

THE REMEMBRANCER

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

FOR

THE LORD'S PEOPLE.

“Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them. Yea, . . . I think it meet . . . to stir you up by putting you in remembrance.”

2nd Peter i. 12. 13.

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The Remembrancer.

WHITER THAN SNOW.

(Heb. ix. 14.)

To heart and soul how sweet Thou art,
O great High Priest of God !
My heart brought nigh to God's own heart
By Thy most precious blood.

No more my countless sins shall rise
To fill me with dismay—
That precious blood before His eyes
Hath put them all away.

My soul draws near with trust secure,
With boldness glad and free ;
What matters it that I am poor,
For I am rich in Thee.

Forgotten every stain and spot,
Their mem'ry past and gone,
For me, O God, Thou seest not,
Thou lookest on Thy Son.

Is all a dream ? Thou canst not lie,
Thy Spirit and Thy blood
Proclaim, to sinners such as I,
The boundless love of God.

They tell Thy love, so deep, so free,
They tell the Father's heart—
Not what I am, or I must be,
They tell me what Thou art,

Come, weary sinners, great and small,
The open door stands wide,
Thy blessed heart that welcomes all,
O Lamb of God, who died.

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JESUS CHRIST THE SAME YESTER-DAY, AND TO-DAY AND FOREVER.

FAITH counts upon the end from the beginning, as our hymn has it---

“The guilt of twice ten thousand sins
One moment takes away ;
And grace, when first the war begins,
Secures the crowning day.”

This calculation upon the *end* at the *beginning* is found in Moses' song. (See Exodus xv. 17-19). It is a fine exercise of the soul. Faith knows what the end *must* be from what the beginning *has been*. The whole journey, as we know, is finely pictured in Israel from Egypt to Canaan, or from Exodus xii. to Joshua iv. It begins with the settlement, the full and perfect settlement, of the greatest question of all—the question of our relationship with God. In Exodus xii., that is the matter. It was no time of conflict as between Israel and Egypt, but as between the judgment of God and Israel found in the place of judgment. It was like the question between God and our souls, and the blood on the door-post settled it, and settled it for ever :

“The guilt of twice ten thousand sins
One moment takes away.”

The destroying angel is turned aside by the blood on the door of that house, where most

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surely he would have entered, carrying death with him, but for the blood. That blood was God's provision for settling matters between Himself and Israel in the doomed land of Egypt. It effectually blunted the sting or power of death, and it did it all alone, in great ease and simplicity. Nothing else could have done anything at such a moment; but that blood alone did everything that such a moment needed—a moment that was to decide whether Israel was to live or die, to be saved or to perish.

In such a character Israel starts for the journey. The greatest of all questions was settled—*their relationship to God*: and this being so, they begin, as it were, to live; so that the very month in which all this took place was to be to them the beginning of months. And well is it when the soul owns that *this* is the first great principal question—that others, be they what they may, are but, can be but, second to this—"Have I found it between God and my soul?" This great question having been settled with God, Israel moves onward. Soon they find themselves at their wit's end; the strength of Pharoah is behind them, and the Red Sea in front, and it seems as that it was only a choice of deaths—the slaughter or the flood. But He who was in Egypt with them yesterday is to-day with them on the road out of it. The

pillar can do its business as effectually as the blood. It may be, and it is, a different business, but it is disposed of with equal ease. The blood is not in use now ; but the pillar serves, because the blood had already served ; the pillar defends, because the blood had already redeemed. Simple and precious, the blood, as I may say, pledges the pillar—pledges *all* that Israel may need ; for

“ Grace, when once the war begins,
Secures the crowning day.”

Accordingly the pillar comes between the two camps. It is darkness to the one and light to the other, so that Egypt does not touch Israel ; and the host of Israel go on and through the sea, when the host of Egypt, in all its strength and flower, perish in it.

Thus is the journey begun. It was as blood-bought people who were taking it, and it is now seen that *such* a people shall be a defended and a conquering people. The blood pledged the pillar. The song declares this. There had been no song till now. Fitly so. The hour of redemption from the judgment of the Lord had been enjoyed in silence, this hour of deliverance from Egypt was celebrated in a song. The silence may have been of a deeper tone than even the song, but it was also a fitter expression of the joy of the moment. Israel enjoyed the thought of the blood that was redeeming them from the

righteous judgment of God by feeding on the paschal lamb, and all in silence : they now enjoyed the sight of the vanquished enemy in the lifting up of their voice in a shout of praise. These distinctions are full of beauty. The silence of the paschal hour was of a *deeper* character, but it was fitting that it should not have been after the manner of the fervent triumphant hymn of the Red Sea.

Redeemed from judgment, and conquerors of the enemy that would have overwhelmed them, Israel proceed on their way. And a chequered scene they pass through ! Necessities call for supplies, and infirmities and trespasses need healing and forgiveness. The Lord is present : He proves His resources and His grace. He feeds, He disciplines, He rebukes, and yet pardons. And be the demands on Him what they may, or be they repeated as they may, He never leaves them. If Israel brings a pilgrimage of forty years upon themselves, the Lord will be in the wilderness with them for forty years. As God over all, blessed for ever, He is seated between the cherubim, in the sanctuary, the Lord or the glory of the very holy of holies ; but the same glory abides as continually in the cloud outside. The God of the camp is the Guide and Companion of the camp ; and though He may be grieved, and have to express His displeasure, He never leaves them.

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His arm is not shortened, nor is His ear heavy.

Say, is Israel a *happy* people still? Is Israel a less happy people than at the beginning, when in Egypt they dwelt under the covert of the blood? Circumstances have changed, but God has not. They are in the very heart of the wilderness—it is wilderness all around them; while in Egypt it was only the wilderness before them. But are they a less happy people *now* than then? Can any argument be drawn from the pillar to prove this? They have been made to know trial and need, and weariness and enemies; and, through the betraying of their foolishness again and again, the rod and the discipline. But are they less happy than they were? Have they any reason to be so? Are they more straitened in God now than then? Is the pillar the witness of another than the blood or the song had given them?

No, beloved, this is not so. They are not straitened in God. And if they loved Him, the movement of the pillar would be as welcome as the hour of the song. The very wilderness, in all its circumstances, is given to them to this end—to prove whether they would indeed obey the Lord, and thus to know what was in their hearts towards Him (Deut. viii. 2). Was such an opportunity ungrateful or unwelcome to them? Would it

be to us at this day, if indeed we loved a person? Should we resent some call to serve, some occasion to give proof that we had him in our heart, that there was something there for him? We know we should not. We know that we should rather give place to such opportunities, if *indeed* we loved him. And the wilderness to Israel was all that, and life to the saints in this world is all that. As far as we are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God," we shall be uneasy and fretted, and impatient and disappointed; but as far as we love, anxious to prove that our hearts are with Christ, these times of journeying, through abounding and through need, through good report and through evil report, through humblings and changes, through weariness or solitude, will not be resented. In themselves they are not joyous. Nothing can make them in themselves other than they are—grievous. But the pillar tells us of the presence of a glorious Friend, who condescends to be our Companion from first to last, though the way always witness our exile, and at times our shame and weakness. It is a *happy* people we are to be all along the road. The blood, the song, the pillar are only different tokens of the very same Jesus in whom we are never straitened. Just at the end of the way there was a confederacy on the heights of Peor against Israel, as just

at the beginning there was a confederacy on the borders of the land at the Red Sea. The Lord has a great occasion to prove Himself the very same to Israel after forty years' sore trial with them as He had been at the outset. And so He does. However we may entertain such opportunities, we may say He welcomes them to prove what He is in His heart towards us.

He meets Balaam and Balak, and all their attempts—their altars and their enchantments on the heights of Baal and of Peor—all alone. Israel is stretched out in the valleys beneath, their very rest there not being allowed to be disturbed by even a report of what was going on—a moment, as it was in one sense, full of imminent peril to them. The Lord meets the confederates all alone. As in the day of Pharoah and the sea, Israel had not to raise a hand or strike a blow, and all the tokens of the liars are frustrated. There is no enchantment against Israel. The Lord lets the Moabite and the Ammonite know this, and Israel may sleep on and take their rest when the question is raised. Can anything erase them from the palms of the hands of the Lord? When the occasion is set for the proving whether indeed He still had them in His heart, all the attempts and powers of darkness shall learn the secrets of that bosom. If we did but value what we

have in Him ; if we but estimated our condition in relation to the Lord, and not in relation to circumstances, all would be joy in the spirit. It is *there* we fail. We love circumstances, and not the divine favour. We live in the power of circumstances, and not in the light of the Lord's countenance. And we are dull and low and half-hearted. That is the secret of *our* bosoms, though we know the secret of *His*. Were it not so with us, the journeys under the cloud, chequered as they are, would find us as happy a people as the hour of the song had witnessed. It is *one* Jesus throughout, whether it be the day of the blood, the song, or of the pillar—one and the same Jesus, who was here with us amid the circumstances of human life, died for us on the cursed tree, now lives in heaven for us, and will give us His unchanged Self in glory for ever.

But further—for there is a stage beyond the heights of Peor in the journey of Israel, there is the passage of the Jordan—the moment when for ever the wilderness is to be put *behind* the back of Israel, as there had been in Egypt the hour when the wilderness was all *before* them, and, after they crossed the sea, the times and the seasons when the wilderness was all *around* them. And now it is not the *blood*, or the *song*, or the *pillar*, but the *ark*, and the *feet* of

the priests. New occasions bring out new agencies. Other necessities display other resources, but the same Lord ; different administrations, but the same Jesus. The arm is not shortened, and the help of Israel for the Jordan is as perfect as was the help at the Red Sea. Not a wave of the swellings and overflowings of the river touch the sole of the foot of the feeblest or most distant of all the tribes. The waters are again a wall on the right hand and on the left. The ark stations itself in the very midst of the river, and there it stands till *all* had gone clean over. Its presence more than encourages them, when nature might have sunk and had a thousand misgivings. Would not the river from above assert its rights, and claim its possession of a thousand years ? Would not the source of that river force its title on the trespassers ? The calm and assured aspect of the priests as they bore the ark, and stood with it there in the very place of the river's height of pride and strength, gave all such questionings their answer, and stilled every misgiving. The people all passed over dryshod ; the ark gave them its presence till all was done. The waters would have been first overwhelming the ark, had they been able to touch even a sole of the foot of the feeblest of the tribes. And all this crowning mercy visits them without the Lord for a single moment calling to their remembrance a sin-

gle evil they had committed all their journey thitherto. He gave them indeed liberally and upbraided not. He sees no iniquity in Jacob, no perverseness in Israel. Everything that is done is done by an arm of conquering strength, and by a heart of perfect, unupbraiding love; and Israel passes on to their inheritance under the very same God of grace by whom they had passed out from the place of death and judgment. The earliest pledge is redeemed at the latest moment; and the song, which in spirit we had at first, is sung again under a fresh breath in the power of the truth of it—

“ And grace, when once the war begins,
Secures the crowning day.”

In view of what we have been dwelling upon, we may well take up the words of that sweet little hymn, and sing—

“ How good is the GOD we adore,
Our faithful unchangeable friend :
Whose love is as great as His power,
And knows neither measure nor end !

’Tis JESUS, the First and the Last,
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home ;
We’ll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that’s to come.”



FRAGMENT.—Israel in the wilderness had nothing to do for food or raiment : the Lord provided. They had no care as to their circumstances : the Lord called them either to rest or motion. But they had activities of the sanctuary as much as faith pleased or as conscience demanded, in worship, communion and confession, through their different offerings. They had the ordinances of holiness to practise, the future ways of Canaan to learn, and all this and the like in great variety. They began their action by erecting the tabernacle.

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"THOU SHALT SURELY REJOICE."

(Deut. xvi. 1-17.)

These three great feasts of which we read here were the feasts of gathering "in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place His name in." All the males were to go up there ; all the people were to be gathered up round the Lord. There was the Passover, the Feast of Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, these three ; and connected with the Passover, though not exactly the same thing, was the Feast of unleavened bread.

In Acts ii., we read : " When the day of Pentecost was *fully* come ;" and then follows the fulfilment—that of which this feast was a type ; but of the Feast of Tabernacles there is no present accomplishment. It is after the harvest and after the vintage ; it is the millennial time of rest after the discriminating judgment of God has taken place, and after the treading of the wine-press, His complete vengeance on the adversaries. Then this feast comes in ; it is the rest remaining for God's people. They dwelt in booths as a sign that they had been strangers and pilgrims—that the Lord had brought them out of Egypt. I just say this that we may see the bearing of these feasts. With the first of them we are all familiar—the Passover, the

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death of Christ. And the unleavened bread we get the apostle himself applying in Corinthians : " Let us keep the feast ; not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." One other point I would notice as to the Feast of Pentecost, that we may apprehend it better, and that is, that it was connected with " the morrow after the sabbath." It is outside the old creation and all that has to do with it ; it has to do with Adam innocent no more than with Adam guilty ; Satan's power. and sin, and death, and judgment, all that is past and gone ; man, in the person of Christ, has got beyond it—it is identified with Him before God in the new creation. That is Pentecost.

" Seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction." Sometimes, I do not say *always*, we are apt to remain in this feast of unleavened bread, and not get on sufficiently to the others. It is all right, of course, that we should have to do with it ; we must have holiness : " Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." " Thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste ;" Pharaoh, that is, the devil, was behind them, and they were just escaping from the judgment. It is just deliverance. You get out of Egypt in haste ; you are obliged to put the dough on your shoul-

der as fast as you can, that you may not be caught by the judgment; and so you have the seven days of unleavened bread. It is deliverance, but it is occupation with the state in which you were when you were delivered, so it is "the bread of affliction." There must be holiness, or we cannot have to say to God; but we do not get fulness of communion and blessing in it, and therefore we read that as soon as they had eaten the Passover, they were to turn in the morning and go to their tents.

But when you come to the day of Pentecost you get this: "Thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the Lord thy God with a tribute of a free-will offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give according as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee." There is not a bit of that in the Feast of unleavened bread. There they had to escape, and that was all; but here I get the heart satisfied with the Holy Ghost. They had the fruits of the land now; they had that which they were brought into, and not only that which they were brought out of. Of course, that which they were brought out of is not forgotten; we shall not forget it in heaven; it is the Lamb slain that is the foundation of everything; but I have more than that here: I have the free-will offering of thanksgiving and praise. But even that is according to the *measure* in

which the Lord our God has blessed us ; and in that “thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God.” And then we find the fulness of grace : it is “with thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are among you.” So I get here these two things with joy : the free-will offering to God, and thanksgiving and praise ; and having these things in our hearts, we have everything except the glory. We have life, we have righteousness, we have Christ Himself ; we have all that the Father’s love and the Son’s love can give us by the Holy Ghost. I do not say we *enjoy* it all, but everything in that sense we have got into—we have actual possession of it all in heaven : “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.” So the strangers, and the widows, and everything can rejoice.

And then “thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and thou shalt observe and do these statutes.” That is, there must be present obedience, and the remembrance that we were bondmen, and then the heart free for the things that are God’s ; there is the enjoyment through the Holy Ghost of the things that are freely given us of God : “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,

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neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit ;” and “where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.” God’s righteousness is settled, the conscience is perfect, and we are in that place in spirit where we can be occupied with God Himself, and not merely with what He has given us.

After this comes the Feast of Tabernacles, “after thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine” after the judgment, as we have seen. That is the reason that, where it is spoken of in John vii., the Lord says He could not go up to that feast ; it will be the millennial glory, and He would not go to that. But afterwards He goes up, “as it were in secret,” and on the eighth day, “that great day of the feast,” He cries, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” He lets us into the new week of heavenly glory, and in the Holy Ghost we do realize it, though we are not in it yet.

Another characteristic is that it is not “*according as*” now, as it was in the Feast of Pentecost, but it is “because the Lord thy God shall bless thee in *all*, etc., therefore thou shalt *surely* rejoice.” It was all right to come out and eat the Passover, and go to

your tents in the morning, saying, what poor wretched sinners you were; it is all right to remember that all the days of your life—we shall remember the Lamb slain in the glory. I have the sense that holiness *must* be, and I go with a personal, individual sense af it, and sit in my tent to keep the feast of unleavened bread, and bless God for having delivered me from that in which I was. And besides this I find that I have got into an entirely new place—a place in which God has made a habitation for Himself. I am risen; I am in the new creation; it is a new thing altogether, and the old thing is all done with; and so I come with a free-will offering, and I worship as I realize the coming down from God of all the blessings that He has given us in the Holy Ghost. Thus, in Pentecost, it is according to my spirituality that I rejoice. It is not merely that I have been delivered, but that God's heart is to *give* me, and God sees flowing out from me praise and thanksgiving according to the spiritual state of my soul.

But in heavenly places I go a little farther and discover what I have in Christ; in Him I find that “all things” are mine, both “things present” and “things *to come*,” and there I can rejoice *always*—there I can “*surely* rejoice.” How could a person, if he had not spiritual power, think of *eternal*

praise? Now it is according to the measure of our spirituality, but then it will be because He *hath* blessed us in all these things. God's heart satisfied with seeing us in the full blessing of all He has brought us into; Christ's heart satisfied with seeing of the travail of His soul; the saint's heart satisfied with being fully like Him and with Him, and He fully glorified.

This is where God has set us; and how far, beloved friends, do your hearts go with it? It will be surely the Lamb that was slain there; but in what measure does my soul get hold of the second feast, and say, "According as the Lord my God has blessed me?" And then how far can my soul, even now, enter into all the blessing which God has prepared for them that love Him, having no present but what is future. We are strangers and pilgrims here, but if we are right, our conversation will be up there "where Christ sitteth." God grant that it may be so in our hearts.



A FEW WORDS ON MODERN CRITICISM.

In almost all the critical works of our times, we find a deep-seated deadness of the mind to the real essential character of the divine word; a blindness which is incapable

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of seeing the spiritual and heavenly character of Scripture. It is only by remembering this sad fact, that one can comprehend how it was possible for criticism to subject the text to such cruel tortures : only thus one can account for the cool indifference with which such indignities to God's word are regarded, even where they are not received. And this disorder in spiritual things arises simply from the fact, that the fundamental relations of the heart to God and divine things are not right ; that there is wanting fear and reverence before His majesty, not to speak of confidence in His love ; that light and darkness are not really distinguished, and carefully kept separate. (Isaiah lxvi. 2 ; see also chaps. v. 20, 21 ; l. 10, 11). From olden times it has been thought a heinous crime to remove landmarks ; but it is the boast of our day to blot out the holiest of all boundary-lines, that between truth and error. Man—Satan—invents something intermediate, and is applauded for boldness and originality of thought. He who emancipates himself from subjection of the conscience to the word of God, is an *unbiblical* critic. Let us not sever, on any point, knowledge and the conscience ; let us give way to no sophisms, however specious, but adhere in questions of all kinds in divine things to *moral* bearings and connections. This is, above all, an imperative obligation in the case of those sacred writers

whom God used as His penmen, to whom we are indebted for all the revealed light we possess, and of whom we find throughout, that their sense of God's authority and truth was strong and delicate in a most eminent degree (1 Tim. ii. 7; John xix. 35; 2 Pet. i. 16). It is by no means narrow-minded to proceed from such a starting point; it is inward liberty from the thralldom of human wilfulness; it is a sound principle which alone leads us to a right, holy, and thorough understanding of the truth. Men have lost faith in the supernatural, not because they have gained, but chiefly because they have lost knowledge of nature, no less than of what is above nature.

Modern theology deeply needs to be reminded of that word, "God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." I know from my own experience, in which I was not spared the passing through the furnace of criticism, that it is the simple foundation truths, to which our conscience bears witness, that form the decisive and all-pervading element, and that they are able to refute the dazzling deductions of a science (falsely so called), which refuses to place itself in the light of God's all-righteous countenance. In a time like ours, when the gospel, not only in its links with the mysteries of Christ, but even in its most simple and essential elements, is foolishness to the Greeks, yea, to the noblest among them, it is of paramount importance to be faithful to these first principles, which, however insignificant they may appear, are the foundation of all the rest.

IS THERE EVER A TIME WHEN PAUL'S DOCTRINE IS OF NO PRAC- TICAL VALUE?

(Col. i. ; 2 Tim. iii.)

The truths unfolded and warnings given in the Epistles of Paul, invaluable at all times, are of incalculable value at a day like the present. The seeds and first symptoms of all that which is now seen in well-developed character around us had their existence thus early in the history of the Church; and divine wisdom, foreseeing the results of them all, has not only foreseen but provided for the difficulties and exigencies of such an evil day. This is one of the blessed characters of the ever-living word of God. It proves, as the difficulties arise and complicate themselves, how matchlessly full of divine and unerring wisdom it is. One is not surprised at anything that has arisen. Scripture has prepared us to expect that the evils would arise and the truth would be surrendered, and falsehood glossed over with an appearance of the truth, as we painfully discover around us. Still the unerring and unfailing manner in which it meets, and guides, and directs, the Christian who is subject to it, in every difficulty of his path, in a labyrinth of evil, and unfolds its varied and wondrous beauty and resources for the Church's need,

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elicits a note of praise, often silent, but deep, to Him who is its Author, and whose perfect wisdom shines in that which is so worthy of Him !

One is struck with the wisdom and beauty of the style in which Paul, when writing to the Colossians, unfolds before their eyes the glories and magnificence of Christ, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell. (Chap 1.) The work of the Father for them and in them, in making them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light; translating them into the kingdom of the Son of His love, the Centre of all His counsels. Their danger lay in "not holding the Head;" and thus they were allowing themselves to be deceived by the craft of Satan, under the pretence of humility and lowliness, and were turning ordinances into a means of gaining a standing before God, instead of using them as a memorial of their having been introduced into a standing known, and enjoyed, and possessed before Him.

Before one word of warning or upbraiding falls from his pen, he discloses the glories of the Son, the Centre of the Father's counsels; by whom, through sin-bearing, and death, and judgment, the fulness of the Godhead had cleared the ground for the reconciliation of "all things" in the new creation, of which

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He was the Centre, and through whom believers had been reconciled to God.

What a rebuke to the state of things which we find touched upon in the second chapter of the epistle!—"philosophy," "vain deceit," "traditions of men," "elements of the world," "meats," "drinks," "keeping of holy-days," "new moons," "sabbaths" (which were shadows which had vanished into their nothingness, when the substance, Christ, had come), "voluntary humility," and such like. Things with which a natural mind could occupy itself, and which had a "show of wisdom" and worship devised by the human will, so gratifying to the flesh.

The apostle ranges as it were through the region of creation, providence, redemption, and glory (chap. i. 15-22), as if he said, "There is not a spot in the wide universe of these things that I will not fill with Christ. I will so unfold and expand Him before your eyes, that I will only have to mention the follies of chapter ii. which have occupied your minds, to make you blush about them; and this is the very One in whom all the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell, and who dwells in you (chap. i. 27), and ye are complete (or 'filled full') in Him (chap. ii. 10). Foolish people, see what you have been doing. Is not that a more touching rebuke for you, than if I had charged you with the

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infantile follies of which I have heard?"

I desire to put before my readers a line of truth which has struck me much of late in chapter i. of this epistle, coupled with 2 Timothy iii. ; and to bring before their minds certain truths of great importance which the apostle presses, when the seeds of the evil had begun to show themselves, and which in this day have grown up and ripened into such a harvest. It seems to me that he has them specially in his mind as the grand preservatives which would guard the faithful against all that was coming. This is the more remarkable when we find that he presses the very same things on the consciences of the faithful in the perilous times of the last days. So that whether in the beginning or the ending of the Church's sojourn here, the truths which would preserve and gird the loins of God's people would be the same.

I gather from the general teaching of the epistle that the apostle, who had never seen the Colossians (chap ii. 1), had heard of them through Epaphras, whose ministry of the gospel had evidently been blessed to them. He had brought tidings of them to the apostle (chap i. 8), of their fruit-bearing reception of the gospel. The apostle contemplates a double condition of soul: first, that of the knowledge of the glad tidings; and secondly,

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a condition produced by being filled with the knowledge of God's will, for which he prayed (vs. 9, 10), in order that, through it, they might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, and be fruitful in every good work, and thus grow through the knowledge of God. In a word, it is the knowledge of the mystery of Christ and the Church.

Consequently, he contemplates his own ministry under these two heads: first, that of the gospel to every creature under heaven (ver. 23); and secondly, that of the Church, which completed all the counsels of God (vs. 22-26). Revelation, up to the point of Paul's ministry, had embraced creation, the law, redemption, the person of Christ, the ways of God, His government, etc. There was but one thing now, and that was the revelation of the mystery of the Church, which, when given completed or filled up the word of God.

Christ—the Son of David and Heir of his throne—rejected by the Jews and by the world; crucified and slain; raised up again by the power of God, and by the glory of the Father; seated in the heavens in the righteousness of God, having answered God's righteous judgment against sin, death, judgment, wrath, the curse of a broken law, all borne and passed through to the glory of God; sins borne; sin in the flesh condemned; the “old man” judicially dealt with, and set

aside for ever ; a man—the Second man—the last Adam—in heaven in divine righteousness. The Holy Ghost personally on earth witnesses to the righteousness of God, and to the justification of the believer according to its full display. Eternal life by and in the Spirit, and its conscious possession, communicated to the believer by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost, acting as the power of this life in his walk, guiding, directing, controlling, and rebuking him. The believer sealed with the Spirit, his body a temple for His indwelling, uniting him to Christ—a Man in glory ; and thus the bond of union between all those who are His, one with another, and with Christ. His presence and baptism constituting “one body,” composed of such, *here in this world* (I Cor. xii. 12, 13). God dwelling amongst His saints here, as a habitation, in Spirit (Ephes. ii. 22). The Holy Ghost, the power for the exercise of the gifts that Christ, when He rose and ascended up on high, received as man, and bestowed on men—members of His body—thus “dividing to every man severally as He will ;” reproducing, too, “Christ,” the “life of Jesus,” in the mortal bodies of the saints. The power also of worship, communion, joy, love, rejoicing and prayer. Teaching them to await the hope of righteousness by faith, even the glory itself. Leading them to wait

for Christ, and producing the longing "Come" in the "Bride" (and inviting "him that heareth" to say so, too), while her Lord still continues, the object of her hope, as the "Bright and Morning Star." Meanwhile transforming them into Christ's image by unfolding, in the liberty of grace, the glories of Him in whose face shines all the glory of God!

Such are some of the features of the "doctrine" of Paul.

We find then a condition of soul in the Colossians for which the apostle can give thanks (vs. 3-6). They had received the gospel, and it was bringing forth fruit in them since the day they knew the *grace* of God in truth. But he well knew that the mere knowledge of the gospel, blessed even as it is, would not enable them to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." It needed something more than the mere acceptance of the glad tidings to guide the steps of the Lord's people in a walk worthy of Him; and hence, while he can give thanks for the first condition of soul produced by the glad tidings, he ceased not to pray for them that they might have the second.

How many of the Lord's people are in the first state in the present day rejoicing in the grace of the gospel, and yet who are ignorant of the second; and some even think that anything beyond the mere knowledge of the

gospel is but speculation, or opinions of men, without power or value for the practical walk of the saints! I think I am warranted in saying, that after Epaphras saw Paul, and learned the deep and paramount importance of that knowledge for which Paul prayed that they might know, that Epaphras was fully convinced of the value and importance of their learning the second character of the apostle's ministry, that he, likewise, laboured earnestly in prayer for them that they might "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." (Compare Paul's prayer in chap. i. 9, 10, with Epaphras' prayer in chap. iv. 12.)

We see, therefore, three prominent and important matters which the apostle presses in chapter i.

First. The importance that the saints should be instructed in the second character of his ministry: that of the Church—the body of Christ, its Head. So that, understanding the deep responsibility which flowed from membership of such, they might hold fast the Head, and walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.

Secondly. That the Scriptures were now filled up, or completed, by the revelation of this mystery. No room was left consequently for tradition or development of any kind. It was the grand summing up of all the revealed counsels and purposes of God the

Father, for the glory of the Son. They had, up to this, embraced and treated of creation, law, government, the kingdom, the person of Christ—the Son, redemption, etc. There might be, and doubtless was, a further development of the details of these subjects, as by John in the Apocalypse, etc., but still it would only be the unfolding, and the summing up of the details of what had been the subject of inspiration. Paul's ministry it was then, revealing the mystery concerning Christ and the Church, which completed the word of God (chap. i. 25).

Thirdly. The glory of the person of the Son, who is the image of the invisible God. No man had seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, had declared Him (John i. 18). He had created all things. By Him all things were upheld. He was the First-begotten from among the dead, and as such the Head of His body, the Church. All fulness was pleased to dwell in Him, and to reconcile all things to Himself; and He had reconciled the saints, who before had been aliens, and enemies in their minds by wicked works, in the body of His flesh through death. Thus the regions of creation, providence, redemption, and glory, are ranged through by the apostle, and Christ unfolded as filling all things. It is the glory of the person of the Son.

To repeat them, that the mind may recall them simply, they are three, viz. : 1st. The doctrine of Paul ; 2ndly. The Scriptures, which had been now completed by his ministry ; and, 3rdly, The person of Christ.

These were the truths on which so much hung and flowed from, which would be the safeguards for those who would be faithful in an evil day.

I do not here enter into more detail, but notice them as those truths to which he directs special attention to meet the dangers he foresaw in the beginning of the history of the Church.

I now turn to the instruction which he gives in the Second Epistle to Timothy, which would afford an unerring guide to the faithful at the closing of the history of the Church in the last days. The mournful heart of the apostle unbosoms itself to one whom he loved, and to whom he could communicate his thoughts freely ; he unfolds to him the irreparable ruin into which the Church was fast drifting in her outward, responsible condition. He does not look for any restoration—not even the ability on the part of the faithful to leave the outward professing mass. He does not in the Epistles to Timothy speak of the inward graces and Christian affections, which are to be the more cultivated than ever in such a state of things, as he

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does in the Epistle to the Philippians. He does not speak in them of the Church as the body of Christ or bride, nor of the relationships of father and children, as elsewhere. What he treats of is the outward thing before the world, in the character (as in 1 Tim. iii. 14-16) of what it had been set in the world to be for God. It was His house, the assembly of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth, the vessel in which the truth was to be displayed; and the mystery of Godliness—the manifestation of God in Christ, and the surrounding truths—was to be her testimony in the world. She was as a light-bearer to reflect Him as His epistle, and respond to God's purposes in this place. In the second epistle the apostle sees that all was now hopelessly and irrevocably gone. The house of God had become a great house in which iniquity was rife, and vessels to dishonour had found a lodgment and were at home in it. Paul had been "turned away from" by all in Asia. He is here, I doubt not, a representative man, one through whom the Holy Ghost can say, "Be ye followers together of me" (Phil. iii.); and one who walked in the power of his own doctrine. He marks out in a clear line the pathway of the faithful in such a state of things: they were to depart from iniquity. "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord (corrected

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reading), depart from iniquity" (chap. ii. 19). Every one who owned Him as *Lord*. Whatever form it would take, the simple and primary step should be to depart from iniquity. From vessels which were not honouring Christ in their walk, one was to purge oneself, and thus that one might become a vessel unto honour, fitted and meet for the Master's use. Fleeing from youthful lusts (i.e., inward personal holiness) was to be the character of one's walk. And then (all before this being negative) the positive following of righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who were calling on the Lord out of a purged heart. (See chap. ii. 19-22.)

But the question now comes, When the saints had done this, when they had departed from iniquity, purged themselves from the vessels to dishonour, were walking in holiness and following these things together, is there anything provided for them, when corruption surrounds them on all sides, to keep them together after a divine fashion in the midst of it all? Would they not be open to the admission of evil amongst them again, and thus find that separation from it was of no avail? In the Epistle to the Colossians, Paul had shown an Epaphras the necessity of having the saints instructed in the *second* part of his ministry when they had been established in the *first*—that is, when they had

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received the grace of the Gospel, that they might know the full counsels of God in the doctrine of Paul, in order to walk worthily of the Lord. Yea, that he ceased not in all earnestness and in the Holy Ghost, to pray that they might be thus instructed. Would this *now* be that to which he would again point them? Here then comes the grand truth, *he recalls the very same three things as those which at the beginning he had pressed upon the Colossians as the safeguards for the faithful in the perilous times*—times when the profession of Christianity is described in words so nearly like those by which he had described the corruptions of the heathen world, when sunk down into the lowest ebb of degradation and departure from God. If the closing verses of Romans i. are compared with the first four verses of 2 Timothy, iii., this will at once be seen. In describing the various manifestations of evil in these verses, three prominent features will be found in them, viz. : 1st, Self-predominating (Christianity is the denial of self); 2nd, A form of godliness, while the power would be denied; and 3rd, Active opposition to the truth by the most subtle device of the enemy—that of *imitation*—the device of Satan in Egypt by the magicians, by copying Moses' miracles performed by the power of God, and thus Satan's power practically nullifying

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that of God. To counterbalance those characteristic features and keep the faithful after a divine fashion, the apostle names the *same things* as before we noticed to the Colossians : 1st, " My doctrine ;" 2nd, " The Scriptures ;" and 3rd, The person of Christ as an object of faith. These he unfolds in the remaining portions of the chapter (vs. 10-17).

The doctrine of Paul (see also the manner of life which flowed from it) is that which is to keep divinely together those who would call on the Lord out of a pure heart. It embraces all the principles and truths connected with it, as when first revealed. Ruin and failure could not affect it, nor hinder the practice flowing from it. Nor would it ever be impracticable for the faithful few to exercise the godly discipline and exclusion of evil from their midst, inculcated by him. (See 1st Cor.) Outward unity, seen to such a beautiful degree at the first (Acts ii., iv.), might be gone forever. The unity of the Spirit in the body of Christ would never fail, and this the Christian was exhorted to endeavour to keep (Eph. iv. 3, 4). Come what would, there never would be a time while the Church would sojourn here, when Paul's doctrine would be a nullity or impracticable to the veriest handful of the faithful who sought to call on the Lord out of a pure heart, and live godly in Christ Jesus.

Such is then the prominent and first-named point in the chapter. "But thou hast fully known *my doctrine*," etc. The resource—the safeguard—the ground or principle of action of the saints in an evil day. *Without* Paul's doctrine, they had nothing stable to preserve them and keep them together on divine ground in the midst of corruption; *with* it, they would find that under their feet which would *never* fail.

Have we then Paul's doctrine? We may boast, as all do, that we have the Scriptures—surely it is well. We may have confidence that an ever faithful Lord will never leave nor forsake His people, and that He knows them that are His, and will keep them unto the end. But can we say that we have Paul's doctrine of the Church—the body of Christ on earth formed by the presence and baptism of the Holy Ghost? Having it, can we say that we are as living members, *acting* upon the truth of it through the never-failing supply of grace He gives? Or, do we come under the character of those who are described as "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth?"—those whose mind and intellect the truth has reached, but without faith, and hence without practical value in our lives? Of the truth we can say as of faith: "What profit, my brethren, if a man *say* he have the truth?"

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if he have not shown that he has faith in it, and thus has learned to act upon it as something in which he believes? It is always a sign that a man has faith in the truth which he knows, when it has had its corresponding effect upon his life—*when it has been acted upon in practice. No man has ever had the joy and power of a divine truth till he has accepted it, and walked therein.* Many are thus ever learning and never able to come to a divinely confirmed knowledge of it, because the practice is wanting. It is learned in the intellect; the natural mind is touched, perhaps, with the beauty and divine excellence of it; it cannot be denied, but there is no faith in it. It has not been learned in the conscience and in the soul; and when tribulation or persecution arises because of it, he is offended—deems it non-essential perhaps—and surrenders that to which he has never come to a divinely-given knowledge. If ever there was a day when there was such a thing as “salt which had lost its savour,” it is the present. The most touching—the very highest truths of God have become the topic of the world’s conversation. They are held by many after a fashion in which the edge and power of them are lost. A worldly talk and conversation are coupled with the intellectual knowledge of the highest truths of God; and like salt that has lost its saltiness, one

can but ask of it, "Wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but (even) men cast it out" (Luke xiv. 34, 35).

"But thou hast fully known *my doctrine*, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured; but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But *continue* thou in the things that thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." (2 Tim. iii. 10-14.)

May the Lord open the understanding of His beloved people, that in the midst of the confusion and corruption of such an evil day—when men are saying, "What is truth?" and yet not caring for the reply, they may find there are such principles in the word of God as no amount of man's failure can ever touch, and which are ever practicable to those who desire humbly to walk with God, and to keep the word of the patience of Jesus, till He comes. May they learn to walk together in unity, and peace, and love *in the truth*, for His name's sake.—Amen.



 We can only be, in truth, a testimony to the complete failure of the Church of God. But, to be such, we must be as true in principle as the thing that has failed. And, as long as we are a testimony to failure, we shall never fail.

SALT.

Salt is of great importance to man. It makes savoury what without it would be insipid. It checks the growth of nature in the vegetable kingdom; it preserves, too, from corruption and decay, what belongs to the animal kingdom.

Of its savoury properties Job speaks (vi. 6). To its power in destroying the growth of nature Moses and the Prophets bear witness (Deut. xxix. 23; Jer. xvii. 6; Ezek. xlvii. 11); and Abimelech's action in sowing the city of Shechem with salt (Judges ix. 45), shows us that Israel were well acquainted with its influence on vegetation. But not less marked is its action on that which belongs to the animal kingdom, preserving what is subjected to its influence from that corruption to which otherwise it would assuredly turn.

Now as salt acts in the realm of nature, so does grace in spiritual matters. It savours; it checks the outflow of nature from man. It is preservative, too, in its action from corruption.

Under the law the meat-offering was to be salted, typical of the Lord Jesus in His life on earth, in whom grace acted constantly (Lev. ii. 13). With all their offerings they were to offer salt. Hence a "covenant of salt" was a term Israel well understood

(Num. xviii. 19 ; 2 Chron. xiii. 5), meaning that such a covenant should never be broken, no element of corruption should enter into it, for it would last for ever. Of that character was the provision God made for the support of Aaron and his house. Of that same character was the Lord's engagement to David and his sons.

In the New Testament the figurative meaning of salt, as illustrative of grace in its savouring and preservative action, is met with more than once. The disciples were the "salt of the earth" (Matt. v. 13). But, as the Lord reminded them, salt is useless, if once it has lost its savour. So they would be of no use as salt, unless grace was really in them. What then man in nature has not, what the earth viewed morally does not possess, that the disciples were, and should be careful to continue to be. They were not merely salt for the earth, but the salt of the earth. And having salt in themselves, the working of nature would be checked, and they would have peace one with another (Mark ix. 50). Moreover, that preservative and savouring character of grace would be felt, if their speech was always with grace, seasoned with salt (Col. iv. 6). They would know how to answer every man, and no corrupt communication would proceed out of their mouth, but only that which was good to the use of edifying, that it might minister grace to the hearer (Eph. iv. 29). Moreover, the preservative character of grace would characterise all God's people, "for every sacrifice shall be salted with salt."

But there is another statement of the Lord,

preserved only in one Gospel, that of Mark . and that statement, to which we now draw attention, is most solemn in its character, and universal in its application. "Every one shall be salted with fire:" for as salt preserves things in the animal kingdom, so the fire of judgment will act on men. It will not consume them so as to terminate their existence, but burning up all that is perishable of men and their works (1 Cor. iii. 13-15), will leave that which never can decay. To have one's works tried by fire is a solemn consideration for God's saints. To be salted with fire is a dreadful prospect for the wicked. And in connection with these latter, it should be remarked, the Lord brings in, "Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; *for every one shall be salted with fire*" (Mark ix. 48, 49). Even in things of nature in the animal frame, there is a residuum, which the fire does not consume. But after burning up all that is consumable, the fire dies out. Now it will not be so in the other world; all that can perish will assuredly perish, but the wicked will never cease to exist, and the fire will never be extinguished.



EXTRACT.—Resurrection is not the communication of life. They are formally distinguished in Ephes. ii. . . . Resurrection involves the reunion of soul and body, not the communication of life. Resurrection unto life, in John v., is not communicating life, but refers to those to whom life had been given, and explicitly to their coming up out of their graves. Resurrection may be the quickening of the mortal *body*, but *never* the communicating of life to the soul; and in its full power it involves a vast deal more. The saint is raised in glory, because of the Spirit dwelling in him; ~~the sinner, to judgment.~~

THE RESPONSIBLE MAN, AND THE MAN OF PURPOSE.

(John xvii.)

I notice first in this chapter that there is responsibility, but of an entirely new order; a responsibility which is connected with Christ and which He has discharged; "I have glorified Thee on the earth," "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world:" a responsibility which in righteousness towards God, and in grace to us, has put us into the same place as Himself. The Word has come down to us; and words have been brought, and we have believed them, and have known surely, as Jesus said, "that I came out from God."

If we think of what was previously given by Moses, the law; it was but the measure of man, come down to the earth, and which claimed from man what he ought to be: a perfect rule for man as a child of Adam. It was connected necessarily with responsibility, but the responsibility of the creature, and in which he failed; God was hidden behind it—He not coming to man, nor man to Him. But under it man fails. Then because of this breakdown, "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," but came in when this need was thus made plain. Man failed in paradise, and failed out of paradise. He failed upon

the question of righteousness by law ; and rejected Christ come in grace. If we look at Jew or Gentile, we see Christ taking up *this* responsibility too before God, and putting away sin for us, by the sacrifices of Himself. He dies and closes up the whole scene in which that responsibility was. All is summed up in the words of Jesus, " I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do."

Another thing is stated in this chapter, " I have glorified Thee on the earth." He came into the world not only as a Man, but as the Heir of promises ; and they rejected Him in whom these promises were, as the promised Seed. But He has secured the *promises* by the cross ; and also laid the foundation for the eternal *purposes* of God in His death and resurrection. He who came with all the promises of God in His hand was rejected and killed. Salvation on God's part is the answer to this wickedness on man's. It was not merely that man was a sinner, but all that God would do for a sinner was refused

—" Last of all he sent unto them his Son."

My soul and conscience are cleared by the very blood which was the proof of my sin and guilt. The purpose which was before the world can now be brought out, for righteousness has come in, and Christ *as Man* has got a place in the glory of God, because He deserves it ! This is the right-

eous foundation of the purposes of God ; and He is there too in a work done for us.

In this ascended Lord we see the power of a life which has triumphed over death, and all the testimony that now comes to us, comes from thence. The Son is there, and there as a Man in righteousness, according to God's nature. But God is not merely glorified in righteousness ; but the Father, in love—"I have glorified *Thee* on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self." The Father's name is the spring of eternal life to us in the Son ; and the Son as Man has brought it in, and we have received it. It is not what Jehovah had given to the Messiah, but what the Father had given to the Son. "These things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." He has given the words to us that the Father gave to Him. These are the privileges that belong to us as believers.

The first three Gospels present Christ to be received by man ; but in John's His people are called out by grace : it begins with His rejection ; and they are separated from the world, and brought into this place of possession also. "All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them ;" this is the full grace of Christ. The Father's

words communicated to Christ are to bring us into every place which belongs to Christ. This is the revelation of God's heavenly thoughts through His Son, where there can be nothing of responsibility as to man, as when under law ; though man is treated by the gospel as a sinner, and needing grace. Christ is the revelation of what a perfect Man is, and what everything in the world is to God. We are not of it.

When we look at Christ's Person, what do we see ? The Father in His Son ! For it was the revelation of the Father in Christ. Philip said, "show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus said unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me ? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father " (John xiv.). The expression of the Father was the living Christ. It was a revelation in the way suited to man as he was down here ; for it was seen in the Man, who tabernacled with us, that He might associate our hearts with the Father as His was. "The glory Thou gavest Me I have given them ;" again, "that the love wherewith Thou lovest Me may be in them." Everything which He is and has Himself He brings us into ; except, of course, what is essential to His eternal Sonship : the Father's words, the life, the glory, the love, with all the blessedness He has, and (what is not so

pleasant to us) His separation from the world. But it is a portion with Himself now and hereafter. Moreover, He puts us in His own place of testimony to the world. "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." He was of God in the midst of the world, always the revelation of God. And this is what a Christian is likewise.

"Sanctify them through Thy truth." The word of God comes down (not like the law) and brings to my heart the measure and character of what Christ is. The truth, His word, which tells what God is, tells me what I ought to be as a child of the Father. Till God is revealed, how can I tell what I ought to be? But grace and truth tell me what the Father is, and what the world is: it is Cain's city. What are the inventions of it, the telegraph and the like, to a man when he is going out of the world by death? But there is something more—"for their sakes I sanctify Myself:" not simply a word come down, but a *Man* gone up! Now I get where righteousness takes us, entirely separated from sinners, and gone into the place where my affections are fixed on Him. He is the model Man in glory, and I must purify myself by the hope of being with Him, as He is pure. The work is perfectly accomplished which makes me meet for the same place. The Holy Ghost takes these things and shows them to us. God hath revealed them to us by the Spirit, according to the purpose of God up there. The truth comes down

through the rent veil to us, but I get the glory of the Man gone up, and who for our sakes has sanctified Himself that we also may be sanctified through the truth.

Another thing is, we should think of His glory and happiness. He expects us to be interested in Him; "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I go unto the Father." So entirely are we one with Him, and He one with us, He brings the love of God, wherewith He is loved, into the heart. The Christian is made up from this Christ. The eye that is upon Him sees God's path even through this world. The responsible man has failed, but the Man of purpose was in love and grace below, and is now in righteousness and glory above.

The difficulty is to get a path through the world where all is wrong, and I have got it, got it in Christ. He has met and cleared away the sins that were ours, and we have put off the old man, and got into the place of the second Man, in perfect acceptance with God. Our responsibility now is to manifest Him in our mortal body. "Holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," was His character, and this is ours. We shall find out our shortcomings, no doubt; but perfect grace has given us a place with Christ everywhere, and this must be held in spite of all failure. In truth, it is the recovering power of grace. The Lord give us to believe in His love; that He has sanctified Himself for our sakes: and He expects our hearts to meet and answer to His own. Blessed place and portion! He sees in us morally, even now, the fruit of the travail of His soul.

DELIVERANCE.

The Epistle of the Romans takes up the Christian, if we compare one aspect of his condition with another, on the lowest ground. If for instance we take the Ephesians, there we find the Christian spoken of as "raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;" but you never get him there in the Epistle to the Romans. Though in the end of chap. viii., it is stated that he is predestinated in God's original purpose for the glory, yet we never get him as risen and in the heavenly places, but looked at as on this earth, and of course he is. We will see now a little, with the Lord's help, how He does look at a Christian on this earth.

Now thus looked at, though not sitting with Christ, yet Christ is his life. Here am I, a sinner in myself, and my flesh has got no good in it. The whole epistle developes very fully what the Christian is, looked at in this world, and the chapter I have read (chap. vi.) treats one special part of it, and that is his positive state and standing, not his guilt; as to his guilt, it has been treated very fully up to the middle of the previous chapter.

To begin with, the apostle says he is "not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one

that believeth ; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek : for therein is the righteousness of God revealed." And then he goes on to show why it must be God's righteousness that is revealed — simply because man has none. God's law had come and required righteousness in man, which it could not find ; but the gospel comes and reveals God's righteousness, and he is not ashamed of it because it *is* revealed in it. He shows us the Jews under law and the Gentiles without law, and proves "every mouth stopped, and all the world guilty before God." Instead of the law making it any better for the Jew, it only proved their guilt ; and as to the Gentiles, that which might have been known of God in creation left them without excuse when they went to idolatry.

He next shows us how "God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood," and applies that death to the past and the present, saying that it declared "God's righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God." God had been forbearing with them, but there had been no proof of righteousness in His forgiving one more than another ; but now on the cross it is explained. And not only this, but He is "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." There it is the present time, His righteous-

ness is now revealed, and we stand upon the ground of this righteousness that has been revealed.

The place where it has been shown and manifested is in setting Christ at God's right hand. This is a demonstration of the sin of the whole world, because it did not believe in Christ ; also a demonstration of righteousness, "because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more:" the Saviour they had rejected they would see no more till He came again as Judge. Thus the gospel comes and shows us that He is seated there (besides being the Son of God) in virtue of the work of the cross. There is where God's righteousness is displayed for faith to look at. I see thus the perfect love of God which sought us in this way. I had sins, but no righteousness; I have nothing but Christ to look to, and my eye rests through faith where God's eye rests; God is satisfied, and so am I through grace. I see the sins put away through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that there is no more question of sin, because my righteousness is Christ; He is "of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." All is perfectly settled once and for all, and I am made the righteousness of God in Christ—God's righteousness. What we rejected God accepted, and proved His righteousness thereby. All

the fruit of the old man is done away, for the believer, and he is in Christ accepted.

But now comes another question ; not that of our sins being put away, but of our deliverance from the principle of sin. As we read, "As He is, so are we in this world." On the ground of what we are by faith all our sins are put away ; but then comes the power of sin—this evil nature—what is *in* me, not what I have *done*. But can I in this world say that I am delivered from sin ? that I am made free from sin ?

Now this word "free" is often abused in English ; it has two meanings. It is not here used in the sense that there is none in us, as I would say, "That horse is 'free' from vice ;" but it is in contrast to the word captive. It means we are not captive to sin. He takes up the question of law as he took up the question of righteousness. Man had not made out righteousness either with law or without it ; then God gave him Christ to be his righteousness. Now the question is whether, we having thus got *righteousness*, the law can *deliver* us.

Well, in chap. viii., it says, "What the law could *not* do." It is not *guilt* now, but the flesh is not subject, neither indeed can be. He means it has a will of its own. We know we have a will of our own. Now a will of our own is the principle of sin : whenever I

have got a will of my own, there is sin—self-will, just the same as Eve when she would go and eat the fruit. The law thwarted the acting of will, of course; it was “holy, and just, and good,” so it must; but it did not take away, nor did it alter, sin. But “what the law could *not* do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:” the law of course had nothing to do with that.

There are three things the law could not do: it could not give *life*; and, even supposing we got life, it does not give *strength*; and, another thing of the deepest moment for our souls, it does not give an *object*. But in Christ I find my life, my strength, and my object. “They that are after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit;” they have the true object. I get in Christ an Object that is sufficient to delight God Himself.

For the fact of life will not do; we must have it, of course, but that is not sufficient. The old man is here yet: there are lusts. The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and “it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;” therefore, the law instead of delivering me, brings me into captivity. It is just what we get in Romans vii. Suppose a man quickened in this world, what will be the effect of the law upon him? It will give

him the knowledge of sin, "I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." Yet "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good;" but it did not give anything of what we want; it was only the rule outside it, and gave us nothing to enable us to walk up to it. Here was a man, in a kind of sleepy, indefinite way, going on quite comfortably a man with a good conscience; "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to Jesus of Nazareth." When the law came, it said, "Thou shalt not covet*;" but it did not take away the lust*; and he found at once another law warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin. There was no deliverance. God allowed him to use every kind of effort to get the victory; but it all went to prove not simply that he was guilty, and that he had an evil nature, but that besides this he had no strength; and this is an exceedingly miserable condition.

If we were to tell the world that they had no strength, they would say, Why, there is

*"Lust," "covet," "concupiscence," Rom. vii. 7, 8, are the same word in the original.

an end to all morality ! Even a child has faith in his own powers ; it says. Oh ! I will be good *to-morrow* ! But I say, I am going to punish you *to-day*—for what you are *now* ! And this lesson of no strength is a great deal a more humbling one to learn than that of the fact that certain sins have been done in some past time of my life. It raises the question, not of what I was before I knew Christ, but of what I am now that I do. “They that are in the flesh cannot please God ;” but the effort made to do so is very useful in this way, that it brings us to the discovery of what we are. If you have found this out, you have found out what Paul did : “to *will* is present with me, but how to *perform* that which is good *I find not*.”

But now is there no deliverance ? Of course there is—*positive deliverance* !

As I have been saying, the apostle shows us, besides the question of guilt, the question of state. I have been seeing what the state of bondage is of a renewed man under law, in contrast to the state of a renewed man knowing what it is to be risen with Christ. We are united to Christ risen, and, being thus, he brings in, not the death of the *law*, but *our* death. So that I have not got to hunt up things in my heart to see whether evil is present with me ; this would be law, and the law cannot help me at all ; but I

have got Christ as my life, Christ risen and glorified too ; and I am past death and raised up, though I do not go on to glory here, because it is a man here walking on the earth. I have got Christ to be my life, not Adam ; I am not alive to God at all as born of Adam ; we are “ not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in us.” When I stood as a child of Adam before God, the law, was applied to me on that footing. I have not got what meets it. As long therefore as I am in the flesh, I cannot meet God or please God, and I never can get free or happy with God. So much the better, that I may find it out.

Now the flesh never changes ; “ it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” When man fell, the world got so awfully bad that God had to destroy it ; when God’s Son came into the world, they crucified Him ; when the Spirit came, the flesh lusted against it ; and when it has gone into the third heavens, it puffs a man up—if there were a fourth heaven, it would only puff him up more : that is the end of it !

But there *is* deliverance ! If there were not, I would not speak of it. Then where is it ? In death ! It is when Christ has died and has risen that He becomes the power of life in me ; but in itself this does not put away the flesh. There is nothing for it but what is

added : "God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh ;" there is no pardon, no taking it away, nothing but absolutely condemning it. If I take the cross, the highest act of grace, I find that there God condemned sin in the flesh.

But then, beloved friends, this condemnation of sin in the flesh, what was it in ? I cannot get away from this evil nature, and Satan too is against me. But Satan is nothing to the new man ! Only, "resist the devil and he will flee from you ;" but he is *everything* for the flesh, of course ! The world is just a great system that the devil has built up round man to keep him easy without God. It began at once with Cain ; he goes out from the presence of the Lord, and what is he to do ? He builds himself a city in the land of the vagabond. God never made the world as we see it ; of *this* world Satan is the prince (John xiv. 30). Cain built his city so as to be comfortable in this world ; and there were the artificers of brass and iron, and there he gets Jubal with his music, and he calls the city by the name of his son, and there we see all the conveniences of life, and harps, and organs, and then people ask, What is the harm of brass or iron, of harps or organs ? None ! I do not say there is any harm in music and instruments ; but this I

say, there was a great deal of harm in his making himself comfortable in them without God. We have got capacities for music and art and so on, and people take pains to amuse themselves with them *because there is a famine in the land*.

I find in the cross of Christ "the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world;" I find sin and the flesh condemned there. Condemned in what? *In death!* If the law condemned sin in the flesh, it only got to the lust: it was the ministration of death, and ministers condemnation. But what I get in Christ is death—the death of the old man. In his sacrifice I get *death*: He has not only been crucified for my sins, but I have been crucified with Him (see Gal. ii. 20). Whilst He has become my life, His death is as available for the old man as his life is for the new. He not only died *for our sins*, but He died *unto sin* once; "in that he died unto sin once." Not that He had any for Himself, but that He put Himself there for us; and then "likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through [in] Jesus Christ our Lord;" I have the full power of life.

"God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." I find sin a grief to my heart. Now, God condemned it in Christ on the

cross; and as a believer I have death to sin just as much as I have condemnation for sins all gone. "He died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through [in] Christ Jesus our Lord." Well, now, that is where it comes out!—I cannot win the victory! But God is teaching me the whole thing is settled; it is, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." It is not simply that the old man is not there—that is not deliverance; nor that the combat is not there: but do you think it is the same thing if I am struggling with a man and I get him down with my knee on his chest, or if the man gets me down with his knee on mine? If I combat with Christ for me, I get my knee on him. Of course there must be combat, but meanwhile I am not saying I am *captive* to the law of sin, whereas what we see in Rom. vii., is a man who is: his soul is all right, but he cannot *do* it.

I get in the death of Christ this testimony, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God;" and as to ourselves, we are to be "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." I am thus set free. It is not that flesh is not there; it was in Paul, but he had the thorn in the flesh to

buffet him; he got it to keep something down. Well, that proved it was there; the thorn kept it down so that it did not show itself, but still it was there. If you fancy it is not there you lower your standard; but there is no reason why you should ever for one single instant let the flesh stir or show itself. And what has brought you to this is death; of course you must have life for it, or else you would be dead to everything.

Now you are never called to die to sin, because the old man *has* died in Christ and the new man can *not* die. Have you not been baptized to death? Then how can you live on in sin if you are dead to it? Are you dead? And where? In the death of Christ. It is always a past thing; there is no such *thought in Scripture as our dying; it is we "are dead."* You have never any death for the old man but that of Christ on the cross. What faith gets hold of is this: I have died with Christ; then I am free. Therefore mark, what he says: "How shall we who are dead to sin live any longer therein?" He brings in death instead of the law; he put the flesh to death, to faith, of course; he does not look for fruit from it; but he comes and kills the tree and puts another in its place, and that is *Christ*, and says, "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instru-

ments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace;" I am now free!

Well, you are free; and what are you going to do? Are you going to give yourself back to sin again? Why, "yield yourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead." Of course He does not come and say this to unconverted men; but, the moment a man calls himself a Christian, I say, Now you are alive and free; to whom are you going to give yourself?

One word more. It is of great importance to grasp this complete redemption—the death and resurrection of Christ Himself become the power of life to us, so that we *can* reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God. "What fruit had you in those things?" But now, he says, you have fruit—fruit to holiness down here; you walk in a path that you know has beauties—positive fruit of holiness in this world, and "the end, everlasting life."

But, I repeat, in this epistle you are perfectly in the world, and how are you to get power? Through death. Suppose for a moment that I always held myself dead, there would not be a movement—not a lust; therefore, John, speaking of it in an abstract way, says, "He that is born of God doth not commit sin." It is just as if all sorts of evil things were outside in my passage, and the danger lay in opening the

door and letting them creep in ; you will find all these evil things in your room if you do not watch. What we are called upon to do is, not to die, but to put to death : " Mortify your members that are upon the earth ; " that is, I have power to do it, so I am to put them to death. Christ is my power, of course.

But, now, are you content to be dead ? Or would you like to spare some of your flesh ? Are you content to have no more of the world than a dead man has ? Constantly we shall find we have little chambers in our hearts that we do not like to open to God ; we go on in our prayers until we come to that, and then we stop, and then God has to break the door open in some way or other. Practically you are saying, I would sooner have this idol than God ; not in your soul, of course, or you would not be a Christian. But now, supposing you have not anything kept back from God, have you taken this ground with Him that you are practically dead ? It is not perfection, because I know no perfection but Christ glorified. The only perfection that is before a Christian is conformity to Him in glory, and I am never satisfied until I am with Him in that glory. But are you free ? Have you got real deliverance ? " The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. " The first thing we want is forgiveness ; but the second thing we want is deliverance, and it is there for us. I have my eye on that Man in the glory ; I am going to be like Him ; it is there I get the Object that is before my soul.

THE GLORIES OF THE CROSS.

If God be righteous, and judges sin, can He exercise love to us in all its fulness—towards us who are sinners? Now here it is the death and atonement of Christ come in. The blessed Lord willingly undertook this task, to glorify God perfectly, and prove infinite love to us, and yet maintain God's perfect righteousness. He bore our sins—was made sin for us. He drank the bitter cup of death and judgment which our sins had filled. He gave Himself for us, and was bruised for our iniquities, and wounded for our transgressions. Was not this love? Oh! reader was it not? Yet there God's righteous judgment against sin was fully maintained, so that what I see there was not the least allowance of it. What could show it like the death of the Son of God when he was made sin for us? Could He not be spared? How then can any, persevering in rejecting mercy through Him? Was it possible this cup could pass unless He drank it? It could not. For whom then shall it, if not drunk by Him?

And see how the notion of mere dying under the hands of wicked men destroys all the glory of the cross. I read, "Christ . . .

hath given Himself for us" (Ephes. v. 1); "He offered up Himself" (Heb. vii. 27). Here I find the holy perfectness of His own soul in a way that nothing else shows. What love! What devotedness! What giving Himself up to the Father's glory! "No man taketh it from me," says He, "but I lay it down of myself" (John x. 18). "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me; but that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given me commandment, even so I do" (John xiv. 30, 31). You will say, How could this glorify His Father—to give Himself up to a cruel death and wrath? Because of your sins: they made it necessary. If love was to be shown to you, it must be in this way; God's holiness must be maintained—the impossibility of allowing sin. You (if, indeed, through grace you believe) are not to be taken away from before Him, because of your sins and defilement. Instead of that, as they could not be allowed, they were taken away, that you might be in peace before Him and know this God of love. "God commandeth *His* love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8).

And see how the cross glorifies God in everything. If I look at it as a sacrifice for sin, as Christ giving Himself up, that God

may be fully glorified. And how glorious Christ Himself is there, by His doing it: for, remember, if it was indeed a bitter cup (and it was so, beyond all that we can conceive), yet Christ never was so glorified as there! Never was His glorious perfection so shewn out; so that, though it may seem a hard task to impose on Him, yet it really was, as to His work, His greatest glory: as He says, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him" (John xiii. 31). For it was a glorious thing to Him who accomplished it, that, so to speak, God should be debtor for His glory to Him who thus gave Himself. For indeed it was a common counsel between the Father and the Son. God's will was He should come, and His will was to come: "Lo, I come to do Thy will."

But see how He was glorified in it. Is God righteous in judgment against sin? The cross has fully shown it forth. Is God perfect love to the poor sinner? The cross has shown it forth. Did the majesty of God require that it should be vindicated against rebellious sin? The cross has done it; yet the sinner is spared. Is God truth, and has said that death should follow sin, the devil saying, as he yet does, it should not? Where such a witness that it *must*, as when the blessed Son of God died as man on the cross? Yet He has obtained for us life by it, beyond

all the power of death and judgment. Were our sins pressing upon us, so that we did not dare look up? They are gone. I can see God in the light without fear : He has nothing to impute to me ; He has proved His love, and I can enjoy His love. And just when man showed his hatred to God in slaying His Son, God has shown His love to man in giving Him to put away the sin shown in slaying Him. Where was obedience shown as on the cross? He was "Obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 8). Where love to us? Where the desire to glorify His Father? Thus the Son of man was glorified, and God, in every part of His nature, glorified in Him : His love, His righteousness, His truth, His majesty, all displayed.

And what is the consequence? The power and fear of death are gone, for the believer. It is but the entrance into paradise for him. The sins that he feared, as bringing judgment, are taken away and blotted out. He knows God loves Him—so loves Him that He has not spared His own Son to save him ; he knows that He has nothing to impute to him, for Christ has borne all. God is faithful and just to forgive him his sins.

And yet, is sin a light thing to one who has this perfect peace with the God of love? It has cost the death of the Son of God.

True, it is put away ; he is justified ; he has perfect peace with God. But how ? By that which makes sin the most frightful thing, to his soul, that possibly could be ; and knits his heart to JESUS, who was willing to suffer thus to put it away.

Whether we think of God's glory, or Christ's glory, or the practical effect on our hearts, it is Christ's cross, as being a real sacrifice for sin, that is really efficacious. It glorifies God, infinitely ; honours Christ ; and perfectly blesses man, telling him he is the object of God's infinite love, and yet maintaining righteousness in his heart. Jesus was God manifest in the flesh ; and, as to His Person, supremely glorious in dignity. This indeed enabled him to do such a work ; but never, as to His work and service, was He so glorious as He was upon the cross. I speak to you feebly, beloved reader ; but is it not the truth—words, as Paul says, of truth and soberness ? And this thing was not done in a corner.

And now mark, too, the blessed efficacy of it for me, a poor sinner. There stood sin, death, judgment, just wrath, in my way. My conscience told me it was so, and God's word plainly declares it. Satan's power bound it down, so to speak, upon my soul ; while his temptations encouraged me to go on in what led to it. God's law, even, did but make the

matter worse for me, if I pretended to meddle with it; for its holiness condemned my transgressions. And now, for him that believes, all is taken out of the way. Sin gone, death gone as the terrible thing I awaited (Christ has turned it into a gain)—I shall be with Christ; judgment, Christ has borne it; wrath, there is none for me: I am assured of perfect love. Christ in making me partaker of the efficacy of His death, has set me beyond all these things in the light, as God is in the light (having loved me, and washed me from my sins in His own blood, and made me a king and priest to God and His Father). In rising, He has shown me this new place into which He has brought me; though as yet, of course, I have it only by faith and participation in that life, in the power of which He has risen. Yes, dear reader, the believer *is* saved, he *has* eternal life, he *is* justified; he waits, no doubt, to be glorified, but he knows Him who has obtained it all for him, and that He is able to keep that which he has committed unto Him until that day.

There is a judgment (terrible it will be to them that have despised mercy and rejected the Saviour); but to those who, as poor sinners, have submitted to God's righteousness, believing in His love, "Christ will appear the second time, without sin unto

salvation" (Heb. ix. 28). That is, having quite put sin away for them the first time, He will come the second time without having anything to say to it as to them, for their full possession of the glorious result, As He said Himself, "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also" (John xiv. 2, 3). That is a judgment, if such you will call it, which shall be the everlasting and infinite joy of them that share in it.

Weigh that passage I quoted just now. Christ has appeared "once in the end of the world . . . to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; and as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment"—there is the natural portion of the sinner—"so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." The first time He came, He bore the sins; the second, He comes apart from that for the full salvation of them that look for Him.

Reader, are you prepared to give up all this for the notion that He merely fell a victim to self-seeking men who put Him to a violent death? Did He not offer Himself up as a sacrifice to put away sin? Did not

the Lord bruise Him? Did He not say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Ps. xxii. 1; Matt. xxvii. 46). Does not your soul need to have sin put away? Is not the love of God shown in the way you need it, by Christ being thus given? Has He not glorified God in it? Has He not been glorified in it and by it, bitter as it was? Is it not peace to know He has done it, and put away sin for us by it? Does not the word of God so present it to us? The Lord give you to believe it in your heart. It has given me peace, perfect, yet increasing peace, these five-and-twenty years, while He has all the glory; and I know God is love, who has purged my conscience from sin. May you, dear reader, be enabled so to know it, and with as much joy! If you do, you know what I say is true. May the grace of God make Him, who has wrought it for us, more precious to us both! It is a blessing and a joy to think we shall have an eternity in which to praise Him for it.

Even if I think of the way good and evil were brought out by it, THERE IS NOTHING LIKE THE CROSS. Everything moral is there brought to a glorious centre, from which it flows down on every poor believing heart, in the proof that evil has been met and put away and that good has triumphed. Where has death been shown in its terrible power as in

the cross? Where has sin, in its all terrible character and effects? Where do I see man's hatred against goodness itself, and the Son of God bearing sin before God, yet where was eternal life obtained for us, such as death can never touch? Where were goodness and love displayed as there? Where were righteousness and obedience accomplished in spite of all? Where was sin brought so immediately under God's eye and punished, as there? Yet where was it put away, and His perfect delight in absolute obedience at all cost, so drawn out? Where was the bowing in weakness under death shown as in Him whose soul was melted like wax in the midst of His bowels? yet where the divine strength which carried Him through all that weakness, death, man's hatred, Satan's power, and God's wrath, could accumulate on His head who drank that bitter cup? All this is told us in Scripture. "He was crucified through weakness" (2 Cor. xiii. 4). "This is your hour and the power of darkness," said the Lord (Luke xxii. 53). "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matt. xxvi. 38). "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

In a word, would I know what sin is? I look there; righteousness? I look there; hatred without a cause? I look there; love without bounds? I look there; judgment

and condemnation of sin? I look there; deliverance and peace? I look there; divine wrath against evil? I look there; perfect divine favour and delight in what infinitely glorified God? I look there. Weakness and death, though willingly bowing under it? it is there; strength, divine, which has met and removed evil? it is there; peace and wrath? it is there also; the world, under Satan's power, rising up to get finally rid of a God of love; and God, by this very act, delivering the world and making peace by the blood of His own Son. As it is said, "That through death He might destroy ('annul,' or 'bring to nought') 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" (Heb. ii. 14, 15). As I have said, good and evil in all their extremes and forms meet there for the triumph of love in once suffering the evil, that good may have its full force.

Do you ask, reader, Why, then, are we in such a world still? I will tell you. Scripture tells us, God in grace is still leading souls to profit by and enjoy this. It is a world of misery and sorrow, and oppression. Did God interfere to change it, He must come in judgment and close the time of mercy; and that He does not do, while yet any have

ears to hear. He allows, therefore, the evil which He will judge, to go on meanwhile. And we, though we may thus have to suffer awhile in the world, ought in this sense to rejoice that it is yet allowed; because it is still a time of mercy extended to others. The end will be everlasting joy in a much better world. Christ is gone to prepare a place for us, and He will come again and take us to Himself, that where He is, there we may be also. Thus Peter says, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. iii. 9).

Finally, my reader, you may not have, in peace of soul, been able to contemplate all the glory of the cross. If you believe the record God has given of His Son, you have a blessed portion yet before you; but remember, it is presented to you, just as you are for your need in all the grace of it towards a poor sinner. It meets you in your sins, if it infinitely glorifies God. A Jesus dying on the cross for the vilest meets the wants and burdens of the vilest—comes home through grace to his heart. If his sins are a burden to him, he may see Christ bearing them, that he may be free and have peace. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only be-

gotten Son, that *whosoever believeth* in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). "And by Him, all that believe *are* justified from *all* things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts xiii. 39). Were his "sins as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Is. i. 18). If you are heavy laden, come to Him who came in love to give you rest, and has died in love for you.

The Lord's peace be with you, dear reader—be with you, whoever you may be. May you be washed in that "blood" which "cleanseth" from all sin" (John i. 7), and the Lord will preserve you for His heavenly kingdom.



THE GLORY OF THE SON OF MAN AS WITNESSED IN THE CROSS.

The supreme blessedness of the saints when they shall have their part with Christ above, will be to behold His glory. "Father I will that they also, whom thou has given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." Such is the desire of the Son of God for the objects of His love. Nothing can satisfy His love, short of having us with Him—

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self, and like Himself, in the place His love has prepared for us in the Father's house. But there, too, He would have us behold His glory—the glory given Him of the Father, who loved Him before the foundation of the world; and, if He is our all, to behold *His* glory in that day will be our deepest delight. But if such will be the case *then*, can it be otherwise *now* than that the renewed nature should be moved, and that we should be led to adore and worship, as the Spirit of God unfolds His different glories before our wondering eyes?

Let us, as the Holy Spirit enables us, seek to contemplate a little the glory of our blessed Lord as it shines out at the cross.

It was man's hour, and the power of darkness (Luke xxii. 53). Satan had entered into Judas, and he had gone out in the darkness of the night, to accomplish his foul designs. Jesus knew this, and saw the cross before Him with all that was to be accomplished there for the glory of God amid the deepening darkness of that terrible hour. Conscious of His own personal glory in the presence of this stupendous work, and knowing well what the issue would be, He said: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him" (Jno. xiii. 31, 32).

Here we have three glorifyings :

- (1) The Son of man glorified,
- (2) God glorified in the Son of man,
- (3) The Son of man glorified in God ; that is, the Son of man goes into the glory of God.

It is to the first of these we desire to call special attention : “ Now is the Son of man glorified.” The thought we have before us is, that the work of the cross was the Son of man’s glory. There His intrinsic moral and personal glory shone forth with a brilliancy that will never grow dim—a brilliancy that lightens up eternity, and in the light of which we shall worship forever.

There was not only the question of man’s ruin and need : there was the question of God’s glory in a scene where His character had been traduced, and where sin had spread its deadly blight on every side. Sin must be judged ; God’s character, His majesty, His righteousness, His holiness, His truth, His love, must be made good. Who could sustain the glory and majesty of God in His judgment of sin ? Who in the presence of this awful judgment could declare and make manifest before the universe that “ God is love ” ? The Son of man. He, and He alone, could do this ; and to do this was His *glory*. That a man—the Son of man—should do this, will be the wonder of wonders throughout eternity. That this Man is the incarnate

Word, the Son, the brightness of God's glory, and the exact expression of His substance, I need hardly say. Yet it is the Son of man we have before us here, and the shining forth of His glory in that work of the cross on which God's glory will rest forever.

In order to get the truth of this more fully before our hearts let us compare other Scriptures.

In Lev. xvi., we have Israel's great day of atonement. Various directions are given in the opening verses. Verse 11 gives us the first real action of the day—the killing of the bullock. This is the death of the atoning victim, the foundation of all. For us it is the death of the Lord Jesus.

Now it might be supposed the next thing would be the sprinkling of the blood; but such was not the case. The first thing after the death of the victim was the burning of the incense: "And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail; and he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not."

What is this incense? And what is the burning before the Lord? We learn from Exod. xxx. 34-38, that this incense was a

“perfume,” “pure and holy,” compounded after the art of the apothecary. It was to be beaten small, and placed before the testimony. It was to be “most holy,” and none was to be made like it, on pain of death. On the day of atonement it was burnt on the censer before the Lord, immediately after the killing of the bullock. Out of this burning arose a cloud—“the cloud of the incense”—which covered the mercy seat.

The killing of the bullock was in type the death of Christ. That death was under the fire of God’s judgment. And what could this cloud of incense be but the sweet savour of Christ—the sweet and holy perfume which arose out of that awful burning? Not the sprinkling of the blood, but the burning of this pure and holy incense, was the first thing after the death of the holy victim. And the sweet perfume of that most holy and infinitely precious Sacrifice, was the first thing that rose up before God in the death of the Lord Jesus. That death of holy obedience told out the glory of His person, and spread abroad the savour of His perfections.

That tabernacle was the sanctuary of Jehovah’s glory. The mercy seat was His throne. Between the Cherubim, over the mercy seat, dwelt the Shechinah, the visible cloud of glory, which witnessed the presence

of Jehovah. The glory and majesty of Him who dwelt there must be made good on that day of atonement. And this we have presented to us in type. Out of the burning incense on the censer of the high priest arose a cloud of glory that covered the mercy seat. This was the glory that answered to the glory between the cherubim—glory equal to that glory—glory giving its value to the blood of the victim, which was to be sprinkled before and on the mercy seat: and so it was said, “that he die not.” In short, it is the intrinsic personal glory and infinite perfections of the Son of man, witnessed in His death on the cross, in which He sustained the full weight of the glory and majesty of God in the judgment of sin, and in that scene of deepest anguish and unparalleled sorrow, made good the truth that “God is love,” as well as “light.”

Let us turn now to Ps. xxii. The psalm opens with the cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” This was the cry of the Lord Jesus on the cross, where He was made sin for us; and where, under the holy judgment of God, He bore our sins. In obedience to the will of God, and for the glory of God, He had gone down under the waves and billows of divine judgment, and out of that abyss of darkness and unequalled sorrow He cried, and was not heard. Oh! where was

ever sorrow like His sorrow? The fathers had cried to God, and had been delivered, but to Him the heavens were brass. Lover and friend were far away—none to comfort; His enemies were against Him; the power and malice and rage of Satan were there; yet all this was as nothing compared with being forsaken of God. It was the anguish of the outer darkness. And yet, while the question “Why?” ascends from those awful depths, no murmur escapes His holy lips; though stroke after stroke of divine judgment falls upon Him for sins not His own, no word of resentment or rebellion is heard. On the contrary He owns the holiness of the hand that was bruising Him for sin; “But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel” (verse 3). What is this, but the rising up of the cloud of incense from the burning censer, the holy perfume of the glory of the Son of man as tested under the fire of God’s judgment?

In Rev. xvi. we have the plagues and judgments of God visited upon men because of their wickedness, with the result that a stream of blasphemy against God issues from their wicked and rebellious hearts, the pressure of judgment bringing out just what was there. How different with Christ! The unmingled judgment of God falling upon Him brought forth the utterance of praise

—“Thou art holy.” It brought out just what was there—what He was. Bruise a noxious weed, and it will emit its foulest odours; bruise a lovely rose, and it will emit its sweetest perfume. So with wicked men; so with Christ.

Men ask: If wicked men are punished eternally for their sins, why did not Christ suffer eternally when He took the place of the sinner? The answer is simple. The judgment of God never produces repentance in the sinner. Its only effect is to bring out all the rebellion of a heart that is incorrigible enmity against God. Man's rebellion and enmity continue forever, and God's judgment abides forever. But how was it with Christ? He suffered for our sins, the Just for the unjust. The full weight of God's wrath and judgment fell upon Him during the three hours of darkness. What was the effect? Instead of enmity, resentment or rebellion, there was perfect submission. The only answer to the crushing blows of judgment was,—“But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.” This was the holy perfume of the burning incense. I ask, *could* God go on bruising forever that holy and blessed One, when every stroke of judgment only brought out the intrinsic glory and moral loveliness of what He was, the burning of the censer

filling the very heavens with the sweet and holy perfume of that precious incense? It could not be. A moment must come when God must say, I am satisfied, I am glorified, and when the sword of divine judgment must be put back in its scabbard. The character of the Victim was such that it must be so. The value of the work was commensurate with the glory of the Person whose work it was.

Oh! what a Saviour! what perfection! what beauty! what moral loveliness! what glory! Who would not worship and adore in His presence! Who would not cry, Worthy, worthy, worthy, the Lamb that was slain! In His presence our souls have rest, and our hearts adore, as we gaze upon the glory that shone out amid the darkness of Calvary,—the glory of Him who not only glorified God, but who has met all our deep need, and in the sweet savour of whose work we stand before God accepted forever,—yea, “accepted in the Beloved.”



Oh what a Saviour is Jesus the Lord!

Well might His name by His saints be
adored!

He has redeemed them from hell by His
blood,

Saved them for ever, and brought them to
God.

BURNING AND EATING THE SACRIFICES.

(*Hebrews xiii. 7-19.*)

There was a twofold character in the offering which has its counterpart for us in Christ: the want of firm grasp of this, to distinguish and yet maintain them together, lies at the root of much want of enjoyment and of feebleness in the children of God. The first and most fundamental point was, that in the offerings there was that which was consumed. Being identified with the sin of man, it was consumed under the wrath and indignation of God, or it went up as a savour of rest, as that which was sweet and acceptable to God, as, for instance, in the burnt-offering. In the sin-offering there was God's judgment of sin, and therefore the greater part was burnt outside the camp. But besides this there was another character that entered into the sacrifices. In very many cases men partook of them. In the meat-offering and peace-offering such was the fact, and even in the offering for sin the priest had a portion.

This is what is referred to here. These Jewish Christians were in great danger of forgetting their privileges. They had abandoned everything that they had once revered as the religion given them by God; they were no longer gazing on things that shadowed His glory. The grandeur, the magnificence, the glory of the Levitical institutions, were all left behind. God was not now, as of old, thundering from heaven. He had wrought with infinitely greater moral glory.

He had sent His Son from heaven. Pardon and peace had been brought; and joy and liberty in the Holy Ghost: but all this was unseen. *It is, however, one thing to enter into the comfort of the truth when all is bright and fresh, and another thing to hold it fast in time of reproach, shame, derision, and the falling away of some.* When the first joy is somewhat lessened, the heart naturally returns to what it had once rested on. And there is always this danger for us—when evil is felt, the blessing not being so present to the soul. Who among us that has long known Christ, known His ways, has not felt this snare? And what is the divine remedy? It is just that which the Holy Ghost here uses, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.” We must not sever this verse from the succeeding one, “Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines, etc.” The Holy Ghost would guard these Jewish believers against that which, compared with our own proper Christian blessings, is mere trash; earthly priesthood, holy places, offerings, tithes, etc. These things, after all, were but novelties compared with the old thing, which is JESUS. Looked at historically, Christianity may seem a new thing. He had been but recently manifested; but who was He? and whence had He come? He was “the First-born of every creature;” yea, the Creator. “All things were created by Him, and for Him; . . . and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.” He was the One whom God intended to manifest from all eternity, and here we see Him in complete person—“Jesus Christ,

the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Through Him God could bless ; with Him He would have us occupied.

We are told a little before to remember them that had the rule over us; to follow their faith, even if themselves were gone. But these all pass out of the scene, while "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." This is the only thing that abides unchangeably, and establishes too. "Meats have not profited those who have been occupied therein." Many might have abstained (it was God's bidding that they should); but if occupied with the thing it was not for their profit. Christ was the substance ; all else was shadow. Therefore, he goes on to say, "We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." If others have the husk, we are feeding on the kernel. (The "tabernacle" was used to express the Jewish thing.) Everything had passed away in Christ. In Philippians the apostle could speak contemptuously of circumcision in contrast with having Christ, even though it had been of God. To be occupied with it, now that Christ was come, was to be outside, to be of "the concision."

"TO EAT." It was not merely the offering, nor the burning of the offering, but the *partaking* of it. We have got Christ Himself, and our sins put away—sin, root and branch, dealt with by God. There is not now one question unsettled for us who believe. Has He one question unsettled with Christ? And if not with Christ, He has not with us; for He died and rose for us, and we are one

with Him. As in the Jewish system, God and the offerer had their portions in the sacrifices, so now we may say that God has His own portion in the same Christ on whom we feed. The entrance into this exceedingly blessed thought is one of the things which the children of God greatly fail in—that we are seated by God Himself at the same table where He has His own joy and portion. Of course there is that in which we cannot share. In the burnt-offering all went up to God. The sweet fragrance of all that Christ was goes up to Him. We must remember that God has His infinite joy in Christ; and not only for what He is in Himself, but for that which He has done for my sins. When we think of this, all of self is absorbed, and must sink before it. The old nature we have still; yet “we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh,” but “through the Spirit to mortify the deeds of the body.” But, while treating the old nature, its likings and dislikings, as a hateful thing, we must remember that the new life needs sustaining; it grows by feeding. As in natural life, the mere possession of riches will not sustain life. It is not only true that Christ is my life in the presence of God, but I must make Christ my own for my food, eating of Him day by day (John vi.). He is in very deed given to us to be turned by faith into nourishment for us. And the sweet thing is, that we are entitled thus to think of Christ, given by God to be this food for us. It is not only that Christ is God’s, but He is ours too. “Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

THE RESURRECTION, THE FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL.

Many have, perhaps, been able, in looking at the Church's hope in Christ, to see the importance of the doctrine of the resurrection; but the more we search the Scriptures, the more we perceive, in this doctrine, the fundamental truth of the Gospel—that truth which gives to redemption its character, and to all other truths their real power. For instance, who does not know that Christianity has its root and its foundation in that solemn and all-important event, the death of our blessed Saviour? But if it had been possible that death could have held the Saviour in his power; death, instead of being the foundation of joy and the certainty of salvation, would have been the source of a black despair which nothing could have dissipated.

It is the resurrection which throws its bright beams even into the dark tomb of Christ, the tomb of the only righteous One, and the trophy of the apparent victory of the prince of this world. It is the resurrection which explains the reason of that momentary submission to the power of the devil and subjection to the necessary judgment of God. We see also how this truth characterizes the preaching of the apostles. We read (Acts iv.) that the priests were

“grieved that they preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.” “This Jesus,” said they, “hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses;” and when they were about to choose some one to fill the vacancy which the crime and death of Judas had made in the number of the apostles, Peter, standing up in the midst of them, declared that the resurrection ought to be the solemn subject of their testimony: “Wherefore,” said he, “of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be (*genesthai*) a witness with us of his resurrection.” And not to multiply passages, Paul says, “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins:” (1 Cor. xv.) and the whole chapter shows us the importance of the resurrection of believers, as well as that of Christ Himself—two truths indissolubly united and developed in the New Testament. And it is a remarkable thing, amidst the subtleties and resources of Satan, that as he opposed the pretended righteousness of the Pharisees to the perfect and divine righteousness of Christ our Saviour, so had he prepared the incredulity of the Sadducees to oppose this fundamental doctrine of the resurrection, preached by

the apostles who were witnesses of it (Acts v. 17).

It is by this doctrine of the resurrection, and by the glory which shall follow the resurrection itself, that the *foundation* and the *hopes* of the christian faith are bound together; and by the same doctrine it is that justification and that which is the power of the christian life—sanctification,* are necessarily united.

It is commonly said that the resurrection of Christ is the proof of the truth of the christian religion, and the demonstration that the work of Christ in His death was accomplished. That is indeed a truth for infidels. If we would prove the truth of Christianity to those who do not believe, the fact of the resurrection is the pivot, so to speak, on which the evidence of its truth turns. God gave it for this end. But for

*The believer is sanctified through and in Christ, and it is his actual sanctification which is the source of all practical holiness: he is holy, and therefore is to be "holy in all manner of conversation." This principle, that God has sanctified us and that therefore we are to be holy in spirit and ways, has ever been the same. God has separated from existing evil to Himself, and then given a variety of directions to keep the so separated person in practical separation. See, as to Israel's sanctification, Lev. xx. 24-26. Sanctification now is God's separation of individuals from the world unto Himself in Christ, so that those so separated are "not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world." They are in Him as risen and sanctified in the power of a new life, if this be real in them.

Christians, for those who already believe in the blessed Saviour, for those whose hope is already founded on the certainty of the word, and who desire to find the power of that word in their souls, the resurrection, as set forth in the Scriptures, contains much more.

The misery of the Church, and one of the consequences of her long slumber, has been to be satisfied with having, by the grace of God, recovered, as far as it is indeed the case, the truth of the completeness of the work of Christ. There Christians are too often apt to stop, or rather *in the hope* of having a part in it. We little think of searching the word to discover the riches contained in it, to find the revelation of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, the portion and heritage of every one born of God.

Sometimes this indolence of the flesh excuses itself under the name of wisdom, which would avoid speculative knowledge; sometimes even under an outward activity which has little real power, because it is habit and duty (or at least it is the consequence of habit and duty), and not the expression of the life of a soul constrained by the love of Christ acting powerfully in it. It is not thus with lively Christians: they hunger and thirst after God. And where shall they find that

which shall satisfy their desires, if not in Christ, and in all the glory which is His, in the goodness and power He has shown forth, and which alone can satisfy the souls of His believing people?

Paul had none of those thoughts, wise as they may seem according to the flesh, when he spoke of the doctrine in question. He regarded all things as loss in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, for whom he had suffered the loss of all things, and counted them but dung, so that he might have Christ as his gain and be found in Him, not having his own righteousness, which was of the law, but that which was of faith in Christ, the righteousness of God by faith; that he might know Jesus Christ, and the power of His resurrection from among the dead. One thing he did, forgetting the things which were behind and reaching forth to those which were before, he pressed toward the mark for the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. iii.).

He found, then, in the resurrection, not only the evidence of the foundation of his faith (Rom. i. 4) and the proof of the accomplishment of the satisfaction for sin (1 Cor. xv. 17), but much more still. The resurrection was, to this apostle of the faith as well as to Peter, the object and source of a living

hope, the power of the life within. He sought to know the power of the resurrection; he suffered the loss of all things, if by any means he might attain unto it. If the Church has lost her life, her spiritual power, it is not by concealing from herself that which acted with such energy on the soul of the apostle Paul, which presented itself as the dawn of blessing to the mind of Peter, that she can hope to recover it. Beloved brethren, let us then seek the truth on this point and examine the blessed word of our God, that we may be instructed on these powerful objects of faith; and may the Spirit of God guide us into all truth, according to His gracious promise—a promise He never fails to fulfil; let us then expect its accomplishment!

I said that the foundation and the hopes of the christian faith are bound up together in this truth. 1 Cor. xv., clearly shows the resurrection to be the object of christian hope. As it regards ourselves, the same chapter teaches us that it is also its foundation. “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.”

With regard to the person of Christ (the fundamental truth of the whole of Christianity), we find that He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the

dead (Rom. i. 4). In the same Epistle we read, "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (iv. 25). In chap. viii. of the same Epistle we find that the glory of the risen Christ is the object of our hope: "He has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren" (ver. 29). What can be more beautiful, more striking? The manner in which these are brought together is very clear. The Church sees Christ glorified at the right hand of God. There she sees the evidence that all has been accomplished for her, and that a righteousness belongs to her in the person of Christ, which will not defile even the throne of God. But in this glory she also sees the result of that righteousness (see Phil. ii. 6-11). She sees in the person of Christ the glory consequent upon it; that is to say, the glory which belongs also to the Church herself, as participating in this righteousness, by union with Christ: "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them" (John xvii. 22). Here we have the true sense of Gal. v. 5: "We, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." We do not wait for righteousness, we have it already in Christ by faith. Such is specially the position of the Church. Justified by faith, but seeing in Christ not only this

righteousness accomplished, but also the glory, and, so to speak, the recompense consequent upon it, we, as justified, as filled with the Spirit through which we thus behold Christ—the Spirit whose presence is the seal of that righteousness, we wait for the glory as that which belongs to us, as that which is due to the righteousness in which we participate.

The use which Paul makes of this truth as regards the justification of the sinner, is very remarkable; and we shall see that, by laying the resurrection as the foundation of justification by faith, justification is inseparably united to sanctification. In the end of Romans iii., the apostle had spoken of the blood of Christ, as the thing which God had proposed as the object of justifying faith. In chap. iv., he continues the subject; and speaking of the justification of Abraham, he proves that he was justified by faith: but the subject of his faith was, that his seed should equal the stars in number. How could such a truth as this become the subject of a justifying faith? We have the apostle's answer: "he considered not his own body now dead," "being fully persuaded, that what God had promised, He was able also to perform; and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness; and not to him only, but to us also, if we believe on Him that

raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." Faith, then, in the power of "God, who quickeneth the dead," was the faith that justified Abraham. Peter gives the same character to justifying faith: "You," says he, "who by him do believe in God that raised Him up from the dead" (1 Pet. i. 21).

The Church sees Christ dead for the sins that she had committed: this is the end of all that she had done, as descended from the first Adam; of all that the members do, as having in them by extraction from him, the nature of the first Adam. The amazing love of the Saviour led Him to put Himself in the place of the Church, and to become her substitute in meeting the pains of death, the just judgment of the most holy God, and the sufferings consequent upon His wrath—a judgment which He felt in all its power (because He was Himself holy) even according to the power of God—wrath of which He felt all the weight, all the horror, because He loved according to the love of God. He, I say, having given Himself unto death for that object, giving up the ghost, bowed beneath the weight of our sins. Satan, the prince of this world, who had the power of death, though finding nothing in Christ to give him power over Him, rejoiced in his victory over the only just One, the only hope of the world, saying, by the mouth of his

servants, "Aha! aha!" and death boasted of having swallowed its only noble Victim. But its joy was short; the triumph of the prince of darkness was but the display of his defeat. He had had to meet, not men captive in his power in the first Adam, but the Captain of our salvation. He had had to enter into combat with Him—he had had to put forth all his power, all his strength, against Him who had taken our cause in hand. But Christ had submitted Himself to the justice of God, not to those who persecuted Him whom God had stricken. The devil outwardly carried out the sentence, because he had the power of death over us by the judgment of God, but the sentence itself was God's justice against us; and God's justice was satisfied, and Satan's power destroyed: "Through death, he destroyed him who had the power of death" (Heb. ii.14).

The resurrection shone upon the world, like the rising of the sun. Faith alone beheld it, the faith of those whose eyes were opened to see the great and sure result of the combat, the consequences of this judgment of God—the faith of those whom God had chosen to give testimony to the complete victory of Him, who alone had undertaken, who alone could undertake the combat; to give testimony, I say, to a world whose blinding by Satan was clearly demonstrated. The

victory was gained by Christ alone ; but the Church, as the object of it, participates in all its results. It is very much to lower the position of the Church, merely to say she is blessed by Christ, blessed of God. She is blessed *with* Christ ; she is the companion of His glory, the co-heiritor of all the promises. She has fellowship with Him who blesses ; she enters into the joy of her Lord. Partaker of the divine nature, she feels derivatively, and in communion with Him who is its source, the joy, the delight which the God of love finds in blessing, because He is love itself. How is it, then, that the Church participates here below in the victory of Christ, and in the fruits of that victory ? It is by union with Him, who has been to every one of her members a quickening Spirit, and has quickened them and united them to Himself as members of His body.

Christ is their life, and they are rendered partakers, in virtue of their union with Him, of all the consequences of *what* He has done, of all that is in Him as risen, of all the favour in which He stands before God—a life and union which make them the objects of the satisfaction which God takes in Him, and which will make them, when the time is come, *participators* in all the glory to which He is heir, and in which He will be manifested. The Church is looked at by

God, and consequently by faith also, as dead with Christ : her sins being put upon Him, the remembrance of them before God is buried in the grave of Christ. As the just God, He remembers them no more : to do so would be not to estimate aright the blood of Christ, not to be just towards Him. "He is faithful and just to forgive us."

The blood of Christ, and not our sins, is before the eyes of God. He esteems us as bought with the price of His blood.

But the saints are also looked at as risen with Christ, living before the Father in the life of Christ, chastised by the Father (who loves them perfectly as He loves the Son Himself) when they turn aside from the ways which please Him—ways suitable to such a life, to such a union. "I am the vine," said Jesus, "my Father is the husbandman." God righteously regards us in Christ, our sins being gone in the cross. In love He chastens us as being in Christ, when we do not walk in His ways according to the power of the risen Christ, as co-heritors of the glory which He inherited in resurrection.

The Scriptures speak thus on the subject : "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness,

and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son " (Col. i. 12, 13).

"Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in [it]" (Col. ii. 12-15).

The victory of Satan over the first Adam rendered him master of his possessions and of his inheritance: "The creature is subject to vanity." The victory of the Second Adam over Satan spoiled him of all that which he had taken from the first Adam.

God, in the loving-kindness and wisdom of His counsels, has not yet manifested the results; but the victory is fully gained. The Church knows it—at least she ought to know it. The consequences to us are these: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection 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" (Col. iii. 1-4). The prayer of the apostle for the Ephesians on the same subject, runs thus: "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling," the calling of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory (He is called the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, because Christ is regarded as head of the Church and as man), "and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." And when we "were dead in sins," continues the Spirit by the mouth of the apostle, "he hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places

in Christ Jesus " (Eph. ii. 5 6). The saints, then, are regarded by God as risen with Christ, and consequently as perfectly justified from all their sins. They are clean, according to the cleanness with which Christ appears before God, being presented to God in Him and with Him. But how does the saint actually now participate in blessings so great? It is by partaking of that life, in the power of which Christ is risen. Thus it is, then, that by the doctrine of the resurrection, as it is set forth in the Scriptures, justification and sanctification become necessarily united; thus it is that I share in the righteousness of God, by being quickened with the life in which Christ was raised from the dead, coming up out of the grave, all our trespasses being forgiven. But this life is the life of holiness here below. It is the source of holiness in us: it is holiness itself, the life of God in us. It is in this that we have the will to belong to God, acknowledging the grace which has redeemed us, and convinced that our life is not of us but of God. It is in the power of this life that we seek the things which are above, which are in Christ and which are His, that our affections are carried out towards God; and in this consists true sanctification, the old man being judged as dead, because Christ has died on account of it. "The body is dead on

account of sin"—that is its only fruit—"the spirit is life because of righteousness." Christ then, in giving us the life, which is a new and holy nature in us, makes us partakers of all that He has done for us as risen from the dead, and of all His acceptance before the Father of glory.

Moreover, we cannot rightly estimate sin but by the resurrection, and for this reason, it is the doctrine of the resurrection, and of our being raised with Christ, which teaches us that we were dead in sin. Otherwise it would perhaps be a healing, an amelioration of man such as he is, a preservation from death by the help of Christ, a troubling of the waters, that we might plunge into them ourselves and be healed. In this way it is, that the natural man looks at the extent of sin, as the Jews, and Martha and Mary expressed it, when they said, "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

But if we have been raised with Christ, it is because we were *dead* in our sins. The doctrine of our entire misery, our complete fall, flows from, and (so to speak) springs out of, this truth : and the blessing is proportionate ; for death is passed, and everything that belongs to the old man is dead, through faith, with Him. We have another life quite new, in which we live, saying, "We are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh" (Rom. viii. 12).

(To be continued.)

RISEN AND ASCENDED.

*“ While He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.”—
Luke xxiv. 51.*

All hail, O glorious Son of God,
In triumph risen again—
All heaven resounds with joyful laud
The songs of ransomed men ;
The mighty chains of death are riven,
The risen Christ is throned in heaven.

Before Thee all the shining hosts
The mighty angels bend ;
Thy saved ones from a thousand coasts
Their psalms of victory blend—
I join that song so passing sweet,
I cast my crown before Thy feet.

O joy ! the second Adam stands
Within God's paradise—
No longer barred by flaming brands
The shining pathway lies—
Within, the glorious Head has passed :
Each member must be there at last.

Behind us lie the cross and grave,
Before, eternal bliss ;
There blossoms from the garden cave,
The Tree of righteousness ;
The Face that shame and spitting bore,
Is crowned with radiance evermore.

With Mary, O my Lord, I bow
In rapture at Thy feet ;
In spirit humbly kiss them now
And soon in presence sweet ;
My name upon Thy lips divine,
The lips that tell me "Thou art mine."

Thou livest far from earthly strife,
In God's eternal peace—
And there with Thee is hid my life,
And there my wanderings cease ;
The secret place where still and blest
I rest in Thine eternal rest.



THE RESURRECTION,

THE FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL.

(Concluded from page 100.)

There is another consequence, namely, the feeling of the entire favour of God attached to the idea of being a son—"the grace in which we stand." Having entered by the cross, we stand in the favour of God in the holy place ; having received not the spirit of bondage, but the Spirit of adoption, we cry, "Abba Father !" Our participation in the resurrection is our being born of God. As delivered, we stand before God as His children, His accepted ones, His holy ones. Love was manifested towards us in that Christ came into the world to die for us. Love is

accomplished toward us in that we are in Him, such as He is before God, even in this world, because we are united to Him by the Spirit He has given us. Our filial relation to the Father, as being purified from sin, clothed with the robe of righteousness (a relation which gives joy to the soul), flows from this doctrine. He has given us the privilege to become children of God—not servants, but children.

Here then are some sweet results from this truth, which exist even here. Our union with Christ is the foundation. We may follow these results, even as regards our body, into the glory. The resurrection of Christ is the first-fruits, that of the saints the harvest. There is an intimate connection between the resurrection of the saints and the resurrection of Christ, on account of the union of the Church with Him, because of the one Spirit which is the Spirit of Christ, and which dwells in Him and in all the members of His body.

It is not thus with regard to the wicked, although it is the power of Christ which raises them; yet it is not because of union with Him, nor because of His Spirit dwelling in them; for the Spirit does not dwell in them. Therefore actual resurrection is a thing which belongs to the saints, as a full accomplishment, in result, of their union with

Christ, not as a necessary preliminary to their judgment; indeed Christ has already been judged for them and suffered the penalty of all their sins.

The resurrection of the saints is the consequence of their having passed through the judgment of their sins in Christ, not the preliminary to their judgment by Christ.

It is the reception by Christ of the Church, who suffered with Him that she might be in the glory with Him in His kingdom; as in John xiv., "In my Father's house are many mansions." Christ is not gone there to be alone: "If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." This is the judgment of the church at the return of Christ. They are manifested before His judgment seat, but already glorified. This does not deny a difference of glory among the saints, that some will be on His right hand and others on His left in His kingdom. It only shews that the resurrection of the saints is the result of the accomplishment of their judgment in Christ, and the full completeness of the life which is already possessed as risen with Him, the effect of the union of the saints with Him, as dwelt in by the same Spirit. It is necessary

that, when Christ is manifested, the bodies of those who are His should also enjoy the privileges of the kingdom, as part of that which He has purchased, thus delivering them completely and finally from the power of Satan and of death. "If the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead," says the apostle to the Romans, "dwell in you, he who raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies because of his Spirit which dwelleth in you;"—a passage which evidently reveals to us, that the resurrection of the saints is a consequence of the resurrection of Christ; that, in fact, the resurrection is a consequence of the interest which God takes in her, as He does in Christ her Head.

We shall see then that many passages manifest this special place of the saints in the resurrection, and that the Scriptures speak of the resurrection of the Church as a thing entirely distinct from the resurrection of the wicked. In this manner, Paul, in a passage already quoted, says, (Phil. iii.,) "if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from [*exanastasin*] the dead." Also in 1 Cor. xv., "Christ the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming." In Luke xx., we find, in one of our Lord's discourses on this subject, that the existence of the relation between God and Abraham neces-

sarily supposed the resurrection, not merely the life of his separated spirit. Many other passages declare also this truth, and moreover that this resurrection was a thing which belonged exclusively to the children of God. He speaks of "those who shall be accounted worthy to obtain the resurrection from the dead." How are they found worthy to obtain the resurrection, if the resurrection is a thing common to the saints and to the world (in a word, if the saints and the world are raised together)? The Lord adds, "Neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." See how the power of the resurrection is identified with this privilege of being children of God.

The subject is treated of in a connected manner in John v. 21-29: "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 should honour the Son even as they honour the Father Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life and shall not come into the judgment, but is passed from death unto life The hour is coming in the which all that are in

the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment." Here are two great means of upholding and of vindicating the glory of the humbled Son. He quickens—He judges. He quickens and the Father quickens also. He alone judges—the Father judges no man.

The saints are quickened in order to have fellowship with the Father and the Son. Christ, in judgment, claims and maintains His glory and His right over all those who have neglected Him, or who were opposed to His glory, in order that all, even the wicked, should honour the Son as they honour the Father.

To this end we find that there are two resurrections: the resurrection unto life, that is to say, the fulfilment of His work in the quickening of the saints, applying to their bodies the power of the resurrection, which had already been applied to their souls, when they were converted; and the resurrection unto judgment, in order that those who have done evil should be judged. I do not here speak of the interval; but I merely say that there are two resurrections, which are different, as well in their objects and character, as in the persons who will take part in them. I will just remark, by

the way, that the expression, on which those who object to the interpretation which supposes an interval of time between these two resurrections rest their opinions, has in no respect the force which they attach to it. The Lord says, "The hour is coming." "See," say they, "a proof that the resurrection of the just and the unjust will take place at the same time," forgetting that the Lord uses the same word (in ver. 25) to specify the time of His ministry, and, at the least, 1800 years of a new period which commenced at His resurrection.

These two characters of the two resurrections, of which I have spoken, are very important, and distinguish in every sense these two events. The one, that of the saints who have suffered with Christ, being the application to our bodies of the power of the life of Christ, who has saved us, in order to accomplish His word toward us—resurrection being the redemption of the body, and the consequence of what Christ did when He saved us from the judgment; the other, the vindicating His glory in judgment, and the exercise of the justice of the living God against all those who have sinned. The first resurrection, consequently, is that which we anxiously wait for, to the end that we may be with Him, and, when Christ appears, we may also appear with Him in glory (Col. iii. 4)—

an epoch which the whole creation is expecting: see Rom. viii. 19, 21, where it is called "the manifestation of the sons of God," "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

There is a passage in the Scriptures which has struck me much on this subject, and which conveys a special instruction on the difference there is between viewing the resurrection as an event common to the Church and the world, or as a privilege which belongs separately to the Church in consequence of the power of the life which is in Christ. I speak of John xi. Jesus says to Martha, "Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Here is real faith, a truth she had well learnt. She was not a Sadducee. This is the faith of the Church generally; "he will rise again at the last day." Without doubt. The same thing might be said of the most wicked man. "Jesus said unto her, *I am* the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"—that is, the power of Jesus when present, the power which He will manifest when He comes again. "She saith unto him, Yea, Lord; I believe that thou art the Christ, the

Son of God, which should come into the world." Here again is a good confession; those who are saved doubtless believe it also. But here, in fact, the faith of the greatest part of the Church stops. "And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee." *Why did she do this?* why so much haste to quit Jesus, that good Comforter, and to call her sister? Was there not the secret consciousness that she could not hold converse with Jesus on subjects such as these? She believed Him to be the Son of God; but "I am the resurrection and the life" was something too deep for her; her heart was not at ease in the company of Jesus speaking thus. And have we nothing similar to this? Are not the sweetest, the most blessed privileges of the Church, too often the things which send the children of God away? They are not at their ease when Christ speaks of such things. They must go and seek some Mary. It is a call for some other person than for them. What were the different characters of these two women, both loved of the Lord? "A woman, named Martha, received him into her house; and she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving." The heart of Martha was

not at ease, through her want of communion with Jesus, and could not enter into the most blessed and encouraging truths in the things which the heart of Jesus, full of consoling power, poured forth to relieve the miseries by which it was broken. To understand them was beyond the habits of Martha's mind; and saying all that she could say in answer to Jesus, she goes to seek some one who, her conscience tells her, is more capable of understanding that which had just proceeded from the heart of Jesus—more capable of maintaining communion with Him and of sustaining a conversation which was painful to herself, because her spiritual understanding *was unequal to it*. How often is Martha's state called wisdom! How often are *the things with which the heart of Jesus overflows*—the revelations of our blessing—designated things likely to trouble the Church, perhaps even regarded as reveries! How often does the Church persist in remaining in darkness, fleeing from Jesus and His goodness, to conceal from herself her incapacity of communion with Him in these things—satisfied with herself, because she can make the confession of Martha, because she can say with her, “Yea, Lord, thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world!”

“I am rich, I have need of nothing.” Poor

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Church—yes, poor every one of us! May the love of Jesus shine upon thee! O may He give thee such confidence in His love that thou mayest never tire of drawing from His heart those sweet truths which are enclosed therein—truths which attach the soul to Him, and which give strength of soul to walk in the world separated in heart unto Him—truths which give power to that secret communion with Him which will make us faithful in His absence, joyful in His presence, calm in soul in the midst of all the misery of a world ruined by death, hastening to run towards Him when we hear those sweet words, “The Master is come and calleth for thee.” Be it so, O Jesus our Lord! Deign, O deign to look upon Thy Church, Thy poor Church, who loves Thee and whom Thou lovest. If she is weak, O strengthen her: if she has turned aside, O God, she loves Thee. Bring her, O bring her back to Thyself, even to Thyself—her blessedness and her joy, her eternal joy, her Saviour and her strength. Bring her near to Thee. Where can she find that which shall renew her strength, if not in Thee, who art the resurrection and the life?

One thing only remains to finish the sketch which I have attempted to make of this important subject. I well know that, far

from having exhausted, I have but slightly touched upon it.

With respect to the dispensations of God, the resurrection is the fundamental subject of the word of God, since sin and death entered into the world, and sin reigns unto death. If sin reigns unto death; then resurrection only can be the victory over it; and it is a complete and final victory. For he that is dead is free or justified from sin: "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe we shall also live with Him; knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him." (Rom, vi. 7-9.) Throughout the Scriptures we find this truth more or less fully disclosed—the foundation of every hope *and* of all moral judgment (see Ps. xvii., xlix.; Isa. xxxviii.). And even the restoration of the Jewish people is described as a resurrection (see Ezek. xxxvii.; Isa. xxvi.; Rom. xi. 15). There is the source of joy, as in Ps. xvi., Job xix. And it was a truth so positive—a notion so necessary to the thoughts of God and of His righteous ones, that when God said, "I am the God of Abraham," the Lord explains it as shewing that Abraham was to be raised; for "God is not the God of the dead but of the living" (Matt. xxii. 32).

I said that one thing only remained.

It is generally thought that Revelation xx., is the only support which the word of God gives to the notion of a separate resurrection of the Church. We have already seen that this idea is connected with all the truths in the word of God.

That the saints will rise when Christ comes, is a thing acknowledged, as we have seen (1 Cor. xv. 23; Phil. iii. 20, 21; 1 Thess. iv. 15-17). In the Apocalypse, xix.. xx., we get the details. There we see that the resurrection of the saints will precede, by a thousand years, the resurrection of the rest of the dead, in order that they who have suffered with Christ, should also reign with Him when He takes the kingdom, and that they should appear with Him in glory when He appears who is their life. This is the important and striking completion of this great truth—a completion which crowns with results so important; a truth, which having its root in the lower parts of the earth, that is, in the grave of Christ, drawing its strength from the life of God, stretches out its branches, and lifts its glorious head towards heaven, covering with its spreading boughs all the inhabitants of a blest earth—the tree of life, from which are gathered the fruits of all the promises of God.

Christian, do you know the power of the resurrection of Christ? Are your thoughts

those of one who is risen with Him, set on things above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God? Is your salvation a thing accomplished for your soul, so that in the perfect confidence of a new life before God, you can, under the conduct of the good Shepherd, as sheep known of the Lord, go in and out and find good pasture in the fields of His delight? Are you, as being raised up with Him, dead to sin, dead to the pleasures, to the greatness, to the fading glory of a world which crucified the Lord of glory? Do the things of the world exercise no longer an influence over your thoughts—over your life; those things which, as far as man was concerned, caused the death of Jesus? Do you not desire to be something in the world? Ah! you do not hold yourselves for dead: the darkness which surrounded the cross is still upon your hearts; you do not breathe the fresh air of the resurrection of Jesus, of the presence of your God. Oh, dull and senseless people of God!—people ignorant of your real treasures, of your real liberty! Yes, to be alive with Christ is to be dead to all that the flesh desires.

But if the risen life of Christ, the joy of the light of His presence, the divine and tender love of which Jesus is the expression and the object, beam on you—if the beauty of holiness in the heavenly places—if the

universal and perfect homage rendered to God by hearts which never tire, whose adorations serve but to renew their strength—if all things full of the glory of God, giving occasion to praises, whose source never dries up, and whose subjects never fail—if these things please you, then mortify your members which are upon the earth. “Ye are come unto Mount Zion; and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly; and to the Church of the first-born who are written in heaven; and to God the Judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” And think you that the honours, the glory, the greatness, the pleasures, the lusts, of this world, of which Satan is the prince, can enter there? The gate is too narrow—the gate of death, the death of a crucified and rejected Christ—the gate of death, which, if it be deliverance from the guilt of sin, is also deliverance from its yoke. By that gate sin enters not—there must be left all that pertains to the flesh. Those are things which cannot be hid with Christ in God: they have played their part by crucifying Him on earth.

The friendship of the world is enmity with

God. Christian, do you believe this? It is a new life which enters into those holy places, where all things are new, in order to be the joy and enjoyment of a risen people. Christian, Christian, death has written its sentence on all things here : by cherishing them you only fill his hand. The resurrection of Christ gives you a right to bury them, and to bury death itself with them in the grave, the grave of Christ ; that " whether we live we may live unto God," inheritors with Him in a new life of all the promises. Remember, that, if you are saved, you are risen with Christ. May He, from whom all grace and every perfect gift proceed, grant you this !



MARY AND MARTHA.

(Luke x. 38-42.)

The little scene that closes this chapter is peculiar to Luke, serving his general purpose of instructing us in great principles of truth. The two sisters here introduced were differently minded ; and, being brought to the trial of the mind of Christ, we get the judgment of God on matter of much value to us.

The house which we now enter was Martha's. The Spirit of God tells us this, as being characteristic of Martha ; and into

her house, with all readiness of heart, she receives the Lord, and prepares for Him the very best provision it had. His labours and fatigue called for this. Martha well knew *that His ways abroad were the ways of the good Samaritan*, who would go on foot that others might ride, and she loves Him too well not to observe and provide for His weariness. But Mary had no house for Him: she was, in spirit, a stranger like Himself; but she opens a sanctuary for Him, and seats Him there, the Lord of her humble temple. She takes her place at His feet, and hears His words. She knows, as well as Martha, that He was wearied; but she knows also that there was a fulness in Him that could afford to be more wearied still. Her ear and her heart, therefore, still use Him, instead of her hand or her foot ministering to Him. And in these things lay the difference between the sisters. Martha's eye saw His weariness, and would give to Him; Mary's faith apprehended His fulness underneath His weariness, and would draw from Him.

This brings out the mind of the Son of God. The Lord accepts the care of Martha as long as it is simple care and diligence about His present need; but the moment she brings her mind into competition with Mary's she learns His judgment, and is taught to know that Mary, by her faith, was

refreshing Him with a far sweeter feast than all her care and the provision of her house could possibly have supplied. Mary's faith gave Jesus a sense of His own divine glory. It told Him, that though He was the wearied One, He could still feed and refresh her. She was at His feet, hearing His words. There was no temple there, or light of the sun ; but the Son of God was there, and He was everything to her. This was the honour He prized, and blessedly indeed was she in His secret. When He was thirsty and tired at Jacob's well, He forgot it all in giving out other waters, which no pitcher could have held, or well beside His own supplied ; and here Mary brings her soul to the same well, knowing that, in spite of all His weariness, it was as full as ever for her use.

And oh, dear brethren, what principles are here disclosed to us ! Our God is asserting for Himself the place of supreme power and supreme goodness, and He will have us debtors to Him. Our sense of His fulness is more precious to Him than all the service we can render Him. Entitled, as He is, to more than all creation could give Him, yet above all things does He desire that we should use His love, and draw from His treasures. The honour which *our confidence* puts upon Him is His highest honour ; for it is the divine glory to be still giving, still

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blessing, still putting forth from unexhausted fulness. Under the law He had to receive from us, but in the gospel He is giving to us ; and the words of the Lord Jesus are these : “ It is more blessed to give than to receive.” And this place He will fill for ever ; for, “ without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better.” Praise shall, it is true, arise to Him from everything that hath breath ; but forth from Himself, and from the seat of His glory, shall go the constant flow of blessing, the light to cheer, the waters to refresh, and the leaves of the tree to heal ; and our God shall taste His own joy, and display His own glory, in being a Giver for ever.



ERRATA.

Page 62, line 6 from bottom, *for* “commandeth,” *read* “commendeth.”

“ 72, line 7 from bottom, *for* “has,” *read* “hast.”

“ 75, line 5 from bottom, *for* “mercy sent,” *read* “mercy seat.”

“ 76, line 12 from bottom, *for* “purfume,” *read* “perfume.”

THE LOVE OF THE TRUTH THE SOUL'S SECURITY.

I fully believe that a just and divine understanding of the present state of things must be accompanied by this trial of mind—that while the great advance in all the accommodations of life, and in the general refinement and culture of all classes is acknowledged, and the public boast in such things is allowed to have apparently most full warrant; all this is known to be only in progress to a something that is to meet the most awful judgment from the hand of the Lord—because it is to be a mocking of all that is blessed, and not really blessed—the kingdom of man, and not of “the Lord and His Christ”—the energy of the god of this world, and not of the Spirit of the living God.

This divine intelligence must bring its sorrows. For the saint possessed of it will hear that condition of things continually gloried in, which he knows is most fearful; and the more the ground of this carnal and ignorant boast is day by day unfolding itself, the more does the saint discover the ripening of human pride, and the progress of that fair structure of the enemy's device, which is to bring the judgment. At midday there is to be night in the world's history. God will

turn man's noontide splendour into the shade of night: as touching His own, He will turn the shadow of death into the morning, and at their evening time give them light (Zech. xiv.).

Such, I doubt not, is the position which the intelligent believer takes at this moment; one of sorrow to his spirit, as he listens to *man* every day; one of joy to his spirit, as he listens to the *promise* that the great redemption is only drawing the nearer, through all this that he looks at and listens to. His security lies in "the love of the truth" (2 Thess. ii.). He is not to expect that the hand of God will interfere to stop the progress of this fair structure. He is not to commit himself to the *hand*, but to the *word* of the Lord. It is rather of the Lord to allow pride to get food whereby to nourish and swell itself, and to let the world prosper by its own devices. The soul that looks for providential visitations on all that is, and will be adoring, is in most imminent hazard. "The love of the truth" is declared to be the soul's security.

How fair were the deceits practiced at Jerusalem in the days of Ezekiel! Paintings on the temple walls, and exquisitely wrought, I doubt not. Ancient men, men of character and of religion, kindling clouds of incense before them, adopting the delusions!

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Women melted into tears while occupied with their idols, exhibiting the fine and generous flow of human affections which is so attractive to the heart! And the sun in his beauty, and rising at the east, worshipped! (Ezek. viii.) What witchery was all this! What fascination for the religious and amiable sentiments of our nature!

What protected the heart of the prophet while surveying it all? The hand of the Lord did not interfere—rain did not come down to quench the cloud of incense. It was allowed to wreath itself upward in lovely forms, as though He who dwelt in the house was accepting it. Another hand did not appear to write on the wall, over against the paintings, their judgment. No; but the word of his divine Guide interpreted all these fascinations and called them “abominations!” This was the prophet’s safety, and it is ours in a like moment. The truth that interprets according to God all that is now going on, must preserve our souls from taking part with this “fair show in the flesh,” which is so much apparent comeliness, but real “abomination.”



“That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.”—Luke xvi. 15.

OUR GENESIS.

There is a striking correspondence between “the beginning” in the book of Genesis, and in the Gospel of John, though the subjects of each are so vastly different. The Creator in one, and the Word in the other, alike come forth into the respective circles in which each is to be displayed. The earth was without form and void, and the eternal Word was concealed in His own essential perfectness.

The elements, with which we are now familiar, served to bring into existence and beauty a material creation; and the attributes, by which Deity has clothed itself, introduced the Creator. True, one was the beautiful development of a thing formed; and the other, the mighty power and wisdom of Him that formed it: “He spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast” (Ps. xxxiii. 9). As to the earth, it was without form — “Darkness was upon the face of the deep—and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” But the eternal “Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.”

Creation and the Creator are necessary to each other; but for what different reasons—like the potter and the clay! The formless

and void earth, with darkness upon its face, carries along the secret power of its formative beauty in the Spirit of God which moved upon the face of its waters. So in John, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men ; and the light shineth in darkness."

The Genesis formations, of day and night, firmaments, earth, and seas, with their greater and lesser lights, are completed ; and the history of signs and seasons, days and years, with the fruitful products of the earth for man and beast, are familiar to us all. But the Gospel of John now claims its own pre-eminence, and passing away into heights and depths, which neither the sun above, nor the sea beneath, can measure, brings out its own mystery, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth."

Again, if we go back to the Adam of Genesis, "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ; and man became a living soul." But pass we on to the new created man of John, and we find another race, "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name : which were born not of blood, nor of the will

of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

The creation of Genesis just ran the cycle of its one week, as we follow it in its magnificent course, from evening to morning—and from its first day to the sixth day, till "God rested on the seventh day from all the work which he had made; and blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it." In this Eden, man was made the responsible head on whose obedience the whole creation depended. Adam sinned, and the link of relationship was snapped between the Creator and the creature, and all broke down. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together," is the sad consequence.

The Genesis of John's Gospel brings in a revelation of grace and truth, reveals the Second man, the Word made flesh, "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." In this new beginning, grace—the grace of God—towards man, as a sinner, takes the place of responsibility between the creature and the Creator. Eden's gate soon closed upon the fair scene of the six days' work, and upon the sabbath of rest too—the cherubim and the flaming sword, forbade the thought, much more the vain attempt, of the sinner to return. Grace, and the resources of God, are what John records: the Word made flesh was the great reserve of

God. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men" is become the new connecting link with God. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself;" and this is the grand theme which the Gospel of John opens out.

How touchingly this is recorded in the intercourse between Jesus and the woman of Samaria! The links which sin had broken in Genesis have been formed anew, between God and the sinner, but only in and through Christ, who shed His blood for the remission of sins. The former ground of creature responsibility is abandoned through the knowledge of that eternal redemption which we have in Christ, "the beginning of the" new "creation of God."

Nathanael under the fig tree, and Nicodemus the master of Israel, set us in the path of the kingdom-glory, with "the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man;" and moreover, all must be born again, "to see or enter into it." How blessedly does the Messiah, the King of Israel, undo every burden, and loose them that were appointed to die! How refreshing thus to see the Second man, as the source of life and joy, where the first had brought in death and misery!

The marriage scene of Cana in Galilee gives further the style and actings of our

Lord in millennial blessing, when the water is turned into wine, and every water pot filled to the brim. What a word will that be, when, in the full consciousness of unhindered joy around Him, and Himself the cause and producer of it, He says, "Draw out now and bear to the governor of the feast."

There are two ways in which the Lord opens out the fulness of His person to us in this Gospel. The first is what we have been considering, and may be described by that verse in chap. ii., "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory"—a title by which He will link the ruined creation of Genesis with the victorious effects of His own death and resurrection, when He comes again to fill every heart with gladness and every tongue with praise. But other and higher glories are connected with His person and may be described by another verse in chap. i., "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," and it is in these two characters of divine and human glory that the Word made flesh passes along before our view as we follow Him throughout this precious book of our new Genesis. The difference we are considering is this: the latter is the personal glory as of the only begotten of the

Father, and the former was the miraculous power which accredited Him to the people by act and deed. Various chapters might be selected as displaying one glory or the other, and here and there a combination of them which is very grand.

Before passing on, let me say that while the first and second chapters have been introduced for the purpose just described of marking these two especial glories of Christ, yet that chap. i., throughout, is the unfolding of the person of the Son, from His own essential being, into the relations by which He stands connected with God and man, and also in the various titles by which promise, type and prophecy had pointed Him out. It is in this breadth and fulness of grace that the Father's love has given Him forth to the faith of His beloved people, and for which the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove lighted on Him and sealed Him!

In chap. iii., the Lord in His intercourse with Nicodemus presents Himself in the circle of His own personal glory, taking as the centre the antitype of Moses and the brazen serpent, giving Himself out to the faith of a poor needy sinner, as the lifted up Son of man—a centre of a circle which in its vast dimensions embraces the love of God which is above all sin in its essential holiness, and yet stoops down to the worthless-

ness of the perishing one, whom it rescues in sovereign grace.

So again in chap. iv., where the personal and the moral glory of the Lord shines forth with the woman at the well, leading her up to the springs of life which were in Himself, and yet giving her to drink thereof according to the perceptions of her own need which He in grace awakened. He maintains His own ground in this touching scene, and proclaims "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Thus He connects God, in what He is in love, with the poor Samaritan in her sin, and by the supply of this living water to her soul, which became in her a "well of water springing up into everlasting life," led her to drink from a spring which is divine.

The nobleman from Capernaum brings Him down to the level of miracles again; but He consents to this, with the rebuke, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."

Chapter v. begins with a word of power to the man at the pool of Bethesda: "Jesus said to him, Rise, take up thy bed and walk." From this point He rises to the point of His personal glory, and says to the Jews, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise;"

and this is applied to quickening, judging, and raising the dead, in this Bethesda-world, the house of effusion (for such is its name), as well as of pity and mercy.

In chap. vi., a great multitude followed Him, "because they saw the miracles which he did on them that were diseased." And He puts His disciples to the proof as to whether they were yet up to the point of His personal glory, by asking, "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" Subsequently, this scene of five loaves and two fishes gives place to the grand action which had brought Him down from heaven, as "the bread of God, that giveth life to the world." And here, if we may anticipate the tenth (or Shepherd) chapter, it is only for the purpose of saying, the Lord seems to be acting in this character in chap. iv., where He led the sheep of Samaria "beside the still waters;" as in chap. vi., He bade them "lie down in green pastures." "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;" "for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."

The feast of Tabernacles, in chap. vii., like the Passover, in chap. vi., carries the Lord up into His own height with the Father. He passes beyond the reach of a reasoning, cav-

illing people, and presents Himself to faith as equal with God, or rather as identified with Him. "I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me." Again, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." One with the Father in counsel and purpose, yet He is on the level with any who can lift the veil and see His personal glory, and take, in the title of His grace, all He is. In the previous chapter He had spoken of "ascending up where He was before;" and *now*, contemplating the day of His glorification at the right hand of God, He connects His disciples with the blessing, which should descend to them from thence: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," adding, "this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." What streams in the desert here surround us, as we follow the incarnate Word, the crucified Son of man, and the exalted Lord!

The narrative, in the beginning of chap. viii., important though it be, serves as the ground of introducing Himself as the "Light of the world," adding, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall

have the light of life." In the midst of such a scene, what other challenge could He make than, "Let him that is without sin among you, first cast a stone at her;" and then takes His own place as a Teacher and a Deliverer. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. . . . If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." And again, "If any man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death." What assurances! They are like the grapes of Eshcol, that came from another land to thirsting souls. "Free from sin" through the lifted up Son of man; "the light of life" by following Him; not "tasting death" through His resurrection. In what majesty and grace has He thus displayed Himself! and how truly do all His paths drop fatness! Yet those, who could not cast a stone at the adulteress now take up stones to cast at Him who had said, in the consciousness of His personal glory, "Before Abraham was, I am." But Jesus hid Himself; and in the silence of disappointed love, "went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." They have lost him!

Before entering on chap ix., we may observe (in reference to the previous eight) a dispensational link which connects them together in a way of its own; for while

every type and promise pointed to Him, He must necessarily embody the type and supersede it. This is the fact even as regards His forerunner, for John's two disciples follow Jesus, and John declared, "He must increase, but I must decrease." So as to the temple, "I will raise it up in three days; this spake he of his body." And again, with Nicodemus and the brazen serpent in the wilderness, "Even so must the Son of man be lifted up." So also He takes the place of Jacob's well, and gives the living water; and at the pool of Bethesda He supersedes the angel, who at a certain season troubled it. He is likewise the antitype of the manna, by proclaiming Himself "the living bread." He also takes the place of the feast of Tabernacles, and finally acts as one superior to Moses the lawgiver, and greater than their father Abraham. Israel's hopes and prophecies are thus embodied in Himself; and in this character He meets the man blind from his birth, in chap. ix., ready to do for the nation what He does for the individual, if there is faith to receive Him. He presents Himself to them, with the man whose eyes He had opened. Will they accept the hand stretched out to give them sight? What a moment! But they say, "We know this man, whence he is; when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." They cast out the man who

confessed Him to have come from God ; but to be cast out of the synagogue was then, as now, to be thrown upon Jesus, who reveals Himself to the man as the Son of God ; and he said, "Lord, I believe. And he worshiped him." Jesus quits them with the solemn words, "For judgment I am come into the world, that they which see not might see ; and that they which see might be made blind."

In chap. x., the cast out sheep, in the person of the blind man last mentioned, gives occasion for Jesus to declare Himself the Good Shepherd, who lays down His life for the sheep. To Him the porter openeth. "I am the door : by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." There are also "other sheep which are not of this fold : them also I must bring, that there may be one flock and one shepherd." "And I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand." The double title in which the sheep are held is very precious. "My Father, who gave them me, is greater than all ; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him," accusing Him of blasphemy, because He, being a man, made Himself equal with God. He makes a

last appeal to them : "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works : that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him. Therefore they sought again to take him." They will not be gathered into the fold, and they cast out the Shepherd of the sheep.

Chaps. xi. and xii., or the Bethany chapters, are complete in themselves ; and, if not standing alone, are to be viewed as family paintings, which represent the circle of Christ's social affections, with Lazarus, Martha and Mary—a home group which had been gathered around him—a green spot—a miniature representation of what the wilderness is to be when He comes again : and by His abiding presence turns it into a fruitful field, and gives the true length and breadth of Bethany, or the house of song (which its name implies), the house of obedience, and the house of the grace of the Lord. In the light of the past, as John gives it, Bethany and its inmates may well stand as a companion picture with the scene at the mount of transfiguration, where Jesus led others up to be "eye-witnesses of his majesty, when he received from God the Father honour and glory." The one is the circle of the social affections of the Lord—"Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus ;"

and the other is the manifestation of the "Son of man coming in his kingdom." But these two chapters supply their own proofs by which, as we have said, this gospel is occupied.

In chap. xi., the death of Lazarus leads Jesus to announce Himself as the "resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." The knowledge of Christ carried no outside sin and condemnation, as other chapters have shown us; and now this further knowledge of Christ carries through death and the grave. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth." Thus the Lord, in this resurrection scene, sets "the glory of God" above sin and its consequences.

In chap. xii., Mary anoints the feet of Jesus, and the whole house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Jesus interprets the act, saying, "Let her alone: against the day of *my* burying hath she kept this." For the last time He presents Himself in the light of promise and prophecy to Israel, and rides into Jerusalem on the colt the foal of an ass. "When Jesus was glorified, then his disciples remembered that they had done these things unto him." His own death is now before Him as the only door of deliver-

ance for His people, and for His own glory, and the establishment of covenanted blessing with Jehovah and the nation. He consequently takes a larger sphere for Himself (outside His Messiah, and King of Israel relations), and on the coming up of the Greeks to see Jesus, says, "The hour is come that the *Son of man* should be glorified. . . . Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." By His own righteous title He had raised Lazarus from the grave, but He is now about to descend into death Himself, as between God, and mankind, and Satan; that God may take *Him* up out of the grave, and declare Him to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the dead, for the obedience of faith, among all nations.

"The light of the world" has travelled over its orbit in these twelve chapters, and, as was declared at its rising, "the darkness comprehended it not." But before it sets, Jesus cries, "Yet a little while is the light with you. . . . While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did *hide Himself* from them!" He is refused in His personal glories—so also as to His acts and deeds, from

the "beginning of miracles, in Cana of Galilee" to the close of His ministry, this is the sum, "though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him." His incarnation has failed as a bond of union between "His own" and Himself, and therefore between them and Jehovah. *Man* must be changed in the springs of his nature; and what deeper work can be undertaken that shall effect this change? This is what is now before Jesus, and in the prospect of the cross He says, "Now is my soul troubled. . . . Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die."

The secret is told, for here are found the hidden depths in which Christ must work for the glory of God, the overthrow of Satan, and the salvation of His beloved people. This closes the first half of John's Gospel, proving that relations in the flesh, however drawn out by what *He* was who was "manifest in the flesh," fell short, infinitely short, of what the holiness of God required, or the condition of humanity around Him needed.

Redemption must be the new basis of intercourse between God and His creatures, and these are the tried stones, the founda-

tion stones, the precious corner stones, which the Lord lays in His death and resurrection. He turns away from everything on the earth—the links are broken, never to be formed again, except on the other side of death and judgment, where divine life, in resurrection power, is the new holding of all established blessing. “Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father,” and this opens a new path upward to the faith of “His own which were in the world.” Judaism, in its full results, is the manifestation that God is come down to man upon the earth; and this will be displayed in the millennial days of Israel’s blessing. But Christianity is based on the wondrous fact that man, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, is gone up to God into the heavens. This, however, finds its place in chap. xiii., or the last half and the heavenly side of this Gospel.



FRAGMENT.—The fulness of Him that filleth all in all is not simply Godhead, but Christ in redemption. Ephesians iv. 10, leads one to this. It is redemption. He who went into the lower parts of the earth is now far above all heavens.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

O Lord ! Thy rich, Thy boundless love
No thought can reach, no tongue declare ;
O give our hearts its depth to prove,
And reign without a rival there :
From Thee, O Lord, we all receive,
Thine, wholly Thine, alone we'd live.

O Lord ! how cheering is Thy way !
How blest, how gracious in our eyes !
Care, anguish, sorrow, pass away,
And fear before Thy presence flies.
Lord Jesus ! nothing would we see,
Nothing desire, apart from Thee !

'Mid conflict be Thy love our peace !
In weakness be Thy love our strength !
And when the storms of life shall cease,
And Thou to meet us com'st at length,
Lord Jesus ! then these hearts shall be
For ever satisfied with Thee.



SOME OF THE CAUSES OF OUR LOW CONDITION OF SOUL AND PRACTICE.

I desire to call attention to some of the causes of the low condition of soul and practice, which so many deplore, and earnestly desire to emerge from. I believe the first great cause of it, and of our consequent inefficient testimony is, that man, and not God, is the object continually before our minds. God's greatest thought was to make

Himself known; and, according as this was effected, the counsels of His heart were declared. Now the strength of every soul must be in proportion to its apprehension of God's greatest thought; because it is in comprehending this, that it becomes a receiver of grace therefrom. "This is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent." The eternal life, God's gift to me, as believing in His Son, leads me directly to know Himself. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Man's great crime was receiving as truth Satan's representation of God, and acting on it. Thus he fell; and to this hour, although by industry and research he acquires a certain knowledge of everything in creation, yet he cannot find out God; his greatest advancement, only convincing him the more of his ignorance; like the Athenians in Paul's time, he must, if honest, confess his ignorance on the greatest point which could occupy any intelligent creature, even knowledge of his Creator. In comparison to this, what is any other knowledge? And what is the good of the knowledge of every thing relating to man, if I am ignorant of God.

Let me hold simply and distinctly in mind, that God's greatest thought is to make Himself known, and that, therefore my highest attainment is that of a "father," as we read (I John ii.) to "know Him, that is from the beginning," even the Son who has declared the Father; and as I do so, I shall not fail to see how constantly and largely we occupy

our souls with something selfish, something wherein *our interest* is expressly before us; and the thought and purpose of God, and *His interest* in revealing Himself, is rarely entertained.

In the mode and terms in which the gospel is preached (and we shall find the mode of its reception generally answers to the character of preaching), this defect is very manifest. I need hardly insist that our strength, in doing anything, must be in proportion as we are in the line of God's mind and purpose. In preaching the gospel, I ought to be from God towards man. My subject is, if I know God, that "God is love." "In this, was manifested the love of God, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." God has expressed His love. He could not express it, except in righteousness, for "God is light," and so it goes on to say: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son *to be the propitiation for our sins.*" I have to present the love of God, and the manner in which it has acted. I have to unfold how He expressed it through Jesus Christ our Lord, who came down here to do His will, establishing His righteousness, so that God is just, and the justifier of every one who believeth in Jesus. "The only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." He came forth from God to bear the judgment under which we lay. God's love could not reach us, while sin remained unjudged: He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him was no sin. The

barrier (sin) being removed by His bearing in His own body the judgment of death—the love of God flows out without hindrance to every one believing in the Son. He that hath the Son hath life. The gospel I have to proclaim is the history of God's love, when His nature is maintained and unfolded in all its greatness and integrity. True it is *to man* I am proclaiming it, and it is *for man's* benefit; and according as I have the love of God in my heart, so shall I do so earnestly and efficiently; but then the primary thought should always be that it is *God's* love to man, and not a mere service rendered to man. Man, no doubt, is before me, but that which engages my soul is God's love, and therefore, while I zealously set forth to man the wonders of God's salvation, yet I do not lose sight of Him, whose *heart* I make known. I am strong in making it known, as I am consciously acting from it; but if I am engaging my soul primarily with the benefit man will derive from it, I am making man and not God my object. It is "the gospel of God" (Rom i. 1), and the point to insist on and proclaim, is what God is, as revealed towards man, a sinner, and at a distance from Him. The love of souls in my heart is divine love, and I must (in order to know its fresh activity in myself) be kept in constant and distinct reference to the source of it, in order to understand the scope and intent of the heart of God which I am allowed, through grace, to present to my fellow-man. The apostle Paul has this so fully before his soul, that he thanks God, who always leads him in triumph in the

Christ, and makes manifest the odour of His knowledge in every place; "for we are, to God, a sweet odour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish." He is thankful to be allowed to make manifest the odour of His knowledge in every place. The great thought before His soul is God. Did he then the less care for souls—he who also writes "I am made all things to all, that I might by all means save some?" Surely not. Why should it be thought, that if I make God my chief object in presenting His love (for His love directs itself to man), that I cannot, or do not, more effectually and vividly present the glad tidings, than one who, keeping man's need in view, is simply engrossed with (as it is admitted) the only remedy for it. Is occupation with the one who is ruined and needs the remedy, likely to be more effective, than occupation with the heart of God, and what is due to it, and therefore, with regard to it propounding the revelation of it, through Jesus Christ our Lord? What more efficacious than setting forth the heart of God in its fulness, making manifest the savour of His knowledge? Paul's commission, from Jesus in the glory, was that he should be a minister of those things which he had seen; the terms of the commission indicated the character of the Gospel entrusted to him. What had he seen? Jesus in the glory—a Saviour in the glory. God could now open out His glory without let or hindrance, to every one receiving His Son, and believing on Him. *He is revealed* to Saul, and forthwith he preached in the synagogue that

Jesus is the Son of God. How often is the *work* of Christ exclusively dwelt on, and how God has been revealed not touched upon at all! I may be told that this is not intended—that may be so. Yet is it not evident, that if I were engaged with Christ, as the One who has revealed the Father in His love, I could not avoid prominently setting it forth. The simple cause of such inadvertence, supposing it to be such, is that man is more before the mind than God. What is most on my mind, must of necessity, colour every expression which flows from it. If God and the disclosure of Himself in Christ were filling my soul, let me meet saint or sinner, I must declare it, and through the wisdom of His grace to each, and as the state of each required; not without real, deep, divine love for each, but at the same time, with the comfort and strength of the Spirit of God, witnessing that I was speaking *for* God, though doubtless also for man's benefit. Man's benefit would be one result of my testimony, but the great object before my soul would be to reveal His love, which in me made me earnest and ready to suffer all things that I might save some; but, even if I did not, if my heart were true to its proper mission, I could thank God that I had made manifest the savour of His knowledge.

Let us note how our blessed Lord, the faithful and true Witness, testified of God down here. His meat was to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish *His* work. In everything He declared the Father, walking as a man close beside and in company

with men, and He could say at the end, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." He always did those things that pleased Him. Are we at all able to grasp the purpose and work of Jesus as the declarer of the Father? He had all the power of God in His hand, and for this end He used it, and not for Himself, though in many ways needing it. He in feeble flesh, in all His ways and works, set forth to men, and He Himself a man, the wondrous intents and counsels of the heart of God in itself which man through Him is invited to taste of and enjoy. Could our eye follow Him in His course, and not know in our hearts at every step that we were accumulating evidence of how great and wondrous was His work? God manifest in the flesh—a man among men, declaring all the love of God, and the lines of it, in all its integrity and strength! "As the Father knoweth me, so know I the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep." He knew His Father's heart. He knew how to represent it; His whole life and work among men was to declare it, and hence He could say in the end, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip; he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" When we survey our Lord's ministry in this light, we are imbibing ideas of what God is in His heart towards us. It is *His* side which occupies us. What He is is made known to me. I see the relation in which He would stand to me; and, as I believe in Jesus, I am entering into the blessing of this relation. I find I am gifted with

eternal life, and am individually partaker of the love which has been declared. It is God I am learning, and *my idea of Him always indicates the character of my relation to Him*. I see how Jesus has declared Him, and my blessing is in connection with this declaration. As is the declaration so is my blessing; the latter depends on the former, limit the one and you limit the other. It rests on what God is, and every knowledge of Him is blessing to me, and every blessing to me is a fruit of this knowledge; so that as I am blessed, so am I consciously connected with God through Christ, and deriving my blessing from my knowledge of Him. If I seek for blessing my heart connects it with knowledge of Him; which knowledge is always blessing to me, but, as I know this, it is the knowledge of Him that is uppermost with me, and thus am I sanctified to Him, "increasing in (or 'by') the knowledge of God" (Col. i. 10). True, as I know Him, I know the nature of His love to myself—that I am Christ's object, and that He hath called me by name. I could not make Him my object unless I knew myself His object, for the greater commands the lesser, and the lesser gives return according to the quality which it apprehends from the greater. We love Him because He first loved us; and the quality of our love to Him will always be in proportion to the quality and measure with which we apprehend His to us.

When in preaching and otherwise, man, his need and his blessing, is the object, that which would confer true power is overlooked, and there must be corresponding

feebleness in those who are blessed through it. How often do we deplore the feeble link which many quickened souls have to Christ ! Why is this ? I repeat because their need has been the point pressed and provided for in the gospel as preached to them, and through which, in divine mercy, they have been born again ; the utility of the gospel and not the divinity of it has been presented to them ; the sweeping of the house to regain the lost silver, or the gain of the prodigal rather than God's claim or relation thereto, and, as a consequence, His satisfaction as the first and greatest consideration. Thus souls, though truly quickened, know little more than relief from judgment, and thus relieved they can pursue their aims in the world without the fear of judgment, which would otherwise have harassed them. It may be asked : Why does God allow conversions through a gospel of which the fruits are such weakly plants ? I answer, His mercy, which I do not attempt to account for. I am only attempting to account for the cause of the weakness of the plants, in the hope that the Lord may lead us into more simple adherence to His own mind, and thus be used of Him to raise His own to the level which His heart desires to see them in. Must not the presenting merely the need, and the provision for the need, necessarily occupy a man with himself, and cause His own ruin and the remedy to comprise the whole of his thoughts ? God in His mercy saves through this preaching, for grace reigns ; but the plants are so weakly that there is no testimony from them. They are

little, if at all, for Christ on the earth, and this, I feel, the servants of Christ ought to regard as indicating defect in their own ministry. Would they feel happy in any degree to say that such were the seal of their ministry; and, if the recipients of the gospel which we preach are so feeble and un-Christ like, do we not well to enquire how we have failed in presenting it?

What a different (and how much greater) thing it is for me to know God and His heart towards me, and as I know it, to know the value and gain of it to myself, than merely to dwell on my deliverance from judgment through the *work* of Christ. Some will say, "Must I not get deliverance from judgment first?" Certainly, but I contend that the true way is to present Christ to you as your life, and the ground of your life, and not merely to relieve you from the fear of judgment by presenting the value of His work for your benefit. In the one case you will count all your blessings from your intimacy with Christ, your knowledge of Him will be everything to you from beginning to end; like the apostle, the one continued desire will be to know Him. In the other, you will have no thought beyond your own rest, you will measure everything by the measure of quietude and peacefulness which you derive from it, you have not had your cup full. Christ Himself can alone fill the cup; "He that believeth on me shall never thirst," "the water that I shall give him will be in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life." Philip preached "Christ"; Paul that "Jesus is the Son of God"; the

revelation of Jesus Christ, not the mere benefit of man, was the thing prominent with them.

Again, if the preaching be defective, it is not surprising that the same vein of imperfection should characterise the teaching: but there the effects are more injurious still, because instead of correcting the defects in the preaching, it allows and supports them; and, consequently, contributes permanently to that weakly condition which we are deploring.

To know Him that is from the beginning, is the attainment of a "father." Higher no one can go, and less none of us should aim at. It is the only unerring standard, whether in matters most elementary or most advanced; the one great and simple reference for either is my knowledge of Him. Thus we find such passages as these:—"Some have not the knowledge of God,"—"hath neither seen nor known Him,"—"hereby we know that we know Him." The apostle tells us that the knowledge of the Son of God is the point we are coming to, for however inconceivable the thought is, we shall know even as we are known, and hence Paul's effort and conflict was to present every one perfect in Christ Jesus; the desire of his heart for the saints and faithful is that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto them wisdom and revelation in the *knowledge of Him*. The tendency of our nature is ever to seek for ourselves and our own happiness, heedless of what God has been gleaming forth from the beginning of man's existence on the earth;

even the knowledge of Himself. Every revelation of His grace to man conveyed a fuller knowledge of Himself; and according as man rested in Him thus revealed was His blessing assured. Whereas, whenever man independently sought his own, he lost all; as, for instance, Lot going down into Sodom while Abram learned deeper and fuller knowledge of the heart he trusted in—in its care and provision for him.

The teaching ought to follow up what the preaching had introduced. The preaching ought to present Christ as now in glory, the full expression of what God's love had accomplished. What God is now to everyone believing in Jesus. How God meets everyone coming to Him—with a Saviour to the glory. So teaching should be but a fuller exposition of Christ in glory. The great end of all teaching should be to unfold Christ to the soul, and so to present Him, in the power of the word, as to make Him its *standard* for everything, and to set forth that our place now is to dwell in Him and He in us, and to grow daily into conformity with Him, to "grow in grace, and in *the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*" (2 Pet. iii. 18). Can we estimate what an effect it would have on us if He were thus our standard to which everything was referred, and by which everything was decided. What separation, what purging of ourselves it would entail on us, though the heart, consciously doing it to Him, would have its own reward in the sense of increased nearness to Him (See Col. iii. 17, 23, 24). Now, on the contrary, the conscience (and the more en-

lightened the worse, for then there is more ground for confidence in our own judgment), or the effect produced on the individual soul, is the standard. I mean this or that association, is allowed or disallowed, as it *affects myself*,—if it does not pain *me* it may pass; if it does I disallow it. I make *myself and my own feelings* my standard, and *not Christ*, consequently I cannot but be weak and incompetent.

It is not faith or devotedness, or any virtue from the practice of which certain advantages will flow to me, that real teaching should aim at. It is nothing short of Christ,—that “Christ may be formed” in me; that “Christ may dwell in my heart by faith.” When Christ is presented to my soul as the one Object, I get to know Him, and while learning thereby that I am His object, my testimony, as I walk here, must ever be true and effective. Read all the Epistles, and you will see that, whatever be the difficulty or the error, all is solved, all removed by living Christ. Every defect arises from not dwelling in Him; without Him we can do nothing. If it be justification by the works of the law, as in Galatians, “Knowing that a man is not justified by works of law, but by faith of Jesus Christ,” “I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave *Himself* for me.” If it be the world and its wisdom as in Corinthians—“I determined not to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ and Him crucified,” and He “of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” If it be worldly religious exaction, as in Colossians,

“we are risen with Christ” who is our life. *Christ determines everything.* Now the teaching, in general, does not engage the heart with Christ as the great sum and scope of everything in the mind of God. It is not pre-eminently in the mind of the teacher, and if it be not—the teacher being necessarily in advance of his hearers—neither can it be pre-eminent with them. This being so, how can there be strength in the soul or power in the walk, when God’s object, the course and work of the Spirit, is either unheeded or indifferently dwelt on? If I would please anyone, I must ascertain what is the first thought and purpose of his mind. I cannot please God but as I believe in His nature. His Son has revealed Him, and as I am in the Son, so do I reach up to the knowledge of God; and hence the apostle writes. “Until we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect (or ‘full-grown’) man.” Good works, the whole range of charities, however commendable they may appear, may be engaged in, and yet the condition be low, and the practice *unspiritual*, simply because the line on which God would display His power, and mark us with His grace, has not been adopted by us.

It is often stated that if we waited more on the Lord in our meetings, there would be more power. Our not doing so is rather, I believe, a consequence than a cause, for I am assured that if Christ were more our Object, the power and presence of the Holy Spirit would be better known. It is as in Christ now in glory, that the Spirit flows as rivers

into and from us, and the Spirit cannot support us, when Christ from whom He acts, is not our Object. The more simply we look at it, the more easily we see the point of departure. God having made Himself known in His Son, if our hearts are occupied with the Son, all the purpose of His heart will be disclosed to us. I preach Christ to manifest the knowledge of God. I teach Christ, in order to furnish the souls of saints with the revelation of God, even to be filled, through the love of Christ, to His fulness.

Another cause of our low condition, and also the result of the heart being occupied with its own gain, is, I believe, that we seek our own things, not the things that are Jesus Christ's. There is a looking to God for mercies, and faith is used and valued according to the favours vouchsafed of God in answer to it. When this is the case, the whole bent and turn of the mind is selfish. What would suit and meet us here on earth is sought for and valued; and while there is a looking to God, it is ever with this end. In difficulties and pressure, according as there is conscience, God is sought; but the end desired is simply deliverance. There is comparatively little or no thought, and less effort, to walk superior to the difficulties in the strength of Christ. On the contrary, if I *live* Christ, I am, like the apostle, able to say: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." The one looks to God and counts on Him in order to be delivered; the other believes in Christ, derives *nourishment* from Him, and is strengthened in His strength. Is it not evident that there

is a great moral difference between these two? In the Old Testament, God was continually showing favour, in vouchsafing deliverance to suffering man; but now, in Christ, we are made more than conquerors through Him that loved us. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." The more I return to Old Testament standing, the more I regard myself in nature, the more do I seek present favour and interposition from God on my behalf; but if consciously walking as one that is "risen with Christ," the more am I, in His life and strength, superior to and master of the difficulties of this life. I think it will be found that little practical strength or advancement accrues from some of the most signal instances of God's intervention on our behalf. We may turn to Him better; but is there more strength to master the ordinary trials of life? Is there not rather an ever-anxious recurrence to Him for deliverance? Whereas were faith in exercise, there would be the consciousness of daily increasing invigoration directly from the Lord and the soul would be seeking rather to glorify Him in the difficulty than to find an escape from it. True, God in His continual mercy grants to us an escape from the difficulty, but the strength of Christ always makes us master of it. I am satisfied that the condition of soul must be weakly, which is occupied with its gains, in circumstances, from God; and more than this, our mercies themselves prove a snare when they engross the heart. Devotedness is the surrender of self, and of the mercies which minister to it for the Lord's sake. If

I am engrossed with the mercies I cannot be devoted ; for if the mercies are my object, the Lord is not my Object. If I am occupied with myself, all natural mercies are attractive to me, and hailed as from God ; and, without perceiving it, I am carried into the current of the world, and my weakness, as a Christian, is manifested. Is not temporal prosperity one of the most fruitful causes of declension and feebleness ? It was God's test to Gideon's army : " Bring them down to the water, and I will try them for thee *there*." Those who were thinking most of themselves and their own gain from the mercy were engrossed with it ;—and they went down on their knees to drink of the water. The 300 alone could resist its attraction, for their heart was with Gideon. The water—any thing which addresses self and engrosses it—diverts the heart from Christ, and feebleness must ensue, for without Him we can do nothing. The importance which attaches to one as the centre of some useful work to man, from the gospel downwards, has, when it engrosses, the same injurious effect ; and we never see anyone thus engrossed make any progress in the ways and counsels and strength of Christ. Worldly prosperity, that which is highly esteemed among men, could not engross the heart of a saint who had appropriated the death of Christ, for if we eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, He abideth in us and we in Him. We are in Christ ; and believing in Him, the Spirit flows from us, having enriched our souls with the fulness of Christ.

He is our known Object, and all our ways and thoughts declare it ; for we always seek pre-eminently what *suits* our chief object. If myself is my object, I seek the natural mercies and what lends importance to myself ; but if Christ be my Object, it is the things which suit Him and interest Him which are my earnest study and care. The things sought after disclose the object of the heart ; therefore, if they be natural things, I must be walking in nature, and weak accordingly.

There is one cause more of our weakness that I would dwell on—that is, that we so little occupy our minds with His mind ; we so little seek fellowship with Him in His thoughts and purposes. This is easily accounted for, if we are occupied with mercies which suit and minister to ourselves. How can the heart take an interest in the study of His mind and purpose, if it be full of its own individual advantage ? Unless Christ were my Object I could not be the friend of Christ ; and unless I am His friend, it cannot interest me to know His mind, though my own personal gain even what He may have given me, may occupy my mind. If I abide in Him and He in me (see John xv.), I have His joy in me, and as His friend He communicates to me His mind. If I am not devoted to Him, His mind is not interesting to me, and He does not communicate it to any one not interested in it. There is no more marked symptom of feebleness than the little sympathy or acquaintance we have with His mind, and the little feeling there is at our want of it ; while, on the

other hand, there is no greater evidence of strength and faithfulness than to be a man of understanding, enriched with the mind of our Lord and Master, and able skilfully to instruct His people in a day of confusion and ignorance. In the addresses to the Seven Churches in the Revelation, the angel is always addressed as setting forth in symbol the true place of the Church as bearing Christ's message. The faithful answered to this character, and heard and understood the Lord's message, as always suited and pertinent to the difficulty of *the moment*. In all ages the true servant of God was entrusted with His mind as to any crisis or distinct purpose. In the words, "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?" the principle on which God always acts is disclosed to us. See also the men of Issachar (1 Chron. xiii. 32). God has ever made known His mind to His devoted servants, and to them only; for others would not value it.

As with Gideon's army, it is not enough for me to attempt or to begin to follow. I must have my heart with Gideon's. I must be devoted. Self must have no place with me; and, then, as with the 300, I shall be instructed in the mind and purpose of my Lord. To the 300 *only* does Gideon tell his mind and plans—"As I do, so shall ye do."

How remarkable is it, and singularly characteristic of our low condition, that one seldom sees a soul occupied with the present current or course of our Lord's mind. Something in reference to itself marks every inquiry or engagement. Little wonder, then,

that our condition should be so low and our testimony so powerless.

In conclusion, I beg again to press that the greatest cause of our weakness arises chiefly from our imperfect apprehension of the gospel of Christ. I have been told that a greater number are converted under an imperfect gospel than under a more perfect one. What answer can I give to this, but that the fuller gospel makes a claim on the heart of man, which deters him from confessing—while the other makes no claim, and there is no cross to him in confessing his faith in it.

The Lord lay it on our hearts to see where we are straitened in ourselves, for surely we are not straitened in Him, and He would rejoice in our knowledge of the mystery of God, wherein are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.



HIMSELF. If our souls go on with God, sweet as is the assurance that we, washed in the blood of Christ, belong to God, yet the uppermost thought will in the long run be *Himself*. We shall come back to His person. We shall in our praises weave with it what He has done, suffered and won for us; but the first of all thoughts in our souls is, the first of all thoughts in heaven is, not what we have gained, however true, but what He has been for us and what He is to us, yea, what He is in HIMSELF.

TRUTH.

“*Jesus saith, I AM the way, THE TRUTH, and the life.*”—John xiv. 6.

“*Sanctify them through thy truth: THY WORD IS TRUTH.*”—John xvii. 17.

“Truth” I hold to be *definite, unchangeable, and perfectly revealed in the Scriptures.* These are, as regards man, the only fountain and depository of truth. As to its essence and living embodiment, it is found alone in Him who said, “I AM THE TRUTH”—happily for us, “*the way and the life also.*” If others hold not this, it is their loss: they have not the anchor that can be trusted in the storm. Truth, I deny not, may be matter of long and hesitating and anxious enquiry. Because truth, which is but the expression of the mind of God, though perfectly revealed, is not at once, and of necessity, perfectly understood—not even by those who are called “wisdom’s children,” and are “born of God.” “We know in part, and we prophecy in part.” But truth itself in the Scriptures, is perfect, absolute, and unchangeable. There is much in the apprehension of this. It removes doubt from the pathway, and is the hinge of all true enquiry. It lays open the well, and how its living waters may be drawn. It points to the

oracle, and the temper in which it must be consulted.

As to the study of truth or its investigation, it must be with intent to *obey*, and not to speculate: "If any man will *do* his will, he shall know of the doctrine" (John vii. 17). The disciple's place, and not the Master's, belongs to every student of the truth. Moreover, if success is to crown the study, truth must be sought for its own sake, or rather for its Author's. If the secret bent and purpose is to feed the imagination, or to gratify the lust of knowing, then *know* this, that thou shalt be "ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge (or 'full-knowledge') of the truth" (2 Tim. iii. 7). On the other hand, "If thou criest after knowledge" (conscious of thy lack of it), "and liftest up thy voice for understanding"; "if thou seekest her as silver" (with an estimation of its value), "and searchest for her as for hid treasures" (willing to dig the field over rather than fail in thy search); "then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." . . . "When wisdom entereth *into thine heart*, and knowledge is pleasant to thy soul, discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee" (Prov. ii. 3-11). It is the *heart's* estimation of the truth that quickens diligence in

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its pursuit; and it is this also, and not the mind's dry activity, that determines the rate and measure of advancement in it

“Buy the truth, and sell it not” (Prov. xxiii. 23): no price is too great for its purchase—no gain sufficient to repay its loss. This is no direction for the world's marketing: but it tells us plainly why so few obtain what so many profess to seek. ”Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath *no heart* for it?” (xvii. 16). Albeit the fool of Scripture is the world's wise man. To him, then, who would advance in the knowledge of the truth, Paul's direction to Timothy must not stand in the letter only: “Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.” And he adds, “Take heed unto *thyself* and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.”

In the communication of truth, when it is drawn directly from the divine word; or, it may be, learnt from others, and verified by that word (for all are not alike successful diggers, in the mine, though all should alike possess a value for the ore), it is definite and determinate. When teaching ceases to be definite it ceases to be powerful; for it ceases to be truth that is taught.

All truth is definite or ceases to be truth. Teaching that swerves from this may not cease to be exciting or attractive, but it ceases to edify. "He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord" (Jer. xxiii. 28). But he who deals out as truth that which is unascertained and indeterminate, first imposes on himself the chaff for the wheat, and then practices the same deception upon others. To present truth in the plainest and severest garb, and to unfold it in terms level to the commonest minds, is the plain duty of every teacher who is in earnest in what he does. But to seek to popularize truth by diluting it—to drape it so that its proportions are hidden—to adorn it by the efforts of imagination, in order to make it palatable, and so win for it a place in minds that have no love for it, nor intention to practice it, is to "sow the wind, and to reap the whirlwind" (Hos. viii. 7). Spiritual truth can only be apprehended by the understanding becoming spiritual; and the attempt to bring it within the grasp of the unspiritual mind is at best but to leaven and corrupt the truth, instead of using it as a lever by which to bring up the soul to God. Confidence in the truth, or faith, is content to let God work, and to open His own doors for its reception. But there is a bustling

activity that is ever thrusting *itself* forward—a running where there are no tidings prepared; which, though it may put on the guise of zeal for the truth, is in the issue no better than sowing in unploughed land. There is divine wisdom in the exhortation of the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, “Break up your fallow ground and sow not among thorns” (Jer. iv. 3).

I speak not here against pressing the message of the gospel upon unwilling hearers; though in this, both time and wisdom, and an open door, should be sought at the hands of the Lord; and there should be care that *love* be never absent as the chief handmaid in the work.

But truth can never be *popular* in this world. Altogether apart from the testimony of Scripture, even philosophers are puzzled “to know how it is that men should love lies, where they make neither for pleasure, as with poets; nor for advantage, as with the merchant; but for the lie’s sake.” And we know who has said, “*Because* I tell you the truth, ye believe me not” (John viii. 45). Truth shows men’s follies and by-ends too clearly, and sheds too broad a light on the masquerading of the world, ever to be welcomed by it. It is only “he that doeth the truth [that] comes to the light” (John iii. 21). Men like to live in sort of twilight; or

to walk by the light of a fire that themselves have kindled, and sparks that they have compassed themselves about with (see Is. l. 11). And this they are allowed to do, as long as truth is mingled with men's thoughts and speculations, instead of shining with its own clear light. All human over-valuing, and self-conceit, and false fancies, are detected by the truth; and things that sparkle and look bright by the world's candle-light, lose their lustre when brought into the light of the sanctuary (see Ps. lxxiii. 17). This men cannot afford, for it strips the world of its glory, and shows it as a base counterfeit. Supposing the light of truth to be let in upon men and their pursuits, and their estimation of themselves (to go no further), does any one doubt that it would make them feel themselves to be poor, shrunken things, where the heart had not Christ to fill up the place of that which the truth takes away? But it is the very province of the truth to exhibit things as they are. It is the light which makes all things manifest (see Ephes. v. 13). There is no object, therefore, unless I would be untrue to my own ends, as they themselves will be ere long manifested in the light, in so disguising truth as to make it pass through the world unrecognized in its claims, and without accomplishing a single purpose for which it is given.

But this is done when it judges neither the conscience nor the ways of those by whom it is professedly embraced. The pleasure that may be professed by such a reception of the truth, or the profit, is as nothing; and I ought to blush, if I have only gained for it a welcome on the condition that it shall be deposed from its authority. It is like making truth a harlot to minister to the lusts of the mind. God is the communicator of truth, and He has given it that the heart may be brought into *subjection to His authority*, as well as into acquaintance with Himself. His works and ways. If I deal with truth at all, for my own profit or that of others, I am bound to do it in subjection to God. Hence the apostle's declaration, "We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor. iv. 2).

Man, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, is only the interpreter of the heavenly oracles. Hence arises a *limit* in the service of truth. I must cease to interpret when I cease to understand. It may be the consequence of my negligence that I do not understand. Be it so. The acknowledgment of this may prove a spur to my diligence

(especially if I bear in mind the word, "to him that hath shall be given"); but it is certainly no warrant to cover ignorance by the pretence of knowledge. How many expositions of Scripture are to be met with, whose contradictions amongst themselves show that it is not *truth* that is presented, but the uncertain and ever-varying notions of men. What, then, in writing, or in oral teaching, profits? The *definiteness* of truth; truth, doubtless applied by the Holy Spirit to the conscience and the heart;—still, the definiteness of truth. That there may be an effect where this is absent, I do not deny. But what is it? The effect of making people think, if they think at all, that Scripture is as vague and pointless as any exposition of its declarations. Still, I affirm that truth is definite, or it is not truth. Boundless in its extent it is, and infinitely varied in its application, but always *definite*. Where this definiteness is not grasped, uncertainty and unpreparedness for action are the necessary result, "for if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" (1 Cor. xiv. 8). An easy-going orthodox profession may be satisfied with vagueness and generality, nay, with vapidness and insipidity; but if the truth is to detach souls from the world, to bring into peace and liberty, and to direct to the just

hope of a Christian, it must be definite. Let those who are teachers of the truth beware, for the streams will not rise higher than the level of the spring; and there is always a (more or less marked) correspondence between the character and condition of the teacher and the taught. People that are caught by the imaginative, the sentimental, the shallow and wordy, as well as those who are captivated by the comprehensive and earnest, will infallibly bear its stamp. Moreover, it is not everything true which profits. Where popular effect may become a snare, the example of Philip, in Acts viii., may well furnish instruction to the heart. But above all should be studied the way in which He, who spake as never man spake, detaches, by the truth He presents, the multitudes that were gathered around Him, from all false expectations which they might have associated with His words and mission, through carnality or a worldly mind. The sermon on the mount (Matt. v., etc.), and John vi., stand out as prominent examples of this. It is a sore trial to our poor hearts to be obliged, by the presentation of the distinctiveness of truth, to count upon following the experience of the Master, as is recorded in John vi. 66: "From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." But this was only a

legitimate, though sorrowful, effect of the Lord's faithfulness to His mission, as uttered before Pilate, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should *bear witness unto THE TRUTH*. Every one that is of *the truth* heareth my voice" (John xviii. 37).

For the truth's sake all *imitation* of others, in their modes of communicating it, should be eschewed. It has the effect of making the message appear *unreal* in the hands of him who is delivering it. Simplicity of purpose and aim will stamp its own impress on the mode of communicating, and the vessel under this power be seen as God has fitted it, and not distorted by the attempt to emulate that which it may be most unlike, both in original character, and in training for the work.

"Take heed *how ye hear*" brings before us the responsibility before God the individual is placed under on hearing the truth. But know this, that truth will never be truth to the soul, until it is translated into action. Truth appeals to the conscience and to the affections with all the authority of the God of truth. At first it deals with me about ruin and redemption. It claims to be formative of my motives, to be the guide of my actions, the director of my thoughts, the animator of my hopes, the overseer of my whole inner, as well as outer, life.

Supposing truth to have been rightly taught and rightly received, what will be its legitimate effect? This is answered in the most direct way in the summary the apostle gives of the effect of the gospel on the Thessalonians. He speaks of them as remembering their "work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope of our Lord Jesus Christ." And this answers to his expression in Corinthians, "Now abideth faith, hope, charity [love], these three." There is that in the revelation of the truths of heavenly grace which thus acts, by the power of God on the soul, when it is yielded up to its power. The "work of faith" is seen in its turning the heart "to God from idols," in all the intensity of the contrast between utter emptiness and vanity, and eternal living fullness. The "labour of love" expresses itself in the outgoing of life's energies in the service of Him who, in the all commanding and constraining power of infinite and unstinted love, makes Himself known to the soul, and by *love* thus enchains and leads it captive. "The patience of hope" takes the definite form of waiting for the accomplishment of the promise of Him who said, "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that *where* I am, there ye may be also." Hope shows its power in the soul by sustaining the patience while "waiting for God's Son from

heaven, whom he raised from the dead [with all the pregnancy of this mighty truth in power and love and grace] even JESUS, who delivered us from the wrath to come."

Now these are presented, not as the ripened fruits of long experience in the truth, but as the very first results of the reception of gospel grace : the upspringing of heavenly fruit from a virgin soil when first brought under culture by the hand of God ; the well-tuned harmony of the soul touched in its chords by the skill of infinite love. The Lord Jesus Christ was the Spring and Object of their faith and love and hope. "The work of faith" was there ; and "the labour of love" was there ; and the "patience of hope" was there. Nothing of the divine testimony was inert. Indeed, apart from this living energy, Christianity has no existence in this world. The truths by which it was first evoked remain, and the divine power remains which gave these truths this living expression. Many things which marked the bright course of the early church have passed away, but these are emphatically said to remain, "faith, hope, charity, these three," without which Christianity is not.

Should not, then, a right presentation and a right reception of the truth of the gospel be still productive of the same effects ? Should we not view it as a defective gospel ;

either as preached or professed, if these effects be absent? God's grace must not be limited: but I am speaking of the responsibility which the truth brings to the soul. The effect of the gospel is not here limited, as it is so often now, to the individual having obtained peace by it, or even the knowledge of the possession of eternal life. If the heart rests in faith on the divine truths on which Christianity is based, must it not claim for them an energetic and transforming power? Where God is working, I own it becomes the soul to tread softly. But in what are called "revivals," I think I see this—on the part of God, souls awakened in an extraordinary degree, and many doubtless brought to Christ;—on the part of man, nature largely acted on, often a defective gospel presented, and the mind concentrated too much on its own assured and joyous feelings. The result of this is, to a large extent, even where the work is real, the rearing of hot-house plants, which wither and show the yellow leaf when the extraneous heat and forcing influences are withdrawn. Conversion is not everything. Fervour will not stand in the place of truth engrafted in the soul. Activity is not the only sign of spiritual life and power. "I am so happy!" may be welcomed as the soul's expression of having found in Christ what it could find in

nothing else. But there is another word of Christ to be heard besides "thy sins are forgiven thee:" it is, "If any man serve me, *let him follow me.*" It is a great thing that the practical aim of Christians be not lowered. True revival I take to be the leading back of souls to see from whence they have fallen, and to repent and do the first works. The sure token of a revival in the church (I do not mean the fact of frequent conversions) will be found in Christians being led solemnly to lay it to heart, whether the church is in a position to meet the Lord, and whether it is a true and faithful witness for Him in His absence. There are dangers of all times, and there are the special dangers of our own; but the fulness of the truth as communicated to us by God is sufficient to enable the simple and dependent saint to meet them all, and so to find the special blessing promised, by the lips of Him whose name we bear, "to him that overcometh."



FRAGMENT.—Scripture speaks of grace as well as truth. It speaks of God's love who gave His only-begotten Son that sinners like you and me might be with Him, know Him, enjoy Him for ever, and enjoy Him *now*; that the conscience, perfectly purged, might be in joy in His presence, without a cloud, without a reproach, without fear.

PROPHECY.

The field of prophecy is a vast and important one, whether in view of the moral instruction it contains, or on account of the great events that are announced in it, or through its development of God's government, and, by this means, its revelation of that which He Himself is in His ways with men. Jehovah and His dealings, and the Messiah, shine through the whole. Israel always forms the inner circle, or chief platform, on which these dealings are developed and with which the Messiah is immediately in relation. Outside of, and behind this, the nations are gathered, instruments and objects of the judgments of God, and finally, the subjects of His universal government, made subject to the Messiah, who however will assert His especial claim to Israel as His own people.

It is evident that the church and the Christian's individual place is outside this whole scene. In *it* there is neither Jew nor Gentile; in it the Father knows the objects of His eternal election, as His beloved children; and Christ, glorified on high, knows it as His body and His bride. Prophecy treats of the earth, and of the government of God. For, after personal

salvation is settled, there are two great subjects in Scripture, the government of this world, and the sovereign grace which has taken poor sinners and put them into the same place as God's own Son as the exalted Man, and as adopted into sonship—the divine glory, and that in Christ, being of course the centre of all. If we measure things, not by our importance but, by the importance of the manifestation of God, whatever developes His ways as unfolded in His government will have much importance in our eyes. There can be no doubt that the church, and the individual Christian, are a still more elevated subject, because God has there displayed the whole secret of His eternal love, and deepest present divine affections. But if we remember that it is not only the sphere of action that is in question, but He who acts therein, the dealings of God with Israel and the earth will then assume their true importance in our eyes. And these are the subjects of prophecy. For the others we must specially look at what the Holy Ghost has given us through Paul and John.

This portion of the word is divided into two parts. The prophecies that refer to Israel during the time that Israel is owned of God, and consequently that concern the future glory also, form one part. The other

consists of those prophecies which make known that which happens during God's rejection of His earthly people, but which make it known in view of the final blessing of this very people. This distinction flows from the fact that the throne of God, sitting between the cherubim, has been taken away from Jerusalem, and the dominion of the earth committed to the Gentiles. The period of this dominion is called "the times of the Gentiles." The former class of prophecies applies to that which precedes and to that which is subsequent to this period. The latter refers to this period itself. There is a moment of transition, during which the restoration of the people is in question, when the end of the times of the Gentiles draws near—a moment especially in view in those prophecies which relate to this period, and to which the Psalms largely apply, connecting it with the first coming of the Lord and His rejection by the Jews. As He says, "Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye say, Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord." But the general history of the period itself is given in diverse forms. The interval between the return from the Babylonish captivity and the coming of Jesus has a special character. For the Gentiles had the dominion; and nevertheless Judah was at

Jerusalem expecting the Messiah. God favoured His people with the testimony of prophets, who addressed themselves especially to this state of things, namely, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Their prophecies have consequently an especial character suited to the position in which the people are then found and to God's ways towards them.

There is another prophet who holds a peculiar place, that is, Jonah. His was the last testimony addressed immediately to the Gentiles, to show that God still bore them in mind, and governed all things supremely although He had already called Israel to be a separate people unto Himself.

Christ is the centre of all these prophecies, whatever their character may be. It is the Spirit of Christ that speaks in them. One of the two divisions above-mentioned is of much greater extent than the other. Daniel alone in the Old Testament gives us the detail of "the times of the Gentiles," with the exception of some particular revelations in Zechariah. There is a very striking difference between the two classes of prophecies. That which belongs to the time when Israel is acknowledged is addressed to the people, to their conscience and to their heart. That which gives the history of "the times of the Gentiles," while it is a

revelation *for* the people, is not addressed *to* them. In the books of the three prophets who prophesied after the captivity, neither Israel nor Judah is ever called the people of God, except in promises for the future, when the Messiah will re-establish blessing.

There is yet another principle, simple but important to our understanding of the prophets. Whatever figures the Spirit of God may use in depicting the ways of God or those of the enemy, the subject of the prophecy is never a figure. I am not speaking of those prophecies in which all is symbol; this remark could not be applied to them. Moreover, a symbol is not the same thing as a figure. It is a collection of the moral or historical qualities, or of both, which belong to the prophetic object, in order to present God's idea of that object. Certain elements which compose this symbol may be figures but the symbol itself, correctly speaking, is not a figure, but a striking whole, made up of the qualities that morally compose the thing described. Accordingly, nothing is more instructive than a well-understood symbol. It is the perfect idea which God gives us of the way in which He looks upon the object represented by the symbol—His view of its moral character.

“AS ORACLES OF GOD.”

“*If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.*”—1 Pet. iv. 11.

One is quite right in thinking that the apostle's word goes far beyond speaking according to the Scriptures, for a man might say nothing but what was scriptural, and not speak “as [the] oracles of God” (*hos logia Theou*). The passage implies that one should only speak when one has the certainty of uttering what one believes to be the mind of God for the occasion. If there is not this confidence, one ought to be silent. It may be an artless message, possibly like that of Peter and John, displaying the speaker to be humanly ignorant and unlearned, and yet just the mind of God, suitable to the present need. This is to speak “as oracles of God.” Another might speak a word true in itself, but applicable to wholly different circumstances, warning where comfort was needed, instruction where the Spirit was rather calling out communion, or *vice versa*. To speak thus is not to speak as oracles of God.

Of course, there is the other and equally imperative obligation on the part of those who hear, of examining all by the word of God.—“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

A BRIEF WORD ON THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

I believe that we may shortly describe this epistle as thus—the “Scripture” by the ministry of Paul now, as once by the voice of Sarah, casting the bondwoman and her son out of the house of Abraham.

The apostle, in order to do this, first proves his warrant. And this he does to perfection in chaps. i., ii.—showing that he received his gospel purely and immediately from God Himself, in a way that admitted of no human admixture whatever, and that, under the full conscious authority of a gospel so received, he had already met the bondwoman and her ways in the person of the apostle Peter at Antioch, and withstood her—thus making proof of his present ministry on a small scale, so to speak; or, like Samson, slaying the lion on his way to this Philistine den in Galatia, when he was to meet a host of them.

And besides this, he makes the experience of their own souls, and the voices of Scripture touching Abraham and the law, his further witnesses. He makes them, as it were, seal his authority to do this great work in the name of the Lord (Chap. iii.). And further, he shows that the time was now fully come, when the Lord had ripened

all His dispensational actings up to the very point of casting out the bondwoman and her son (chap. iv. 1-7).

Nothing could be more perfect than a warrant thus delivered, thus verified, thus sealed, and thus countenanced, if I may so speak, by God's own acts. The apostle, therefore, with full ease, and conscious authority, finds himself in company with Sarah in Gen. xxi. As she then knew her right, without leave from her husband or apology to anyone, summarily to demand the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael from the house, so does Paul here. He shows what the modern or Mystic Hagar is—that it is the religiousness of mere nature, or a system of observances and ordinances, either imposed or revived by man in the churches of the saints—that formality of days, and months, and times, and years, which genders the spirit of bondage, and hinders the formation of Christ in the soul, and that spirit of liberty which He ever brings with Him. And the expulsion of this Hagar, this bondwoman, from the house of Abraham, or the churches of the saints, he demands with as full, unsparing decision as ever Sarah demanded the casting out of Hagar the Egyptian and her mocking child (chap. iv. 8-v. 12).

But, if I may so speak, the energy of the

apostle even exceeds that of Sarah. And this is but right. It is right that, as we advance in the unfolded ways and thoughts of God, and get from the time of Gen. xxi., to the time of Gal. v., we should find the energies and demands of the Spirit still more wide and more intense also. We often see this. It was written of old, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself;" but it is written at a later period, "Swear not at all." * So here, the demands of Paul are somewhat larger and more intense than those of Sarah had been. She was satisfied with the dismissal of Hagar and the child, but Paul calls together with that for the removal out of the house of all that belonged to them. He will do what he can to get every vestige of their former residence there effaced. He would fain obliterate every remembrance of them—the very customs they once observed there, their habits and modes of living, and the spirit and tempers which they were nourishing and practising; all these he would have to be gone, as well as themselves. He would even purify the place of the very air their breath and presence had

* Just, as we all know from abundance of cases, the dispensational purposes of God are gradually disclosed more and more perfectly, so the holy demands of the Spirit are more and more fervent and intense. (See an instance of the first of these in Psalm viii. and 1 Cor. xv.).

diffused. Not merely the religiousness of the flesh would he peremptorily expel the house, the miserable and beggarly elements which kept the soul in bondage; but the works of the flesh also, its moral ways, its boastings and energies. Yea, and its conceits and high mindedness too—its despite of a poor overtaken soul, through the vain thought of its own security. Against all this, and more than this, he lifts up his more-than-Sarah voice, knowing no stint to the demand, that the bondwoman, with all that belongs to her, as well as her child, shall be turned out of the churches of the saints, or the modern mystic house of Abraham. And even in addition to this, he would have that house learn and practise the very opposite and contradictory habits—the ways of the Spirit and not of the flesh, the things that become the new creature in Christ, and not what was found inseparable from the flesh (chap. v. 13–vi. 10).

He then gives us another witness of the importance he attached to all this truth, writing this epistle with his own hand (See Rom. xvi. 22). For the defence of it demands more vigour than its publication (ver. 11).

He, in the next place, exposes the moral or the interested purposes of those who

were leading them back to circumcision or religiousness, and is bold to present himself as one that knew the power of the opposite principle (see chap. i. 4; vi. 14), with all authority, too, as from God, speaking peace to all who clung to that principle (vs. 12-17).

And he closes by a suited valediction. For it is their spirit he commends to the grace of the Lord (ver. 18).

Such I judge to be the principle details of this epistle. And generally, I may say, there is a tone of peculiar decision and fervency in it. The apostle felt as though the citadel itself were in danger. A standard-bearer at Antioch had already well-nigh fainted. He had come, as it were, fresh from that sight, and he must grasp the banner of the gospel with fresh vigour because of it, and step into the breach like a man.

It was a moment of deep interest, and he cannot but be alive to it. And though we are not in commission exactly as he was, intrusted with the truth of the dispensation in a special way (1 Cor. ix. 17), yet we are, as in the train of this great ambassador, to be of one mind with him, and give place by subjection, no, not for an hour, if the mine have been laid again that threatens the citadel.

TOLERATION.

There is a great cry now-a-days against intolerance and bigotry, and a proportionate laudation of tolerance and liberality; and people are frightened by hard names and deceived by soft ones, and at last, from mere habit, believe what they assert or what others assert to them, and think that toleration must be the right thing. Progress in the search after what the world calls truth is said to be hindered by dogmatic opinions or teaching. In secular things, however, such as natural science, etc., dogmatism may be admitted. In spiritual things, and in those things which concern the truth of God and the salvation of men's souls, dogma is, they say, inadmissable. We are told that what men on these subjects think to be true to-day, may to-morrow be found susceptible of modification, or be proved altogether erroneous; that doctrines and practices, good and true in one age, are unfitted for a succeeding period of the world's history, and may be pronounced "obsolete." What would do very well in times past as the foundation of a man's hope for eternity, is quite unsuited to this more advanced age; the doctrine of which to-day will in turn pass away, and be succeeded by others more advanced, and so on. In the face of such a state of

things, we are told that it is presumption for any man to express conviction in a settled opinion upon any religious question or doctrine. Many, indeed, are asking, "What is Truth?" and "Who will show us any good?" but very few wait for an answer.

Toleration, then, is the order of the present day; and men may hold what they please provided they will not interfere with their neighbours' opinions, and limit the suitability of their own opinions to themselves. But it was not always so, neither will it always continue, but it is the cry of the moment, and therefore it is worthy of examination.

What, then, is toleration, and why and what are we to tolerate? The very word implies a state of imperfection. If all were of one mind, there would be no toleration needed; if good universally prevailed, there would be nothing to tolerate; if evil was universal, it would certainly be intolerable, though for all that it must be endured (as it will be in the "place prepared for the devil and his angels"). Toleration, then, implies the co-existence of good and evil, in which evil is tolerated by (that which assumes to be) good, for toleration must necessarily be by the superior towards the inferior.

That in a sense and in degree toleration is

right none of course would deny, for God Himself tolerates, exhibits patience and long-suffering. His own word, and every man's experience, teaches this. But with God, toleration has a limit; and it must be so, for though in grace for a time He may "endure with much long-suffering," He could not always do so without a denial of His character. A Being who eternally tolerated evil would not be good, holy, or righteous; and a state in which toleration was eternally called for would not be a perfect one. Toleration, even on God's part, must therefore be defined and limited, both in its extent and its duration.

But there is another side to the question. For though in patience and grace a being who is perfectly good may for a time, and for an object, tolerate evil, toleration, if exercised by beings in themselves not good but evil, assumes another and very different aspect. If a being who is perfectly good tolerates evil, it must be for a good end, or he would not be good; but if an imperfect being exercise toleration, we must suspect both the motive and the end. To speak of evil tolerating evil sounds paradoxical, yet as a matter of fact we meet it constantly in the world, and it is the spirit of that which people call "agreeing to differ."

Toleration, then, on the part of fallible or

imperfect beings, springs from two or three motives. Firstly, from such self-condemnation as to render the judgment of others in like doubtful circumstances impossible. Secondly, from inability to force their own views and opinions, owing to a balance of power in those opposed to them; or, thirdly, from lack of certainty, and conviction of the truth of what they do hold.

Now, while the first is true of man in his natural state (Rom. i. 31, ii. 1); and the second undoubtedly underlies all forms of doctrinal error, whether infidel or superstitious; the third, we are assured, is the motive of much that is called religious toleration now-a-days. Men are uncertain in their opinions, have no solid foundation for their belief, no sure prospect for their hopes. In things which concern the soul's salvation (that which the world itself admits to be the most important of all subjects) men hold opinions as wide as the poles asunder, and none dare say in their hearts, much less with their lips, "I have found the truth."

One system of religion alone in Christendom has emphatically claimed infallibility. Whilst that system had the power, it not only asserted infallibility, but, consistently therewith, it exercised intolerance. Another spirit and a superior power has been slowly developing. Man's reason is asserting its

claim, and the charity and toleration of our day is *mainly the fruit of the co-existence and conflict of the spirits of superstition and infidelity. The world will yet experience again the intolerance of an over-bearing power of evil. As the influence of superstition still further wanes, and the present necessity of mutual toleration ceases (for toleration will always lessen as the balance of power tends more and more in one direction, and will cease when such power can assert itself), so will the tyranny and selfishness of man uncontrolled by religion, whether false or true, be developed in the Antichrist—the man of sin, the lawless, the wicked one, spoken of in the Scriptures (Dan. xi. 36 ; 2 Thess. ii. ; Rev. xiii.).

Hitherto we have been speaking of the character and spirit of the toleration now abroad in the world, but we also desire, if the Lord will, to say a few words for the help of those who, desiring to know and do the will of God, are yet in difficulty as to what to allow and what to refuse.

On this subject, as on every other in which the professing people of God are concerned, we can go nowhere for instruction but to God and to His word. His ways must be

*We say *mainly*, for we do not deny but that there is a measure of true Christian forbearance also in exercise, and often in combination with less pure motives.

our example. His word our precept. All will admit that if there be any revelation of God, there must also exist in connection with it a standard of right and of truth, if it be but apprehended. But while this is admitted in a general way, there is the greatest hesitation on the part of men either to grasp this standard for themselves or to admit that others may have attained to it. All Christendom acknowledges Christianity as God's revelation, yet for the most part argue as if the arrival at a divine certainty of God's truth were impossible—as if, in fact, God, who gave revelation, had not intended, or was unable to bring it home to the hearts and understandings of those to whom it has been made. Hence dogmatism is deprecated, and strong convictions generally demurred to. Even the one system which in its own self-assertion dogmatises unhesitatingly, ceases to be dogmatic, or even confident, directly it attempts to deal with the real and primary object of a divine revelation—namely, the bringing together into acquaintance, confidence and peace, the holy God and His sinful creatures—and denies that this end can be attained in this life; asserting, in direct opposition to the whole teaching of the New Testament revelation of grace and love, that “no man knoweth whether he be worthy of love or

of hate." But for our own part we are confident that God has given an unerring and perfect revelation, wherein He Himself may be infallibly known, and His truth infallibly grasped, all the diversity and uncertainty of men's opinions notwithstanding.

Before, then, we can venture to be tolerant or intolerant, the first point to be settled is the confidence and ground of the individual soul. Unless we know and are persuaded that we have the truth, it is certainly impossible for us with any decency or power to exhibit intolerance of the opinions of others.*

What, therefore, is needed is individual personal assurance, founded on divine and therefore a perfect authority, and when this is possessed, what, and what not to tolerate may be soon arrived at. God's truth is the standard of doctrine; His ways, of practice.

*If, for instance, one knows not for himself salvation as a possession, one cannot honestly be intolerant of the views held by others on the subject. One may not approve them, but one must tolerate them. On the other hand, the soul that knows by divine faith that it has salvation from God on the alone ground of the death and resurrection of Christ, has a positive confidence and a standard on this point, which renders him necessarily intolerant of every opinion which may be advanced against it. "I know whom I have believed," is the language of such. There are certain things in which theory will not stand against possession, and this is one. Theories about salvation may be as clear as the day, but the one that has the thing itself alone can judge their value.

That the Christian may not, without terrible risk and responsibility, tolerate that which is contrary to God, His word distinctly teaches. Toleration of sin and of evil doctrine are denounced in many and many places, such as 1 Cor. v. ; 1 Tim. v. 20, 22; 2 John; Rev. ii. 14-16, iii. 15, 16. The warnings of Christ to the churches are solemn words in the present day, when men tolerate every form of evil under the common name of Christianity, and deprecate the judgment of opinions and teaching the most dishonouring to Christ and His work. How do the words of Malachi ii. 17, apply to such—"Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied Him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delighteth in them." When professing Christians are asked to judge and separate from evil doctrine and practice, they reply, "How are we to judge that to be wrong which is conscientiously held;" or more often they retort, "Who are you, thus to judge others?" And why is this, but that men, calling themselves by the name of Christ, hold not in their own souls the power of Christianity as God's own revelation of Himself; and on this everything turns. If I hold doctrines as mere matters of opinion, how can I contend against con-

trary views held by others on the same ground and by the same right.

But when the heart and mind are persuaded and pervaded by the truth of God, we do not speak of "my opinions" or "my ideas," and we do not, and ought not to set up our opinions against those of others. It is not that "I think one thing and you another, and we shall never agree," but it is that I believe *God*, that I have submitted to His word, I have accepted and adopted His thoughts, He has answered every question of my heart, and He alone can answer truly any question of any heart. What may be advanced to the contrary is not against the believer's opinion merely, but against the word of God in whom he has believed; and thus false doctrine or opinions contrary to such an one's faith cannot be tolerated, or admitted as having any weight or claim whatever. In dealing with them, grace and wisdom are, however, needed, and the believer has to judge, and has the ability also to judge (1 Cor. ii. 11-15) the spirit in which they may be advanced. He will make a difference between the teacher of evil doctrine and those taught and deceived thereby. Whilst after admonition he will reject the former, and tolerate neither the teacher nor the teaching, he will have compassion on the latter—the one who is ignorant and de-

ceived; and while refusing and correcting the error, will in no wise reject the person. The believer will "have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way;" he will lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for the feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed. In meekness also he will endeavour to instruct those that oppose themselves. Here, however, there is danger of failure. Often we lack patience with those whose hearts are truly upright, but who are unskilful in the word of righteousness, or have been deceived by false teaching. Or, again, in tolerating the person who is ignorant we go too far, and tolerate, or appear to tolerate, his opinions and ways, and thus are unfaithful to the person, and to God and His word. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity;" and if the believer sees one in ignorance, even linked with that which in any degree is contrary to the mind and truth of Christ, he must not touch the evil which *he* knows to be evil out of any consideration of love for the other. For instance, one dear to us may be linked with a false system of religious doctrine, which we know to be contrary to God. Are we to say that he believes it, and therefore we must ac-

knowledge his right to practise it, and aid him in doing so? Surely not! We must no more acknowledge for another the right to believe and practise error than for ourselves. We may not be able to persuade, or even to interfere on the subject, but we can no more aid and abet in it than we could in facilitating the suicide of a friend who assured us on his word that he was weary of life.

But we are well assured of this, that the more our own souls are imbued and satisfied with the truth of God as it is revealed in Christ, the less tolerant shall we be of all that is contrary to it, and yet the more able are we to exhibit the patience and grace of Christ Himself towards the *persons* who may be involved in error. For while in a sense there is nothing so intolerant as truth, yet the one who has truth knows that both "*Grace and Truth* came by Jesus Christ," and he does not therefore separate what God has joined together in the revelation of Himself.* To be persuaded in our own souls that so far as we have attained (for we only know in part—1 Cor. xiii. 9; Phil. iii. 12, 13), we hold the truth of God Himself,

*On the other hand, error knows not grace, and cannot show it. When unchecked by a conflicting power, error propagates itself by force, fraud and cruelty. So was Romanism in the darker ages; so will be infidelity in the latter days (1 Tim. iv. ; 2 Tim. iii. ; Rev. xiii. 14, 15).

gives us an immeasurable superiority in dealing with the souls of others, and enables us, while unsparing towards error, to manifest the toleration and long suffering of God towards those who are deceived thereby. Compassed ourselves with infirmity, having nothing but the grace of God to boast in, we have not to assert *ourselves*, but simply that which is due to Him who has left us here to be witnesses for his truth.

With regard to toleration of the religious opinions of others, which is so strongly advocated now-a-days, we would observe that nothing is more resented by the majority of professing Christians than to have their profession judged. They claim for themselves the liberty which they profess to accord to others. Their position is, however, untenable if judged by God's word. However great the confusion may have become, there is in Scripture a distinct recognition of a "without" and a "within." In Christendom no doubt the line is all but obliterated; but, nevertheless, all who take Christ's name and call themselves Christians, unquestionably take the *inside* place, and are therefore liable to be judged by their fellows. "Doye not also judge them that are within?"† (1 Cor. v. 12.) Every profess-

† The Christian is not called on to judge the world: "Them that are without God judgeth;" but

ing Christian is, therefore, open to judgment, and all that such can require is that they may be judged by the word of God, and not by the measure of another's, or even of their own, conscience. If we can bear that test, we can say with the apostle that with us it is a very small thing to be judged of man's judgment. We fear, however, that much of the tenderness we find abroad on this point arises from inability to bear the test.

Finally, we ask our readers to examine their own position and practice as to toleration, and to ascertain whether their own hearts are persuaded and satisfied with God's revelation (we do not say with man's interpretation of it, but with the revelation itself)—Christ, the Son of the living God—He who has the words of eternal life, God manifest in flesh, crucified in weakness, declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection of the dead, and now by the right hand of God exalted? Is He so the ground of their peace and confidence? Has the word which reveals Him so laid hold of their souls that they can say, "Let

we are often in difficulties now-a-days from finding those who call themselves Christians, and claim to be "within," so linked with the outside world that it is impossible to know how to class them. All we can say is, that while they make very bad Christians, they are a very good imitation of what is commonly called the World.

God be true, though (if need be) every man a liar?" Do they believe God rather than man, and know and recognize the immeasurable claim which He has, not only on our love, but on our obedience and life? Lukewarmness is a hateful thing in the sight of One who has spared nothing for the benefit and blessing of those He loves. Where love in one is "stronger than death," how hateful to find Its objects careless and indifferent. To such Christ says, "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." But even this is not His last word to them; for He adds, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."



"IN THE WILDERNESS ALONE WITH GOD."

(Extract from Letter, written 1871.)

"I do not know whether my heart apprehends things in England aright as to the work of the Lord; and I would desire to see His thoughts ere I speak or write about a

work in which His hand is engaged and which is either His own work and then all-important, or else a mixed thing which is not indeed and in fact the very preparation for the Bright and Morning Star though it may link on with that which, or be that out of which, what is prepared for, the Bright and Morning Star shall emerge. The great want of soul-trust in individuals is God and Christ. The want of clear understanding of expiation and of the new revelation of the character as brought out to light of God (as the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb upon the throne), has pressed upon me not a little as seen in England; and I have feared a tendency to enlarge and restore without due reference to souls being really in faith and spirit in His presence. I give you my thoughts as they rise afresh, though they have long been again before me.

In early days there was much patience and a wall to jump over; this gave more character to both workman and those worked upon. The Lord grant that in the removal of barriers (many of them removed through infidelity and rationalism, etc.) we may not have fallen and may not fall into a superficial kind of work. The work has become so vast that one can only commend it to Him, but at the same time, and in proportion as it augments, one needs to keep oneself more and more apart with Him."

SELF-JUDGMENT.

"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor myself."—Job xlii. 5, 6.

"For if we would judge ourselves we should not be judged."—1 Cor. xi. 31.

It is a common saying that "self-preservation is the first law of nature," and, without doubt, nature *does* prompt self to preserve itself in every condition and circumstance. *Naturally* man cares for self before any other object, and whether it be in connection with his life, his possessions, his ease, or his character, self has the first place in his thoughts and affections. Even the law of God fully recognises this, for (addressing man as it does in his unregenerate state, 1 Tim. i. 9, 10) it says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as *thyself*." Greater love than this God's law does not exact from man to his fellow.

Now, as self is a selfish and a jealous being, justification is its first impulse when accusation or conviction is brought against it. *Naturally*, if it can avoid it, self will never condemn, but will always justify, self; and thus self-judgment is a work not of nature, nor of willingness, but of compulsion and constraint.

Self-judgment, however, lies at the very basis of Christianity in the individual soul, and it is the inseparable condition of a walk in communion with God.

I think we may say that self-judgment is an effect of the conscience of a man (sinner or saint) being brought into the presence of a higher standard of righteousness than it has hitherto apprehended; for although self-judgment is a spontaneous act of the conscience of man,—as distinguished from his being judged by another,—yet self cannot judge self apart from a standard, and that standard or measure must be outside self, and to be of any value to the soul in the way of comparison, it must also be altogether above it. True self-judgment is therefore always in the presence of God, and of His revelation or word, for here alone a *perfect* and *unchanging* standard is to be found. No judgment of self by any lower standard can avail either to arouse the conscience or to raise the condition of a soul.

Indeed we may say that self-examination or self-judgment by any lower than a divine standard, must always partake of, and end in, self-justification. Thus, for instance, if the uneasy conscience or dissatisfied soul commences a comparison of its present with a past condition, whatever may be the dis-

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covery as to advancement, or declension, it cannot profit or raise the soul above its *own* either present or past experience. So we find with Job's case, his remembrance of what he had been in the past, gave him no power in the present (chaps. xxix., xxx., etc.). He was measuring himself by himself, and though dissatisfied enough with his present, yet he boasted in his past condition; and was proved after all to be "righteous in his own eyes" (chap. xxxii. 1). But no sooner does he apprehend the righteousness and the glory of God than self is judged and abhorred.

Again, the examination of self by comparison with others can only bring the same imperfect results; for though on the one hand self in me, may in a degree be rebuked, and judged in some respects by the higher tone and character of life in another, yet on the other hand I see failure in them, and then there is the tendency to say in the heart, "I am not so bad after all. Though he exceeds me in this, I excel him in that, and our trials and temptations are not the same"; and so self, whether in me or my brother, is excused and justified. Paul sums them all up in 2 Cor. x. 12, saying of those who "measure themselves by themselves," and "compare themselves among themselves," that they "*are not wise.*" This,

however, is the tendency of the natural heart, and of a human religion. Human rather than divine excellence is set up as the standard, and so in Romanism, "Saints," so called, are the examples set before the soul, as in them may be found a righteousness attainable by human nature, and infirmities offering an excuse for the failures of the flesh.

But how different and how perfect is the work of self-judgment when produced by a divine and unchanging standard, that is, by the conscience of man, a sinner, being brought into the presence of God, the Holy God. Genesis iii., Exodus xx., Isaiah vi., Luke v., are well-known instances of what is wrought when God is seen in His holiness, and self is judged in its sinfulness before Him. "I was afraid"; "Let not God speak with us"; "Woe is me"; "Depart from me," are the varied utterances, telling the same tale, that conscience had been brought into the presence of a righteousness which it had not before apprehended. And in the case of a sinner unreconciled to God, or of *unjudged flesh* in any, whether sinner or saint, the sense of this righteousness is insupportable, and the conscience seeks to escape from its presence. And this work still goes on when the souls and consciences of men are brought into contact with the

righteousness of God revealed in the gospel of Christ (Rom. i. 17). A sinner is proved to be a sinner by this very gospel, gracious and blessed as the message is (2 Cor. v. 14; 1 Tim. i. 15): and if on the one hand the grace of God, when learned in the cross of Christ, brings peace and salvation to the broken and convicted heart, on the other hand it is the unwavering righteousness of God's judgment of sin in the person of His Son, which breaks and convicts the heart, and shuts it up to this *one*, this *only*, way of salvation.

But it is self-judgment in the believer that we rather desire to speak of and to press upon the consciences of our readers. We have said that it is an inseparable condition from a walk in communion with God, and this is the question which is so important for the soul of every Christian.

God has brought His people to HIMSELF. It is not merely salvation from death and judgment which they obtain by the Lord Jesus Christ, but they are brought "TO GOD" (1 Pet. iii. 18). This has ever been God's purpose in redemption, that man might so have fellowship with Him, and walk with Him. He brought Israel to Himself (Ex. xix. 4); but they refused Him. In that nation it was tried, and proved that unregenerate man, however favoured, could not have fellowship with God. The mighty

signs and wonders by which His presence with them and favour towards them were evidenced, never touched their hearts, nor gained their affections. No mere exhibition of the grace or of the power of God can alter man, or give him power *in himself*. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Man, to have fellowship and communion with God, "must be born again" (John iii.); and, "through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus," God has shown how His purpose is now fulfilled. In the death of Christ we learn how the believer's sin and sins are judged, forgiven, and put away. (Rom. viii. 3; 1 Pet. ii. 24; Ephes. i. 7; Heb. ix. 26); the "old man crucified with Him" (Rom. vi. 6). In His resurrection is declared the way in which He becomes the quickening Spirit, and thus imparts to the believer a new life, a divine nature, in the power of which he can and does have fellowship with God the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, the Lord (see John v. 26; 1 Cor. xv. 45; Ephes. i. 19, 20, and ii. 5, 6; 1 John i. 3).

Now it is this new standing, this nearness to God, which gives the believer power for self-judgment. The believer now knows God, is no longer in ignorance of Him or of His will. Not only by outward revelation through the word, but by the inward witness of the Spirit hath He "shined in our

hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6). "We *have* the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. ii. 16). In Christ, the believer is *always* in the presence and power of divine righteousness, for "we are made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21).

For self-judgment the believer has therefore a perfect rule and measure, *and the ability to use it*. He has only to ask himself, "How has God judged, how has He examined, by what has He tested my nature, my thoughts, my words, my deeds"? "Do I know peace with God, and have I tasted that the Lord is gracious, even He who bore my sins in His own body on the tree? If so, do I desire to know communion with Him"? "Then let me ever in honesty and sincerity bring myself, and all that is within me, to the light of His presence, and by the word of His grace test it, and judge it, even as He has done already. God knows me through and through, and He has given me ability to know myself through and through. Deceitful and desperately wicked as my heart is, yet He has searched it, and I can search it too, and may and should detect every motive and thought, and sift them and judge in their true character in His sight. What will bear His eye, and the judgment of His word, I may allow; and whatever will not,

let me condemn it that I may be of one mind with Him out of whose presence the soul can have no true rest,—the heart no joy.”

True self-judgment then is the judgment of myself as God has judged and still judges me: Christ as the revelation of God, in His love,—His righteousness and His glory, is the rule, and touch-stone for my conscience; the word and the Spirit the means and power for applying Him thus.

Faith in, and the practical application of, the word of God to the soul is what we need. The word which tells us of the infinite grace of our God, tells us also of His holiness. And the same revelation which gives the believer to know his completeness, his standing in Christ, beseeches him to walk worthy of his calling.

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way, by taking heed thereunto according to thy word” (Ps. cxix. 9); “clean through the word” (John xv. 3); “the washing of water by the word” (Eph. v. 26); also Heb. iv. 12, 13, and 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17, show us the fulness and value of the word of God as a lamp unto our feet, a light unto our path, and the searcher of our hearts.

Now we must again repeat, that without self-judgment there can be *no* communion with God. Faith may have believed the gospel, and a soul may know forgiveness of

sins and peace with God through the precious blood of Christ; but his fellowship and communion with God depend upon his judgment of self, and confession of sin. It is one thing to be a believer and a child of God; it is another thing to walk in the light of His presence, in the *sense* of relationship, and of unhindered communion. We may often hear Christians, when spoken to in admonition about some inconsistency in their course, reply that they are "happy in the Lord," thus implying that the thing rebuked does not hinder communion. But what such really mean is, that they know their sins are forgiven, and do not doubt that they are saved. This, however, is not communion—this is not the happiness, the joy in God which He desires for His saints. It is the common portion of God's children to know forgiveness of sins, indeed no one can call God, Father, who knows it not; but communion, fellowship, confidence, gladness, joy in His presence, are something more, and these cannot be attained or enjoyed apart from self-judgment.

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed"? (Amos iii. 3.) Can parent and child go on happily together if there be controversy between them? The nearer the relationship and the greater the love which exists between *two*, the more sensi-

tive will their hearts be to any difference of judgment or mind. And how infinitely true is this of us in our dealings with God our Father. "His divine power *hath* given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Pet. i. 3); and His desire is that we "may stand perfect and complete in *all* His will" (Col. iv. 12); and it is in His presence, in Whom is no "darkness at all," that it is our privilege, as it is also in our power, to judge and bring into light the secret and dark corners of our hearts. And what growth would there be in our souls, what power and what testimony in our lives, if as the light of God shone in we opened up more willingly these dark hidden things. *He* knows that they are there, and we know many of them ourselves, but alas! we often close our hearts, desiring to keep within us, or around us, things which will not bear His judgment. "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth" (Rom. xiv. 22). Happy indeed; and one may add, that none other is truly happy.

It is blessed to realize that, for Christians, self-judgment is not a *legal* exercise, but an evidence of that liberty which belongs to them as children of God. There should be no sense of bondage for the quickened soul, in having to detect and subdue things which

make against its apprehension and enjoyment of the love and presence of its Saviour and God; and on the other hand how wonderful is the grace of God who has thus given to His people the power of meeting and overcoming by self-judgment all the infirmities, temptations, and conflicts of nature and flesh, which unjudged must separate their souls from Him, but when judged prove the intense reality of the things so freely given to them of God, and the abounding grace and power of Him with whom they have to do. For we can truly say that our very weakness, and the infirmities of our nature when dealt with in self-judgment, so far from hindering communion, cause the grace of God to be more precious to the soul, and the things which seem to be most against us, prove to be for us, giving us, as they do, experiences of God which we should otherwise be ignorant of; for weakness, infirmity, and temptation in themselves are not sin in the believer, though they be evidence of sin in the flesh. It is only as they are allowed, excused, or justified that they defile the soul, and destroy communion.

1 Cor. xi. 28 teaches us how inseparably self-judgment and communion are linked in connection with the table of the Lord. It is there the communion of saints in Christ is

openly witnessed, and so each one is to approach in the spirit of self-judgment, lest by the presence of one with a defiled conscience he eats judgment to himself, and hinders communion in the assembly. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat." "For our God is a holy God, and the Lord shall judge his people." Sin must be dealt with, if not by ourselves then by Him ; but He has said, "If we would judge ourselves, we should *not* be judged," and this is the way He has chosen for us, and that we should choose for ourselves.

It may be said that all have not equal discernment even of their own hearts, and that we must not judge one another in this matter. This is quite true, but it is not about judging one another, but about judging ourselves that we have been speaking. Every quickened soul can and must judge itself in some measure ; what, however, all must own is that the measure is usually low and insufficient. In divine exercises, as in all other things, "practice makes perfect." It is "by *reason of use*," that our consciences become "exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. v. 14). That "all seek their own" (Phil. ii. 21) is too true of Christians now-a-days, but the perfect Exemplar remains the same, unchanged and unchangeable, for the soul that desires to know the

secret of communion with God. Christ, who “pleased not Himself” (Rom. xv. 3), could say, “I do always those things that please Him” (John viii. 29). With Him, self—precious and perfect as He was—was always denied, and His own will disallowed, and thus “his judgment was just.”

PSALM CXXXIX

* I would add a few words to the foregoing paper. If there ever was one time more than another in which the duty and privilege of self-judgment were important, that time, as it seems to me, is *now*. The night far spent and the Morning Star soon to appear, how little are we, practically, like unto those that wait for their Lord!

In perusing the paper, I trust with profit to my own soul, it struck me that the subject might be looked at from two different points of view:—1st. We are pilgrims and our feet tread the earth (as in 1 Cor. and 1 Pet.). We know whose we are and whom we are called to serve; and we have the power and responsibility (in the new nature) to walk in the light, and to cease from all the unfruitful works of darkness. Examining ourselves to see whether we are consistent with our professed calling, there is no need for God to judge us, lest we be

* Added by the Editor of the periodical in which the foregoing paper originally appeared.

condemned with the world. Our doing so is part of our privilege (it is priestly, too), and is an expression of our individual identification of ourselves, through the Spirit, with the glory of God. But

2ndly (and this sets its seal to the other), as being in spirit in heaven and in fellowship with the Father and with the Son Jesus Christ, it is impossible for any of us to feed on and enjoy the beauty and the glory of the blessed Lord, without the consciousness being produced in us of the contrasts between Himself and us. Would we wish to lower Him to what we are? Never! no, never! Because He *was* the perfect One and very contrast to what we were, therefore He could give Himself a ransom for us. He *is*—how perfect now, all-glorious in light! and we see in Him the character and nature of our acceptability, and His fitness up there, to secure all for us, poor mortals as we are! whose inward weakness and whose outward circumstances need such an One on high. And we know that He *will come* forth soon, and then what we are in spirit now (cleared from all guilt and accepted sons of God) will be made evident. But how could a John, or a Paul, or a Peter, have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, without that fellowship producing, in him, the consciousness of the contrasts between them and that Lord.

"WE ARE MADE MANIFEST."

2 Cor. v. 1-10.

One of the remarkable things about the truth of God is that it lays hold of the conscience, and acts on it far beyond the intelligence of the person. In this way a statement, in itself inaccurate and incomplete, in the mind even of the person who makes it, is directed to the very point needed to touch the conscience.

This is the case with what is often said about this chapter. It is a solemn thing to have everything thus turned out before God and man. There is a time coming when language will no longer be able to disguise what we really feel; all will be brought into the light—will stand in the presence of it; everything will be made manifest, not only to the person's own conscience, but in the presence of other men, too. There is this in this passage, but there is a great deal more.

"We must all *appear* before the judgment-seat of Christ;" that word implies our personal presence—the judgment-seat and every one there; but besides this all is "*made manifest*" *there now*. It is "knowing the terror of the Lord" that "we persuade men." "*We are made manifest to God, and I trust also to your consciences.*"

There was a light which had shined into Paul's heart, and there was no terror to him.

To a sinner it is an awful thought that all must be opened up before God, but it was not to Paul, because he was made manifest to God. He had been before God—he had been read by Him. And not only this, but there was a something—a certain life of God—which these Corinthians might see whether they did or not. There was not only light in his heart, but there was treasure in an earthen vessel, and Paul showed how God works death in us in order that the life may be free.

This is God's way with us, but it is not what man likes. If man could have heaven in his own way, he would be ready to go there; but when it comes to the living God having *His* way with us, man's will broken and death working, it becomes a painful thing. "Though our outward man perish" is the way Paul had to go, and the Corinthians, and we, too, whether sensible of it or no; and it is a very blessed thing when, while conscious of the outward man thus perishing, the child of God can say, "The inward man is renewed day by day." Life is working on through all the death.

Paul could say it was, in the midst of all circumstances. "For which cause we faint not; . . . for our light affliction, which

is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." What is the secret from lack of which many finding death working in them have no power to say, "for which cause we faint not"? Why not now as then? It is because we are not realizing that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Do you wonder that if Christ is preparing a place for us there, and sees us meanwhile here carrying about as much of the sand of the desert as we can, that He, by letting death and disappointment roll in on all we seek, should bring home to us the fact that it will not do? There is not one of us really able to say, I see what He is doing, who is not also able to add, I faint not, though all be against me. In contrast to present things, for every touch that death gives, you should be able to point to some circumstance in glory that answers to it. God has taken us potsherd of the earth up for His glory, and the great thing for us to do is to sit down and see which way God is going, for we shall find His way is to make all give way before that.

I should be sorry if any one knowing me could not say, Your walk says that you have everything inside Christ and nothing outside. I would look upon my body as an earthen pitcher in which to carry about the dying of Jesus, as it shall carry one day the glory of Christ; and, as to circumstances here, they are smashed.

This is no matter of attainment; it is the simple path of the Christian. If God has, by the hand of His Son, labelled a place for me in the glory, what do I want here? When I get up to where He is I shall see that, though I was a poor broken thing here, "in deaths oft," yet it was my pathway. And where does that pathway lead up to? To the judgment-seat of Christ. He is only a *Saviour* to some. But He would not apply His work to your soul and leave *Himself* out of the question. The point is how the saved ones should walk. He cares about your walk though you do not gain life by it. I should not like to be one who so little appreciated the love and grace of Christ as to be dragged up there just because He must have me, and it to be manifested there what an unworthy life mine has been!

Do you know what it is to have your motives detected? to have a friend come and say that which makes your heart ready to burst because he has touched the right point

—the one you thought concealed? What agony you felt at the first sound of it! What is that, to what it will be before that judgment-seat?

But everything is “made manifest” *now*. What is there in me that is not made manifest? All is. You may, like Job, be in the furnace, but God comes in and says: He is a dear child of mine; the dross is purged away, and there remains that which I put in. What would a place on the throne be without the heart being brought into subjection to His present work?

What is all the eternal glory compared to the thought that Christ is the Object for which I have to live now? He has made me a vessel to show forth His glory now, and what sort of fruit does he look for from me?



FRAGMENT.—“Men ought always to pray and not to faint” is ever before me at present. For ourselves, broken in pieces—our prayer is for oil on every part. That our sorrow may be such as shall magnify Christ in the very character of it; under any and all parts of it. And the prayer for this has been, as it must be, alleviation to the deepest human anguish that I have ever tasted.

**“HE THAT IS PERFECTED SHALL BE
AS HIS MASTER.”**

Can you say, “I am a called one—one with Christ?” And what is the hope of such? Nothing less than reaching the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. It is a *real* thing that Christ is sitting at the right hand of God in all His beauty and glory, and our expectation is the seeing Him as He is, and being like Him. The Father of glory, who looked at you in all your weakness and failure, will not cease working till, one by one, millions of vases shall be made like that pattern vase at His right hand. He is moulding all to the likeness of that One, and when we shall see Him as He is, these bodies of humiliation shall be like unto His body of glory. What a thought! Each believer being a vase full of glory; thousands of thousands of vases all to be filled with His glory. God will make you—will make me—to be one of them.

There are two things: the first, God dealing with every individual heart; the other, His taking you as part of a building, a city where every stone is bright and polished, and each one reflecting the glory of Christ. There every saint will show forth to the eye of God, the Lord Jesus, because they will all reflect His glory.

A STONE OF MEMORIAL.

*"And thou shalt remember all the way
which the Lord thy God led thee these forty
years."—Deut. viii. 2.*

O Lord, I remember the day that I came,
All wearied and wounded to Thee ;
My heart was bowed down with its sin and
its shame :

But Thou spakest so kindly to me :
Oh, I ne'er shall forget Thy sweet accents of
love,

Nor the mercy that beamed in Thy face,
When Thy pitiful-kindness my load did
remove,
And assured me of welcome and grace.

O Lord, I remember the peace that I felt
When my pardon I read in Thy blood ;
How my heart with the sweetest contrition
did melt

In the arms of Thy Father, my God :
All the darkness was gone, all my terrors
were o'er

As I saw all His glory in Thee ;
And He promised my sins He'd remember
no more,

But my God and my Father would be.

O Lord, I'd remember, each day that I live,
The grace that has made me Thine own :
To Thee, with myself, all I have would I give,
And live for Thy glory alone :

I'd remember, each step of my journey below,
Thou didst die for my sins on the tree ;
But how can I ever express all I owe,
My Lord and my Saviour, to Thee ?

THE GRACE OF GOD, AS BRINGING AND TEACHING.

Read *Titus ii. 11-14.*

It is very striking to notice the connections in which the summary of divine truth, contained in the above verses, is introduced. The chapter is occupied with teaching what sort of conduct Christianity demands from those who profess it according to the relative position in life in which they may be found. It teaches what is becoming in aged men and in aged women. It tells us, also, how young women should behave; and what should be characteristic of young men. It takes up the common, every-day conduct which is due from servants to their masters; and while teaching them to be obedient, and to seek to please them in everything—guarding against insolence and dishonesty—“that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things;”—it adds, “*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto*

Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Now there is a reason for the introduction of this passage here ; it is simply this : that, while men are satisfied—and must be satisfied, for they can go no further—with the expression of the mere outward behaviour, the word of God occupies itself with the creation and correction of the *motives* and springs whence all conduct flows. More than this—no conduct can ever be acceptable in the sight of God that does not flow from a heart subjected to His grace, which brings salvation ; and that is not swayed by its daily powers. Rules of conduct are not given, cannot be given, to those whose hearts have not been subjected to "the obedience of faith."

But even here, amongst Christians, there is a very frequent mistake. While the world values Christianity merely for its collateral results, such as the reformation of manners and its conservative effect on society, etc.. Christians too often are occupied with the working and effect of God's grace, in the subjects of it—whether themselves or others—to the exclusion of the contemplation of that grace in its divine and absolute character, and in its first and grand effect. I mean this : ordinarily the Christian's mind is more occupied, as expressed in the passage

before us, with what the grace of God *teaches*, than with what it *brings*. It *teaches* us to *deny ungodliness, etc.*, but before it teaches, it *brings salvation*. How many may be found most anxious to discover, what men now call the *subjective* power of this grace, who at the same time are utterly at sea as to what is meant, in corresponding phrase, by its *objective* power! Surely it is well, and necessary, in its place, to see to it that we yield ourselves to the *teaching* of God's grace, when its lesson is, "that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." But it is *not well* to overlook or underestimate, the absolute power of that grace in what it *brings*. The grace of God brings salvation, or is *salvation-bringing*, to the lost and ruined, before it is *teaching* in those whom it saves.

"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared," is but the succinct description of God's intervention in infinite love by the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the accomplishment of redemption.

Apart from all the effects and fruits of grace in those who are the subjects of it, there is God's intervention in perfect absolute goodness, in the scene of ruin and death which sin has introduced, for the perfect and entire deliverance out of it. The

grace of God *brings* salvation into this world, where sin and death and Satan's power mark the condition of man's existence ; and that apart from all the effects of that grace, in peace of conscience, or holiness and happiness, on the part of those that believe. There is the *grace itself*, as well as the blessed fruits which it produces. The salvation which it brings has its own proper character, as the intervention of God in divine love and power, as well as its own blessed results in the position, Godward, to which it brings its objects.

The two termini of a Christian's course are here marked as the results of this interposition of God in grace : viz., *salvation* and *glory*. The Christian's path, I repeat it, is here shown to lie between the starting-point, which is salvation, and the goal, which is glory. Grace and glory are inseparable :

“ Who *grace* has brought, shall *glory* bring,
And we shall reign with Him.”

Conduct, exercise of heart, trial, conflict, service lie between these two points, and in God's estimate take their character from them ; but the *salvation* was accomplished alone by Christ's appearing in grace—for “ grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” And the glory will be accomplished, alone, by Christ's appearing in glory. This is what the passage

states. "The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." It then adds, "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing (or rather, 'appearing of the glory') of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." Intermediately it tells us that the grace, which brings salvation, teaches us "that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;" while in verse 14, we have the constraining motive to holiness in the end for which Christ gave Himself for us: "Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

This is plainly practical as the end, in us, in this world, of Christ's infinite love.

Let us look, then, first, at the character of the deliverance, or salvation, which this wondrous intervention of God in grace brings. This cannot be learnt by going over the heads of systematic divinity, but by a reference to the character of man's condition through sin, as unfolded in the word of God, and manifested by the suffering and death of Christ. Whatever there is of moral distance from God through sin, this salvation, which "the grace of God" brings, meets, and sets aside. "For Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the

unjust, that he might *bring us to God*" (1 Pet. iii. 18). Sin in its very nature separates from God; for light cannot have fellowship with darkness; but then it is said, "Ye who sometime were far off are made *nigh* by the blood of Christ." Sin, and death, and Satan's power, and the judgment of God—all marked man's condition of ruin, and all must be met before salvation, full and adequate, can be proclaimed. It is not enough to raise man from his degradation and moral pollution, if such a thing could be, and set him on his pathway to happiness. The conscience must be set at rest on the ground of every claim of God in His righteous holiness having been met, and every possible consequence of sin set aside. And this is the salvation which the grace of God brings. It brings eternal life into this region of death; for "God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son." It brings in divine righteousness into the midst of condemnation. For "He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the *righteousness of God* in Him." It brings deliverance from Satan's power; for "through death (Christ) destroyed ('annulled') him who had the power of death, that is the devil; and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14, 15). Nay

more, the salvation which the grace of God brings puts us in the very place, and position, and acceptance before God, and makes us partakers of the very life and glory of Him by whom the salvation has been wrought. It has no other measure. It has no lower character. Was ever love like this!

There is, indeed, the *teaching* of this grace, which is all-important in its place; but what the heart must know first, as it is its first action, on the part of a God of goodness, is its salvation-bringing power; for without the knowledge of the salvation, its teaching will be misapprehended and in vain.

The grace of God, then, first *brings* a perfect absolute deliverance to the soul from the whole consequences of sin, and brings into God's presence in acceptance, according to the acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ. For the salvation lies in His obedience and sufferings for sin, in the acceptableness of His sacrifice, and in the power of His resurrection; and "as He is so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17). This is all absolute; it is God's part in the grace which brings salvation.

And as it is absolute in its character so is it universal in its aspect and bearing: "the grace of God which brings salvation hath appeared to all men." It is unrestricted in

its character; as the sun shines for all, though some even hide themselves from its light. "God so loved the *world* that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth on him might not perish but have everlasting life." "*Whosoever will*, let him take the water of life freely."

But the grace received becomes *teaching* in those who are the subjects of the salvation which it brings. It teaches us "that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." And here, I observe, *it is* "the *grace*" that teaches, and not something else. It is not man's wisdom, or man's morality, mixing itself with that which is divine in his salvation—and, I may add, divine in the nature which it imparts. It is the grace which brought the salvation still acting—but acting now in the subjects of it, and on the divine nature which it imparts. They are not *human* motives that form, and fashion, and produce the morality of a Christian, any more than it is human power that accomplishes his salvation. It is "*the grace of God*" that teaches him as well as saves him.

This is very remarkably shown in a passage in Timothy (1 Tim. iii. 16), the force of which is very frequently overlooked. The apostle would teach Timothy how he ought

to behave himself "*in the house of God*;" and he then presents the formative power of all true godliness, in the words, "Without 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."

This is often quoted and interpreted as if it spoke of the mystery of the Godhead, or the mystery of Christ's person. But it is the mystery of *godliness*, or the secret by which all real godliness is produced—the divine spring of all that can be called *piety* in man. "God manifest in the flesh," is the example and the power of godliness, its measure and its spring. Godliness is not now produced, as under the law, by divine enactments; nor is it the result in the spirit of bondage in those (however godly) who only knew God as worshipped behind a veil. Godliness now springs from the knowledge of the incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. It takes its spring and character from the knowledge of His person as "*God manifest in the flesh*;" the perfectness of His obedience, "*as justified in the Spirit*;" the Object of angelic contemplation, and the subject of testimony and faith in the world; and His present position as "*received up into glory*."

This is how God is known; and from abiding in this, godliness flows. And, as in the passage before us, between the salvation, which is the result of the appearing of the grace and the crowning of "that blessed hope" which the believer looks for in the appearing of the glory, is the *teaching* of the grace that has brought salvation. It teaches the denial of ungodliness and worldly desires, as at war with the ends of redemption, and contrary to the character and position in which salvation places us as "delivered from this present evil world" (Gal. i. 4). Certainly the cross and glory alike forbid the allowance of ungodliness and the pursuit of worldly desires. It was the world that crucified Christ; and in the appearing of the glory worldly desires can have no place: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof" (1 John ii. 16, 17). It will be all withered by the appearing of the glory. But sobriety, righteousness, and godliness are due from the believer towards the world, as a witness; and due towards God as a witness of the conforming power of His most precious grace.

Already I have noticed that this passage in

Titus presents the believer's path as lying between the *salvation*, which was accomplished by Christ's appearing in grace, and the glory, which will be accomplished by Christ's appearing in glory. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing (or epiphany of the glory; as it was the epiphany of grace) of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ." The salvation which the grace of God brings settles every question between God and the soul as to sin and condemnation; and the appearing of the glory will bring those who are Christ's into the enjoyment of the presence of God and Christ, in the perfected victory of Christ, and in the possession of all that can fit us for His presence in glory. "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body (or 'body of humiliation'), that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body (or 'body of glory'), according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. iii. 20, 21). "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 28). "We are saved by hope;" and nothing so moulds the affections for heaven as "waiting for God's Son from heaven, . . . even

JESUS, who delivered us from the wrath to come." In possession, and in the enjoyment, as to the soul, of this divine and perfected salvation, the believer has that which is far brighter in hope. He who, in sorrow and suffering, and in infinite love, wrought the salvation, is coming to receive us unto Himself; that where He is, there we may be also. We shall see Him as He is, and then we shall be made like Him.

All is divine and precious, infinite in love and goodness, in the way our God takes to act upon the soul. How touching is the motive to holiness which is presented in the closing verse of our passage! "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (verse 14). Here we have the end of redemption in the practical walk of the believer in this world. *But what can equal the motive that is presented in the declaration, "WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US?"*

May our hearts more fully answer to its constraining power! Amen.



ASSEMBLING OURSELVES TOGETHER.

It is quite certain that those who are whole-hearted for Christ desire to be in His company. They instinctively wend their

way to the spot where He is known to be. Is there such a spot on earth? Yes, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii. 20.)

No one who is truly conscious of the greatness and excellency of His person, and of the blessedness of communion with Him, would willingly be absent from that favoured place. A neglected Lord's Table, and a neglected prayer-meeting, speak aloud of the Laodicean state of the heart towards Him. We read that of old "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts ii. 42). Alas, that there should be such a lack of continuing steadfastly now!

Does the Lord say to the Father, "In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee" (Heb. ii. 12), and can we suppose that He fails to notice whether we are there or not, to join in the song He leads?

In the coming day of review before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. v. 10), how shall we take the disclosure, that self-indulgence, a little unfavourable weather, or a tiff with a brother or sister in Christ, has outweighed with us all the mighty motives for a loving response to His wish, "This do in remembrance of Me"? (Luke xxii. 19).

It is deeply humbling to think that any who have tasted the Lord's love can take

advantage of not having to work on the Lord's day to spend its morning hours in bed, and that others can excuse their absence from its meetings on the ground of visiting, or receiving visits from friends. Priceless opportunities of gratifying the heart of the Lord, and of showing our attachment to Him in the scene of His rejection are thus wasted and lost.

It is mere mockery to repeat "Come Lord Jesus," and use glowing expressions of desire to be with Him in glory, if, by our absence from His assembly, we betray our indifference to His presence here.

Beloved, it is high time to awake out of sleep (Rom. xiii. 11; Ephes. v. 14). May we take to heart the solemn and impressive exhortation of the word, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. x. 25).

Closely connected with the foregoing is the question of *time*. Where is our reverence for the Lord, or our sense of His grace, where our responsive love, if we come with lagging steps, five, ten or fifteen minutes after He has taken His place in the midst of His own?

It was easy in the freshness of first love, to come early to the place where He manifests Himself in such a peculiarly blessed way. Excuses were not made. Has He become less precious? The moments we may thus spend together with Him on earth stained with His blood, are swiftly passing away. Let us not willingly lose one of them.

It is touching to remember that no thought of all the sufferings that awaited Him, of Himself presently becoming the true passover, "sacrificed for us," delayed the Lord's appearing at His last paschal feast. "When *the hour was come*, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him (Luke xxii. 14).

Oh for a holy eagerness to be where He is!



"SURELY I COME QUICKLY."

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."—Rev. xxii. 20.

Brethren, hark! the midnight cry!
Lo! the Bridegroom draweth nigh!
Let us all with joy proclaim Him,
Lest our careless slumbers shame Him;
Shame, were ready none to meet Him,
None prepared with joy to greet Him!

Shame to us, were robes not white;
Shame, were lamps not burning bright;
Shame, if not our vigils keeping,
He should find the virgins sleeping!
Hark! my brethren, hear the cry,
"Lo, the Bridegroom draweth nigh!"

Let us each repeat the cry,
Louder let the tidings fly;
Every virgin swell the story
Of the Bridegroom's coming glory!
Lamps all burning, hearts all beating,
Longing for the joyous meeting. Amen!