians constantly turn. They may not be aware of the reason, but it is very plain; it is because the Lord is there, regarding their case as

one of desolateness, and meeting them in their desolation not only in the most suited but also in the most gracious and affectionate manner.

But he must needs speak of fruitfulness—of the real power of fruit-bearing unto God. He had rejected Israel, He had withered up that vine, and now He speaks of another vine—even Himself. “I am the true Vine,” in contradistinction to Israel “the empty vine.” Fruitfulness entirely depended on *abiding* in Him. Under the law the order was, “Cursed is every one that *continueth* not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Deut. xxvii. 26; Gal. iii. 10). But now there might be due attention to the ordinances of Christ Himself, and even the performance of sundry duties prescribed by Christ, and yet no fruit-bearing unto God. Nothing is fruit to God which does not manifestly show the stock from which it is produced, in other words, when Christ and not man is prominent. The object of God is the glory of His Son Jesus Christ, and He is “glorified” in His real disciples. They make mention of His name, even His only: “Blessed indeed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance. In Thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in Thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For Thou art the glory of their strength: and in Thy favour our horn shall be exalted” (Psa. lxxxix. 15–17). There is the element of “continuance” in the ways of God. “Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, *those that remember Thee in Thy ways*: behold, Thou art wroth; for we have sinned: *in those is continuance, and we shall be saved*. But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and *we all do fade as a leaf*” (Is. lxiv. 5, 6). But if in God’s ways there is “continuance,” it is because with “Him alone there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” Hence the importance of the word of the Lord, “Abide in me.” Jesus presents Himself to us as “the First and the Last, the Beginning and the Ending.” And the apostles’ doctrine runs much on this point. In that beautiful picture of the early Christians, which so convicts us of our degeneracy (Acts ii.), it is noticed of the

The Three Vines.

335

disciples, that "they *continued* steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine." They abode as branches in the True Vine, and glorified the Father by bearing much fruit. There is another sample of fruit-bearing in the Church of Philippi. They *continued* "in the fellowship of the gospel" (Phil. i. 5). They had obeyed not only in the presence of the apostle, but much more in his absence (ii. 12). The apostle looked to fruit-bearing from them, "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (i. 11; iv. 17).

The apostolic writings abundantly prove the constant tendency in the disciples to *depart* from Christ, instead of abiding in Him. Indeed we may say that all error is departure from Christ either in doctrine or affection. The error of the Galatians is very glaring, they were "removed from Him that called them *into the grace of Christ* unto another gospel: which is not another: but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." There was a peculiar fascination in a system of ordinances, not only respectable for their antiquity, but which could rightfully claim a divine origin; but the observance of these ordinances not only "frustrated the grace of God," and "subverted their souls," but hindered their bearing any fruit to God. There was no savour of Christ unto God in them; there was no fellowship with the Father in His delight in the Son. Before the manifestation of the Son in the flesh, and the actual accomplishment of the work He came to do, those very ordinances served a most important end—they were "shadows of good things to come"—they were the shadow, but Jesus Himself the substance. But since the substance had displaced the shadow, and the good things to come were present realities to be known and enjoyed by the Spirit, the apostle was forced to use very reprehensive language, addressing his own converts as "*foolish*," and terming the very ordinances of God "weak and beggarly." He saw departure from Christ, he saw both the work of Christ on the cross, and the work of the Spirit in the believer, as the fundamental principles of fruit-bearing, cast into the shade in order

to "make a fair show in the flesh," which abiding in Christ effectually hinders. At the same time he shows his own *continuance* in that doctrine of Christ, which he had been taught by the Lord Himself, and had taught others, which must be carried into everything from the outset of the Christian course to its end here, to be illustriously displayed in heaven. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." There is no fruit-bearing unto God without abiding in the doctrine of the Cross.

The Epistle to the Colossians may well be regarded as a treatise on abiding in Christ. The arduous labour of the apostle was, "to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." They could not be higher than they were in the sight of God, reconciled to him by Christ, "in the body of his flesh through death, to present them holy and unblameable, and unreprouvable in his sight." The labour of the apostle was to show them that the highest objects of human ambition, "power" or "philosophy," would really lower them, and intercept their direct contact with their living Head, and all the supplies flowing to them from holding the Head, and bring them down to living in the world, instead of realizing that they had died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, and were risen with Him, so that the *interests of their* life were in things above. "The word of the truth of the Gospel had come unto them, and brought forth fruit since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth" (Col. i. 5, 6). Upon this ground the Apostle prays for them, "that they might *walk worthy of the Lord* unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (ver. 10). But everything depended on their continuing in the faith, grounded and settled, and not being moved away from the hope of the Gospel (ver. 23): He joyed at "beholding the stedfastness of their faith in Christ;" and then adds the word of exhortation—"As ye have, therefore, received Christ Jesus the Lord, so

The Three Vines.

337

walk ye *in him*, rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving" (Col. ii. 5—7). This would almost appear a commentary on the Lord's words, "Abide in me,"—"Apart from me ye can do nothing," whilst the warning against being "spoiled or beguiled" plainly points out the sources of the corruption of the truth, by which "branches in Christ" became fruitless, and fit only to be burned.

But not to pursue this to too great a length, it may be well to notice the same thread of teaching pervading the 1st Epistle of John: "Let that, therefore, *abide* in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall *remain* in you, ye also shall *continue* in the Son and in the Father. . . . But the anointing which ye have received of him *abideth* in you. . . . And now, little children, *abide* in him" (1 John ii. 24—28).

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for *severed*^a from me ye can do nothing."

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." He is the same in His love; hence He says, "*Continue* ye in my love." Obedience to Him, and continuance in His love, are inseparably connected. If His love to His disciples becomes clouded, their obedience to Him becomes forced and burdensome. It is only happy and cheerful, when springing from a sense of His love toward us. Jesus knew the depth and unchangeableness of the love of the Father towards Him; and He had the sense and enjoyment of that love even in the midst of the most trying circumstances, by keeping His Father's commandments. Even so is it with His disciples with respect to Jesus Himself. His commandments are not legal enactments, but the very things which He in His infinite wisdom knows to be most suitable for us, and most conducive to our blessing. It is His command-

^a Marginal reading.

ment, that we abide in Him. It is an act of disobedience to the truth to question His love. "He loves His own in the world, and loves them unto the end."

"Abide in me." There is a peculiarity of hardness of heart which attaches to the disciples of Christ. The leper questioned the will but not the power of the Lord to heal him. So is it with ourselves, we own the ability, and question the readiness of the Lord to come in at the very time of need; and expose ourselves to the same gracious rebuke, as the disciples in the boat, when He appeared for their help, "Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid. And he went up unto them: . . . and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. For they considered not the miracles of the loaves: for *their heart was hardened*" (Mark vi. 50—52). Oh! that our hearts may not be hardened against the thought that He careth for us—"sees us toiling," when we see Him not; and waits to be gracious. "Abide in Him" as the ever watchful Shepherd of His sheep.

In our most arduous conflict, our strength is to "abide in Him." "Be of good cheer," He says to His disciples in their struggles, "I have overcome the world." And one who knew well the arduousness of the conflict, and also where real strength was to be found, thus speaks, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." If our bow is to abide in its strength, and the arrow of our hand be made strong, it must be by the Mighty One of Jacob (Gen. xlix. 24, 25). And to those who abide in Him, it may most strictly be said, "The battle is not yours, but God's."

"Abide in me." The latest exhortation of Paul the aged, to his son in the faith, is, "Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." It was by abiding in Him, that the apostle had found all his supplies in outward and inward conflict. He who by the depth of his experience was led to know that in the flesh good did not dwell, and to have all expectations from it entirely cut off, was also led to know the unfailing grace which was in the Lord Jesus Christ. His weakness became his strength; because, never reckoning on any sufficiency in himself, he was led to reckon only on

The Three Vines.

339

the real sufficiency which there was in the Lord Jesus Christ. He would have Timothy and all other disciples to reckon on the same. He knew that the branch must wither severed from the vine. May we so abide in Jesus as to know both what we are, and what we have in Him; and this, in the increasing consciousness of what we are in ourselves, and that all human resources not only speedily fail, but conduce not to fruit-bearing.

Abiding in Christ, as the alone power of fruitfulness, presents one of the strongest contrasts between grace and law. "Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace: *for* the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John i. 16, 17). This consideration gave very great force to the teaching of our Lord respecting the vine and the branches, and opens to us very clearly the character of the branch severed from the vine. And more than this, it makes way for the transition from "the true vine" to "the vine of the earth." "The law was given by Moses." He was the Mediator of the law. He faithfully communicated to the people of Israel all that He had received in charge to give to them. Israel received, indeed, the law by the hands of the mediator Moses; but they received nothing from Moses himself—no strength to keep it; Moses was *not the embodiment of the law*. The law was *not* "hid in his heart." When he had faithfully given the law to the people, his work was done—he might retire, but the law remain in full force. Moses, the mediator of the law, showed by his significant act of casting the tables out of his hand when he saw the golden calf, not only that the law was most distinct from its mediator, but that it was broken; and, instead of ministering blessing, brought those under it under a curse. And besides this, the mediator of the law learnt in his wondrous intimacy with Jehovah, that blessing was to come from a source quite opposite to the law of which he was the mediator. "For He saith *to Moses*, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (Rom. ix. 15; Ex. xxxiii. 19). Moses died, and the Lord buried him; but the law continued, and the people were

constituted under it, and they acknowledged that "God spake by Moses," and that their law was the law of God; it was their true boast that it was so; although, by breaking it they dishonoured God. Moses had, from time to time during his lifetime, stood in the place of intercession and averted the wrath of God, but his dying testimony to Israel was, "Behold while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord; how much more after my death" (Deut. xxxi. 27). The words of Moses and the prophets fastened on Israel, but neither the one nor the other were any present help in time of trouble.

Now Christianity exists. It is acknowledged with more or less precision as a divine institution—that its Founder was not only divinely commissioned, but also a divine person. The appeal is most legitimately made to the stupendous miracles which He wrought, His ability to read what was passing in the hearts of others, the purity of His precepts, and His remarkable prophecies, that the Christian religion has a claim on the conscience, understanding, and affection of men, which no other religion can pretend to have. But all this may be acknowledged by branches not abiding in the vine, by fruitless branches. Christ Himself, not Christianity, is the true Vine. Christianity *severed* from Christ Himself becomes the vine of the earth. The law of which Moses was the mediator, was a divine institution, as truly as Christianity is a divine institution. But the law was *given* by Moses, but grace and truth *came* by Jesus Christ. If Moses be taken away the law still remains; but if Christ be not risen and at the right hand of God, our preaching is vain.

Christ is the truth; all fulness dwells in Him. "Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." It is not the point whether we believe Christianity to be divine, but whether we are *actually* receiving out of the fulness of Christ. A branch not abiding in the vine—it is an alarming emblem. How many things which are true respecting Christ Himself may be honestly held, without that habitual dependance on Him, and drawing from Him that which not only meets our need as sinners,

The Three Vines.

341

but satisfies the craving of our souls as creatures. "He that findeth me," says Jesus, as the wisdom of God, "shall inherit substance."

Jesus in presenting Himself as "the True Vine," being in Himself the one grand comprehensive doctrine of God, saw *prophetically* that which we now see before us *actually*—Christendom. He saw the men of the civilised world as much glorying in Christianity, as the Jews boasted in the law; at the very time they were *actually* dishonouring God by breaking the law. Even so now Christ Himself is displaced, overlooked, or disregarded by reason of wide-spread Christianity. The branches are severed from the Vine; men observe Christian ordinances and perform Christian duties without abiding in Christ. The great bulk of those who call themselves Christians, care not to hear of the work and worth of Jesus, of His interest in His sheep, His sympathy in their trials, His making known His perfect strength in their weakness. It is not Himself which is the object before them. Their life is not a life of faith on the Son of God. The uppermost thought is rather what they do than what He has done—what He requires rather than what they receive. Fruit is estimated by the thought of what is useful for man, rather than what is for the glory of God. May we abide in Him and His words abide in us, that we may ask what we will, with the assurance that it shall be done for us.

"Every plant," says Jesus, "which my Heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Jesus, in the eyes of men, grew up as a root out of a dry ground, and men still see no beauty in Jesus; and God, instead of seeing fruitful branches in the True Vine, sees in wide-spread Christianity "a degenerate plant of a strange vine"—"the vine of the earth." For while Christianity boasts a heavenly origin, its actual resources are all from beneath; it is, as professed by the majority, as much a religion of the *flesh* as Judaism itself. What has been found by experience to work well for a professedly worldly object, has been adopted by nominal and even real Christians for the promotion of Christianity. Men combine together; they organise their combinations, and

delegate to a committee the working out of their plans for the attainment of their object. Nominal and even real Christians have done the same. But a combination of Christians even for the most laudable object, is in the estimate of God, "a confederacy," and traverses the great oracle announced by God, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Cultivated human talents, multiplied silver and gold, are resources of great influence, and may greatly help to the spreading out of the branches of "the vine of the earth," but contribute not to the fruitfulness of the branches of "the True Vine." The kings of the earth who gave her the glory she has, "may make desolate the harlot, and make her naked, and eat her flesh" (Rev. xvii. 16), but the united power of the kings of the earth cannot take away, because they never gave, "the true riches" of the Bride of Christ. They cannot make her naked, because "to her was given of the Lord Himself to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white" (Rev. xix. 8). But if the resources of wide-spread Christianity are earthly, the object which it proposes is equally earthly, it is *Christian civilisation*.

That marvellous effects have been produced in the world by the outward profession of Christianity, is undeniable. The Christian religion overthrew idolatry in the Roman empire. The energy of love in real Christians towards their fellow-sinners, has produced such practical results in mitigating human misery, that nominal Christians have sought by the same means to produce the same result, or to associate themselves with real Christians in order to attain them, but not from the same motives. "There be many that say, Who will shew us any good?" who do not recognise that "every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights." Good is estimated by them by the present beneficial effect produced; and much present blessing has resulted even to the world by the gospel itself, although it be rejected by the world. For the saving grace of God teaches those who know it, to "live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world."

The Three Vines.

343

Sobriety and righteousness are virtues in the estimation of man, and they are enforced with the most cogent motives of the saving grace of God. But many value sobriety and righteousness who are strangers to that grace, and would join in a common cause with those who do know that grace, in order to promote so desirable an end. But then the low ground is immediately assumed that the Son of Man came into this world to better the condition of man, instead of coming into this world to save sinners, which is a far higher end.

The salvation of a sinner is so wonderful a work, that Christ must necessarily appear as the prominent object; but the amelioration of man's condition as the object and end of Christ's coming into the world, displaces Him from His proper place of Saviour, and lowers Him to the standard of a human Benefactor. Where man's convenience or exaltation is the object proposed, we may reasonably expect that such a system will widely spread. Such is the fact. "The vine of the earth" has become a great protecting power; a large tree, under which the fowls of the heaven may roost. The Christianity of nations of the earth is actually in authority, not in suffering; it is in relation to the real church of God, as the stately forest of Lebanon is to the rod which came forth out of the stem of Jesse (comp. Isa. x. 34; xi. 1). "The Vine of the Earth" has indeed sent "forth her boughs unto the sea," yea, and brings forth fruit, too; but, like Ephraim, "bringeth forth fruit unto himself," and is, therefore, regarded by God as "an empty vine." The object of the Christianity of the nations is not to make known the savour of the name of Christ, but to exalt themselves by the very light which they have borrowed from Christ. It is by this means they hope to promote a *comity of nations* whilst the object of God is to "*take out from the nations a people for His name.*" If the Christianity of the nations realise its object in a comity of nations, will it not be identical with the last confederacy of the nations against the Lamb and His armies (Rev. xvii. 12—14).

The character of "the vine of the earth," has been in measure anticipated in noticing "the True Vine." Christianity exists. It is beneficial to man. It com-

mends itself to men's consciences as divine. The legislator, the philanthropist, the moralist, alike appeal to it, as owning its value, and claiming its help. As a fact, that portion of the habitable world which professes Christianity is the most intelligent, the most active, the most civilised. "Christian civilisation" is the compendious expression by which the leading minds of the day present the object which is before them. It is undeniable, that the advantages of those who are born and brought up where Christianity is the professed religion, are "much every way." If to the Jews it was a great privilege to have "the oracles of God committed to them," what must it be to be entrusted not only with the same oracles, but with the further history of Him to whom those oracles pointed, and the very oracles He Himself uttered? The apostle denied not, but most strongly asserted the privileges of the Jews, but he would not allow them to plead the privilege of their "light" as a cover for their sins. "Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?" The Christian nations may now also boast of their light, and of their true knowledge of God. They may point to themselves and their institutions as examples of the advantage "of the form of knowledge and of the truth" in the gospel. What then? Shall they turn the grace of God into lasciviousness? making the knowledge of it a cloak for their own wilfulness. Shall they deny "the Lord that bought them," as if they were their own and could do as they liked? Shall they pretend to a pure spiritual worship, and present a system of ordinances? Surely "the light is become darkness, and how great is that darkness"! For have not men derived light from the revelation of Jesus, and used their derived light to turn their backs on Him who is essentially "the Light"? A result has been produced, and is being produced, from this borrowed light; and let the Scripture of truth tell us what that result is in the judgment of God. "And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire, and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the

The Three Vines.

345

earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God " (Rev. xiv. 18, 19).

It is readily acknowledged that war, pestilence, famine, blasting, mildew, and the caterpillar, are the sore judgments of God. But the sorest of all judgments is unperceived, the peaceful ripening of the grapes of the vine of the earth. It is when men say, " Peace and safety, that sudden destruction comes upon them." It will be in the moment of their rejoicing in the attainment of their object, that judgment will come on them. " How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her; for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. *Therefore shall her plagues come in one day*, death and mourning and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."

The fruit of the True Vine will be manifested in the heavenly glory of the risen saints with their exalted Head. The fruit of the vine of the earth finds its due place in the winepress of the wrath of God. " A branch severed from the True Vine"—what a faithful yet solemn picture of wide-spread Christianity! Had not the Son of God come into the world, had He not accomplished the work He came to do, had not Christ been preached to the Gentiles, it were impossible for such a thing to exist. But it does exist, a witness to the very truth it despises, and a witness to its own righteous judgment.

A branch abiding in the True Vine. The whole truth of redemption is crowded into the thought—" From me," says Jesus, " is thy fruit found." The heavenly Husbandman is looking for fruit. He purges the vine. He prunes off much that appears comely. He cuts deeply into the old wood, that the new may bud forth and be fruitful. And what is fruit? anything that carries with it a savour of Christ? Fruit may abound to God in an action trivial in itself (Matt. x. 42). Fruit may be discovered by the eye of the Husbandman, which appears not to another eye (Matt. xxvi. 13). " As unknown, yet well known," will be a general characteristic of the

Lord's people; and those who are really most occupied with the words of Jesus, and learn most deeply the prevailing power of His name will be most fruitful to His "God and our God, His Father and our Father."
 "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

PRESBUTES.

"PRAYER AND FASTING."

(MATTHEW XVII.21).

It is well when these words express the habit and condition of the soul, and not merely acts resorted to upon some sudden and pressing emergency. They characterize respectively a consciously *weak* and *chastened* soul: and in such case, whatever may be the strength of the enemy, or the difficulty of the circumstance, there is certain victory, for the battle is not ours, but the Lord's.

The tone and habit of the soul are of the greatest moment, practically, and with God. It is *recorded* of Daniel, that when he prayed three times a day, contrary to the king's decree, it was "*as he did aforetime.*"—Dan. vi. 10.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

A FRAGMENT.

THERE is a divine wisdom stamped on every page of the precious Word of God, which only requires divine light, and a heart subject to God, in order to its being perceived and enjoyed. But in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the rays of this wisdom are concentrated, making the ever-interesting subjects on which it treats, glow with its heavenly brightness.

Sacrifice, priesthood, and religious ordinances, are elements for which there appears to be a natural affinity in the human mind, almost independently of the adventitious circumstances of rudeness or intellectual culture—the possession of a divine revelation, or the glimmerings of traditional notices of truth—and the immense practical importance of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in such a day as this, is found in its object being to define the character of these elements, to show their necessity and bearing in regard to a sinner's intercourse and relationship with God; and above all, to give them their just place and force according to the light of the gospel of the grace of God.

Everything in the shape of a divinely-appointed ordinance that ever had a claim upon the conscience and the soul, is in this epistle taken up, and the limit of its continuance is marked, and the manner of its abrogation indicated with a wisdom that proclaims itself to be divine.

It is shown especially, that in the original constitution of these ordinances, whether relating to sacrifice or priesthood, or ritual service, no latitude was allowed to the mind or thoughts of man. “For see (said He to Moses) that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount.” But, in the next place, it is as plainly shown that, in their original constitution, they were but the “shadows of good things to come,”

which had their verification in the perfected work and offices of the Lord Jesus Christ; and not, as many imagine, by an arrangement of *more spiritual* ordinances, but in these ordinances having their whole meaning, and harmony, and force, in the person, and work, and present position, and offices of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, when it is considered that all which is ordinarily called *religion* in these days is but an imperfect, humanly-devised compound of these ordinances, it will easily be conceived how unspeakable is the importance of a right understanding of this epistle, that men may not blindly imagine they are serving God by attending to what are called "meats, and drinks, and divers ordinances, imposed until the times of reformation"; and in another Scripture, called even "beggarly elements" by the Holy Ghost.

The express object of this divine treatise is to take up the whole means of God's own appointment, by which man was to have to do with God, and to show that in their abrogation the believer is brought, through the very means of their putting away, into the nearest possible connexion with God, and into an entire dissociation from the world in which these ordinances had their place; so that now a believer's position is (toward God) "boldness by the blood of Jesus to enter into the holiest of all," and (toward the world, and all the religion of the world) "going without the camp, bearing Christ's reproach."

J. C.

Nº. XXI.

LUKE.

THE Gospel of Luke sets the Lord before us in the character of Son of Man, unfolding the power of Jehovah in grace among men. At first, no doubt, we find Him in connection with Israel, to whom He had been promised, and in relationship with whom He came into this world; but afterwards this Gospel presents moral principles which apply to man, whosoever he may be, whilst yet manifesting Christ, for the moment, in the midst of that people. This power of God in grace is displayed in various ways, in its application to the wants of men. After the transfiguration, which takes place earlier in the narrative by Luke, than in the other Gospels, we find the judgment of those who rejected the Lord, and the heavenly character of the grace which, because it is grace, addresses itself to the nations, to sinners, without any particular reference to the Jews, overturning the legal principles according to which the latter pretended to be in connection with God. After this, we find that which should happen to the Jews, according to the righteous government of God; and, at the end, the account of the death and resurrection of the Lord, accomplishing the work of redemption. We must observe, that Luke—who morally sets aside the Jewish system, and who introduces the Son of Man as the Man before God, presenting Him as the One who is filled with all the fulness of God dwelling in Him bodily, as the Man before God according to His own heart, and thus as Mediator between man and God, and centre of a moral system much more vast than that of Messiah among the Jews—we must observe, I repeat, that Luke, who is occupied with these new relations (ancient, in fact, as to the counsels of God), gives us, with the facts belonging to the Lord's connection with

must needs go through death, if man was to be delivered from it, for it was man's portion; and He alone, by going down into it, could break its chains. He had become man, that man might be delivered and even glorified. The distress of His soul was complete. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Thus His soul was that which the soul of a man ought to be in the presence of death, when Satan puts forth all his power in it. Only He was perfect in it; it was a part of His perfection, put to the test in all that was possible to man. But with tears and supplications, He makes His request to Him who had power to save Him from death. For the moment, His agony increases. Presenting it to God makes it more acute. This is the case in our own smaller conflicts. But thus the thing is settled according to perfection before God. His soul enters into it with God, He prays more fervently. It is now evident that this cup—which He puts before His Father's eyes, when Satan presents it to Him as the power of death in His soul—must be drunk. As obedience to His Father, He takes it in peace. To drink it is but perfect obedience, instead of being the power of Satan. But it must be drunk in reality; and, upon the cross, Jesus, the Saviour of our souls, enters into the second phase of His sufferings. He goes under death as the judgment of God, the separation of the soul from the light of His countenance. All that a soul, which enjoyed nothing except communion with God, could suffer in being deprived of it, the Lord suffered, according to the perfect measure of the communion which was interrupted. Yet He gave glory to God—"But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." The cup of wrath—for I pass over the outrages and insults of men, we may spare them—the cup of wrath was drunk. Who can tell the horrors of that suffering! The true pains of death, understood as God understands it, felt—according to the value of His presence—divinely, as by a man who depended on that presence as man. But all is accomplished; and that which God required in respect to sin is done, exhausted, and He is glorified as to it: so that He has only to bless whosoever comes to Him through a Christ who is alive

and was dead, and who lives for ever a man for men before God.

The sufferings of Christ in His body, real as they were, the insults and upbraidings of men, were but the surface of His affliction, which, by depriving Him, as man, of all consolation, left Him wholly to His sufferings in connection with the judgment of sin, when the God, who would have been His full comfort, was, as forsaking Him, the source of sorrow which left all the rest as unfelt and forgotten.

FRAGMENT.

Marriage was instituted in the garden of Eden ; and it vividly displays the nearness of relationship into which believers are to be brought, as the church and bride of Christ, to Himself. Moreover, the familiarity of our minds with this relationship, makes us understand better the place to which we are brought in the gracious affections of Christ. There are many things which are the blessed and substantial revelations of God, that we cannot so well understand. For example—the reign of Christ in glory, and our association with Him in that reign, however blessed it may be, can hardly be definitely familiarised to the mind. But everything around the Christian, in this world, serves to illustrate what this blessed relationship is between Christ and the Church.

Eve was to Adam the companion of his home, and the depositary of his affections. So “Christ *loved* the Church, and gave Himself for it” ; and the fact that she becomes the depositary and witness of His affections, is a thought more deeply touching than all the glory which will be her endowment as allied to Christ.

The purpose of Christ’s ministry toward His Church is, “that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word,” and the end of that ministry is, “that He might present it to *Himself* a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.” Just as Eve was for Adam himself, so is the Church to be for Christ Himself.

Nº. XXII.

PARTAKING OF CHRIST,

IN A REVIEW OF SOME OF THE REV. F. D. MAURICE'S THOUGHTS
ON SACRIFICE, ETC.^a

ON taking up Mr. Maurice's dedication of his Sermons on Sacrifice, one is tempted to say, "What next?" But though Mr. Maurice shows vivid marks, in some places of the Sermons, of great earnestness for purity towards God—our praise must stop here. There always seems something that is not fully expressed. If he is able to define and bring out distinctly what his doctrine is, let him; because on the material point of the value and character of the person of the Son of God, he is vague if not enigmatical, because there is something in reserve. This feeling is left on our minds. It might cover much worse than seems.^b The process by which he has thrown together the items of his creed is remarkable. The sects are generally the complements of one another's defects. He seems to have picked out all their defects and thrown them together for his special confession. The atonement of Irving which destroyed all ground of substitution—the inward light of the Friends which gave to the heathen as much share of this, as the possessor of Christ by faith; and curiously satisfies himself with the establishment, because it contains space for every shade of this light, in its varied measure of development.^c We

^a These pages are hardly in accordance with the ordinary style and object of this work, but the position of Mr. Maurice, with the currency and popularity of the doctrine of which his works are the exponent, are the excuse. Such a paper may not be necessary as a safeguard to the ordinary readers of the Present Testimony, but it may let them know what is abroad, and become of some service by the blessing of God, in the contradiction of it.—ED.

^b See pages 188, 190.

^c There is one article we should have thought nothing could have reconciled him to.—It is contrary to his views as it is to Scripture, though that is not of much account with him; we mean the Second, where reconciliation of the Father is spoken of and not of us with God. Can we agree with Mr. Maurice? We do here.

Partaking of Christ.

449

remember a Roman Catholic Convert, who grew in intelligence beyond his first teachers, and owned that there was much contrary to the word of God in the establishment, into which he had recanted, but said that the articles claimed no man's belief, beyond what could be proved by Scripture, and therefore that he was not bound by what he found in his new home. We recollect the answer given. "It is a pity the Roman Catholic had not such an article; you might have staid among them still." That Mr. Maurice's conclusions are on defective grounds of knowledge of what is proffered in Scripture is manifest. He had formed a moral system of his own, and to this Scripture was to bow. Not setting out with the word, or in subjection to it, he picks up the members of his creed here and there, and touches on the German line of subjective religion, and then Scripture is to walk in his train, and the forms of his Church Services, are to speak the same in its "motley" application; an account of it which nobody ever thought of before, and at which the compilers would wonder. The juxtaposition in which he puts the English and Scotch confessions is remarkable and gives occasion to the discovery of the ground-work of his theology,^d viz., that man only requires mending and not remaking. Any system founded on this must re-adapt every thing; and meaning to be religious he has much on his hands. May God make those who believe by grace come into quick apprehension of the truth, viz., that the *house* is leprous and must be pulled down, and that the building anew in the second Adam, in resurrection, is the mind of God, in the gospel of His grace, and that all His dispensations of truth wind up in this.

This truth will always expose, as it does in Mr. Maurice's system, the whole weight of the evil of religion, and the notions of God, being subjective, instead of having Himself as necessarily the object of every creature (made to apprehend Him), as revealed by Himself. His character revealed by Himself determines the offence in which the

^d He gives a moral sense to the Ninth Article of the Establishment. He says, having "gone very far from original righteousness," expresses but moral corruption, not a total perversion.

sinner stands. It is not the comparison of the racy Scot and the frame of an article in the establishment. Truth presents two facts—the nature of God (and it is unavoidably perfect), and departure from that created position which had proceeded from the hands of God. With this original difference—one was from the first in creature fallibility, though not having failed; and the other unavoidably perfect as divine Creator. If failure comes in, there is no remedy in the way of recovery. The covenant whereby man is erect is broken; and we come to the saving truth, that there is none good but God. THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS is the saving confession of deliverance and stability. Partial views of divine truth must ever create confusion. Such men as Mr. Maurice must make up for what they do not see. They have neither sense of the divine greatness nor of man's incapacity to meet it. But considering it as the defectiveness of view, we would liken it to a man approaching the periphery of a circle from which the alleys all run up to its centre. He can see but one alley full home to the centre at once, the next partially, but the greater number not at all. In like manner any man standing on the opposite side or facing any one of the alleys,—his conclusions are equally partial and all fallacious. The only person seeing all in proportion is he that stands at the centre and in this case (*i. e.* of divine truth and its relations), the only centre is God, and being at the centre with God. So placed, he sees the divine counsels proceeding from the same centre, even from God Himself, in just proportion, and just relationship to one another. Apparent contrarities always harmonize in the centre from which they proceed. The *righteousness* of God and the goodness of God—mercy, truth—all that is divine, all that is divinely moral, all meet perfectly in God as manifested in Christ, to and for man, to the glory of God.

The truth is, as to Mr. Maurice—there is a seeking to accommodate that which is divine to man's corrupt reason and condition, rendering all revelation futile,^e by

^e Men often will be content to allow corruption of affection and perverseness of will; but they fancy that their reason stands in a clear unclouded atmosphere. But it is fallen with the rest,

taking all direct intent from its declarations and statements. This wrong takes place under the correction of his use of revelation, and the correction of other men's partial knowledge of it. The working of the mystery of iniquity was seen by the spiritual eye of one apostle, and the persons of it by another. Their judgment did not separate the beginning from its results. Heathen warning is not enough—

“Principiis obsta, sero medicina paratur
Cum mala per longas convaluere moras.”

Falsified truth is more demoralising, and eventually is fuller opposition to God than heathenism has reached. We will try one place.^f In describing Abraham's position and relation to God, he says: “A man who has waited long for some good which has seemed to him more blessed each day that has *not* brought it to him, and yet has seemed each day more improbable—who has been sure from the first, if it ever came, it must be a gift from one who watched over him and cared for him, and who, for that very reason, has gone on trusting that he shall receive it, yet growing in trust as the natural difficulties grew more insurmountable—such a man, when the dream of his heart becomes a substantial reality, has a sense of grateful joy which turns to pain, which is actually oppressive till it finds some outlet. Yet what outlet can it find? what can it do for the giver more than rejoice and wonder at the gift—more than say, ‘It is thine.’” Nothing, perhaps; but how can he say that? How can he utter what he means to one who he knows is the source of all he has, and can need nothing from him? What can he offer? a mere sign and symbol. “A sheep, which he would slay for his own food, and which he would not miss out of his own flock? Or a miserable sample of the fruits which the earth is pouring out to him?”^g It must surely be something better, more pre-

and we might only judge by what man makes of God for himself and by want of any corrective to his gross and absurd notions of divinity.

^f Page 37.

^g Mr. Maurice with little consistency vindicates Cain's offering in this kind.

cious than any of them. His own heart seems to scorn such presents: must not the heart of Him to whom he brings them?

“The description I have given is the description which in simpler, truer language, the book of Genesis has given of Abraham. He has waited, longed, feared, trusted, received. The child has come to him in his old age—a child to whom blessings are attached, which he cannot measure, which stretch into the farthest future. From him are to come as many as the stars or as the sands. It is indeed a child of laughter and joy. He has lived for this; as he looks upon it, it appears to him the pledge of an infinite interminable life. The child has brought him nearer to God; though he has believed in Him so long, it is now as if he believed in Him for the first time, so much is he carried out of himself; such a vision has he of One who orders ages past and to come, and yet is interested for him, is interested for the feeblest of those whom He has made. Out of such things comes the craving for the power to make some sacrifice, a sacrifice that shall not be nominal but real.

“Many strange and perplexing thoughts invaded men’s minds as they invade men’s minds now. When they became very tormenting, then as now, people betook themselves to some wise man. They asked what do these thoughts mean, whence do they come, and what are we to do in consequence of them? They got various answers. The answers in different places shaped themselves into different rules and maxims; forms and services of devotion were grounded upon them; above all, sacrifices were suggested which might satisfy the desire of the creature, perhaps might satisfy the demands of his ruler. The book of Genesis says, ‘*GOD did tempt Abraham.*’ It leads us back to the source from which the thoughts which were working in his mind were derived. It says broadly and distinctly—this seed did not drop by accident into the patriarch’s mind—it was not self-sown. It was not put into him by the suggestions of some of his fellows. It was part of the discipline to which he was subjected that these questions should be excited in him. It was his Divine Teacher who led him

to the terrible conclusion—‘The sacrifice that I must offer is that very gift which has caused all my joy.’” Enough! Let a common intelligent, unsophisticated mind, read the account in Genesis. It matters not what objection he may make, but could any such give the account of what is written in Genesis that Mr. Maurice has done? Was there ever such unaccountable trash? Is it worth pulling to pieces? We see no end in Mr. Maurice’s paraphrase but the attempt to show that God was not in it at all. The Divine Teacher is the subjective faculty; that is, at the bottom of it. “God is not in all his thoughts.”

Mr. Maurice has become famous by being dismissed a professorship—not for the confession of Christ, but for a most prolific spawning of his ideas of the perfectibility of man. He is only dangerous because he falls in with the current that is hurrying men away from God. I say to the unbelieving student of the bible (if there is need to say anything), was there ever more unhallowed fire offered as incense to God since the sons of Aaron died for that sin before the Lord? Will not Mr. Maurice leave one sacred feeling to hang about Abraham’s offering up his son, *whom also he received back in the figure of resurrection?* God did tempt Abraham—put him to proof, as we should say, in easier terms of paraphrase according to the use of vulgar terms. “And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt Abraham, and *said* unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest; and get thee into the land of Moriah.” We need not copy what immediately follows—it is well known. But we find further on the angel of the Lord calling to him from heaven, who says: “Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me.” God here put Abraham to proof, and Abraham, by grace, stood good in the proof, namely in his obedience to God, and reliance on His word and promises as to Isaac. What puerile neology is Mr. Maurice’s—“The divine teacher suggests”—the way of fulfilling his gratitude for the son given him, that Abraham was to offer up his son to

death as a way of pleasing himself, in return for the grace of God in giving him the same son, in a perpetual purpose of futurity; not in confidence, that we hear from Mr. Maurice, that the WORD OF GOD ensured his being kept to him *through* death. What miserable drivelling in order to avoid the plain intent and plain expression of the word handed down to us. Why does Mr. Maurice go by it at all? We are sure that the time will come when he will not, unless by his turning through grace to the obedience of faith, of which his entire work is an avoidance.

There is a page of Mr. Maurice's we did not note and cannot find again, in which he most touchingly exposes that corruption of heart and thought, in speaking which his eyes must have fallen to the ground, and asks if we are to hold the doctrine of sacrifice and satisfaction for sin by the death of Christ, and to leave all this untouched. It was a sentence for which every one who knows the plague of his own heart and its fruits, and confesses it, must love him as one would a poor Carmelite undertaking his penance and prayers, and likewise with the hope of purifying his heart thereby, and in true desire thereto. Mr. Maurice may be surprised at finding himself standing in this comparison. We believe him to be standing in the far worse predicament of the two. God loves them both in the intent. God loved Cornelius, who nevertheless had yet to hear words by which he might be saved. The Carmelite hardly stands as one departing from light; Mr. Maurice does—that is the difference between them. But what would interest us in Mr. Maurice is his desire after sanctity; but there was no need for his rejecting the corner-stone of the faith, in the rejection of the substitution of Christ for the sinner in death; when there lay, a few steps further on, *more than he seeks*, in the partaking of Christ in life as risen. But will what he has fallen back upon bring him to the desired haven? Ah! no. Human perfectibility by a universal inward light, without being individually cleansed by the blood—without the washing of regeneration in the faith of Jesus risen, and without the renewing of the Holy Ghost for failure, will find itself dying in its sins, and

make the stream yet broader of human departure, to fall at last into the hands, power, and direction of the enemy.

We took his explanation of Abraham's sacrifice as a palpably offensive example of the faith of the Son of God dying for sinners (and raised again, which he seems to have forgotten) being explained away by strained and gross perversion of the word of revelation.

Let us now see what the sanctity of the new nature in Christ, *according to Mr. Maurice*, is to produce. "When^h St. Paul preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified, he preached, that in obedience, humiliation, and sacrifice dwelt the mighty conquering power, that power against which no other in heaven or earth could measure itself. And his words have not been confuted by the experience of ages; they have been confirmed by facts, which seem at first sight to be most at war with them. Do you ask why the soldiers of Islam in the first centuries after Mahomet or in any subsequent centuries, prevailed against those who had the sign of the cross on their banners? The only answer that can be given is; that there was more of this thought and mind of Christ, more of humiliation and obedience and sacrifice in them than there was in their opponents. They prevailed not through their denial of Him, *but through their implicit recognition of Him*. So far as they had zeal, faith, and union—so far as they sought to magnify God's name and to give up themselves, they were His soldiers and not the prophet's; they succeeded because the incarnateⁱ Son of God was highly exalted, because there was a name given him above every name." To continue the quotation would be of no use, as I am convinced it would be unintelligible. But there is one sentence shortly following the above, inconceivable as it is for any possible purpose in the

^h Page 224.

ⁱ We put Mr. Maurice in a strange juxta-position with a Carmelite. This word places him beside the Puseyite, who keeps to the incarnation, and not to the resurrection, as constituting Jesus the *Life* and *Head* of them that believe, giving the incarnation continuance in the ordinances. Extremes meet. They will meet yet in common hostility to Jesus and to those that know Him.

matter, we must give. Contradictions or contraries may elucidate something to somebody. It is this:—"The will that rules the universe, the will that has triumphed and does triumph, is all expressed and gathered up in the *Lamb that was slain.*" We confess all our senses are turned topsy-turvy. He goes on:—"The unconscious creation and all its energies and impulses, refer themselves to the name of Jesus." This last paragraph we must leave as a wonder to readers, unless we find in it the figurative language of the psalmist, who says that "The floods clap their hands, and the trees rejoice before Jehovah." As to "the will that has triumphed and does triumph," we humbly think that Mr. Maurice has mistaken the devil for God. It is the most fearfully rapid growth, and ripening to evil, of mistaken principles we ever witnessed in the mind of man. The wilful king of Daniel cannot but come into our mind: "And the king shall do according to his will, and he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every God, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished."

"Adam was the head of the creation; he fell, and all fell in him and with him. Satan having the upper hand of Adam, all is fallen under the power of Satan, who fills the world with evil, and who governs by the passions of man."^k

Is not this a truer account of the state of things. But we must not lose sight of the oriental Christians and the followers of Islam. It would be dangerous to agree with Mr. Maurice in anything, but he will not differ from us when we say that the former were effeminate, immoral, and idolatrous; that they bore no testimony to Christ's name, and were judged of God in their evil. *Corruptio optimi est pessima.* Perhaps Mr. Maurice does not know that the learned Mede (quoted, we believe, by Foster in his *Mahometanism Unveiled*) judged the Mahometan to be duly considered a Christian sect; so he is not put to the

^k "Adam était chef de la Création, il est tombé, et tout est tombé en lui et avec lui. Satan ayant eu le dessus sur Adam, tout est tombé sous la puissance de Satan, qui remplit le monde de mal, et gouverne par les passions des hommes" (Notes sur l'Apocalypse. Kauffman. Geneva).

shift of calling them followers of Islam,¹ but of the Lamb slain! We certainly read of the judgment of the oriental Christians, whose worthlessness was come to the full. We read also of the end of Babylon, the mystic Babylon, "her sins had reached unto heaven, and in one hour her judgment came;" and we hear that the mighty angel cried, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird." In the case of Babylon, it is the empire and the ten kings that make the great city desolate. Now Babylon is not the oriental Christians, but the occidental ones sunk in corruption. "And strong is the Lord God that judgeth her, but His instruments, as the sword of His vengeance, what are they?" "They shall make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire;" and take possession too, and be bolder than the followers of Islam. When they have done this, they then shall make war with the Lamb. "What *zeal, faith and union*" will they manifest; "with all the energies and impulses of unconscious creatures." "The name of Jesus is the name to which all the intelligences of the earth refer themselves!" The only reason that Mr. Maurice would give, nay, has given to the question why the followers of Islam overcame the oriental Christians at one hour, or would give, whoever were the conquerors at another, is, "that there was more of this thought or mind of Christ, more of humiliation and obedience and sacrifice in them than there was in their opponents."

What words can we use for such pestilential mockery of God? Would to God Mr. Maurice could see what comes of this mis-matching of truth, this change of bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter, and of those who persuade men so. Are the energies and impulses of unconsciousness, and humiliation and obedience and sacrifice to be found in the present followers of Islam—with the waning protestantism of England, and infidel catholic France; or otherwise in the Russian? Which have the most inward light by which they shall conquer; or are Mr. Maurice's sympathies with one side or the

¹ The Koran certainly holds that Christ shall judge the world.

other in a war of opinion? We protest before God, we never heard anything so disgustingly dishonoring to the Spirit of God, and to the Holy Child Jesus, whose reign shall bring in on earth, (of heaven and its hope let us not here speak), peace and goodwill among men! Come Lord Jesu! may the soul well exclaim, if it were only for this.

We do feel called on to offer to Mr. Maurice, and others, who may have been his readers, some other thoughts, if by His grace God may deliver him or some one out of the snare of the Devil, into which his writings surely conduct any one that gives his ear to them. Is there nothing better than what he has brought forward, given us?

Whatever course we can trace in Mr. Maurice's mind, which would seem to excuse him, (as the fault of one person, is sometimes the palliation for the fault of another,) yet with the *word* of GOD in his hand, and an unchecked use of it, so perverse a departure from it is fearful.—“The words that I speak” says the Lord, “shall judge you.”

Have you believed on the name of the Son of God? What is the salvation that he brings? We do feel greatly the guilt of those, who (to commend themselves and the ordinances, they would persuade people to be specially in their hands, as necessary to salvation instead of as secondary to its enjoyment), deaden and would forbid every lively sentiment to God, to put themselves and their solemnities in His place, yet can this excuse those who displace the Spirit of God, equally and as fatally, by introducing again the energies and the wilfulness of the natural man, and call it of God?—*God is not mocked by either.* The first Adam having achieved his independence of his Creator, by the advice and suggestion of the enemy became as God; but a poor and sorry God! for death followed his sin. God in His abundant compassions undertook the re-creation of his fallen likeness and gave HIS ONLY-BEGOTTEN not to us as incarnate now, (that would be “to know Him in the flesh”) but as crucified and RISEN, the LIFE of those that believe on His name, and the least of those who

join themselves to Christ thus known, who love Him shall shine in His glory. The believer is made partaker of Christ! of *Christ risen*—the NEW MAN. He is created anew in Christ Jesus. We cannot neologize we believe. —But wherein and what is the gift, and the fruits, and the manner of its exercise. I speak not now of what Christ is by imputation for righteousness to the forgiveness of sins, but the gift of Himself, as life and righteousness unto everlasting life. This is something different from “the energies and impulses of the *unconscious* creature.” “I *know* Him whom I have believed,” says St. Paul, The Elysium and houris of the followers of Islam find no place here. But sacrifice, humiliation, and the cross do find place. If life, as it does (and life brings consciousness to the creature), precedes, in the order of the gift of God, death, yet death again precedes the abounding of life, *i. e.*, sacrifice, humiliation, and the cross, precede the abounding of life. “If ye *through the SPIRIT* (not unconsciously, or as an anchorite, either), do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live,” *i. e.*, the risen Christ shall abound in you; “Christ in you the hope of glory.” As far as the negative goes, we quote Peter.—“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered *for us* in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind, for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men but to the will of God.” Or as St. Paul, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a *living sacrifice*, holy acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service, and be ye not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” Or the same apostle in his epistle to the Colossians, if ye then be dead with Christ, let all the ordinances that belonged to the covenant with the Jew, in the flesh cease to you, “If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, let your affections be set on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also

appear with him in glory—mortify therefore,” etc. And, “Ye have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge, (not in unconsciousness), in the image of Him who created him.” Again, “Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith.” We are unwilling to stop quoting till we reach the example of Christ “true in us and in Him.” “If we have become planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also plants of the resurrection” (see Greek). We hear of Him, “who endured the cross, and despised the shame,” as a witness to God for our example, “and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” And we bring forward lastly, the place in Phil. ii. “Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took on Himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath also highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father”!! Now is there a conscience that allows the truth of Scripture, that can stand with Mr. Maurice and his idea of the nature of the exaltation of Jesus, or of those who walk in Him? If there is let them give up the word entirely.—Well! Sad indeed for them, but they cannot hold to Mr. Maurice and to the Bible too. We have the cross sacrifice humiliation in truth, and exaltation to follow; but the cross sacrifice and humiliation is to be applied to everything in man born of Adam, and exaltation, to its being brought low in grace at the coming of the Lord Jesus. We have said we might feel some excuse for Mr. Maurice, because of the neglect of doctrine of this kind by so many—with antinomian result, too, in some measure. The “works of faith” are such as humiliation and the cross, but Mr. Maurice had the Scripture as well as we,

A Review.

461

But why should we, because we have all this fulness, throw away the substitution of Christ for the sinner on the cross before God; but it was too apparent in the word to be got rid of. "Here the case," says he, "of the old covenant is closed;"¹ that is, that all the types given in the Old Testament are, when we come to the New, to go for nothing! Admirable neological logic! Let men be consistent and cast the word away, and then act with a will full of "triumph," or save their souls by the obedience of faith in receiving it. Grant it, O God!

We do not quarrel so much with the heavenly things to be purified with better sacrifices than the legal sacrifices are, those sanctified by the will of God; but he has taken an epistle written in a levitical sense, bringing in wonderful truth in its proper place, and we hear that by one sacrifice they have been *perfected* for ever. Deliverance it was from dead works, by Him who by the Holy Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, to purge our conscience from them to serve the living God. The typical substitution was put aside by the real substitution. He died the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. Judgment for sin was passed upon Him. We

¹ (Page 169.) It is true that the Lord in the offering of Himself closed Aaron's priesthood. But *Christ* is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and He is the Lamb slain to the end of it. "If any man sin *we* [observe, *we*] have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; who is a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world"—and that while it lasts. *We* who have received the grace likewise, in the blessing of the church in Christ, are present in Him before God—not through Him. A priest must have something to offer; and that Christ, as Melchisedec-priest, is enabled to do in presenting His own offering perpetually. But that is not in our heavenly privilege, as in Him, but as in the warfare of a good confession on earth, and for those on earth in the kingdom to come was the Melchisedec-priesthood instituted. The covenant of sacrifice *under the law* was an exceptional covenant, and a *typical* one. And the Lamb is slain to faith from first to last, for sin; and without the shedding of blood there is no remission. "Christ appeared once in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." He is the door, under whatever covenant, and to the end, to come near to God.

that believe are dead in Him. He that is dead hath been freed [justified, see Greek] from sin; we were dead with Him, and the judgment is past, and we are alive in the same Jesus, risen from the grave. "He loved me and gave Himself for me," says St. Paul. Death must precede, but rising again was more than the death.

All this thought, which puts us in God's presence free in Christ and unto life, even the life that is in resurrection truth and power, is lost to Mr. Maurice. He is in the culmen of his subject, in the mire of sunken humanity. We do hear of the empire that is to rise out of the bottomless pit, and to such will humanity come, *unconscious* of the bonds in which it is held, and *unconscious* of what "God has wrought in Christ for them that believe, when He raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory."

Can we return to consider the subjects in Mr. Maurice's book that we in our last division started from? It is not possible; but we put before him and his readers in respect of those he has chosen for his heroes a few verses of the Apocalypse:—"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: And the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE."

HEBREWS, XIII. 7—10.

Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

FRAGMENT.

What a time of *crisis* the time contemplated by the Apocalypse is—and you will observe, that very much of the moral characteristics which marked other times of crisis are to be found therein.

I might say, we ought to be prepared for *such* a book, and for *such contents* of such a book.

We ought to be prepared for such a book (a book of crisis or of judgment), because crisis or judgment has at times marked the way of the Lord from the beginning. Thus:—

1. In the day of *Noah*, there was judgment—the judgment of the old world.

2. In the day of *Lot*, there was the same, the judgment of the cities of the plain.

3. In the day of *Moses*, likewise, the judgment of Egypt.

4. In the day of *Joshua*, likewise, the judgment of Canaan.

5. In the day of *Ezekiel*, likewise, the judgment of Jerusalem.

So that we might well be prepared for such an action as that which we get in the Apocalypse—*judgment*.

But further. In each of these five eras of judgment, we get certain characteristic actions, which are found also in this book. I will mention these leading ones.

1. There are divine warnings or delays ere the judgment come.

2. In spite of these, man goes on to perfect his iniquity.

3. An election is delivered out of the scene of judgment.

4. Another election is separated or withdrawn, prior to the judgment.

These actions will be found in each of these five great eras of crisis or divine judgment; and they will be found in the Apocalypse also.

So that we might well be prepared for the *contents* of such a book, as for *the book itself*; for the characteristics of the action, as for the action itself.

And this is a comforting and establishing thought—that instead of being surprised by the existence of such a book, it is just such a one as we might expect.

There are literal details which are obscure and difficult; but that is secondary. The *moral* of the book is of chief value—and for that we might be well prepared, on the ground of divine or scriptural analogy from the beginning.

But I only *suggest*.

END OF VOL. VII.

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