

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.”

—2 PET. i. 12, 13.

VOLUME XV.

T O R O N T O,

CANADA.

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The Remembrancer

THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

(*Genesis ii.*)

The full act of creation under God's hand is detailed in chapter i. The work of creation is again given us here, but much more succinctly; the narrative soon passing, the general action confines itself to Eden, or to the garden of Eden, because there the scene of the great action about to be tried was laid, and all here is under the hand of the Lord God in a character of covenant relationship to man and the creation. The garden is shown us very particularly; it is described as the place of every desirable production, and as the source of those fruitful rivers which were to go over the whole earth; and Adam himself is put there "*to dress it and to keep it.*"

Now all these were so many characters of the man's *happy* estate. He had provision of all desirable things, he saw his habitation a spring of blessing to the earth around it, and he himself made important to that garden from which he derived his enjoyments. He was made to *give* as well as to *receive*, and all these were but different features of a happy condition to a well-ordered mind

such as Adam's. All this was surely so, but with advantages of so high an order it was needed that he should be told that he was but a creature still, and that the divine Planter of the garden alone was supreme. Accordingly the voice of a *Sovereign* is heard in the garden : a commandment goes forth, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat." But this voice is not a discord. It is all unison in the ear of an upright creature : for, act in what way or sphere He may, God must be, and will be, God—filling the chief room, and not giving His glory to another. A creature of a right choice must therefore rejoice in any witness of God's supremacy as in its own blessing. All this is but harmonious and consistent happiness ; for in the command there is nothing beyond the necessary thing. There is no laying upon Adam any other burden. One command is needed, and only one is given. And this is therefore only another item in the great account of his happiness. There the Lord God, to fill out the scene of this happiness, celebrates for Adam a coronation-day and a day of espousals ; but here I must linger for a moment or two. The order of the passage is this (vs. 18-22) :

The Lord God first takes counsel with Himself about Adam's espousals.

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He then introduces him to his dominions and sovereignty.

At last He celebrates his espousals, presenting Eve to him.

This is the order of his coronation and of his marriage, and it is an order which has its meaning. I believe the richest purpose of joy is the *first* in counsel, but the latest in manifestation: so in the substance. The church was in the election and predestination of God before the world began; but other ages and dispensations took their course ere that "mystery . . . hid in God" was made known (see Ephes. iii.). There is something of peculiar beauty and meaning in the order of this passage. It is not the mere progress of the narrative of independent facts; it is the design of a Great Master who knew the end from the beginning. But not only so. It is not only the design of a perfect mind, but the well-known way of love also. The Lord God's first thought was about Adam's *best* blessing. The helpmeet at his side was to be more to him than the subject creatures under him. The day of his espousals was to be dearer to him than the day of his coronation. Accordingly the Lord crowns him; but that is done at once, and put out of hand. But that which was to be *chief* in his enjoyments was the fondest image in the mind of his Lord. His

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Lord pondered it. He made it familiar to His thoughts ; spoke of it to Himself, because it was to be the dearest to Adam. This was the way of love. We understand it to be so. We like to think of the materials of a loved one's happiness ; we turn it over in our thoughts, and thus is the Lord God represented here as engaged for Adam. The manner of forming the plan or taking the counsel is thus beautiful, and the plan itself was wonderful. It took the highest aim, "It is not good that the man should be alone : I will make him an helpmeet for him."

Jesus the Son of God has found this to be so. His joy is provided for in the very way in which the Lord God here provides for Adam's. As we read, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son." How excellent a purpose therefore was this ! It was making nothing less than the divine enjoyments the standard and the measure ; it was saying to the creature, "Enter thou into the joy of *thy Lord*." And not only in the *plan*, but in the *execution of the plan*, the divine original is copied. Adam sleeps a deep sleep, and out of his riven side a rib is taken, of which the helpmeet is made. As the Lord's helpmeet comes forth from His toil, His sorrow, and His death, and He felt and valued all this. He saw of the travail of his soul,

as it were, and was satisfied. "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh," said his satisfied heart, surveying the fruit of his weariness and of his mystic death, and this again is *divine* joy. There is Another, we know, who will thus see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. It is the rest of the *labouring* man that is sweet. It is the bread eaten through *sweat of brow* that is pleasant. Adam had not helped in the forming of any beast of the field. They had not been quickened through any sleep of his. But Eve was taken from his riven side. She had been the fruit of his death-like slumber, and he therefore prized her: "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." Not only as his helpmeet, his companion, but because he had been *so necessary to her did he prize her*; she was *out of* his side as well as *for* his side. The execution of the plan bound his heart to her as well as the result.

And this was divine joy, this is the joy of Jesus. This joy in His church is His chief joy; she is both *for* His side and *out of* His side. Angels are not of the travail of His soul. But that which His toil and sorrow have won for Him, and which is prepared for the fellowship of His thoughts and His affections--this will be the dearest. The

whole redeemed thing in heaven and on earth will surely be to Him the rest of the *labouring* man, and the bread that is eaten through *sweat of brow* ; but the church it is which is destined *for His side*, like Eve, as well as *taken out of it*.

Finally, we see here the unshamed nakedness of the man and the woman—happy expression of innocent intimacy. No familiarity which such hearts *could* indulge *would* be rebuked, and so will it be between the true pair in the heavenly garden ; no fear of being bidden away, and no shame in drawing intimately near. Innocence was the security between Adam and Eve, and all the virtues of the new mind will be the necessary, instinctive, essential protection of the ways of the redeemed Bride of the Lamb, in company with the Lord, while indulging her heart in His nearest affection.

Beautiful, wondrous chapter ! I would ask myself, Are such the materials of my happiness ? Adam *communicated* as well as received ; Adam was *subject to God* as the creature was subject to him. And all these were but different parts of his happiness. Do we know this kind of blessedness—the blessing of imparting to others, and of being subject to God ? And do we enjoy those mysteries which so tell out the ways of Christ and the church ?

All this is a picture of perfect happiness; but it is such happiness as God could sanction or impart, and Jesus Himself could share.



PURGED WITH BLOOD.

(Hebrews ix.)

“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”

In the latter part of this text we find an exclusive proposition—that without shedding of blood there is no remission.

In the flaming sword placed in the garden of Eden, after man's disobedience, we find his positive exclusion from the presence of God; in our being out of paradise, we see the existing fact, that we are in a state of exclusion from God. And the question now is, have we any access to God—to that which is far above paradise?

It is not only that we are out of paradise, but that we stand in all the accumulation of our transgressions. In the first act of sin we find that the will of man is disobedience to God; and every act of his since has been treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.

When our conscience is awakened, we learn how productive of fruit our evil na-

ture is, and whenever we see that all is gone (for innocency once lost is lost forever), then we find there is no competency in us to enter into association with God. That which was man's privilege in paradise has been lost, and we find ourselves not only evil, but daily accumulating transgressions. And can we then enter into the place of God's holiness? This is the only true question. Let me ask you—Is there nothing your consciences own as needing remission? Murder and theft, etc., which are the consequences of the condition man is in, through transgression, are owned by all as evil. The natural man may see the blessing of moral conduct as giving happiness on earth, but can discern nothing beyond. But when we look within the veil, it is altogether another thing. Our not wronging our neighbour may produce temporal happiness: but the revelation of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ awakens the mind to a new enquiry—its fitness for the presence of such holiness; and this question is soon settled: we find it utterly impossible. It is not fitting us for happiness in the world as it is (that is not the question); but making us competent to be associated with Christ in the glory He is in when He appears. Does the world know anything about it? Is this what they look for? Do they not rather say it is presump-

tion to think any can have association and fellowship with God? The world is a witness to itself that it presumes no such thing.

God's testimony is, "There are none righteous, none understand, and none seek after God." But suppose we have received an understanding to know Him that is true, then still the question is--How are we to stand in the presence of the glory? Can one in a sinful condition abide in His presence? Can we say we are fit to be partakers of the glory? There is nothing in the world fit for this. It is vain to plead the highest morality, or the most refined amiability; they are not the things to qualify us for heaven. We may find the character of evil all around: all are guilty, for all come short of the glory of God. The evil of the root from which it springs may be easily discerned in the fruits.

Now there must not only be a renewing, but a complete purging of the conscience. And I plead this, that without shedding of blood there is no remission: all other ways are the efforts of man to depreciate the righteousness of God—the substitution of something instead of God's way of salvation, which is most presumptuous and subversive of the great testimony of God, that without the shedding of blood there is no remission. The accumulated sins of our evil

nature must be put away. The Spirit of God can have no part but bringing us to the knowledge of the hatefulness of sin, and the necessity of the blood shed ; and whenever the soul is awakened to what sin is in God's sight, there cannot be peace until the Spirit which shows the necessity of holiness, and reveals that of God, thus teaches us that nothing but God's own efficient act can put away, by the shedding of the blood of Jesus, that which God testifies against.

The shedding the blood brings it to the actual power of death—the taking away of the life of him whose life is given ; and why ? Because there is the forfeiture of life, and therefore the necessity of the life being given, the blood shed, to blot out the sin ; and here we find Christ stepping in, and all the believer has entirely shut up in Christ, in whom we have a new nature whereby we can delight in God, and not forgiveness only ; and this the consequence of the work of Christ alone, shedding His blood before God, offering His life as a ransom to God, presenting that which was adequate for the purpose, but without which there is no escaping the consequences of sin. “It pleased the Lord to bruise Him” (Is. liii. 10). The blood was shed, but it is manifested as His own voluntary act. At the same time His side is pierced that we might know the act

complete. This is presented to our faith as a thing requisite, and which could be done in no other way. Christ had no associate, no companion ; but once alone and for ever the thing was done ; and the revelation of it by God to the soul is salvation. This is a transaction between God and the Son ; the thing done is the ground of the remission of sins to every one who believes.

I have not peace in anything in which I take a part, but peace in that in which Christ acted alone. Man's part in it was only stretching out the sinful hands which crucified Him, and this is all he had to do with it. Is it, I ask, by any act to be done now that peace is obtained ? No ; it is simply by the blood which has been shed, the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of His death, which can give peace through faith.

If once we see ourselves morally dead in trespasses and sins, and that without the full forfeit of life there is no remission, we shall see, as regards the cleansing of the conscience, there is nothing but the blood for us. But who did this ? It is the act of God to provide Himself a Lamb, by the shedding of whose blood the conscience of those admitted into the holy presence of God is effectually purged.

Can you say paradise is lost, and disobedience and sin are here, and yet I shall force

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my way back to God? What hope can those have who are not washed in the blood, taking a worse ground than that which excluded them from paradise (with thus accumulated sin upon them), treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and despising that blood which cleanses from all sin, counting it an unholy thing? He who seeks God's holiness and passes by Jesus, going to God in his sins, passes by the blood, rejects the testimony of God, and despises Jesus.

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**THE HOPES OF THE CHURCH OF GOD,  
IN CONNECTION WITH THE DESTINY OF  
THE JEWS AND THE NATIONS,**

*As Revealed in Prophecy.*

—  
INTRODUCTORY.  
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*(Read 2 Peter i.)*

It should be the endeavour of the Christian, not only to be assured of his salvation in Christ, but also of all the results of this salvation. He should not only know that he belongs to the Father's house, but enjoy the privileges of his happy position. "God has called us by glory and virtue" (2 Peter i. 3).

In the glory of Christ and of the church, God has given us a futurity full of His own designs, the present study of which fills our



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hearts full of associations with Him ; and this assuredly is one of His objects in dispensing prophecy to us ; He reveals it to us as His friends (John xv. 15 ; Ephes. i. 9), making us participators of the thoughts which occupy Himself. He could not give us a more tender pledge of His love and confidence (Gen. xviii. 17), nor anything having a holier tendency as regards ourselves. In fact, if men are to be known by the ends they are pursuing, our conduct in the present life will have the impress and bearing of that futurity which we are expecting ; our life *here* will be coloured by the foretaste of things *there*. Those whose ambition is dignity and power, those who dream only of riches, those who have no other aim than the pleasures of this world, act according to that which is in their heart ; their habits bear the mark of what they are longing for. So it is in the church. If believers understood *their* calling, which is no less than participation in a coming *heavenly* glory, what would be the consequence ? Nothing less than to live here as strangers and pilgrims. In distinguishing the prophecies which relate to this earth, they would better understand the nature of the earthly promises made to the Jews, and would learn to separate them from those which refer to us Gentiles ; they would judge the spirit of

the age, and would preserve their hearts from being engrossed by human objects, and from many a care and distraction hurtful to the life of a Christian ; they would exercise a happy dependence upon Him who has ordered all things and who “ knows the end from the beginning,” and would yield themselves entirely to that hope which has been given them, and to the discharge of those duties which flow from it.

It has been said, that the real use to be made of the prophecies is to show the divinity of the Bible by those which have been already accomplished. This is certainly a use which may be made of them, but this is not the special object for which they have been given. They belong not to the world, but to the church or remnant, to communicate the intentions of God to that church or remnant, and to be its guide and torch before the arrival of those events which they predict, or during their accomplishment. Shall we use the revelations of God merely as the means of convincing us afterwards that He has told the truth ? It is as if some one were treating me as his intimate friend, heaping benefits upon me, communicating his thoughts to me, telling me all that he knew would shortly happen ; and I should use all his confidence for no other purpose than to convince myself, when everything

had come to pass, that he was a truth-telling person.\* Alas ! alas ! where are we ? Have we so far lost the feeling of our privileges, and of the goodness of our God ? Is there, then, nothing for the church in all these holy revelations ?—for certainly it is not the church's place to be discussing whether God, its divine Friend, has told the truth. Dear friends, we wrong the goodness and friendship of God in acting thus towards Him. As Christians, we have no need to be witnesses of an event, in order to believe what God says to be true—that His word is true. You believe already that prophecy is the word of God.

But more than this. The greater part of the prophecies, and, in a certain sense, we may say all the prophecies, will have their accomplishment at the expiration of the dispensation in which we are. Now, at that epoch it will be too late to be convinced of their truth, or to employ them for the con-

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\*As Satan is watchful to take advantage of every part of Scripture not used to a right end, he has not been unmindful of the above argument ; he has therefore led many to suppose a partial fulfilment of many of the prophecies to be their complete accomplishment. An undue prominence has been given by many commentators to little events, owing to the scope of prophecy not being understood in its utility to the present wants of the soul, or ultimately to those who will, in the midst of Israel, be waiting for redemption in Zion.

viction of others; the terrible judgment which will come upon those who disbelieve them will be sufficient demonstration of their truth. No; they are given to us to direct us in our present walk in the ways of the Lord, and to be our comfort in enabling us to see that it is God who disposes of all events, and not man. They are as a light shining in a dark place. Thus, the passions, instead of being let loose in the world of politics, are quieted. I observe what God has said—I read in Daniel that all is ordered from the beginning, and I am tranquil. Altogether separated from these worldly things, I can study beforehand the profound and perfect wisdom of God; I get enlightened, and cleave to Him instead of following my own understanding. I see in the events which take place around me the unfolding of the purpose of the Most High, and not a field abandoned to the struggle of human passions. Thus, and specially in the events which come to pass at the end, it is, that prophecy opens out to us the character of God—all that God would have us know of Himself—His faithfulness, His justice, His power, His long-suffering, but at the same time the judgment which He will certainly execute on proud iniquity, the public and fearful vengeance which He will take on those who corrupt the earth—in order that

His government may be established in peace and blessing for all.

Where was the use of the Lord forewarning the disciples that they were to flee under such and such circumstances, if they did not understand what He was speaking about, and did not believe beforehand in the truth of His word? It was precisely this knowledge and this faith that distinguished them from all their unbelieving countrymen. It is just so with the church.

The judgment of God is to come upon the nations; the church is informed of this; and, thanks to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, understands it, believes it, and escapes the things which are coming.

But, says another objector, these prophetic studies are merely speculative. Oh! what a device of Satan is this! If looking beyond the present, beyond the feeling of my own wants; if, passing beyond the domain of material being, I launch into futurity—everything will be vague and uninfluential, unless I fill it—with my own thoughts; now these are real speculations; or with the thoughts of God; what are these? It is prophecy which reveals and develops them; for prophecy is the revelation of the thoughts and counsels of God as to things to come. Where is the man bearing the name of Christian, who does not rejoice in

the prospect that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea"? This is prophecy. If it be asked, How is this to be accomplished? it is not from man's mouth that the answer is to come: the word of the same prophecy will tell us, and thus silence the imaginations and the vainglory of our proud hearts.

In truth, although communion with God comforts and sanctifies us, and this communion, which is to be eternal, is already given to us, yet He wishes to act upon our hearts by positive hopes. Necessarily then He must communicate the subject of them to us, in order that they may have an efficacious influence, and so prevent these hopes being either vague, or the result of ingeniously contrived fables. Thanks be to the God of all grace and goodness, our futurity is neither the one nor the other. The fullness of the details of the coming glory are still the subject of prophecy. "For," says the apostle, when he wants to call forth the exercise of piety, virtue, brotherly love, and charity in the souls of those who are the Lord's, and would have them keep these things constantly in remembrance (2 Pet. i. 16-21), "we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. but were eyewitnesses of his

majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also \*a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts : knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

In going through the more general features of prophecy, we shall examine these three great subjects :

The Church ; the Nations ; and the Jews.

In pursuing this study, we shall find, according to the measure of light which is given to us, a very beautiful result—namely, a full development of the perfections of God under two names or characters, according to which He has revealed Himself in relationship to man. To the Jews, it is as Jehovah that He makes Himself known (Ex. vi.

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\*Properly, "the word of prophecy (or 'the prophetic word') confirmed" (or "made more sure"), to wit, by the transfiguration.

3) ; to the church, it is as Father. In a word, as that which is predicted by the mouth of the prophets as to the Jews gives us the character of Jehovah—His faithfulness and all His attributes ; so that which is prophesied concerning the church opens out to us the name of Father. The church is in relationship with the Father, and the Jews with Jehovah, which is the characteristic name of their relationship with God. Jesus, in consequence, is presented to the Jews as the Messiah, the centre of the promises and of the blessings of Jehovah to that nation ; to the church He appears as the Son of God, gathering to Himself His “many brethren,” sharing with us His title and privileges—those, namely, of “children of God,” members of His “family,” “joint-heirs with Christ,” the First-born among many brethren, who is the expression of all the glory of His Father.

In the dispensation of the fulness of times, when God will gather together all things in Christ, then will be also realized in its fullest sense the name in which He revealed Himself to Abraham, the father of the faithful ; that name under which He has been celebrated by Melchizedec (a type of the Royal Priest, who will be the centre as well as the assurance of the common blessing of the united earth and heavens), the name of “the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth.”

*(To be continued, D. V.)*



THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM OF OUR  
LORD AND SAVIOUR  
JESUS CHRIST.

*(2 Peter i. 11)*

He reigns—His blessed kingdom spreads  
From sea to sea, from shore to shore ;  
He who for us, on Calvary bruised,  
God's righteous wrath unwavering bore.

O wondrous grace ! that lowly Man,  
Who in our nature felt the rod ;  
Hear it, ye heavens ! give ear, O earth !  
That sufferer was the Son of God !

Yea, God Himself, the great God-man,  
Messiah, Christ, th' eternal Lord ;  
Predestined to receive at length  
The kingdom as His bright reward.

And now 'tis come—on David's throne,  
(The false one into darkness hurl'd)  
The Holy One shines forth at last,  
The light, the sovereign, of the world.

But O, a joy, a higher joy,  
A glory far transcending this  
Is His—His portion here above,  
His guerdon in these realms of bliss.

That guerdon is His royal bride,  
His loved, His ransomed, and His own ;  
Chief object of His heart's deep joy,  
Beside Him here upon the throne.

Chosen in Him, beloved of God,  
Ere Adam sinned, ere time began ;  
For her He gave His life away,  
A weary, suffering, martyred Man.

O matchless love! what wonder now  
That thus these ransomed hosts should  
raise,  
In memory of His dying love,  
Their anthems of unwearied praise.  
What marvel that yon peopled earth,  
And choral heavens above should sing  
Of Him the church's glorious Head,  
Of Israel's Offspring, Israel's King?  
O 'tis His due—that worthy One  
Tastes now the fruit of love's blest ways;  
Eternal is His joy in us,  
Eternal is our song of praise.



## THE HOPES OF THE CHURCH OF GOD.

*(Continued from page 20)*

### LECTURE II.

*Read Ephesians i.*

#### THE CHURCH AND ITS GLORY.

Of the three objects which have been mentioned in the first lecture as about to form the subject of our study, that of the church and its glory is to have the first place. It introduces us to the name of Father, the character in which God has revealed Himself to us, and whence flow to the church, the fruits of grace, and all the circumstances of its state of glory, as everything flowed to Israel from the name of Jehovah. To this name of Father, however, is to be added another relationship, distinctly

marked in the Epistle to the Ephesians, and closely allied to the principal one, namely, that the Father has given the church to Christ as His bride, so that it will fully participate in all His glory. In adopting us for His children, the Father has associated us with the dignities and glory of the Son, "First born among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29). As the bride of Jesus, we enjoy, in virtue of His incomparable love to us, all the privileges that belong to Him.

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John iii. 35). This is the first great truth we desire to set out from. And as the Son has glorified the Father, so the Father will glorify the Son.

Our second point is : we shall participate in the glory of the Son ; as it is said in John xvii. 22, "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them;" and it is in order that the world may know that the Father loves us as He loves Jesus Himself. In seeing us in the same glory, the world will be convinced that we are the objects of the same love ; and the glory which we shall have at the last day will be but the manifestation of this precious and astonishing truth.

Thus the hope of the church is not alone salvation, that is, to escape the wrath of

God, but to have the glory of the Son Himself.

That in which the perfection of its joy consists is the being loved by the Father, and by Jesus; and, in consequence of this love, the being glorified. But more than this, the Father would have us enter into the full intelligence of these riches, and has even given us the firstfruits by the presence of the Holy Ghost in all those who are saved.

Before we follow up these thoughts by other testimonies from the word of God, let us look into the chapter before us.

In the very first lines, God presents Himself as a Father, and in the relationships already indicated.

He is "*our* Father" (ver. 2), and "the Father of our *Lord Jesus Christ*" (ver. 3).

From this until verse 8 the apostle expounds salvation. God "has made us accepted in the beloved"—this "to the praise of the glory of his *grace*," in God's presence, in conformity to His nature, and adopted as children to the Father. We have redemption through His blood. This is according to the riches of His grace.

From verse 8 to 10, we see that this grace of salvation introduces us by its actual power, by the Holy Spirit, into the knowledge of the proposed purpose or decree of

God as to the glory of Christ; a touching proof, as we have before remarked, of the love of God, who treats us as His friends, and tranquillizes our souls, in an ineffable manner, in making us see the termination of all the efforts and all the agitation of the men of this world.

The decreed purpose of God is this: "God will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth."

Until verse 8, we have seen our predestination to the state of children of the Father, and the actual accomplishment of salvation. "*We have redemption through his blood.*" In that which follows, we have the purpose of God, as to the glory of Christ, in relation with all things; afterwards, from verse 11, our participation, yet future, in the glory thus designated; and, further, the sealing of the Holy Spirit whilst we are waiting in expectation of this glory. "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance . . . . that we should be to the praise of his glory." Previous to verse 8, it had been "to the praise of the glory of his grace." Now it is "to the praise of his glory;" and then, "after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our *inheritance until the redemption* of the purchased possession, unto the

praise of his glory." The remainder of the chapter is a prayer of the apostle, that the faithful may understand their hope, and that the power of the resurrection and of the exaltation of Christ, to whom the church is united, may be accomplished in them, a power which works towards them as believers.

This position of the church, which enjoys its own redemption, and which waits for the redemption of the inheritance, has its perfect type in Israel. This people, redeemed from Egypt, did not enter at once into Canaan, but into the wilderness, whilst the land itself remained still in the possession of the Canaanites. The redemption of Israel was finished, the redemption of the inheritance was not. The heirs were redeemed, but the inheritance was not yet delivered out of the hands of the enemy. "Now all these things," says the apostle (1 Cor. x. 11), "happened unto them" [the Israelites] "for types, and they are written for our admonition" [the church], "upon whom the ends of the world are come."

Christ is waiting for the resurrection of the church, in order that everything may be subjected to Him; subjected, not of right only, but in fact. He is waiting for that solemn moment when Jehovah will make all His enemies as a footstool under

His feet (Ps. cx. 1). Until that moment arrives, kept as a secret in the depth of the divine counsels, \*He is sitting on the "right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. i. 3).

Christ will take the inheritance of all things as a man, in order that the church, bought with His blood, may inherit all things with Him, purified co-heir of an inheritance which will be itself purified.

Let us keep in mind, then, these two fundamental points :-

First. Christ, in the counsels of God, possesseth all things.

Secondly. In virtue of being the bride of Christ, the church participates in all that He has, and in all that He is, except His eternal divinity, although in a sense we do participate in the divine nature.

\*It is perhaps for this reason that it is said in Mark xiii., that the Son Himself knoweth not the day nor the hour, because He Himself was the object of this decree of Jehovah. He will receive everything from the hand of God, as man and servant, as also God has now highly exalted Him (Phil. ii. 9). Speaking as a prophet, Christ announced His coming as the terrible judgment which was to fall upon an unbelieving nation; but the counsel of God as to this judgment, or at least as to the moment of its approach, was contained in those words, "Sit thou at my right hand *until* . . . ." Christ as a servant waited (as always, and this was His perfection) upon the will of His Father, and to receive the kingdom when the Father would have it so.

It is worthy of remark that Psalm cx., and Mark xiii., refer exactly to the same subject. The enemies are the Jews who rejected Him (Luke xix. 27).

Let us look through the passages which furnish the thoughts we have been giving out.

All things, we say, are for Christ.

He is "appointed heir of all things" (Heb. i. 2). They belong to Him of right, because He is their Creator (Col. i. 15-18). Observe, in this passage, two headships of Christ: first of all He is called "firstborn [or, chief] of every creature," then, "firstborn from the dead," "the head of the body, the church;" a distinction which throws much light on our subject. "All things were created by him, and for him." Moreover, He will possess them as man, as Second Adam, to whom God has intended in His counsels to subject them.

It is thus that we read in Psalm viii., which is applied to Christ in Heb. ii. 6, &c., and is, in fact, the corner stone of the doctrine of the apostle Paul upon this subject. He cites the psalm three times in his epistles, in passages, the leading thoughts of which are the subjection of all things to the man Christ under three different aspects, every one of which is important for us.

According to Heb. ii. 6, the prophecy is not yet accomplished, but the church has, in the partial accomplishment of that which is yet to come, the pledge of its final con-



summation. All things are not yet put in subjection to Jesus; but, in the meantime, Jesus is already crowned with glory and honour—certain proof that what remains will have its fulfilment in due time.

Under the present dispensation (the object of which is the gathering together of the co-heirs) all things are not subjected to Him; but He is glorified, and His followers acknowledge His rights. In Hebrews ii., then, we have the application of Psalm viii. 5, 6, and we are informed that the subjection of all things to the Second Adam has not yet taken place.

In Ephesians i. 20-23, we equally see Jesus exalted, highly exalted, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and the putting of all things under His feet is also offered to our attention; but as the effect of this is the introduction of the church into the same glory, Jesus is presented to us, in this glory, as the Head of the church, His body, “the fulness of him that filleth all in all”—the other truth upon which we have been insisting.

Again, in 1 Corinthians xv., this same fact, the glorification of Jesus, and the subjection of all things to Him, is shown to us, but still in another point of view, that is, as about to take place at the resurrection, according to the power of which Jesus has

been declared the Second Adam, and withal head of a kingdom which He will possess as man, and which He will eventually deliver up to God the Father, whilst He Himself, as Second Adam, is to be "subject unto him that put all things under him," instead of reigning as man, as He had been doing, over all things—all things, we say, except over Him who will have subjected them to Him.

The truth, then, which we have presented, besides the proper joy of being with Him and like Him and in the Father's presence, is, a subjection yet to come of all things to Christ, a reign which He will share with the church, inasmuch as this is His body, and which will take place therefore at the resurrection of this same body, and a power which He will afterwards resign to God the Father, at some decreed time, in order that God may be all in all.

Christ, glorified in His person now, and whilst the church is gathering, is sitting upon the throne of God, waiting until it be complete; until, in short, the time be come for His being invested with royal power, and that Jehovah shall have put His enemies as a footstool under His feet.

An important distinction results from the passages we have been citing: it is this, that besides the reconciliation of the church, there is the reconciliation of all things.

You may have perceived this in the chapter, with the reading of which the lecture began: we saw that the proposed intention of God was to gather together all things in Christ; that the reconciliation of the church is represented, in the verses which precede verse 8, as a thing accomplished, and the glory as a thing future, of which we have as yet but the earnest in the presence of the Holy Spirit in us after having believed. But we see in Romans viii. 19-23 that the deliverance of creation will take place at the time of the manifestation of the sons of God. As to the present, that is, the time during which Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, everything is in a state of misery, the whole creation remains in the bondage of corruption. It is true that we are redeemed, and that even the price for the redemption of creation has been given; and more than this, we have received the firstfruits of the Spirit as earnest of the glory. But all this is but our expecting state, until the Most High enters upon the exercise of His power, until He reigns, and becomes possessor in fact, as He is by right, of the heavens and the earth. Inhabiting in our bodies a fallen creation, whilst indeed by the Spirit we are united to Christ, we have, on the one hand, the assurance of being children "accepted in the beloved,"

and the joy of the hope of the inheritance by the Spirit which is the earnest of it; but, upon the other hand, by the same Spirit, we give utterance, inasmuch as we are in the body, to the sighs and groanings of the creation, being participators therein owing to this body of death. All is in disorder: but we know Him who has redeemed us and made us co-heirs of all things, and who has introduced us into the enjoyment of the love of the Father; we enjoy these privileges. But, understanding also the blessings which will be shed upon the inheritance, when Christ shall take it and we shall appear with Him in glory, perceiving likewise the miserable state in which the scene of His future dominion actually is, we serve, by the Spirit, as a channel to those sighs which go up to the throne of the God of mercy.

The passage already cited from the Epistle to the Colossians accurately establishes this distinction. It is said (ver. 20), "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you . . . (the saints) now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death." The church is already reconciled. The things of earth and heaven will be

reconciled later, by the efficacy of His blood already shed.\* The order of the ceremonies on the great day of atonement explained this reconciliation typically, though in special reference, as to details, to the part which the Jews will have in these blessings.

In Colossians i. 16, we clearly see what are the things which are comprehended in this reconciliation: "All things were created by him, and for him." All that He has created as God, He will inherit as the restorer of all things. Were there, for example, a blade of grass that was not subjected to His power in blessing, Satan would have got an advantage over Christ, over His rights, and over His inheritance. Now it is the judgment which will vindicate all the righteous title of Christ.

Besides all this, Christ, when He comes, will be the source of joy to all created intelligences, joy reflected and elevated by the blessing which will be spread over the whole creation: for the joy of witnessing the happiness of others, and also that which flows down in the freeing of creation from the servitude of corruption, is a divine part of our enjoyments; we partake it with the God of all goodness.

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\*It must be carefully attended to, that it is a question here of things, and in heaven and earth, and in no way of sinners remaining in their unbelief, who are in neither.

As to us, it is in the "heavenly places" that we shall find our abode. The spiritual blessings in heavenly places which we enjoy even now in hope, and hindered in many ways, will be for us, in that day, things natural, our physical and normal state, so to speak; but the earth will not fail to feel the effects of it. "Wicked spirits in heavenly places" (see margin Eph. vi. 12), whose place will be then filled by Christ and His church, will cease to be the continual and prolific causes of the misery of a world subjected to their power by sin. The church, on the contrary, with Christ, reflecting the glory in which she participates, and enjoying the presence of Him who is at once to her its source and fulness, will beam upon the earth in blessing; and the nations of those who are saved will walk in her light. "Help meet for him" in His glory, full of thoughts of her beloved, and enjoying His love, she will be the worthy and happy instrument of His blessings; whilst, in her condition, she will be the living demonstration of their success. For God has done these things, "that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 7). The earth will enjoy the fruits of the victory and of the faithfulness of the Second Adam, and will be the magnificent

testimony of it in the sight of principalities and powers, as it is at present, in the chaos made by sin, of the ruin and of the iniquity of the first Adam. Without doubt, the crowning joy—the joy of joys—will be the communion of the Father and of the Bridegroom; but to be witness of His goodness, to have part in it, and to be an instrument of it towards a fallen world, will certainly be to taste of divine joys, for “God is love.”

Dear friends, it is this earth that we inhabit that God has taken to make the scene for the manifestation of His character and His works of grace. This earth is the place where sin has entered and fixed its residence; it is here that Satan has displayed his energy for evil; it is here that the Son of God has been in humiliation, has died, and has risen; it is upon this earth that sin and grace have both done their wonders; it is upon this earth that sin has abounded, if, notwithstanding, grace has much more abounded. If now Christ is hid in the heavens, it is upon this earth He will be revealed; it is here that the angels have best penetrated the depths of the love of God; it is here, also, that they will comprehend its results, manifested in glory; upon this earth, where the Son of Man has been in humiliation, the Son of Man shall be

glorified. If this earth in itself is but a small thing, that which God has done upon it, and will do, it is not a small thing for Him. For us (the church,) the heavenly places are the city of our habitation, for we are co-heirs, not the inheritance (we are heirs with God and joint-heirs with Christ); but the inheritance is necessary for the glory of Christ, as the co-heirs are the object of His most tender love, His brethren, His bride.

I have, then, detailed to you, dear friends, briefly and feebly, as I am well aware, what is the destiny of the church. The Spirit can alone make us feel all the sweetness of the communion of the love of God, and the excellence of the glory which is given to us. But, at least, I have pointed out passages enough in the word to make you understand (with the help of the Holy Spirit, which I implore for you all) the thoughts which I had on my heart to tell you to-night. It results clearly enough that we live under the dispensation during which the heirs are gathered together, and that there is another which will take its place at the coming of the Saviour,—that in which the heirs shall have the enjoyment of the inheritance of all things,—that in which all things shall be subjected to Christ, and to his Church, as united to Him and manifested with Him.



What is to follow ulterior to that is not our business now : I mean that last period, when God will be all in all, and when Christ Himself, as man, will be subject to God ; and chief, as man, of a family eternally blessed in the communion of God, who has loved that family, and whose tabernacle will be in the midst of it—God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, eternally blessed. Amen.

It is in occupying herself with these subjects, full of hope by the Spirit, that the church will be detached from the world, and will clothe herself with the character which becomes her as the affianced bride of Christ, to whom she owes all her heart and all her thoughts.

*(To be continued, D. V.)*

### CHRIST EXALTED, THE SOURCE OF BLESSING.

The Jews did not understand the Scriptures, and fulfilled them through not understanding them. God's ways have gone on through all, manifesting His grace and patience towards man. He placed man on the earth, and then sent law, prophets, &c., until man gets to the end in rejecting all. God tries man, and then brings in the new Man, who is the fulfilment of all His blessed counsels—the second Man. Then He takes up the last Adam as the heavenly Man into

a heavenly place, and all now depends, not on the responsibility of man, but on the stability of God. Life, righteousness, and glory descend from heaven. Is it life that is needed? God gives the life of Christ in resurrection. Is it righteousness? It is a divine righteousness that God gives. Is it a kingdom? It is the kingdom of heaven. All flows down, not simply from God in grace, but from the place which man has in glory, from the counsels of God about the heavenly Man in glory. He has first taken Him up, and thence the blessing flows down. The Man Christ Jesus has fully met all man's responsibilities. This is the reason of the fulness of the blessing of the gospel, and also that of the kingdom to come. The gospel is the power of God, and the kingdom is to be set up in heaven. The King is gone into the far country, and when He returns it will be to bring in the kingdom of heaven. All the counsels of God now take their centre and seat in heaven. Thus, in the largest way, the turning-point in all the plans and counsels of God, is Jesus being set at the right hand of God. All the character, the stability, and the perfectness of our blessing take their source from the exalted Jesus. The character of it is heavenly, the stability is what God has done, and the righteousness that fits me for it is God's.

## THINGS REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT.

People quote this passage, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him," to show how great these things of God are. They have not entered into the heart of man, "but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit:" such is the Scripture—just the opposite of the common use of it. You see God means us to know them, though we may have been bad scholars at the lesson. But He has given us a title—to what? Simply to be pardoned? Is that all? Is it nothing to say, I am come to God, the Judge of all; I can look down upon things that are for judgment, the reproach of Egypt being done away; I am in Christ, and see the glory of the Son of God and Son of Man—the Son who earned God's love? Yes; earned it! for He says, "Therefore doth my father love me, because I lay down my life." Is it nothing to see the Lamb slain? Have we not far more than pardon? And where is to be your place? You are going to be like Himself. Did you never think of this? "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly;" "And we have received the Spirit, not which is of the world, but which is of God, to know the

things which are freely given unto us of God." It is not the redemption—though we must know that truly, and get clear as to it—it is more. Again I ask, Have your souls never tasted what it is to be where there is nothing but holiness—not a jar with what God is? What a delight! And all around not a flaw, not a thing that does not answer to the glory of God as God and to the love of God as love! Nothing. Christ is the centre of it, and we, in a certain sense, so too, as in Him. Are your souls living there? Well, you will get a white stone; but you say, Am I to have God's approving delight upon me? Yes; and the new name. Ah, this will be a secret between you and Christ! Is there nothing in that? Is there nothing in His approbation so put upon us? Does it not come into your heart as that which is unspeakable joy? Again, "The glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." But if *I* see the Lamb in the midst of the throne, Ah! I say, now I am indeed at home; that is the sight that dazzles every other, and that is the sight which is for me. The Lord God and the Lamb are the temple there. We shall sit on Christ's throne with Him—conferred glory surely, but none the less real. Will this be nothing? There will not be a thing in Christ's heart that is not satisfied towards us, and is this nothing to us? And is it nothing to us to see the Man that suffered for us glorified? Now the Spirit of God has taken these things and revealed them unto us that we may live in them.

## “IT IS GOOD FOR ME TO DRAW NEAR TO GOD.”

### *A Few Practical Words on Psalm lxxiii.*

What a blessed conclusion to come to, after all the exercises of soul passed through, as recorded in this Psalm: “It is good for me to draw near to God!”

The Psalm itself primarily refers to the temporal judgment of God in Israel, as satisfying the anxieties of heart among the faithful; yet, as these anxieties are of all times, we shall find it profitable to meditate on. We see the ungodly having their way, so that God seems to have forgotten, and the heart is envious. But it shows in our case too often that the heart would yet have its portion here—at least a portion here as well as one to come. The sorrow at the power of evil in the world is right, but it mingles itself in our minds with liking to have one's own way and judgment in setting it aside. When the will mixes itself up with the sense of the success of evil, it is irritated or disheartened so as to give up perseverance in good. The ungodly prosper in the world. What a riddle! Where is God's government? What is the use of good? No doubt it was more directly trying where

temporal blessings had been made a sign of divine favour, as was the case with Israel. But Christians are seldom separated enough from this world not to feel the success of wickedness, and a desire to take vengeance on it. Mere indifference to it is utterly evil. Thus the path is narrow, and grace must work in the heart to lead us in it to feel the evil in itself, to feel God's glory cast in the dust by it; but to abide God's time and way, as Christ did when He suffered.

There is no place of learning but in the sanctuary. There the will is bowed: there God is known: there the eye is not obscured by the passions of the world, and an ignorance of how to do what God alone could do—make allowance for any good, have perfect patience with evil, so that judgment shall be simply on evil, and be true judgment on evil without excuse. Our impatience would be nothing of this, even where the evil as such is justly judged. But in the sanctuary will is silent and God is listened to. His ways are right, and we see things with His eye. The evil is worse, the compassion right, the patience adorable, yet the judgment sure; so that the sense of righteousness is not crossed in the heart, though the will of vengeance is; for the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God. The judgment is righteous because

patience is perfect—far more terrible because there is no passion in it. It refers to God. When we desire that fire may come down from heaven (Luke ix.), self is in it: we do not know what manner of spirit we are of; yet, in one sense, they really deserved it. When God awakes in His own just time, they are as a dream. Their pride, pretensions, all is as a departed image. Faith believes this and leaves them there.

But another blessed truth comes out here. He had been foolish, ignorant—"as a beast," so he says, "before God;" yet there had been integrity and conscience. If he had let his thoughts loose when half disposed to say godliness was no use, he would have offended against the generation of God's children. This checked him. How beautiful to see in the waywardness of man's will these holy affections, this conscience of putting a stumbling-block in the path of the weakest of God's children, check the heart, and show where the affections really are, and that fear of God which shows He is lovingly known—that the new nature is there! It is a great mark of good that God is owned. But what he knows of himself is that he was as a beast in his heart's reasoning as it did. But, then, mark what is seen. He comes to see that, in spite of all this, while owning his folly, he was continually

with God. O how the full knowledge of self, when we know as we are known, will show the patient unvarying grace of God waiting on us all the way in adorable love and interest in us! Through all his foolishness he was continually with God, and God had holden him by his right hand. Blessed grace! God loves us, cares for us, watches over us, is interested in us; because of His sovereign love, we are necessary to his satisfaction. "He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous" (Job xxxvi. 7): this is a wondrous thought of constant grace. But He is God, and not man: and so the heart here counts on Him.

Up to this, through all his shortcoming in faith, he could say, "Thou hast holden:" now he says, as in communion, "Thou wilt guide me by thy counsel." This is not merely holding up unconsciously; it is the mind and will of God guiding us in communion. Hence it is seen when he has judged himself and is in communion; it is not that God does not guide us—make us go according to His own counsels, when we are not in communion, holding our mouths with bit and bridle; for He does. But the soul does not understand it then, cannot speak, as here, in the knowledge of His doing it by His counsel. This He does. Here (in the last half of verse 24) we meet, in the full force of the



passage, the plain distinction of the Jewish position: "After the glory, thou wilt receive me." It has been altered to make more of it for Christian ideas, and the true meaning is lost. (Compare Zech. ii. 8).

After the glory, when this is set up, Israel will be received; but in that glory we shall come with Christ. The heart is now set right by this visit to the sanctuary: "Who in heaven but the Lord?" We, indeed, may have our thoughts expanded by the knowledge of the Father and the Son; still the truth abides, only better known. Who in heaven but God, the centre and source and all of blessing? On earth, where with such as us not thus fixed on God, there might be distracting desires, there is no source of delight with Him; that is, He is the only one. Singleness of eye is complete. As we are in the world, it does make us feel alone, but alone with God. So the blessed Saviour "All ye shall be offended in me this night and shall leave me alone; but I am not alone, for the Father is with me." In one sense the heart accepts the dominancy of evil and is blessedly abstracted from all to God. See thus the blessing of this seeming evil. Were all peaceful and good, prosperous in the present and imperfect state of things, the heart would sink into that imperfect state and be really worldly;

but the prevalence of evil, though pressing on the spirit (the will checked by the feeling that one cannot dissociate oneself from God's people), drives to the sanctuary of God. The heart is weaned from this world, and in a world where evil does prevail, looks up to God, has Himself for its portion alone in heaven, and so nothing along with Him on the earth. Nothing competes with Him at all. As in the New Testament, "Christ is all."

But this brings in another blessing. This endures. Heart and flesh fail; surely they do. "God is the strength of my heart." He stays with divine strength and goodness and sustains the heart, and is not only a present stay, but an everlasting portion, our "portion for ever." This leads to a sweet and earnest conclusion. "*It is good for me to draw near to God.*" There we learn truth; there we find comfort. He has put his trust in the Lord Jehovah, in One sovereign in power, abiding and faithful in promise. He who does, will surely have to declare all His wondrous works. He will be in the place to see and experience them, have the heart to notice and understand them, the joy of testifying the faithfulness of One the heart has trusted. In verse 20 we have only sovereign power; in the last verse, covenant faithfulness also.

## THE HOPE OF HIS CALLING.

*(Ephesians i. 15—ii. 10)*

“That ye may know what is the hope of his calling.” God has called you; what is the hope of the calling? What future is there in this call? We get it in chap. i. 5: “Having been predestinated unto the adoption of children.” I know “Abba’s” heart now; I am to know “Abba’s” house then. If God says, “How beautiful my house will be with my Son in it, surrounded by those associated with Him,” is it nothing to my heart that God already has joy in the thought? It will have a separating effect on the soul from evil to God. “And what the riches of the glory,” &c.? Glory is not the same as the Father’s house. There is rest in the thought of the house, whereas in the glory we get the public expression of it. What a contrast to this beggarly world down here! Here it is all toil; but what is it all leading to? To a bright, brilliant, glorious future, now made little of by people here; then made much of by God up there. So far there is no question of life; He takes them as it were and shows them the corpse they were, the pit they were in. God loves to be Centre, to have round Him a circumference of blessing. What was the pit you came from? What good was there

in it? God could find none; so you cannot. Everything in it is bad, though it need not come out. As the pit was down there, and nothing but evil working in it, so the blessing came from quite a different place—from the Man up there upon the throne. Had we taken a few steps towards Him? No! it is even when we were “dead in sins.” It is not a question of bad fruits—“dead in sins” (not alive in sins, as in Romans,) all entirely wrong, all dead; not a correct notion of God, nor of Christ, nor the Holy Ghost, nor of ourselves.

There are three things: life-giving, separation from the grave, and a place of permanent rest. Satan cannot rob me of blessing, because I am within Christ. The bringing into a place of blessing is a thing to be known individually; knowing it, and knowing the existence of it, are very different things. You say you believe it. Have you got it yourself? Can you say, “I have gone up from the tomb by a power that associates me with all that is dear to God? God looks on me, and says, ‘There is an individual who has life together with my Son.’” Can *you* say it? Is the life that you live in the flesh by faith of the Son of God?

God promised a Son to Abraham; his circumstances said, “Impossible, you cannot have any children.” But Abraham, as

it were, said, "Let God alone, He will see to His promise." Difficulties to believers now come in exactly the same way. Things inconsistent are brought up by conscience: if you say, "That is inconsistent with the Man up there, I am ashamed of myself," you judge it in faith; but if you say, "I have failed, I am no Christian," you play into Satan's hands; you do not judge yourself, but slur over the evil. We get here three things: Abba's heart, Abba's house, and that the Man, the perfect Servant of God, who was obedient even unto death, has won His place up there. He went in not only as One who had a right to go in, but because He had humbled Himself. These things just mark the place that you and I are in as Christians. God wanted to show what a God He was and the resources He had in His Son.

If God has raised us up together, &c., it is that we may have communion with Himself through this Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith. We cannot get steadiness of works, unless with a soul abiding in communion with God. If I am in communion with God, what do I get? If a heart be right with God, there is thinking or talking about Christ—Christ at home in the heart. I look up and say, "There is a Man on the throne of God, and He has all power in His hand: the Son of the virgin, the Seed

of the woman;" and God says, "That is my beloved Son, the fulness of the Godhead." If you know Him, you may get all the fulness of God. I never shall know Him; but I know Himself. God presents in that Man, seen there by faith, what can fill the humblest mind.

God has formed in my soul such an estimate of Christ that I could not do without Him; and more than that, He cannot do without me. Nothing is good without Christ; and the presence of Christ in anything makes a home-scene to the heart.

The valley of Baca is a precious place if Christ be there. Oh, what a height and depth in the truth that makes us one with Him! What an expression of love! What an expression of light!

Lord Jesus, are we one with Thee!

Oh height, oh depth, of love!

And crucified and dead with Thee,

Now one in heaven above.

Such was Thy grace, that for our sake

Thou didst from heaven come down;

With us of flesh and blood partake,

And make our guilt Thine own.

Our sins, our guilt, in love divine,

Confess'd and borne by Thee;

The gall, the curse, the wrath, were Thine,

To set Thy ransom'd free.

51

Ascended now, in glory bright,  
Life-giving Head Thou art ;  
Nor life, nor death, nor depth, nor height,  
Thy saints and Thee can part.

And soon shall come that glorious day,  
When, seated on Thy throne,  
Thou shalt to wond'ring worlds display  
That we with Thee are one.



## THE HOPES OF THE CHURCH OF GOD

*(Continued from page 37)*

### LECTURE III.

Read Acts i.

#### THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

This evening I am going to speak of the coming of Christ. Many questions link themselves with this great one ; as, for instance, the reign of Antichrist. But I shall limit myself this evening to the event itself —namely, the coming of the Lord.

I began by reading Acts i., because the promise of the Lord's return is there set forth as the alone hope of the church, as the first object which would of necessity fix the attention of the disciples, when they were vainly following with their eyes the ascending Saviour, who was going to be hidden in God. In this chapter, just as the Lord was about to leave them, three remarkable features appear. The first is that the disciples desired to know when and how God would restore the kingdom to Israel.

Now Jesus did not say that this was never to happen; He only said, that the time of this restoration is not revealed. It belonged to times and seasons which the Father has put in His own power. The second is, that the Holy Ghost was about to come; and the third, that during the time the disciples were looking towards heaven, two angels said to them, "Why stand ye here gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

They were then to expect the return of Christ.

If we study the history of the church, we shall find it to have declined in spirituality exactly in proportion as this doctrine of the expectation of the Saviour's return had been lost sight of. In forgetting this truth it has become weak and worldly. Not, however, wishing to quit the sphere of the word, let us see therein how the feeling of the return of Christ ruled the intelligence, sustained the hope, inspired the conduct, of the apostles. We have only to this end to look through a few passages of the New Testament.

Acts iii. 19-21. "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come



[or 'so that the times of refreshing may come'] from the presence of the Lord . . . 'The Holy Spirit is come; He has remained with the church; but the times of refreshing will come "from the presence of the Lord when He shall send Jesus." It is impossible to apply this passage to the Holy Ghost, because He was already, at that time, come down, and had said by the mouth of the apostle, "Whom the heaven must receive till the times of restitution of all things." And, in truth, the Holy Spirit has not restored all things. He who is to come according to this passage, is not to come to judge the dead, nor that the world may be burnt up and destroyed; but it is especially for "the restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets."

I cite these passages to make you comprehend what I understand by the coming of the Saviour. It is not the judgment of the dead; it is not the great white throne; but it is the return of Jesus Christ in person, when He shall be sent from heaven. If you compare these verses with what is written in Revelation xx., you will see that the coming of Jesus Christ, and the judgment of the dead, are two distinct events; that when the judgment of the dead takes place, there is not a word about Christ returning

from heaven upon the earth; for it is said, "From whose face the earth and the heavens fled away." (Ver. 11.)

The Lord will return to the earth.

Let us now see how Himself first, then the Holy Ghost by the apostles, have constantly directed our attention to His personal return.

Matthew xxiv. 27-33. "Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." Certainly the expedition of Titus against Jerusalem was not the coming of the Saviour in the clouds of heaven. Neither is this a description of the judgment of the dead before the tribunal of the great white throne. At that time the earth is no more, whilst in the passage just cited the nations of the earth are brought before us, and it is a question of an event in which the earth is concerned. "Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn." It is not a millennium brought about by the exercise of the power of the Holy Ghost. The world has never seen the Holy Ghost. We are told that the tribes of the earth shall lament when they see the Lord Jesus (Ver. 33). "So likewise ye, when ye see all these things, know that it [He] is near, even at the doors.'

Verses 42-51. The faithfulness of the church is made to hinge on its watchfulness as regards this truth of the return of Christ. From the moment that it was said, "My lord delayeth his coming," "then the servant began to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken." "Therefore be ye also ready," said Jesus, "for the Son of man [not death] cometh."

Matthew xxv. 1-13. The expectation of the return of Christ is the exact measure (the thermometer, so to speak) of the life of the church. As the servant became unfaithful the moment he had said, "My lord delayeth his coming," so it was with the ten virgins, for it is said, they all slept. It was not death, nor the Holy Spirit, that the ten virgins were told to expect; for neither death nor the Holy Spirit is the Bridegroom. All the virgins were found in the same state; the wise ones (the true saints) as well as the foolish ones, who wanted the oil of the Holy Spirit, slept and forgot the immediate return of Christ, as, on the other hand, what wakes them up is the midnight cry that He is coming.

In Mark xiii., we get nearly the same thing. Verse 26 forbids us to apply the passage to the invasion of the Romans;\*

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\*There may have been, at the time of the taking of Jerusalem by Titus, circumstances in some respects

and when it is said (ver. 22), "It is nigh, even at the doors," there is no thought about the judgment of the dead, nor of the great white throne. At that day, the day of the judgment before the great white throne, there will be no question either of house or household.

Four passages only are to be found in the New Testament which speak of the joy of the departed soul. The first occasion is when the thief said to the Lord (Luke xxiii. 42, 43), "Remember me when thou comest into [in] thy kingdom." It was about the coming of Jesus in glory that his thoughts were occupied—a truth which was familiar to the Jews. The Lord replied to him, "*To-day* shalt thou be with me in paradise." The second case is that of Stephen, who said (Acts vii. 59), "Lord Jesus, receive my

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resembling those which will yet take place when the prophecies of Mark xiii., and Matthew xxiv., shall be accomplished, so that the disciples might have been able to use the warnings which they contain (although there is no certainty of the fact). But there are insurmountable obstacles in applying "the abomination of desolation" to the army of Titus, or to the Roman ensigns. For there is a period which dates from this event, of which we see no fulfilment, in counting from the taking of Jerusalem. So that it has been found necessary to transport this part of prophecy to popery, which we know has nothing to do with the invasion of Titus. The passage in Luke would seem to have more to do with the events which took place at the taking of Jerusalem by Titus; but again I say, to attempt to apply the passages which have been occupying us to this event is to lose our time,

spirit;" the third, when Paul said, "To be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8); the fourth, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. i. 22, 23). In truth, it is far better to expect the glory, present with Christ, than to remain here below: not that we go to glory when we depart, but we are quit of sin, out of the reach of it, and we enjoy the Lord apart from it. Yes, it is a state far better, but it is also one of expectation, like that in which Christ is Himself placed, sitting at the right hand of the Father, expecting that which is to come.

Luke xii. 32. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning."

Here we find again (circumstantially different) the parable of the unfaithful servant; only the Lord adds, "That servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself [what a picture of Christendom!] shall be beaten with many stripes; but he who knew not [the pagans], . . . shall be beaten with few stripes." All shall be judged; but Christendom is in a state worse than that of the Jews or pagans, inasmuch as it has had more advantages.

Luke xvii. 30. "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

Luke xxi. 27. "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." The fig-tree of which the Saviour speaks on this occasion, is especially the symbol of the Jewish nation. "Watch therefore," He adds, "that ye may stand before the Son of man."

These two chapters, namely, Luke xvii., and xxi., as well as Matthew xxiv., and Mark xiii., relate to the coming of the Lord connected with the Jews—its earthly bearing. To these may be added Luke xix., where the servants who are called, and the enemies who rejected the nobleman, clearly mark the servants of Christ, and the Jewish nation. See particularly verses 12, 13, 27.

John xiv. 2. "In my Father's house are many mansions . . . And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself." The Lord Himself will come for His church, in order that the church may be there, where He is.

Acts i. 11. "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner."

Acts iii. This is the preaching of the apostle to the Jews: Repent, and Jesus will return. You have killed the prince of life; you have denied the Holy One and the Just; God has raised Him from the dead. Repent, be converted, and He will return

But they would not repent. During three years He had vainly sought fruit from His fig-tree. The husbandmen, on the contrary, killed the Son of Him who had placed them in His vineyard. The Son of God, Jesus, asked pardon for them on the cross, whence His voice is all-powerful, in saying, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do." The Holy Ghost, by the mouth of the apostle answers to the intercession of Jesus, "I wot that through ignorance ye did it . . . Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." But we know they continued to resist the Holy Ghost (Acts vii. 51).

Acts iii. 20, 21. "And he shall send Jesus Christ . . . whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

This is the great end of all the counsels of God. As we have before seen the secret of His will, that God would gather together all things in Christ, we find here what He has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets: that is, the earthly part. How are all these things to be accomplished? Is it by the operation of the Holy Spirit? No,

for it is said that "he shall send Jesus." It is, doubtless, true that the Holy Ghost will be shed abroad, and He will be so specially upon the Jews; but in the passage quoted, the event is to take place by the presence of Jesus. There cannot be a revelation more explicit, than that it is by the sending of Jesus, that the things spoken of by the prophets will receive their accomplishment. How can the force and simplicity of this declaration be evaded?

We see the fall, the ruin, of man; we see even all creation subjected to corruption. The bride desires that the Bridegroom may appear. It is not the Holy Spirit who will re-establish the creation, and who is the Inheritor of all things; it is Jesus. When Jesus appears in His Glory, the world will behold Him, whilst it cannot see the Holy Ghost.

"At the name of JESUS every knee shall bow." The work of the Holy Spirit is not to re-establish all things here below, but to announce Jesus who will return. Again, it is the Holy Spirit who was in Peter when he said, "Whom the heavens must receive till the time of the restitution." Receive whom? Not the Holy Ghost (He was descended from heaven already), but Jesus; and all we have to do is to believe.

*(To be Continued.)*



## “EVERY WEIGHT.”

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Many have speculated as to the nature of what the apostle calls (Heb. xii. 1) “the sin which doth so easily beset us.” I am persuaded it is not any special form of sin, although it is quite true that there are such things as besetting sins, and we are all conscious of it. This however is more general. It is sin of whatever nature—all that can be called that—that we are enjoined to “lay aside,” in the endeavour “to run with patience the race that is set before us.

The connection here is what is of so much practical importance, and it is missed perhaps by most who read the exhortation: it is this that to lay aside the sin that besets us, we must lay aside along with it the weights that impede us—“let us lay aside every *weight* and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run.”

It is as runners in a race that we are addressed. That is plainly the governing thought in the passage. And it is all important in a race, and especially a long-continued one, where endurance as well as energy is required, to be as lightly equipped as possible; hence “lay aside every weight” is the very first thing, and deserves the first attention. Nay, I doubt not, that the first thing will be found to involve the other, as

I have said. If any one asks seriously, how shall I, how can I, lay aside the sin that besets me? He will find the answer practically in the other part of this, "lay aside every weight."

Not that "weight" and "sin" are identical. It is the very fact that they are not, that helps to hide from many the real connection between them. The "weight" is a thing lawful enough to carry, if you look at it in itself merely. It belongs to that class of things of which the apostle writes: "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not *expedient*; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought *under the power* of any." It is a thing lawful but not necessary, a thing I may let alone if I please, but I please to occupy myself with it. Nothing that is really duty for me to take up is properly a "weight." Nothing that I unnecessarily burden myself with, but I shall find one.

A Christian is a heavenly man upon the earth, a man taken out of the world, sent into it only on Another's business (John xvii. 18). He is a man in Christ, his place and portion being where Christ is; his treasure, and so his heart, there. On earth he is a pilgrim and stranger therefore, as a citizen of heaven, from whence he looks for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the meanwhile, therefore, while he seeks to be faithful in the things entrusted to him here, which are another's, the things which are his own, and take up his heart, are elsewhere. They are things unseen, substantiated to his soul by faith, things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor which have entered into man's heart naturally, but which God hath revealed to us by His Spirit. It is these with which of his own choice he occupies himself. Here is the line of things in which he desires to make progress. He wants to apprehend that for which he is apprehended of Christ Jesus, and, doing "one thing," concentrating his energies in one pursuit, he forgets that which is behind, and reaches forth unto those things which are before, pressing on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling (or rather the calling *on high*) of God in Christ Jesus.

This is the true, practical character of a Christian, described almost in the very words of Scripture, and it tells us at once why the thought of running a race should be so prominent in the passage in Hebrews, as well as other places. It is the occupation of the soul with what is outside the present scene that really gives ability to *be in it* aright, and separate from the evil which infects it. If my heart is really out-

side, it will be shown by my seeking (wherever the choice is left me) to occupy myself with what is outside, and to be as free as possible from all here that would engage and distract my thoughts. If for my own satisfaction I can occupy myself with it, this proves that what is my own does not satisfy me, and that things (which may be lawful enough in themselves) have already that "power" over me, which the apostle dreaded for himself. Moreover by abandoning myself to their pursuit I increase that power, and, as they cannot possibly themselves satisfy me, I am more and more left to the misery of a craving which enslaves me more and more, and compels me to toil in the impracticable pursuit of good I cannot find. "Whose god is their belly," is the apostle's description of such: whereas for him who is in the pursuit of what is real and substantial good, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

This then is what is involved in the admonition to "lay aside every weight." It is only a soul intent on progress that will feel what a "weight" is. Such an one will feel it in proportion to the degree in which he is intent on it. And when things *are* felt as weights, it is easy to lay them aside; for it is the essence of a "weight" that it is something I choose to burden myself with.

Duties are never in themselves such, for whatever I take up for God, *because He wills it*, it is not my own heart choosing, and I can count on Him for all needed strength.

If then my heart is set upon the things beyond, and I lay aside every weight, everything that would hinder my occupation with and enjoyment of them, I shall surely find that in laying aside the weight I lay aside with it the sin which so easily besets me. For from whence does temptation come? Comes it not from the power of present things? And is not everyone practically "tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed?" Will not then a heart engaged and satisfied with what is elsewhere be the true remedy for this?

Fitly therefore does our text end, "looking unto Jesus, the Leader and Finisher of faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." This was the principle of the one perfect life of faith that ever was, and we cannot walk as He walked, unless we imitate Him in this. The man that is seeking to get on in the world, is doing manifestly what He never could do—is walking as He never *did* walk. Fellowship with Him is on this principle impossible. Our

pathway and His have necessarily separated. What wonder if our joy in Him is gone, and our spiritual strength, of which that is the spring, be gone also? What wonder, if sin prevails against us?

There is no remedy, so long as we will not believe that the world is what it is, or that Christ is what He is for those that come to Him. "My people have committed two evils;" is the Divine complaint, "they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and have hewn out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, which can hold no water (Jer. ii. 13). "If any man thirst," is the invitation, "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" (John vii. 37, 38).



### "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD."

*(Hebrews ix. 8-19).*

Such a thing as personal connection with God would never have entered into our minds unless He had revealed Himself. We see in Abraham's history how God comes to him, and introduces Himself as a living Person to his soul, drawing him out of his own country and from his own kindred after Himself. Henceforth all Abraham's associations were to be with the living God, who promises to be to him a shield, and his

exceeding great reward. Abraham had nothing to act upon but faith in God's word. What a fool he must have appeared to his worldly relatives, leaving all at the bidding of One whom he did not see, and in whom they did not believe.

All went on well with Him as long as he trusted in God to act for him; but when he tried to arrange matters for himself, it was all failure. We see this in his taking Terah and Lot with him; God never called *them* out, the word was, "Get *thee* out of thy country and from thy father's house." Abraham did not *leave all*, so he had to stop in Haran till Tarah dies, and was at last, obliged to desire Lot to separate himself from him; after that we find progress. Mark in the 8th verse, when he was called to go out, "By faith Abraham obeyed; and he went out *not knowing whither he went*."

This was a trial to which God put his faith, for the testing of it. Nothing tries human nature so much as uncertainty; we can bear anything rather than be kept in suspense; there is relief in the worst certainty.

But that is just God's principle of acting with us: He does not want us to know beforehand how and when His promises are to be made good to us, for then there would be no exercise of faith.

God told Abraham that his seed was to be as the stars of heaven. How was this to be, seeing he had no child? Everything but that he had got, silver and gold, flocks, tents, and three hundred trained servants.

But who was to inherit all this? Naturally this question would often suggest itself. Poor Sarah tried to help him out of the difficulty in *her way*, by smuggling a child into the house; but it was not *an Isaac, a son of promise*.

How we see ourselves in Sarah! We have no patience to wait God's time for *giving*, so we put forth our hand and take, often to our sorrow and spiritual loss. Had we just kept hanging on God, He would have given us something far better than the thing to which we had helped ourselves in our impatience.

From the 9th verse we see that the pilgrim and stranger character was kept up—dwelling in tents; houses are for Canaan, tents for the wilderness. God's dwelling in the wilderness was a tabernacle or tent, in Canaan a temple. Abraham kept true to the pilgrim character, Lot did not. He pitched his tent first *toward* Sodom, afterwards had a house *in it*, and sat at the gate (Gen. xiii. 10-13; xix. 1). What a place for a child of God to settle in and *receive honour*!

Abraham had his eye on a far different city, "he looked for the city which hath foundations whose builder and maker was God." Meanwhile he was satisfied to live in a tent, with God for his portion.

When tested, Abraham refused to take anything from the king of Sodom, from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, lest he should say, "I have made Abraham rich" (Gen. xiv. 16-23). The very next thing we find is God saying to him "*I am thy shield and thy ex-*



*ceeding great reward*" (Gen. xv. 1). Whenever we are enabled to surrender what nature clings to for Christ's sake, there is blessing in a clearer revelation of Himself to the soul; as it were, room is made for the Lord by the displacing of lower objects, and the promise of John xiv. 23 is made good in our experience: "If a man *love Me*, he will keep My word: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

What a wall of fire the Lord is round the soul that is *separated to Himself*! He plants the blood of Christ right behind us. Has He spoken to us of His glory, and told us of the glories awaiting us as fellow-heirs with Christ, and shall we turn back and *mind earthly things*? Shall not His country be our country, His associates our associates, while we are waiting in strangership down here, confessing ourselves pilgrims by our walk and ways, showing by our blessed independency of all the good things which nature esteems so highly, and our indifference to the attractions by which so many are dazzled and blinded, that we are passing through this scene in haste to a better country, choosing nothing for ourselves, but receiving all as God's gift?

Does anything bright offer itself? Our first question should be, "Does my Father give me this? If not, I do not want it." If I am a true pilgrim, I shall not be thinking of settling down in a world like this; I will say, "That cannot be God's gift for me; it is not good enough; He has prepared for me a city; I am going *home*; meanwhile I

want to keep my mind and heart free for Him who gave *Himself* for me."

We never read of God being the God of Lot; not that but He was Lot's God quite as much as Abraham's, but He could not associate His holy name with Sodom, of which Lot was a citizen. He is not ashamed to be called the God of pilgrims and strangers, and to associate His name with theirs.

The trial to which God put Abraham in offering up Isaac was very remarkable. He wanted to see whether he was hanging all his weight on the promise or not. He tries us often in the same way. How blessed when the faith He has given, when tried, is not found wanting!

In many ways our faith is tested. Do we know what it is to be kept in suspense? When we put forth a single thing to help ourselves, God just moves it out of His way, that He may work unhindered.

Walking with God, what is it? To hang on His word, often kept in suspense—but taking nothing till He gives—living as a pilgrim and a stranger, looking on the glory beyond. Happy experience! The Lord grant it may be ours!



## THE HOPES OF THE CHURCH OF GOD

*(Continued from page 60)*

LECTURE III (Continued).

### THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

Let us now turn to the Epistles, in order to be shown that the coming of the Lord is the constant and living expectation of the

church. We see, on referring to Romans viii. 19-22, all creation in suspense until the moment of His appearing. (Compare John xiv. 1-3; Col. iii. 1-4). Again (1 Cor. i. 7), "Ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ;" and Ephesians i. 10, on which we have already spoken (page 25). Since at the last judgment the earth and the heavens will have passed away, it is before this time that God will gather together in one all things in Christ.

Phlippians iii. 20, 21. "For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body."

Colossians iii. 4. "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

The two epistles to the Thessalonians turn entirely on this subject.

1 Thessalonians. Everything in this epistle has reference to the coming of Christ: all that Paul says of his work, or of his joy, belongs to it.

First of all, conversion itself is made to bear upon it (chap. i. 10). The faithful of Thessalonica, who had served as models to those of Macedonia and Achaia, and whose

faith was so spread abroad that the apostle had no need to say anything, "had turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." It is remarkable that this church, one of the most flourishing of those to whom the apostles have written, should be precisely that one to which the Lord has chosen to reveal, with most detail, the circumstances of His coming. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him" (Ps. xxv. 14).

Such was the faith of the Thessalonians, that it was spoken of in all the world. What was it? That they expected the Lord from heaven. And it is for us to have the same faith which the Thessalonians had. We ought, like them, to be expecting the Lord before the thousand years. They were certainly not saying there must be a period of a thousand years ere the Saviour comes. (Chap. ii. 19). "For what is our hope? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ *at his coming?*"

Chapter iii. 13. "To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." It is evidently the ruling idea influencing the mind of the apostle.

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Chapter iv. 13-18. It is remarkable that the consolation which he gives to those who surrounded the death-bed of a Christian, is their friend's return with Jesus, and their mutual meeting. It is customary to say, "Be content: he is gone to glory." This was not the way with the apostle. The comfort which he proposes to those who are mourning the death of a believer is, "Be content: *God will bring them back.*" What a change must not the habitual feelings of Christians have undergone, since the consolation given by an apostle is counted in this day as foolishness! The believers in Thessalonica were penetrated to such a degree with the hope of the return of Christ, that they did not think of dying before that event; and when one of them departed, his friends were afflicted with the fear that he would not be present at that happy moment. Paul reassures them by asserting that "those also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." We can understand by this example to what a degree the church has put away the hope which occupied the souls of the first converts; how far distant we are from the apostolic views, which we have replaced by the idea of an intermediate state of happiness (the soul separated from the body), a condition true, indeed, and by much superior to ours on the earth, but

vague, and which at best is a state of waiting. Jesus Himself waits, and the dead saints wait.

I by no means desire to weaken the truth of this intermediate state of happiness. Thus the apostle speaks of it in 2 Corinthians v., "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened : not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. . . ." After declaring that his hope was in the power of the life of Christ, and that mortality should be swallowed up by it, he adds, "Therefore we are always confident; knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord, etc." That is, if this mortal body is not absorbed in life (is not changed without seeing death), the confidence which I have is not interrupted at death; I have already received the life of Christ in my soul—that cannot fail. It may be that I shall depart, but the life in my soul will not be affected. I have already the life of Christ: if I depart I shall be with Him.

One more remark on 1 Thessalonians iv. 15-17: "We which are alive [those which shall be alive on the earth at the coming of the Lord] shall not prevent them which are asleep." "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the

voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive [those who remain] shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

If the apostle had expected a millennium of the Holy Spirit before the coming of Jesus, how could he ever have said, "We who remain until the coming of Christ?" There was, then, in his soul a continual expectation of the coming of Christ of which he knew not the moment, but which he had a right to expect. Was he deceived in that? No, not at all: he was always expecting; his business was to do so; and waiting had this of good in it, that it kept him completely detached from the world. If we were expecting from day to day the coming of the Lord, where would all those plans be as to family, house, etc., to flatter the pride of life and to get rich? It is the nature of the hope which we have that forms our character; and when the Lord comes, Paul will enjoy the fruits of his waiting. The hope which animated him produced its good fruits; as it was in the spirit of this hope that he exclaimed, "And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. v. 23).

1 Thessalonians v. 2-4. Mark well that this day ought not to overtake the followers of Christ as a thief.

2 Thessalonians i. 9, 10; ii. 3-12. Instead of a world blessed with a millennium without the presence of Jesus, behold the man of sin growing worse, until he is destroyed by the glorious appearing of Christ—evidence to us that a mere spiritual millennium alone is untrue. For the mystery of iniquity, which was already working in the time of Paul, was to go on until the man of sin was manifested, who will be destroyed by the glorious appearing of Christ Himself, with the spirit of His mouth. Now in such a state of things where is the place for such a millennium?\*

I Timothy vi. 14-16." "Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, *until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*, which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."

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\*For the meaning of the expression, "spirit of his mouth," see Isaiah xi. 4; xxx. 33.



2 Timothy iv. 1. \* “I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, *at his appearing* and his kingdom.”

Titus ii. 11-13. The grace of God has appeared, teaching us first how to live, and, secondly, the expectation of glory. The appearing of grace is already come, it teaches us to expect the appearing of glory.

Hebrews ix. 28. “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 into salvation.” As the great High Priest, when He shall have finished His work of intercession, He will go out of the sanctuary (Lev. ix. 22-24).

James v. 8. “The coming of the Lord draweth nigh.”

2 Peter i. 16-21. “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we make known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty; for he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came to him such a voice from

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\*This passage, compared with 1 Corinthians xv., shows that the appearing of Christ is not at the end; for at the end He has delivered up the kingdom, whereas here, the kingdom takes place at His appearing. Note—The whole period is spoken of, and therefore the judgment of the dead as well as of the quick.

the excellent glory ; This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; and this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy ; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts ; knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation ; for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

The transfiguration was, then, a specimen—a kind of pattern—of the coming of the Lord in glory.

1 John iii. 2, 3. "But we know that when he [the Son of God] shall appear, we shall be like him ; for *we shall see him* as he is." We shall only be like Him when He appears, not before. "And every man that hath *this* hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." He whose heart is full of this hope conducts himself accordingly—he purifies himself. Knowing that when Jesus shall appear, I shall be like Him, I ought to be as much as possible, even now, such as Jesus. How powerful and efficacious is this truth of the return of Christ, and what practical effect flows out of its expectation ! This

hope is the measure of holiness to us, as it is the motive.\*

Those also who are in heaven (Rev. v. 10) say in their songs, "We shall reign on the earth." This is the language of the saints who are already on high, surrounding the throne. Their language is, "*We shall reign*," and not "*we reign*." They are themselves in a state of expectation, like the Lord Jesus Himself, awaiting that which is to happen; namely, that His enemies be made a footstool for His feet.†

Study also (Matt. xiii. 24-43) the parable of the tares and the wheat. The tares—namely, the evil which Satan has done where the good grain has been sown—are to increase until the harvest which is the end of this dispensation or age. The evil which he has caused by heresies, false doctrines, false religions, all this evil will continue, increase, and ripen: these tares, we say, will increase in the Lord's field, until the harvest. Here, then, is a positive revelation, which gives a formal contradiction to the idea of the millennium by the Holy Spirit, apart from the return of the Lord.

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\*This passage explains Matthew xvi. 28, xvii. 1; Mark ix. 1, 2; and Luke ix. 27, 28.

†Critical editions read "they" instead of "we," but this only strengthens the doctrine we are occupied with, as pointing to a remnant on the earth when the church is gone.

We have now seen that the coming of Christ allies itself to all the thoughts, to all the motives of consolation and joy, and to the holiness of the church, yea, even to the dying bed; and that Christ will bring back with Him those who have previously quitted the body. We have also seen, on the one hand, that it is the coming of the Saviour which will be the means of the restitution of all things; and on the other, that evil is to increase in the Lord's field until the harvest.

May the Lord apply these truths to our hearts, dear friends, on one side, to detach us from the things of the world; and, on the other, to attach us to His coming—to Himself in person: and we shall purify ourselves even as He is pure. There is nothing more practical, nothing more powerful to disentangle us from a world which is to be judged, and at the same time to knit us to Him who will come to judge it. Certainly, there is nothing that can better serve to show us wherein ought to be our purification; nothing which can so console us, invigorate us, and identify us with Him who has suffered for us, in order that we who suffer might reign with Him, co-heirs in glory. Assuredly, if we were expecting the Lord from day to day, there would be seen in us a self-renunciation which is rarely seen among the Christians of the present age. May none of us be found saying (even in his heart), "My Lord delayeth His coming."

*(To be continued, D. V.)*

## THE HOPES OF THE CHURCH OF GOD.

*(Continued from page 80.)*

### LECTURE IV.

Read Luke xx. 17.

#### FIRST RESURRECTION; OR, RESURRECTION OF THE JSUT.

The subject which I propose for this evening's lecture, is the resurrection, and particularly the resurrection of the church apart; that is, the resurrection of the just as altogether distinct from that of the unjust.

We have already spoken of Christ, the Heir of all things; of the church as co-heir with Him; and of the coming of Christ to reign before the thousand years—an event which we must not confound with the day of the resurrection of the unjust, and of the judgment before the great white throne, which will not take place until after the millennium. We have now to see that the church will participate in this coming of Christ; it does so as the subject of the first resurrection.

There is no need to speak to you of the resurrection of Jesus as being the seal of His mission; it is an admitted truth; it is enough to quote Romans i. 4, where the apostle tells us that "Jesus Christ was declared to be the Son of God with power . . .

. by the resurrection of the dead.”\* This resurrection was the great fact which demonstrated that Jesus is the Son of God; but it was likewise, for other reasons, the great theme of the preaching of the apostles, the basis of their epistles, and of all the New Testament.

Let us commence by saying, that the difficulty people find in the subjects of which we are treating do not arise from the word of God not being simple, clear, and convincing; but from this—that preconceived ideas often rob us—of its natural sense. We have habits of thinking apart from the Scripture, before we know it; then it is we find inconsistencies—incompatibility—in that which presents itself to us, not suspecting that this incompatibility belongs alone to human preconceived opinions.

The doctrine of the resurrection is important under more views than one. It links our hopes to Christ and to the whole

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\*It is not exclusively by His own resurrection, though there was the first and most important proof. The reader will do well to pay attention to the expression, “from among the dead,” employed elsewhere. It is an expression distinct from the present, and indicates the introduction of a divine power into the realm of death, —a power which withdraws some from it in such a sort as to distinguish them completely from others. This it was that astonished the disciples (Mark ix. 10). Resurrection was the faith of every orthodox Jew; but what they did not understand was a resurrection *from among* the dead.

church, in one word, to the counsels of God in Christ; it makes us understand that we are entirely set free in Him, by our participation in a life in which, united by the Holy Ghost to Him, He is also the source of all strength for glorifying Him, even from the present time; it sustains our hopes in the most solid manner; finally, it expresses all our salvation, inasmuch as it introduces us into a new creation, by which the power of God places us, in the second Adam, beyond the sphere of sin, of Satan, and of death. The soul in departing goes to Jesus, but is not glorified. The word of God speaks of men glorified, of glorified bodies; but never of glorified souls. But, as before observed, prejudices and human teachings have taken the place of the word of God, and the power and expectation of the resurrection has ceased to be the habitual state of the church.

The resurrection was the foundation of the preaching of the apostles: "One must be with us a witness of his resurrection" (Acts i. 22). This was the constant subject of their testimony. Let us now see in what terms they testified.

Acts ii. 24. "Whom God hath raised up." So verse 32: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."

Chap. iii. 15. "And killed the Prince of

Life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses."

Chap. iv. 2. This doctrine of the resurrection was acknowledged as the doctrine publicly preached by the apostles; it was not that the soul in dying went to heaven, but that the dead shall live again. As the Pharisees were the greatest enemies of the Lord whilst He was upon earth—that is to say, the falsely righteous ones, as opposed to the truly Righteous One—so in like manner, Satan, after His death, raised up the Sadducees, who were enemies to the doctrine of the resurrection (Acts iv. 1; v. 17).

Acts x. 38-41. Peter testifies to this same fundamental truth before Cornelius the centurion and his friends. Paul preached it to the Jews of Antioch in Pisidia, saying (Acts xiii. 34), "And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead . . . he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David."

Acts xvii. 18-31. He announces, in the midst of the learned Gentiles, this doctrine, which was the stumbling-stone of their carnal wisdom. Socrates and other philosophers believed, after a fashion,\* in the immortality of the soul; but when these men, curious in science, heard of the resurrection

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\*It was in metempsychosis, or transmigration to other bodies, after all.



of the dead, they mocked. An unbeliever is able to discourse about immortality ; but if he hears about the resurrection of the dead, he turns the subject into derision. And why ? Because in virtue of the immortality of the soul he may exalt himself, he can elevate his own importance. There is something in the idea which can ally itself to man such as he is ; but to think of dust raised again—of a living and glorious being made out of it—this is a glory which belongs only to God, a work of which God alone is capable. For if a body reduced to dust can be reconstituted by God into a living and glorified man, nothing is hid from His power. With the immortality of the soul man can still connect the idea of self—of power in the body ; but when the leading truth is the resurrection of the body, and not the immortality of the soul, man's impotency becomes glaring.

See again (whether the apostle was right or not in appealing to the prejudices of the Pharisees), Acts xxiii. 6 : where Paul directly affirms, that it was for the preaching of this doctrine he was called in question. In chap. xxiv. 15, he tells the same truth. In chap. xxvi., he gives it to king Agrippa as the reason of his detention ; so also verse 23.

From these passages it is easily seen,

that the resurrection was the basis of the preaching of the apostle and of the hope of the faithful.

We now come to the second part of our subject, the resurrection of the church apart, or the special resurrection of the just.

"There will be," says the apostle (Acts xxiv. 15), "a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust;" but the resurrection of the just, or of the church, is a thing altogether apart—which has no relation with that of the wicked, which does not take place at the same time with this last, nor after the same principle. For, although both the one and the other are to be accomplished by the same power, there is in the resurrection of the just, a particular principle, namely the habitation of the Holy Ghost in them (Rom. viii. 11), which is foreign to the resurrection of the wicked.

The virtue of the resurrection embraces the life, the justification, the confidence, the glory, of the church. God Himself is made known unto us by the name of "God who raises the dead" (2 Cor. i. 9), who introduces His power into the last depths of the effects of our sin—into the domain of death—to bring men out of it by a life which from that moment puts them outside the reach of all the dreadful consequences of sin—a life close to God.

Romans iv. 23-25, It is in "God who quickeneth the dead" that we are called upon to believe; it is the resurrection of Jesus which is the power—the efficacy—of our justification. This is the truth presented in the passage before us. Our union with Jesus raised gives us acceptance with God. We ought to see ourselves already as beyond the tomb.

On this account the faith of Abraham was a justifying faith. "He considered not his own body now [already] dead;" but he believed in a God "who quickeneth the dead;" for this reason his faith "was counted to him for righteousness."\* The resurrection of Jesus was the great proof, and as to all its moral effects, the establishment of this truth, that the object of our faith is that God raises the dead. This truth is pointedly expressed in the first Epistle of Peter (Chap. i. 21). The application is made to us by our union with the Lord.

Colossians ii. 12. "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." The church is raised now, because Christ is raised as its Head. The resurrection of the

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\*Remark the difference; he believed God was able to perform it; we, that he has done so. Through it we believe on Him.

church is not a resurrection whose object is judgment, but simply the consequence of its union with Christ, who has been judged in its stead.

We may observe in this passage how these truths hang together. The resurrection of the church is a thing of itself, because the church participates in the resurrection of Christ; we are raised, not only because Jesus Christ will call us from the grave, but because we are one with Him. It is by reason of this unity, that, in partaking of faith, we are already raised with Christ, raised as to the soul, but not as to the body. The justification of the church is, that it is risen with Christ.

The same fact is expressed in Ephes. i. 18 &c., and ii. 4-6. Paul never said, "If I am saved, I am content." He knew that it is hope that makes the soul active, which excites the affections, which animates and directs the whole man; and he desired that the church should have the heart full of this hope. Nor is it enough for one of us to say, "I am saved;" it is not enough for the love of God, which is not satisfied unless we are participators of all the glory of His Son; and we ought not to be indifferent to His will.

Ephesians ii. 6 shows forth the same truth. The presence of the Holy Ghost in the

church is that which characterizes our position before God. As the Spirit of Christ is our consoler, and helps us in our infirmities, testifying withal that we are children of God, and making us able to serve God, so it is on account of the Holy Spirit who is in us that we shall be raised ; and it is on account of the Holy Spirit also that the principle of the resurrection of the church is quite other than that of the resurrection of the wicked. Our resurrection, we say, is the consequence of the abiding of the Holy Ghost in us (Rom. viii. 11)—a very essential difference. The world does not receive the Holy Ghost, “because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him” (John xiv. 17). Now, “our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost” (1 Cor. vi. 19 ; our soul in consequence is filled, or at least it ought to be, with the glory of Christ. Our body, also, which is the temple of the Holy Ghost, will be raised according to the power of the Holy Ghost who dwells in us ; a thing which can never be said of the wicked.

It is the resurrection which, having introduced us into the world of the last Adam (even now as partaking of this spiritual life), will introduce us in fact into a new world, of which He will be the Head and the glory, since He has acquired it and will reign there as the Risen Man.

Observe, in the passages concerning the

resurrection, not one speaks of a simultaneous rising of just and unjust ; and those which refer to the resurrection of the just speak of it always as a thing distinct. All will rise. There will be a resurrection of the just and a resurrection of the unjust, but they will not take place together.

I will cite the passages successively which refer to it.

It is at the coming of Christ that the church will rise (Phil. iii. 20, 21 ; 1 Cor. xv. 23).

The idea of a resurrection of the just was familiar to the disciples of Christ ; and such is represented as to happen in Luke xiv. 14, "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

But before coming to direct proofs, I would express the conviction that the idea of *the immortality of the soul*,\* although recognized in Luke xii. 5 and xx. 38, is not in general a gospel topic ; that it comes, on the contrary, from the Platonists ; and it was just when the coming of Christ was denied in the church, or at least began to be lost sight of, that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul came in to replace that of the *resurrection*. This was about the time of Origen.

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\*In the expression (2 Tim. i. 10),—"Brought life and immortality to light,"—"immortality" signifies the incorruptibility of the body, and not the immortality of the soul.

It is hardly needful to say that I do not doubt the immortality of the soul; I only assert that this view has taken the place of the doctrine of the resurrection of the church, as the epoch of its joy and glory.

Luke xx. 35, 36. "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead." The resurrection, then, mentioned here, belongs only to those who shall be made worthy of it. "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that age," that is to say, this world of joy, of the reign with Christ. That resurrection of the dead, then, belongs to the period spoken of, and not only to eternity. "Neither," adds the Saviour, "can they die any more . . . . for they are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." The wicked shall be raised to be judged, but those others shall be raised because they have been accounted worthy to obtain the resurrection which Jesus has obtained. We see, in the passage quoted, the proof of a resurrection which concerns the children of God alone; they are the sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. To be a son of God, and to have part in this resurrection, is the title and inheritance of the same persons.

John v. 25-29. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when

the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God : and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself ; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself ; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this ; for 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 damnation." It is customary to oppose the latter part of this passage to a view of the resurrection of the just apart ; but we shall see that the whole passage enunciates, and even explains and strengthens, the truth which is occupying us.

Two acts of Christ are presented as the attributes of His glory : one, to make alive ; the other, to judge. He gives life to those whom He will, and all judgment is entrusted to Him, in order that all, even the wicked, should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. Jesus has been shamefully treated here below ; God the Father takes care that His claim of glory shall be recognized : He (Christ) gives life to whom He will—to their souls first, and then to their bodies. These glorify Him of good will. As to the wicked, the way of obliging them to recognize the rights of



Jesus, is to judge them : and this judgment is in the hands of Jesus. In the work of vivification, the Father and the Son act together, because those to whom life is given are put into communion with the Father and Son. But as to judgment, the Father judgeth no man, because it is not the Father that has been wronged, but the Son. The wicked will own Jesus Christ in spite of themselves when they are judged. At what epoch will these things be accomplished? For the wicked, at the time of the judgment--the judgment both of the living and of the dead, before the great white throne ; for the just, the children of God, when their bodies shall participate in the life already communicated to their souls (the life of Christ Himself) at the resurrection of the just. The resurrection for these is not a resurrection of judgment, but simply, to repeat it again, the exercise, towards the bodies of God's children, of that quickening power of Jesus, in which He has already worked upon their souls, and which, in God's good time, shall work upon their bodies. "They that have done good," says our text, "unto the resurrection *of life* ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection *of judgment*."\*

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\*Really judgment (see Greek); which is said before to be committed to Christ.

But the objection is made, Jesus has said (ver. 28), "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice." The wicked and the just will then evidently rise together. But three verses before (ver. 25) is said, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." *Hour* comprehends here all the space of time which has elapsed since the coming of the Saviour; and under this word are contained two states of things quite different, seeing that the dead heard the voice of the Son of God during the time He was living on earth, and that they have been hearing it for eighteen centuries since. This, then, is the interpretation. The hour \* for giving life to the soul is an hour which has lasted eighteen centuries already. And the hour is also coming for the judgment. The word hour has the same sense in the two passages. That is to say, there is a time of quickening and a time of judgment; there is a period during which souls are quickened, and a period when bodies shall be raised. For us, the resurrection is only the application of the quickening power of Jesus Christ to our bodies. We shall be raised,

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\*For the use of this word, see (in the Greek) John v. 35; xvi. 2, 4, 25; Luke xxii. 53; 1 John ii. 18; 2 Cor. vii. 8; Philemon 15.

because we are already quickened in our souls. The resurrection is the crowning of the whole work, because we are children of God, because the Spirit dwells in us, because (as far as our souls are concerned) we are already risen with Christ.

There will be a resurrection of life for those who have been already quickened in their souls ; and a resurrection of judgment for those who have rejected Jesus.

1 Corinthians xv. 20, 23, sets forth very clearly the connection which exists between the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead. The order of the resurrection is explicitly shown : "Christ is become the first-fruits of them that slept" (ver. 20) ; "of those which slept," and not of the wicked. They that are Christ's shall rise at His coming ; then cometh the end, the time when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God the Father. When He comes, He will take the kingdom, but at the end He will deliver it up. The appearing of Christ will therefore take place before the end ; it will be for the destruction of the wicked. He will come to purify His kingdom. "Christ the firstfruits ; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end."

1 Thessalonians iv. 14-16 : "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with

him;" "and the dead in Christ shall rise first." It is the complement—the filling up—of our hopes ; it is the fruit of our justification, the consequence of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us.

The righteous dead shall rise first; then the living righteous shall be changed, and "shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord." All this is a matter which belongs exclusively to the saints—to those who, sleeping or living, are Christ's, and who will be, from that moment, "for ever with the Lord."

Philippians iii. 10, 11: "To know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death: if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead."

Why speak thus, if it be true that good and bad must rise together, and in the same manner? This resurrection *from among the dead* is just this first resurrection which Paul had before his eyes. I am willing, he says, as it were, to lose all, to suffer all, if, cost what it may, I arrive at the resurrection of the just: such is my desire. Evidently the resurrection from among the dead was a thing that concerned those that are Christ's exclusively. I might say, like the apostle, "I press toward the mark for the

prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

As to the period or interval which elapses between the resurrection of the faithful and the wicked, it is a circumstance altogether independent of the principle itself, that is, of the distinction of the two resurrections. Our faith on this point depends upon a revelation, which has only importance because God has so chosen to order it for His own glory. The period is only mentioned in the Book of Revelation under the expression, "a thousand years." Between the two resurrections a thousand years elapse. The only point, then, on which I cite the book is upon the length comprised in the reign of the Son of man on the earth. The passage is found in Revelation xx. 4, "And I saw thrones . . ."

The world will then know that we are the objects of grace, that we have been loved as Jesus Himself has been loved by the Father (John xvii. 22, 23).

If the first resurrection—that of the just—is not to be taken literally, why should the second—that of the unjust—be so taken? As the object of our hope, and source of our consolation and of our joy, it is but a small thing to know that the unjust shall be raised; but the precious thing—the essential—is to know that the resurrection

of the just will be the consummation of their happiness; that in it God will accomplish His love towards us; that, after having given life to our souls, He will give life to our bodies, and will make of the dust of the earth a form suitable to the life which has been given to us on the part of God. We never read in the word of God of glorified spirits, but always of glorified bodies. There is the glory of God, and the glory of those who will be raised.

I desire, dear friends, that the knowledge of this truth, by the power of Christ, on which depends its entire accomplishment, may strengthen us in our hearts unto all perfection. For this knowledge in all its extent is that to which the Scripture applies the word "perfection." Christ was thus made perfect as to His state and position before God; we also ourselves are now perfect by faith, in acknowledging that we are raised with Him, as we shall be later as to our bodies. May your bodies, souls, and spirits be preserved blameless until the coming of our Well-beloved! May this truth of the resurrection of the church become bound up in our minds, with all the precious truths of our salvation consummated in Christ, and may it be accomplished in the plenitude of our salvation in our bodies also!

*(To be continued, D. V.)*

## THE BIBLE.

The Bible is a Book which unfolds the harmonious whole of all God's thoughts, of all His ways with regard to man, and of His determinate purpose as to the Christ—and as to man in Him. It also sets forth the revelation of what God is; of man's responsibility, and of what God Himself has done for man, as well as of the new relationships with God into which man enters through Christ. It reveals what God is in His nature morally, and the dispensations in which He glorifies Himself in the sight of the heavens and their inhabitants. It lays bare the secrets and the state of the human heart, and at the same time unveils before it things invisible.

It begins where the past touches eternity, and leads us on (through a developement and a solution of all moral questions) to the final point where the future merges in eternity, according to God. It fathoms moral questions in the perfect light of God revealed, and makes known to us the groundwork of new relationships with Him, according to what He is, and what He is in infinite love.

How marvellous indeed is this divine parenthesis (which we know as *time*) in the midst of *eternity*, in which the febrile activity of the fallen creature displays itself in thoughts which all perish, urged on by him who wields his power as a liar and a mur-

derer ; but in which also the nature and the thoughts of God, His moral being and His determinate purpose (until then hidden in Himself) are (while testing man and manifesting what he is) revealed and fulfilled through the Son, that they may in their final result appear in an eternity of glory to come, in which God, surrounded by blissful creatures who know and understand Him, will manifest Himself as Light and Love in the full results of His own eternal and imperishable thoughts ; but where also all that has been wrought by His grace and wisdom throughout the things that are seen here below, will be displayed in its glorious and eternal fruits ; where GOD—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—known of Himself before time was, will be known by innumerable blessed beings—known by them in their own happiness when time shall be no more. And this world is the wonderful sphere where everything is made to work to that end ; and the heart of man the scene wherein all takes place and is morally wrought out, if so be that God, in whom and by whom and for whom are all these things, dwell in him by His Spirit to give him intelligence ; and if Christ, who is the Object of all that is done, be his sole Object. The Bible, then, is the revelation which God has given to us of all this wondrous system, and of all the facts which relate to it.



## WORSHIP IN CONNECTION WITH BROKENNESS OF WILL.

*(Genesis xxii).*

Worship always supposes the will broken.

In Gen. xii. 10, Abraham goes down into Egypt, and it is to be remarked, that so long as he was there he built no altar; but he came out of it, and then, having abandoned Egypt, he could build an altar to the Lord.

David (2 Sam. xii. 15-23) sees the child sick who is dear to him; then he fasts and prays, but he wrestles with God; his will was not submissive. When the child was dead, David changed his apparel, ate, drank, and could come to worship before the Lord, because the struggle that existed in his heart had ceased, and his will was broken.

Job, after those heavy afflictions, which are set before us in the first chapter, the loss of his substance and of his family, rends his mantle, it is true (chap. i. 20); he did not sin in that, the word tells us. His grief was lawful, he was permitted to grieve for the loss of his children; but he arises and worships before God. He can worship Him, because his will is broken, and he can say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

But in Genises xxii., we find something far above what we have in Job and David.

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They acquiesced in God's will, but their submission was passive ; it required of them no act. Not so in this chapter of Genesis. Not only must Abraham accept God's will, but, moreover, he must act against himself ; he must, so to speak, sacrifice himself, for the sacrifice of his son was nothing short of that. God says to him, Offer up to Me *thy* son, thine only son. The name of an individual contains in it for us all that concerns him and all our relations with him. "*Thy son*"—this word kindled in Abraham the tenderest of feelings ; and he had to sacrifice that son ! Nay, more ; this name recalled to him the promises of God, and it was in this son they were to be fulfilled, for God had positively told him, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called."

But he whose will is subjected to God is satisfied of these two things. God will provide for it, and, I am with God. Every look to the flesh in the way of expectation, for the fulfilment of the promises, must be turned away, and God alone remain as the source of the life, the blessings, and the promise ; as the One who never comes to the end of His resources, even in the very failure of all the means He Himself might have pointed out for the accomplishment of His promises.

God thus proves the heart, that all confidence in the flesh may be destroyed ; but,

at the same time, knowing that the heart needs to be sustained under the trial, He sustains it by a new revelation, which enables it to triumph. Thus, we see in Hebrews xi. 19, that Abraham, on the occasion of the sacrifice required of him, had a revelation concerning the resurrection, then so little known. It is thus that God, in His infinite mercy, causes us to gain in Himself what we lose in the flesh.

Far from those who accompanied him (that is, alone with Isaac and with God), Abraham received this revelation, and could offer the ram on the altar in the stead of his son, according as he had said, God will provide Himself a burnt offering. It is thus that, in the secret of communion with God, we learn much of Him.

In Jesus, the true worshipper of the Father, the will was always broken. The cup was full of bitterness, as we know; but, in His desire to fulfil the will of God, He forgets, so to speak, this bitterness, and cries out, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"



FRAGMENT—

The wisest will is God's own will;  
 Rest on this anchor and be still;  
 For peace around thy path shall flow,  
 When only wishing here below  
     What pleases God.

## SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT: HINDRANCES AND HELPS THERETO.

“And the Lord spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die; it shall be statute for ever throughout your generations: and that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.” Lev. x, 8-11. “Wine” and “strong drink”—all that excites the flesh, that does not belong to the cleanness of spiritual apprehension and judgment becoming those who go into the sanctuary—must be put away.

I believe we are often hindered going into God's presence by this “drinking of wine.” The moment there is that which acts on the flesh and excites nature, the going to find pleasure and joy in things harmless even in themselves, no matter what (nature may take up anything), there is “wine” and “strong drink,” that which would put us out of the place of spiritual discernment; and it is inadmissible.

There are ten thousand things which may thus excite—eloquence for instance. If ex-

cited by eloquence, this would hinder the enjoyment of truth: the same truth, were it presented without it, and thus that which is of Christ, would pall on the taste. Eloquence is not in itself a wrong thing, and yet Paul says, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (1 Cor. ii. 1-5).

There is a vast deal connected with the things of God that is not like this; a vast deal which after all is "wine" and "strong drink," and it unfits for the sanctuary. Whatever has not the real, calm, spiritual joy fit for the presence of God is so. Look at it—we see it connected with all the forms of false worship. Again, thought as to the beauty and elegance of the edifice where we meet for worship, &c., has the same character; it acts on nature, and whatever does this cannot be fit for the presence of God—cannot be carried into His sanctuary. So

of all things around which hinder the power of spiritual discernment, though not in themselves wrong. We might be in a lovely place and not think of it, then it is not "strong drink."

The object of this instruction is not merely as to our acting rightly. The condition of mind which gives the capacity of judging "between unclean and clean," depends on the absence of these things—the capacity of learning, *through fellowship with God in the sanctuary*, to "put difference between holy and unholy." So the apostle prays for the saints at Colosse, that they might be "filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that [‘in order that’] they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing," &c. So, too, for the Philippians that they might have such a knowledge of the will of God, "that ye may approve things that are excellent [or ‘try the things that differ’]; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ:"—without a single stumble all the way along until the coming of the Lord. He supposes there might be such intimacy of acquaintance with the mind of God, that there should not.

We never can give the least justification to sin and say, "the flesh is in us, and we could not help it; for "there hath no temptation

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taken us but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape that we may be able to bear it." The theory of the Christian is this—the flesh should never be discovered but in the presence of God, where it is always in the presence of grace and of holiness too.

This is the true power of our walk. It is not any particular measure of attainment; it is simply a man walking according to his communion, who never gets into the weakness of the flesh, for the flesh is known only before God, and not before Satan. When I learn the flesh thus, I drink into the opposite of it, the grace of God, and so go forth in the strength of what is in God, and not in the shame and weakness of what is in myself.

Thus it is, that, in estrangement from all that acts upon the flesh, and near God, I learn in the sanctuary His mind, and am able to "put difference between holy and unholy, unclean and clean." Then also I can teach others and say, This is the mind of the Lord about such and such a thing; as it is said here, "teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses." But have we not often found an incapacity to judge

according to the mind of God, where there was no failure in precept—a spiritual incompetency? Alas! my friends, we have been content to “drink wine and strong drink,” and thus our spiritual faculties have become darkened.



### “I'D RATHER SUFFER LOSS.”

“It was that very spot, sir,” said a working shoemaker, pointing to a place in his little workshop; “Yes, in that very place, sir, six years ago, that the Lord spoke peace to my troubled soul; and how good and gracious He is.” Such was almost the beginning of our happy and profitable intercourse, on paying a visit to this dear servant of the Lord Jesus.

After talking generally together, and having had sweet fellowship in the things of our precious Saviour and Lord, and we were about to leave, he said, “I should like to let you know something about the exercises of soul I have been lately passing through.” To this we readily assented.

He then said something like this: “When I was converted to God, and knew the Lord Jesus Christ His Son as my Saviour, I thought I shall now surely prosper in my little business; but in this I was sadly mistaken, for my earnings very soon fell off.



The first year I earned three shillings a week less, the second year three shillings a week less, the third year four shillings a week less, and of late my earnings have been so little that I thought I must give it up, and seek some other employment, though I have so enjoyed the Lord's presence with me in this little place.

"Accordingly, knowing Mr. M. to be a kind Christian man, and that he held a good situation in a large factory near this, I asked him if he thought he could procure me employment of any kind in his place of business, and he promised to let me know when there was a vacancy.

"But after this I became greatly exercised before the Lord as to what I was about. Is this that I am seeking according to my own will or the Lord's will? Is He bidding me to give up my present calling and seek another? for I have had much of the Lord's presence, and enjoyed His sweet company when working alone in this corner.

"And just then the Lord seemed to say to me, Which will you have? Will you go into the factory, and mix with the ungodly multitude with large wages, or remain in this corner and enjoy My presence with small earnings; which will you have?

"I assure you, sir, it was a serious moment. I turned it well over in my mind. I

considered how weak I am, how easily turned aside, and began to think that if I went into that factory to work, I might soon be drawn away, and lose my blessed Lord's sweet company.

"So I said, 'Lord, let me have Thy company even if it must be with small earnings; I'd rather suffer loss, than not enjoy Thy presence with me.' From that time I became perfectly settled, and told Mr. M. not to think anything more about procuring a situation for me. Now, sir, it is remarkable that from that time work began to come in more than for a long time before."

We could not help thinking that the result was just what we should have expected. We believe that one of the greatest hindrances to souls is their being so taken up with desire for worldly prosperity. The consequence is that the Lord has not got His rightful place in their hearts; and, however many excuses they may make, the question really is, "Am I really seeking earthly gain, or the enjoyment of the Lord's presence? Is communion with Him the uppermost desire of my heart?"

Perhaps no point is of more importance for us really to settle in the presence of God. If worldly advantage, to say nothing of the accumulation of wealth, has the *first* consideration, let it not surprise us if such go

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further and further away from the Lord; but if we are willing to suffer loss, and to lay aside everything that hinders our enjoyment of His sweet company, then we may be sure that He will not forsake us as to food and raiment.

We believe the Scripture is as true as ever, "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. vi. 33). We do well to remember that to the believer it is said, "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." (Phil. i. 29).



## THE HOPES OF THE CHURCH OF GOD.

*(Continued from page 98.)*

### LECTURE V.

Read Daniel ii.

#### PROGRESS OF EVIL ON THE EARTH.

We have been occupied, as yet, with the union of Christ and the church conformed to His image; with the coming of Christ Himself; and with the resurrection of the church, by which it gets a share of this glory of Christ as co-heir.

The subject for to-night is not so full of joy and happiness, but it is right that we should know the testimony which God gives

of human wickedness. Let me hope, dear friends, that the consequence of knowing it will be to produce unfeigned seriousness of spirit. The sight of the progress of evil, and of the judgment which it draws down, ought, first of all, to have the effect of making us avoid it; and, secondly, of impressing us with the power of God, who alone can remove it: "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh" (Heb. xii. 25-29). This passage gives the apostle's view of the great change that will take place when the power of evil will be overthrown.

What we are about to consider will tend to show that, instead of permitting ourselves to hope for a continued progress of good, we must expect a progress of evil; and that the hope of the earth being filled with the knowledge of the Lord before the exercise of His judgment, and the consummation of this judgment on the earth, is delusive.

We are to expect evil, until it becomes so flagrant that it will be necessary for the Lord to judge it.

First, I shall show that the New Testament constantly presents to us evil as going on increasing until the end, and that Satan will urge it on until the Lord destroys his power; secondly, I shall endeavour to show the character which this wickedness will take,

in its external form, as a secular power. In other words, what I have to say can be reduced under two heads:—

1st, the apostasy which takes place in Christendom itself;

2ndly, the formation, the fall, and the ruin of the Antichrist, in the sense of a visible power.

I begin with Matthew xiii. 36, the parable of the tares. It brings out this circumstance that, whilst men slept, the enemy sowed tares in the field of the householder; and that, upon the demand of the servants whether the tares ought to be plucked out, the answer was, No—that the wheat and the tares were to grow together until the harvest. It is, then, the sentence of the Lord, that the evil, which Satan has done in the field where the good seed of the word has been sown, shall remain and ripen there until the end. It is an express declaration, that the efforts of Christians shall not have the result of taking away the evil, which is to remain until the day of judgment: “Let both grow together until the harvest.” The harvest is at the end of this world—the end of this age; that is, of the dispensation closed by the coming of Christ. We must bear in mind that now, in God’s dealings with us and by us, we have to do with grace and not with judgment. We have not to

judge the world. Even could we say with certainty of such an one—he is a child of the devil, he is precisely on that account out of our jurisdiction; it is a tare. We have to do with grace; we cannot lay hand upon the evil which Satan has produced; but we can act as instruments of grace, for God permits us to sow good seed.

The tares are not simply wicked men—pagans; these last have not been sown among the good grain. The tares are some particular evil sown by the enemy after Jesus Christ had sown the good seed. What, then, we may call heresy, corruption of the truth in whatever way, or to whatever extent, will remain until the harvest. The evil which Satan has produced by a corrupted religion will exist until the end. All our efforts ought to be directed—not to pluck out the tares, but to gather in the children of God—to assemble together the co-heirs of Jesus Christ.\*

1 Timothy iv. 1. “The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to se-

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\*We read in 2 Samuel xxiii., a remarkable prophecy of the judgment of the wicked one who “cannot be taken with hands;” and of the beauty and blessing of the coming of that One, who will reign in righteousness, and whose blessings will correspond to His faithfulness in keeping the covenant during our state of misery.

ducing spirits, and doctrines of devils ; speaking lies in hypocrisy . . . .”

We have no reason to expect, in the ordinary meaning given to it, the progress of the gospel ; there may be, and will be, as much as is necessary for the gathering together of the children of God. But that which we ought to expect is contained in these words—a kind of picture of the last times—“Some shall depart from the faith.” (Compare 2 Pet. ii. 1-3.)

2 Timothy iii. 1-5. “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come . . . .” Are we to heed what men say ? No, but what God says. Observe the language which Jeremiah holds to Hananiah (Jer. xxviii. 6, &c.). And so we must reply when we are told that the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the channels of the sea. We believe, undoubtedly, that the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth ; but that is not the question. The question is, *How* will this be accomplished ? By the judgment of God. “When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness” (Isa. xxvi. 9).

Let us return to the passage in Timothy. “Men shall be lovers of their own selves,” &c. These are not pagans ; they are Christians, nominal Christians ; for it is written,

“Having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” The characters, indeed, drawn by the apostle, are those of pagans, such as they are painted in the lowest degree of vileness at the beginning of the Epistle to the Romans, and nearly in the same terms. And it is added, concerning these men of the last times, “They shall wax worse and worse.”

We see the same expectation of evil in 2 Timothy iv. 1-4: “I charge thee therefore before God,” &c.

It is worth remarking, that the tares were already sown in the days of the apostles; and in one sense it is a happy thing for us. If it had happened later, we should not have had the testimony of the word in this matter in order to warn us, and direct us when these sorrowful events came to pass; as it is, we have the perfect light of God upon this state of things.

1 Peter iv. 17. “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God.” Compare these words with the Acts xx. 28-31: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the



flock; also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking preverse things, to draw away disciples after them." This state of things began during the lifetime of the apostles.

1 John ii. 18. This passage declares, that "the last time" does not mean the time of Jesus Christ, but the time of antichrists. These were precursors of the great Antichrist. That which characterizes the last time is, not the spread of the gospel over the whole earth, but the presence of Antichrist.

Jude. This Epistle is a treatise in itself upon the apostasy; and in verse 4 we have a succinct description of its character. The apostle says, that he found it needful to exhort the believers to contend for that which they had already received. Some had already crept in amongst them, who were the germ of the apostasy; and this was to continue until the judgment of Jesus Christ. For, after having described their character more in detail, he adds (ver. 15) that it is this class which would be the object of the judgment of Jesus Christ when He should come. Of course, therefore, the evil, which was manifested in the church almost from the beginning of its existence, would remain until the coming of Christ. In verse 11 we get three sorts of apostasy

brought together in these men: natural apostasy, ecclesiastical apostasy, and open revolt, upon which last the judgment will fall. First, the character of Cain is given us—apostasy of nature—hatred, unrighteousness; secondly, Balaam — teaching wrong things for a recompense (this is the ecclesiastical apostasy); and thirdly, the character of Korah, that is, of him who set himself up against the rights of priesthood and royalty, the royalty of Christ, in the types of Moses and Aaran.

Alas! it is evil, and not the gospel, which will gather together the world. “And I saw three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the false prophet . . . to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty” (Rev. xvi. 13, 14).

But, it is said that the secular power of corrupted Christendom has disappeared by judgment, and that the destruction of its influence will give place to the gospel. But the spirit says, “The ten horns (kings) which thou sawest upon the beast (the Roman empire), these shall hate the whore (ecclesiastical power), and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be ful-

filled " (Rev. xvii. 16, 17). Christians are desiring the destruction of the influence of the great whore upon the world ; but even should her external power be destroyed, would the kingdoms become the kingdoms of Christ ? On the contrary, the kings will give their power to the beast. The great whore has ruled the beast ; at length her power and riches shall be taken away from her, but only that the ten horns may give their power to the beast, that all uncertainty may be dissipated, and that his self-will and blaspheming character may be fully manifested in his last apostasy. It is the power of corruption and seduction which will give place to the power of open rebellion against God. Thus we get the transition from corruption to rebellion.

2 Thess. ii. 3-12. "That day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition ; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, &c."

All this must happen before the day of the Lord comes. We must take the facts as the word of God reveals them. Christians, having seen the promise in the Scripture that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, have said, Yes, we will fill it ; whilst in the Scripture this event is attri-

buted to the glory of Christ. The spirit of His mouth, by which the Lord will destroy the wicked one, is not the gospel, but the force and power of the judgment of Christ. See Isaiah xi. 4, "With the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked;" Isaiah xxx. 33, "The breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it."

We may observe, that this Antichrist will unite in his person the characters of wickedness which have appeared from the beginning. First, man has always wanted to have his own will; secondly, he has exalted himself against God; thirdly, he has put himself under the guidance of Satan. These are just the three things which will be reproduced in the Antichrist—all the energy of man exalting himself against God, the king doing according to his will, his coming after the power of Satan. It is the ripened fruit of the human heart, which is itself an antichrist.

*(To be Continued, D. V.)*



"Then answered Jesus and said, . . . . I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." (John v. 19, 43).

## THE NEW CREATION.

*(2 Corinthians v. 13-21.)*

It is blessed to see in this chapter how the thought of *God* comes out in the new creation. In this aspect man is gone as to his sins and responsibility—dead in them. The judgment of the first Adam is complete. The old thing is entirely gone. It is a new creation now, and in this new creation I find God instead of man. Even Christ Himself, as known after the flesh, is known no more. True, He was, when down here, the hope and expectation of faith as coming into the world; but the apostle only knows Him now as having died for all and glorified, all under death whether Jew or Gentile, and Christ no more known after the flesh—that is, as come after the hopes of man in it—but Head of a new creation, where all things are of God, and in which we have been made in Him the righteousness of God. God has manifested Himself in the second Man, and wrought atonement in His death, and now those who believe are made the righteousness of God in Him.

In the first creation we see man and his responsibility. In the new creation, all things are of God, and man is reconciled by Jesus Christ unto Himself. We want to

have the power of this in our souls, to live as belonging to the new creation, as reconciled by God to Himself, all that belonged to the old creation for ever gone to faith, "old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."

We see how the apostle walked in the power of this in verse 13. "Whether," he says, "we be beside ourselves, it is to God." That is, if he were beyond the influences that belonged to him as a man, it was not an excitement that belongs to those influences, it was because he was absorbed in God. It is what is called ecstasy. When his spirit was free to rise above present service in what he was in Christ, he was lost in God, carried out beyond himself. If he were sober, if he had to weigh difficulties—come down into the sober estimate of what was before him—it was God in love working in him. His thought was entirely for others in that love. This was his daily life: as to himself, transported with God; and, when he did think about things down here, all his thoughts were for others. It was the love of Christ that constrained him, and he looked upon all around in connection with the death of Christ. It was no longer a living Messiah in the flesh with promises for Israel. All this was over. Christ had died, and he judged that Christ would

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not have gone into death if men had not been there. The whole history of Adam's race is closed in death. If they had not all been dead, Christ would not have been found in death ; why have gone down there if others were not lying there ? And therefore those who from amongst these lived were now to live not to themselves, but to Christ who died for them, and rose again. Thus, if he met an unconverted man, he would not think of him as an old acquaintance, and know him as such. He would look upon him as one that was dead and needed to be saved by the death of Christ. Or, if the person were a Christian, it would be just the same. He would not know him after the flesh according to an old acquaintance with him ; he would look upon him as one alive with Christ, and his one thought would be that Christ might be glorified in him. Even Christ Himself was not to be known any more, in connection with this creation. He had died to it, and if any man is in Christ, he is of the new creation, where old things are passed away, and all things are become new, and all things are of God. Man is looked upon as dead, and God brings in a new creation.

We have the same aspect of truth, when in verse 19 he speaks of Christ coming in the flesh. It is not looked upon as fulfilling

promises to Israel, but God revealing Himself in grace to the world. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." This was the aspect of Christ's first coming, in which the apostle thought of Him. We know He came to His own, and was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made to the fathers. All this is blessedly true; but here we have God in man come here, and the apostle sees neither Jew nor Gentile. If God were in Christ, he acts toward the *world*. To what portion of it can you confine Him, if it be a question of God displaying Himself in grace in the world? For the same reason when he speaks of the love of Christ, he judges all to be dead, and sees neither Jew nor Gentile, but a new creation, in which God counts every man that is in Christ.

We know that that is God as to the glory of His divine Person, but the apostle is speaking here historically; and therefore when he looks upon the Lord Jesus living in the world, he sees God in Him acting in overtures of grace to the world. God *was* in Christ; that is the great fact, that God has been here as the Reconciler, and man would not be reconciled. Does the apostle say that God



is reconciling us? No, but that God *has* reconciled us by Jesus Christ unto Himself, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation to the world. Specially, no doubt, the apostles, but in their measure true of all. Man would not have God when He came, and therefore He had to make Christ sin, to work atonement for us, and now He is at God's right hand, in whom we become the righteousness of God. The apostle does not say to the Corinthians, Be ye reconciled, for they *were* reconciled; but Christ being in heaven, having gone there through death in working out atonement for us, and His presence there being necessary to complete all in glory, He must have ambassadors to carry out His work of reconciliation here; so the apostle says, when he preaches (that is the gospel to sinners) "We pray in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God." That is what he had to say to men as Christ's ambassador. How far are we living thus? Living in the power of God's new creation, judging the whole thing belonging to the first creation as gone to faith, and entering into the blessedness of our place in Christ, in the power of an ungrieved Spirit? Exercised for others, that the life of Christ may have power in their walk and ways; judging evil practically in our own path through the

world, but yet having our souls so full of our blessedness in Christ, of what it is to be reconciled to God, that directly opportunity arises, our hearts burst forth in praises to God, and ever go forth after others still dead in their sins. That this may be so practically, we must bring the death of Christ to judge everything in ourselves and in our ways. As the apostle says, "Always bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." (2 Cor. iv. 10.) If we do not daily and hourly, bring everything under the sentence of Christ's death, and judge everything by it, the Spirit will be grieved in us, and, instead of filling us with the joy of our portion in Christ, He will cause the light of Christ to awaken us to the judgement of ourselves, and of our ways.

May the Lord give us to walk in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, bringing everything into subjection to Christ, that we may know what the apostle goes on to say, "Death worketh in us, but life in you." In thus bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, Paul found death to self, and the result was life to the Corinthians. Paul held the power of Christ's death on the natural man, so that when he ministered among the Corinthians, there was no Paul

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at all, but only Christ. It was life to them, because death was working in Paul.

May the Lord give us thus to live. And may He grant us, especially in a day like this, to judge of men as Paul did, so that whatever the boast of human nature may be, we may see that all are dead, because Christ died for all in grace—for the highest act of grace and love is the proof of it—and that the only living ones are they that live to Him who died for them and rose again, while in our own souls we enter into His new creation. We may have to go down to babes, and feed them with milk, and not with strong meat; but may we ourselves live in the light of this new creation where all things are of God. We must pass through exercise, and be tried and tested to learn what is in our hearts, and to have our senses exercised to discern good and evil. This is all needful and profitable, but then there is our distinct place in Christ, as part of the new creation, where, instead of having the first man responsible to God, we have God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself in grace, and making Christ sin for us, to bring us into the new creation, where all things are of God, and where man is before God in divine righteousness, and, as to his enjoyment, finding himself lost in God. It is God, and not man. It is what

God is to man, and the blessedness of man being with God. God, we know, revealed in Christ; but nevertheless God revealed, and man made the righteousness of God, a part of God's new creation.



### FRAGMENT

Christ is the expression of what divine perfection is in a man going through the world.

If I look up I am perfect; if I look at myself here I am very imperfect; but still I am not of the world just as Christ is not of the world. What are we of? We are of God. We are *of God* in the midst of a world that is *not* of God; and in which now, what is religious and what is worldly are so mingled together that you cannot tell what is black or white; it is all grey. So the word has to be applied in a thousand ways to things of which the true character must be discerned.

The Spirit applies the living word to every motion of my heart. He comes and says: I delight in you, but I cannot delight in this and that. The Father's word has to be applied to everything in me—things in which will has to be broken; and, because I am going to be in the glory, I purify myself even as He is pure (1 John iii.); I have got to keep company with Him. I am not sent into the world but in the measure in which I am able to testify for Christ. It may be but a little testimony that I am able to bear, but still that is all I am sent into it for—all that I am required to go into it for.

## THE HOPES OF THE CHURCH OF GOD.

*(Continued from page 120.)*

### LECTURE V. (Continuation.)

Read Daniel ii.

#### PROGRESS OF EVIL ON THE EARTH.

It is known to all of us, that there have been three successive beasts : the empire of Babylon ; then the empire of the Persians ; then the empire of the Greeks, or of Alexander in particular ; and that the fourth is the Roman empire—a beast with marks altogether peculiar to itself.

At the beginning, or rather before the beginning of these four monarchies, the throne of God was on the earth at Jerusalem. In His temple, above the ark where the law was deposited, Jehovah manifested His presence in a sensible manner. But at the commencement of this present period, which is that of the Gentiles, the throne of Jehovah was taken away from Jerusalem (as is detailed in the chapters i. to xi., of the prophet Ezekiel). The glory of Jehovah, which the prophet had seen in chapter i., near the river Chebar, he sees, in chapter xi., leave Jerusalem ; it departs from the house (chap. x. 18, 19), and from the city (chap. xi. 23). It is a remarkable fact, that the glory of the Lord has quitted its terrestrial throne. But more ; at the same time, this

terrestrial power was transferred from Jerusalem to the Gentiles, and government entrusted to men. So we read in Daniel ii. 36-38, "This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O King, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory."

You thus see that, by the destruction of the last king of the Jews, earthly dominion passed to the Gentiles in the person of Nebuchadnezzar. He began by establishing a false religion by force. He made a statue that all the world was to worship, and he became lifted up in heart; hence he was made to become as a beast for seven years. That is, instead of conducting himself humbly as a man before God—as before Him who had given him his power, on the one hand, he exalted himself, and on the other, ravaged the world to satisfy his will.

Omitting the second and third monarchies, which are not at this moment of direct importance to us; and pursuing the character of the fourth, we meet in it certain lineaments worthy of remark. The Jews have been in a state of captivity from the time of Nebuchadnezzar unto this day. It is true, that there was a return of the people from the captivity of Babylon, but without their having ceased to be under the power of the

Gentiles. The throne of God has in no sense been re-established; and if God did permit the Jews to return to their country for a short time, it was that His Son might appear at the commencement of the fourth monarchy. And, in fact, it was at the moment when the fourth monarchy, under its imperial form, had become the universal power (Luke ii. 1),—it was just at that time, we say, that the Son of God, by right King of the Jews and of the Gentiles, was presented to them. And what reception did He meet? They crucified Him. The chief priests, who, as viewed by God, were the representatives of religion upon earth, and Pontius Pilate, the representative of earthly power, joined in league together to reject and put to death the Son of God. Thus the fourth monarchy became guilty of rejecting the rights of the Messiah. The Jews, as we shall see presently more in detail, are set aside; and then comes in the calling of the church for the heavenly places. But as to that which concerns the church on earth, we have seen it marred by the seed of the wicked one, and the apostasy which resulted from it; we have seen afterwards, that this corruption will give place to a more open and daring revolt of the beast itself (that is, of this same fourth monarchy under a new and last form yet to be developed). It is

this that will be the occasion of its judgment (Dan. vii. 9-11, 13, 14), "I beheld till the thrones were cast down [set\*], and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him; and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake; I beheld, even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame." Verses 13, 14, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

This is the kingdom given to the Son of man, when the fourth beast is destroyed.

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\*The common translation is "cast down," but "set" or "placed" is more exact, after the LXX. and a good number of other authorities.



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The judgment and destruction of the fourth monarchy has not yet taken place, as we know from Dan. ii. 34, 35: "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken in pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." That is, before the stone cut out without hands spreads out and fills the whole earth, it completely destroys the statue: gold, silver, brass, iron, clay, are carried away as chaff before the wind. None of this is yet accomplished. In the action of the stone, no mention is made of a change of character of the statue; it is a blow—a sudden one—a blow which breaks in pieces, destroys, leaves not a trace of the existence of the statue; as it is said, "No place was found for them." The Roman empire—the feet, and with the feet all the rest—disappears. By this one blow the whole is pulverized, destroyed, annihilated; and *after* this judgment, the stone which fell upon the statue becomes a mountain which fills the whole earth.

Did Christianity break to pieces the fourth monarchy, when it began to be promulgated? In no wise. The Roman empire has continued; it has even become christian; nay, more, the feet of the statue were not then in existence. The act of destruction, which is marked in the fall of a little stone upon them, does not represent the grace of the gospel; nor has it any reference to the work which the gospel accomplishes. Besides, it is *after* the *total* destruction of the statue that the stone *begins* to grow; which signifies that the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, which is to fill the whole earth, will not begin to spread until after the fourth beast has been judged and destroyed.

There remains a difficulty to be cleared up in the history of this beast. It may be alleged that the Roman empire does not exist in our days. It is an additional proof in support of what we have been saying. In Revelation xvii. 7, 8, the angel says, "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not;" the Roman empire, as an empire, exists no longer; but what follows? "And shall ascend out of the bottomless pit and go into perdition; and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder." It existed; next, it exists no more; then, it will come out of the pit. It will have a really diabolical character; it

will be a full expression of the power of Satan.

That which we learn, then, in general, of this beast, is, first, that from its beginning, the Roman empire has been guilty of the rejection of Jesus as King of the earth here below; secondly, that later in the time of this fourth monarchy, there is a little horn that speaketh great things; and, lastly, that this fourth beast, after having ceased to exist for a season, will reappear upon the scene out of the bottomless pit, and be destroyed on account of the great words which the little horn spoke. This beast is connected with a power described in 2 Thessalonians ii. 9, "That wicked one, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders," whose destruction is found in verse 8. There is another description of the last head of the beast (see Rev. xvii. 11), which is the beast himself.

Daniel xi. 36, etc.\* The agreement between this passage and 2 Thessalonians ii. 9 is clear. We see in both the same exaltation of himself against God. In the epistle, the power of Satan is added, because the wicked one is presented in his character of

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\*Verse 35, the Jews are passed by. Read verse 36: "The king shall do according to his own will."

apostasy and iniquity ; in Daniel xi., in his earthly and royal character. As to the third mark which we have signalized in iniquity—the will of man, it also appears : “the king shall do according to his own will.”

It is observable, also, that this wicked one is alluded to in John v. 43. The Jewish nation will receive him who comes in his own name.

The iniquity, then, of the heart of man arrives at its height in the last head of the fourth monarchy.

Isaiah xiv. 13-15 describes the self-exaltation of the same under the title of the king of Babylon : “Thou hast said in thine heart,” etc.

It is exactly all the privileges, all the rights of Christ, which this king arrogates to himself : “I will ascend into heaven”—what Christ only has done ; “I will exalt myself above the stars of God”—the throne of Christ is above principalities and powers ; “I will sit, also, upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north.” “It is the palace of the great king,” the king of Israel at Jerusalem. Christ is to come with clouds—“I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,” says this one : his end is, “Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit,”

I am afraid that many a cherished feeling, dear to the children of God, has been shocked this evening; I mean, their hope that the gospel will spread itself over the whole earth during the actual dispensation. It was just the church's task to proclaim the glory of Christ everywhere; but as for the fact in result, if we express ourselves according to the word of God, as we see it in the later epistles and other scriptures, we shall see all that is powerful in this world in operation, but without regard to God. All the intelligence of man, his faculties, his talents, his knowledge, will be displayed; all that which can seduce the heart, and master the mind, all the resources in the character and nature of man, apart from conscience, will astonish the world, and draw it into following the beast, and place them under the influence of Anti-christ; because the glory of man in self-exaltation, and not service to Christ in humiliation, is man's natural bent. "He that exalth himself shall be abased."

But, you will say, to insist upon such a result is to discourage all our endeavours to propagate the gospel on the earth. We answer, If false hopes are entertained, you are already deceived. It is indeed true, that the view which has been taken of the progress of evil is not very encouraging to the efforts

of those whose hopes have been founded on their own ileas. But ask yourselves this question, Did the fact that God told Noah that He was going to destroy the world, and did his full conviction that the judgment of God was about to come, prevent his preaching to his fellow mortals? On the contrary, it was precisely this which animated him, in order that he might gain those who had ears to hear. The conviction that false christianity will become more and more refined, more corrupt in the world, ought to give but the more energy and activity to the love of him who believes; and the nearness of the judgment of God, instead of paralysing our efforts, ought to drive us with more power, more energy, more faithfulness, to present the gospel—the only means of causing men to escape the righteous judgments which threaten them.

When I say that the tares, instead of diminishing, will continue to grow, do we thereby hint that the good seed will not increase? By no means. If the evil is to ripen for judgment, God gives, at the same time, power to the testimony that would separate the good from it. This I believe to be God's usual mode of procedure. If we were to see three thousand souls converted in Geneva in a day, it would be said the millennium is come, the gospel is going to

spread over the whole world. How is it? There are perhaps not three hundred converted in a year. The conversion of many thousands at Jerusalem, what did it prove? That God was going to judge that city, and that He saved from that perverse generation those who should be saved. Whenever we see evil increasing, and God at the same time acting in drawing away from it those who believe, it may be taken as a sign that the judgment of God is nigh. It cannot be denied, that God is acting powerfully by His Spirit in these days; we ought to thank Him with all our hearts. Let it be a sign to us, that God will remove His own children from a world which will shortly be judged.

There are two signs of the proximity of judgment: the one is, that piety increases, and that all the resources of man develop themselves in a wonderful manner; the other is, that Christians are withdrawing from this state of things. In either case, there is nothing to hinder us working for our divine Master. On one side is to be seen the work of grace operating, deepening, extending, and God separating His children from the evil around; on the other hand are to be seen all the principles of the wicked one in manifest developement. In the word of God I see an express declar-

ation, that the present economy will have an end, and the evil go on to a greater and greater height, until that wicked one is destroyed by the coming of Christ.

Romans xi. 22. Let us conclude with the warning which the Saviour gives us: "Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

Has the church kept itself in this goodness of God? Truly Christendom has become completely corrupted; the dispensation of the Gentiles has been found unfaithful: can it be again restored? No: impossible. As the Jewish dispensation was cut off, the Christian dispensation will be also. May God give us grace to continue steadfast in our hope, and to rest upon His faithfulness, which will never fail us!

*(To be Continued, D. V.)*



"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and for him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."



## JESUS THE WILLING CAPTIVE.

*(John xviii: 1-10.)*

Two points attract and fill our hearts in this passage. First, the perfect willingness with which Christ gives Himself up, the unhesitating way in which He presents Himself to the armed band come out to seek Him, fully knowing what was to befall Him. "Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, I have told you that I am he. If, therefore, ye seek me, let these go their way," proving that, while He offers Himself, there is a full and perfect deliverance for us. "Of them which thou gavest me, I have lost none." The Lord presents Himself, that none of us might even be touched with the power of the enemy. It was the same self-devotion on the cross; though here it was the power of Satan, but He had gone through it. When led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, He bound the strong man, and introduced present blessing into the world; but we as men were unable to profit by this, because of a moral inward incapacity to receive the blessing that came. Outwardly it was received in healing diseases, &c., but men had no heart to receive Him. If He turned out the legion of devils from him that was pos-

sessed, men turned Him out. The hearts of men in such a condition were glad to get rid of Him; and this shows another and a deeper evil to be remedied—that man morally has departed from God, and that he is himself irremediable—that nothing will do but a new creation: “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation.” Thus here the Lord has not only to conquer Satan, but to underlay man in his moral departure from God. “This is your hour”—“My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death.”

Satan brings all this darkness and death to bear on the soul of the Lord, his object being to get between His soul and God. So, the more pressed by Satan, the nearer to God He is. Therefore it is said, “being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly;” and in consequence He receives nothing at the hand of Satan, but of His Father. “The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” Before He left Gethsemane, the whole power of Satan was morally destroyed. He had gone through the hour with His Father, and now takes the cup at the hand of His Father, as an act of obedience. He is now as calm as when doing any other miracle (healing the servant’s ear), as if nothing had happened. It was their hour, and the power of darkness was upon them, not on Him. “Whom seek ye?”—“I

am he." "As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground;" but He presents Himself again (as He says in John xiv. 31 : "But that the world may know that I love the Father . . . . Arise, let us go hence") saying, "Whom seek ye? . . . . If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way," and they were not touched, as a token of the complete deliverance of us all.

At the cross He cries out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He went through the hour in Gethsemane, and here drinks the terrible cup. His soul had drunk the cup of wrath, and only one thing remained. He said, "I thirst:" this He said that the Scripture might be fulfilled; and crying, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit, he gave up the ghost." Here we learn the perfect deliverance that has been obtained for us, and that all is perfect light and joy for us. If I look at Satan, I see his power annihilated and destroyed. If I look at wrath, He has drunk it to the dregs. He entered into all the darkness and the wrath of God; but before He went out of the world He had passed through it all, and went out in perfect quiet. The work is so perfectly done, that death is nothing. "His hour being come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father," He passes

out of Satan's reach, and beyond all wrath, to the Father.

No believer is any longer under the power of Satan. Thus Israel of old, though once under Pharaoh in Egypt; but when delivered he was never under the power of the Canaanite, except when he failed, as we know in the case of Ai; so we may fail too, but we are in that new creation that has passed all the power of Satan and the wrath of God. Do your souls realize the truth that Christ has abolished [or 'annulled'] death, and brought life and immortality to to light," so that our souls are brought into the light as He is in the light? It was not true when He was down here; but *now* we who believe are brought into the light where there is no darkness at all. May our souls know and enjoy the true and perfect deliverance that is our portion in Him!



FRAGMENT—Remark the amazing power of the words in John iii. 13, 14, thus brought together—the Son of man in heaven, and the Son of man must be lifted up—whether we consider His person, or the grace that is in that "must," as showing how He had thoroughly taken up our cause and identified Himself with us.

## THE ACTIVE GRACE OF CHRIST RISEN.

(*John xx. 1-23. Luke xxiv. 13-36.*)

I am bringing before you some very familiar Scriptures ; indeed they are so familiar that it is well if our very familiarity with them has not hindered us from realizing the importance and blessedness of that which they speak of. We have often been reminded that the first day of the week—the resurrection day—imparts its own peculiar character to Christianity ; nor did it close without presenting *in pattern* the assembly—the saints gathered, the Spirit given, and the Lord in the midst.

My object in adverting now to this day, is to bring briefly before you *the activities of the Lord in resurrection*. Does it not awaken at once a lively interest in our hearts, when we ask, how was the blessed Lord engaged on that memorable day ? We have often, it may be, meditated with profound delight on His activities in the days of His flesh. We have followed Him through the day of His activity as Jehovah's Servant on earth, from its sunrise at the baptismal waters of Jordan to its sunset in that awful hour of the power of darkness, when the night came of which He spake, when He could no longer work.

Blessed, indeed, for us to know that the night did not overtake that peerless Servant until His work was done! I speak not—for the moment—of atonement, but of all these ceaseless activities of grace, in which He was the Servant of Jehovah's pleasure, and the Son of His Father's love as a Man upon the earth.

Then I trust every heart in this company has lingered with adoring thoughts of faith and love in presence of the work accomplished on the cross. There we see the One of whom we can say, through grace, that He is "all our salvation," accomplishing the work which gives Him title to be thus known by our poor hearts. There we see our sins and our whole state as children of Adam brought before God, and we see a divine Saviour under judgment and in death, that He might settle every question that sin had raised between God and our souls, and that He might so deliver us as to make Himself the object of our faith and the One in whom our hearts should find their every blessing and joy for ever.

But "the first day of the week" finds Him in a new condition. The "days of His flesh" ended; all His earthly associations with Israel and with men in the flesh entirely broken. He now comes forth in resurrection to be the Source and the Giver, and

to present in His own person the character of blessings altogether new. I am increasingly persuaded, my brethren that the Holy Ghost would lead our hearts affections to that Risen One: and in order to this my present object is to bring before you His gracious activities as the Risen One. Have you thought of the round of service that occupied Him on that eventful day? We may truly say that it was *a busy day* for our blessed Lord.

#### A SORROWING HEART.

His first action—and surely love would have it so—was to meet and satisfy the longings of a heart that had no object but Himself. A heart like Mary's had the first claim, we may say, on the attention of the Lord. And, beloved, to such a service as this His heart would joyously turn. His own precious words were—oh! that we may treasure them in our hearts—“He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and *I will love him and will manifest myself to him*” (John xiv. 21). With what delight did His eye rest upon that early visitor to His empty tomb! She loved Him, and her love called forth the expression of His. She *wept* for Him; she *sought* Him; she *loved* Him; and He loved her and manifested Himself unto her.

Now, beloved christians, are *our* hearts

turning from everything that is here because of the treasure we have in Himself? There is such a thing as turning from the world as philosophers and monks turn from it, in disgust when it has disappointed and vexed us, or when our power to enjoy its things is gone, or in a religious way to build up a religious character for ourselves. But the Lord looks for something different to this. He looks—yes, He is looking now—for *the heart that longs after Himself*. Has the treasure we have found in His love really separated our hearts from everything here.

I do not ask whether you understand church truth, or dispensational truth or resurrection truth. You might know a great deal about these things, and yet be like the disciples of whom we read in John xx. 8-10. They *saw*. Yes! it was as clear as noon-day that the Lord was risen. They *believed*, too, that He was risen. But though the intelligence was right and the faith was right, there was something else that was singularly wanting—perhaps I ought to say dormant. Can you understand the lack of that wanting element? Have you no key to it in your own experience which compels you now to own in your conscience that their condition is but a picture of your own? Indeed, my brethren, we *see* many things clearly enough; we can perhaps define them



with mathematical accuracy ; in a certain way we *believe* them ; and yet our practical every-day life is but little affected thereby. We still live in the narrow, selfish circle of our own things and our own interests. "The disciples went away again unto their own home."

It was far different with Mary. Hers was a widowed heart. The sunshine of her life had gone. As someone has said, all the world was a blank to her because He was gone. Neither apostles nor angels could fill the void in that bereaved heart. Christ had made Himself *everything* to her : with Him she had all, without Him she had nothing. It is easy to speak with cold criticism of her lack of intelligence ; but, my brethren, it might be well for some of us if we could part with some of our intelligence, and receive in exchange a little more of that whole-hearted and self-forgetting affection for Christ which made her homeless and without an object in the world where He was not.

It was to a heart like hers that the Lord delighted to manifest Himself. A single word sufficed to dispel the sorrow of that broken heart, and to fill it with immeasurable satisfaction and delight. It was that one word "*Mary*." It was not any communication made. It was nothing but Him-

self, and the consciousness of His presence and love borne into her heart as the well-known Shepherd's voice called His sheep by name. Divine communications of the most wonderful nature followed, but there must be *a suited condition of heart* to receive divine communications, and that condition of heart was found in Mary. That one word from His lips filled and satisfied her heart. She had reached Himself and that was everything. It was to a heart like that the blessed Lord could make communications which surpass all human thought—to such a heart he could unfold what divine love would do for its own delight in the blessing of its objects.

*Her love* would have kept Him here and been content to follow Him still as the Messiah upon earth ; rejected and dishonoured indeed, but still to her the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely. But *His love* had its own secrets, and He tenderly set aside her thoughts that He might replace them by His own. "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father." His death has proved there was nothing for Him here, but it had also proved that there was nothing for Mary here. Now He leads her heart to *a new world* by telling her that He is going there. She had known Him here and lost Him ; now He reveals Himself

to her in connection with a scene where nothing can ever break the link with Himself. He is going to His Father, but He is going as the "Leader of a chosen race." He has those in this world whom He owns as His brethren, His Father is their Father, and His God is their God, and His love would have them to know this new place of association with Himself as the Risen One. What a revelation to the sorrowing heart that yearned after Himself! She had found Him in resurrection, in a new condition where the links could never be broken, and she had learnt that she was one of a company whom He owned as His brethren—all of one with Himself. Every longing in her heart was more than satisfied. Beloved brethren, is it so with ourselves? If not, depend upon it we have not really taken in the thoughts of His love, and it may be the Lord has not found in us that freshness of affection for Himself that would set Him free to communicate those thoughts to us.

#### A SOILED CONSCIENCE.

But it is not with all as it was with Mary. Alas! how few there are whose hearts are wholly absorbed by Christ! There are many whose hearts are not free because their consciences are burdened. They are not

right with the Lord. They are under a cloud. They can say—

“What happy hours I *once* enjoyed,  
How sweet their memory still!”

But their spiritual joy has fled. Instead of holy thirsting after Christ, and the joy of His love, there is nothing in their soul's secret history but sadness and reproach. How is it? In some way the flesh has been allowed, the Spirit has been grieved, the Lord dishonoured, *the conscience is soiled*, and the matter has never been bottomed with the Lord. On that resurrection day while Mary's heart was being made glad as we have seen, there was another disciple who was under a cloud. Poor Peter! Who can tell the agony of that fervent spirit since the hour when the Lord turned and looked upon him, and he went out and wept bitterly?

I may here remark that there are two things to which almost every fall can be traced. One is spiritual indolence and the other is self-confidence. David is an example of one, and Peter of the other. It was the time “when kings go forth to battle”—why then was David tarrying at Jerusalem? A pernicious indolence clogged his footsteps, and you know the consequences. No doubt the palace royal was more congenial to

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flesh and blood than the battle-field, but tarrying there threw David into temptation he would never have had if with purpose of heart he had been acting as a king. If the Lord has called you to any service and you neglect it, you are sure to get into trouble. Lot is another example of spiritual indolence. The mountain life with its daily exercises, and its constant demand for the energy of faith, was too laborious for him. His eye rested upon well-watered plains. The dwellings of Sodom seemed more secure than the mountain tent, and he went down to the city whose sin was "pride, fulness of bread, and *abundance of idleness*." You may shrink from the troubles of faith, but if you shirk *them* you will have the troubles of sin, which are much worse to bear. If you look back to see where you have dishonoured the Lord I think you will see that it was when you had been neglecting the word of God and private prayer, and your heart was not going diligently after the things of the Lord.

In Peter we see self-confidence. He loved the Lord, and he was confident in the strength of his love, and he needed to learn what a bruised reed he was. He did learn it, as we know, in a most humiliating way, and bitter was the lesson to his soul. Who can tell what scalding tears coursed down his

cheeks! and what bitter self-reproaches he heaped upon himself! But was he forgotten by the Lord? Nay. Mark xvi. 7, reveals a precious touch of grace; "tell His disciples *and Peter*." Why should Peter be specially mentioned? Would it not have been enough to have said "his disciples"? Ah! Peter might have said, "I cannot call myself a disciple any longer. I have denied Him. Such a name is not for me." So it must needs be that Peter has special mention. Then furthermore Luke xxiv. 34, tells us of the Lord's second appearance in resurrection; "The Lord is risen indeed, and *hath appeared to Simon*." We know not what passed at that private interview, but I will venture to say that there was so much confession on Simon's part, and so much tender and gracious love on the Lord's part, that when the Lord and Simon met again within the closed doors in the evening no uneasiness or shyness remained to hinder Simon from enjoying the presence of his Lord.

If there is a Peter here tonight—one who has failed and dishonoured the Lord—I can tell you that dishonoured Lord loves you still, and it would give His heart great joy to remove the soil from your conscience and to make you happy in His love. Is there a shadow between your heart and Himself? Has something been allowed to get in, so

that instead of being happy with the Lord you are ill at ease? You feel that there is a reserve and you are reluctant to go straight to Him and have it all out. The Lord would have that reserve banished from your heart, and this is the great object of His present dealings with you. He makes you conscious of your sin, but He does not fail to assure your heart of the constancy of His love. Look at all those links in the chain of His gracious dealings with Peter: (1) the prayer, Luke xxii. 32; (2) the warning, verse 34; (3) the counsel, verse 46; (4) the look, verse 61; (5) the message, Mark xvi. 7; (6) the private interview, Luke xxiv. 34; (7) the full restoration, John xxi. 15-17. Every link bears the stamp of divine and changeless love. The Lord would not rest until He had His poor disciple alone with Himself to have it all out. It is to this end that He is speaking to *you*. Satan would keep you away from Him, and use the failure to create and widen a breach between you and the Lord. The active grace of the Lord comes after you now, as it went after Peter, that the breach may be completely healed. Get alone with Him and have it all out. Make a clean breast of the whole matter; go to the very bottom of it with Him; and you will find that he will remove the shade from your heart and the stain

from your conscience, and give you a deeper sense of His love than you ever had before.

But the Risen One has now before Him another service. He first satisfies a sorrowing heart ; then relieves a soiled conscience ; and then He has to think of

#### STRAYING FEET.

Mark how the Holy Ghost introduces the subject ! “ And, *behold*, two of them went *that same day* to Emmaus ” (Luke xxiv. 13). It is as though the Holy Ghost marvelled at such a thing. They were true disciples—they loved the Lord—they were not happy in going away—they had heard that He was alive—and yet they went ! While He was with them He kept them, as He said ; but now that He was gone and nothing remained for sight, they sorrowfully decided that the best thing they could do was to go back, as I suppose to their own home.

We may be under influences of a natural kind which keep us outwardly right, without being at all in the faith of God's purpose. Then when the influences are removed we drift back to our own things. How often we see saints whose feet are kept right so long as certain influences are acting on them, who turn into a wrong path as soon as those influences are removed. I do not mean going into sin, as men speak, but go-



ing back to think only of their own things. It was so with Paul's converts. When he was put in prison he had to say that all in Asia had turned away from him, and that all were seeking their own things and not the things which were Jesus Christ's.

The fact was that the two whose course we are now considering were disappointed. Things had not turned out as they expected. *Disappointment* is a fruitful source of back-sliding. Then let us be quite sure that our expectations are according to God's purposes. If we expect on the line of God's purpose we shall never be disappointed. These two had been looking for earthly blessing in connection with a living Messiah, and when all hope of this had been withered by His death they were sad and disheartened. Their expectations were on a wrong line, and the blessed Lord goes after them and speaks to their hearts that He might lead them on to the line of God's purposes in resurrection. Think of Him, just risen from the dead, walking eight miles with those two wanderers that He might conduct their hearts into the wonderful secret that God was going to establish everything in resurrection. In short, He was leading their hearts to Himself in that new condition into which He had entered as the Risen One. With what surprised burnings

of heart did they hear of the wonderful change in God's Programme which even Old Testament Scriptures had announced beforehand. As their feet paced the road to Emmaus their hearts and minds were being conducted by the wondrous Stranger along a moral road which ended in the revelation of Himself in resurrection.

Do not let us suppose that the journey is one which only *they* needed to take. It is equally necessary and important for ourselves. It is so easy and natural for our hearts to connect the blessings of God with ourselves as men in the flesh, instead of seeing that the blight of death is upon everything that is of that order. We have to learn that all the blessings of God's present grace are wrapped up in One who is risen from the dead, and in order to reach them and have the joy of them we must reach HIM who is no longer to be known after the flesh. If all expectation of blessings of a *natural order* is blighted by His death, He reveals Himself in resurrection as the Source of infinite blessings of a *spiritual order*. When at length He made Himself known as the Risen One to the opened eyes of the two disciples it dawned upon their hearts that there was a new order of blessing infinitely surpassing all the earthly blessings for which they had

been looking. Instinctively they turned at once to seek the company of their brethren. His death had broken all the earthly links that had held them together, and had put them outside everything that was recognized by men; but now His resurrection had put a new complexion upon everything, and they hastened to be found with the company which had been gathered, as someone has beautifully said, by the message sent by the Risen One to His brethren. His gracious service had accomplished its end.

Thus, at the close of that memorable day, were the brethren gathered together. Gathered upon the new ground that Christ was risen, and gathered as the "brethren" of the Risen One, He could have His own joy in being in their midst. I do not enter now into the wonderful character of that gathered company. You may perhaps feebly conceive what it was to Mary, to Peter, and to the two disciples of Emmaus to know the Lord in His new condition as the Risen One, and to be found in a company to whom He could manifest Himself! But what was it for HIM to gather *His own company* thus for the first time around Himself as the Risen One! In the midst of that company His heart could let itself freely out. HE was in the peace of accomplished redemption, for all the judgment

of sin was fully borne ; God was glorified ; His work was finished ; the storm that had bowed His blessed head was hushed for ever. He was now in cloudless peace, but it was the peace which He could share with this gathered company. He could impart to them the same peace that He was in as the Risen One. Then if *He* had been quickened out of death by the Spirit, He would associate this gathered company with Himself in life, breathing upon *them* the Spirit of Life. To that company He could declare the Father's name ; in their midst He could sing praise to God ; and He could entrust to them the maintenance of His interests and glory, as the Father's interest and glory had been entrusted to Him. It was a company gathered BY and FOR Himself ; *His own* company, or, as He says in Matt. xvi.—“ My assembly.”

Now do we know anything of being gathered by the Risen Lord, and upon such ground as this ? May we better understand that it is the purpose of His love to have us here for Himself, and that all the wonderful grace that meets us in our need—whether it be that of the sorrowing heart, the soiled conscience, or the straying feet—is bent upon dealing with us in such a way as to free us for Himself and for His own company ! May we know truly what it is to be gathered together to His name !

## THE LITTLE CHILD.

(*Matt. xviii. 1-22.*)

We must receive the kingdom of God as a little child. Yes, indeed; and the moral of that thought is very beautiful.

The Lord Jesus, the Son in flesh, has by His death atoned for the sin which brought in death. But He also, in His life and passage through the world, acted on principles which were the very opposite and contradiction of that sin. Surely He did. He did not *remove the penalty*, and leave the *transgression uncondemned*. This He could not have done. By His death, He suffered the judgment; but in His life, He practically and thoroughly gainsayed the sin which had incurred the judgment.

This must have been so. He could not accredit the sin while suffering its judgment. The sin was pride or creature-exaltation—man seeking to be as God, affecting the place, and rights and majesty of God. The life of Jesus, in full contradiction of such sin, was that of the self-emptied Son—the subject, obedient Jesus. The station in the world which he assumed, the trade He followed, the family He was born into, the company He kept, the circumstances He lived in, all tell us this.

Again, we may say, it could not have been

otherwise. But, let me add, from the beginning God has been exercising His elect in this same lesson, humbling them while blessing them, leading them out of the original penalty or judgment into light and blessing again; but leading them by such a way as taught them, that man should not again exalt himself. And this He has done by taking up the weak, and the foolish, and the poor, in whom to illustrate His holy principles, and by whom to carry on His gracious operations.

Noah and the ark of gopher-wood; Abram, and the call from home and kindred to be a stranger here, without friend or inheritance; the barren wife and the younger brother of the book of Genesis; the captives in the Egyptian brick-kilns, and the infant cast out among the flags of the Egyptian river; the rod and the uplifted hand of Moses; the feet of the priests; the lamps and pitchers of Gideon; Samson with the ass's jaw-bone; David with his stone and sling; all witness this lesson, that while bringing to us and securing to us all blessing, the Lord would humble the pride of man, and throughout the wondrous story of His doings, expose the folly and the wickedness of the first departure from Him in self-exaltation.

And the elect, thus exercised and thus

used of God, have rehearsed the beautiful moral of all this, and said—"Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name, give glory." Daniel did so when he declared to the king, that it was not in him, but in God, to interpret dreams; as did Joseph, also, long before. But again, I say, the life of Jesus, from first to last, was speaking this language in forms of beauty and perfection, such as have glorified God beyond all that His rights and majesty were of old gainsayed in the garden of Eden. And this is very principal in the reckoning of our souls, when we are spiritually awake to the mysteries of God.

But, I ask, has God ceased to teach this lesson? Now that we are in the church and on the road to the *heavenly* country, has God ceased to teach this lesson? We might rather judge that He is teaching it with increased emphasis. And is it not so? "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," answers this. A little child is nothing in this world—a cipher in its great account—a weak thing—a foolish thing—a thing to be passed by, not worthy of being either courted or dreaded in the important game of the world's rivalries. It may have its own things, but they are toys. And so the church. She has her own things, and

peculiar things they are, but just such as must be esteemed toys, or children's play-things, by those who are concerned in the contentions of pride and selfishness on the earth.

Our Scripture, Matt. xviii. 1-22, gives us some of them — If thy brother trespass against thee, see him and win him if you can—try every way, be servant to him that has injured or insulted you—get others to seek him—if all fail, simply set him aside. If you want anything, ask God about it; if you do anything, take God's principles in the doing of it. This, we may say, is the voice that is heard here. These are among the things of the church—"a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease" (Job xii. 5). For how can the world value the light of such principles as these?

And yet all this is according to the stone and sling of David in other days. It is the weak thing. "Two or three met together in my name," says the Lord. Can anything be weaker in the judgment of man? And yet, in the judgment of the Spirit, such an assembly was doing the business of the sling and the stone, or the lamps and the pitchers. It confounds the strong, the noble, and the wise of this world. It brings to nought the things that are, though in itself nothing. "Ye see your calling," says the apostle,



looking at such an object, "how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. i. 26-29).

Surely the Lord in the church is teaching the old lesson still. And we are to be *always* practising it, exercising ourselves in those principles which are the church's peculiarities, though they are but weakness and foolishness in the thoughts of men. These are to be *always* our lesson, as the Lord says to Peter in this Scripture—"I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven."\*

But how entirely has Christendom refused to learn this lesson of "the little child!" She has consented to forget that it was the one who was accounted by the world as the despised Galilean, a carpenter's son, that suffered the death of the cross. Christen-

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\*The present dignities of the church are hidden in heaven. The angel of the little child beholds the Father's face there.

dom — the professing world around us — treats the mystery of redemption as if it had been some great personage that made atonement. It was God Himself, the Son in flesh, Jehovah's Fellow, that did so. That is indeed true. But as touching His place in the world, or among men, it was the despised Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth in Galilee. He did not go to Calvary from king's courts, or amid the acclamations of the world; but He was the rejected One. The station He took in the world, as I noticed before, the trade He followed, the family He was born into, the company He kept, the circumstances He lived in, all tell us who He was—as a root out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness, no beauty that He should be desired in the eyes of those seeing Him, yea despised and rejected and not esteemed by man ere He went to Calvary as the Lamb of God.

But Christendom has forgotten this. It may boast of Calvary, and of the Lamb of God in a certain way; but it has entirely lost sight of Nazareth and of the carpenter's Son. It links the *palace* with the *cross*, greatness in the world, wealth and ease, with the confession of Jesus and of the Gospel.

And it was in the face of such a perverted mind as this that the apostle, through the

Spirit, lifts himself up before the saints at Corinth (1 Cor. i., ii.), for he purposes to introduce Christ crucified to them again. They were receiving again the spirit of the world—they were walking as men—and they needed that Christ crucified, *in full character*, should be introduced to their souls afresh. For in that expression, “Christ crucified,” the apostle did not mean Christ in His *sacrifice* only, but Christ in His *humiliation* also; Christ regarded not merely as the Lamb for the altar of God, but as humbled all through, from His birth in the manger to His death on the tree. It is this full mystery which the apostle desires to have brought in with power on the conscience, that the spirit of the world, which was defiling the saints at Corinth, might be controlled. And it is only in that mystery, “Christ crucified,” opened and applied in its full form, that “the wisdom of God and the power of God” are to be found. But in that mystery, faith is very conscious that it does come into communion with the wisdom and the power of God—a wisdom which interprets all around, and a power which separates from it all.

O how poorly has the soul learnt the mystery of “the little child,” the living practical lesson of a scorned and rejected Jesus—the world-conquering truth, that the

One who was "the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father" was but a despised Galilean here, though the mind and the pen can trace the form of it without doubt or difficulty! Lord, give us to know the honour of witnessing to Thy rejection in this proud world!



FRAGMENT.—A worldly religion, which forms a system in which the world can walk, and in which the religious element is adapted to man on the earth, is the denial of Christianity.



## THE HOPES OF THE CHURCH OF GOD.

*(Continued from page 149.)*

### LECTURE VI.

Read Daniel vii. 16-27.

### THE TWO CHARACTERS OF EVIL:-- ECCLESIASTICAL APOSTASY, AND CIVIL APOSTASY.

Up to the present, dear friends, we have only spoken of the happiness that pertains to the church, save that, at our last lecture, we traced the progress that evil will make on the earth until the very end. This evil has a twofold character, upon which I will speak a few words, seeing that the relations which exist between the power of evil and

the judgments which await it, have a special interest for the children of God. When the evil has come to its height, God will destroy it.

The verses which I read are the interpretation which the angel gives to Daniel of the vision of the beasts which the prophet saw; and, as always occurs in symbolic prophecies, the interpretation contains many new features. In the explanation given to Daniel, all that will happen to the saints is added; but the principle subject of the chapter is the beast who exalts and elevates himself against the most high God.

I say, dear friends, that there are two characters in the evil which manifests itself on the earth: the first is ecclesiastical apostasy; and the second, apostasy of the civil power itself.

First, apostasy of the Church—viewed in its outward responsibility here below—has in principle taken place. Later on there will be a more open manifestation. As to the second, the civil power will rise against Him to whom all government belongs—against Christ, whom God will establish King over the earth. It is in the time of the fourth beast (Roman empire) that this revolt will take place.

Before entering directly on our subject of to-day, I desire to make a few remarks on

Matthew xxv., to which we shall return when we speak of the nations: for all the peoples of the earth which shall exist at the end of the times shall be either subject to Christ and, consequently, saved; or, in rebellion and, consequently, destroyed. But to remove doubts on the subject of this chapter, a few words must be said on it. People believe ordinarily that the judgment of which this chapter treats is the last or general judgment; but they are wrong. It is the judgment of the living nations on this earth, and not of the dead. Accordingly I did not speak of it when we treated of the resurrection of the dead. In this chapter of Matthew, I repeat, there is no question whatever of resurrection. In chapters xxiv., and xxv., are seen the judgment of the Jews, what will happen to that nation; next, what will happen to believers; then, what will happen to the Gentiles. It is the judgment of the quick, and not of the dead. It is this when we read, "Before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." What has given rise to the notion that it is the judgment of the dead is the statement that "these [the wicked] shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." But this would only tell us

that the judgment of the living would be *final* like that of the dead. Certainly, when God judges the living, His judgment sends some to eternal punishment, and others to life eternal. The judgment of the living is as certain as that of the dead. We shall be able to speak of it in its place.

Last time I was speaking mostly upon the tares, that is, the ecclesiastical apostasy—of the progress of evil there,—of that which has happened to the church as on earth. Now I am going to look into the apostasy of the civil power in its outward form, and the judgment which will come on it from God; for His wrath will fall upon this power. If at the close, ecclesiastical evil in some sort disappears in the character of secular power; and if the civil power has exalted itself, ecclesiastical power, is not the less vigorous: only it has not the supremacy; and herein is the difference. In other words, it is not that ecclesiastical power has improved itself, only it is not exercised in the same way; but its influence is not the less pernicious. It is no longer an ecclesiastical power wielding the secular arm, which is seen riding on the beast, and ruling it; but it takes a more mysterious form, and consequently a more dangerous one. Its occult influence continues, though deprived of its outward splendour; for by their pride men now begin to

lift themselves up and combine against God, and so prepare the way for the son of perdition.

Although ecclesiastical wickedness is always the worst, nevertheless, as we have been saying, civil apostasy will have its time of manifestation. Scripture tells us that all civil power is of God (Rom. xiii.). Now, in the same way that the church loses its proper force and character by its rebellion against God, so the civil government will be found in a state of revolt and apostasy when, instead of confessing fealty to God, it sets itself up against God, who is the source of its authority.

The Spirit of God being the true strength of the church, the church's revolt begins when, instead of being subject to Christ, it gives itself over to the will and power of man, leans upon man's aid, and renounces truth to follow error. Christ is the Head: the Holy Spirit is the only strength by whose means the church can act; and when the church is not guided by the Spirit, and is not in this sense truly subject to Christ, Christendom is practically apostate. Now, at the end of the present dispensation, the civil power will be found in this same state of revolt; and be it remembered that apostasy in the civil power is a thing much more manifest and prominent than in the church.



This will take place in the bosom of Christendom ; and it would seem that ecclesiastical wickedness will be its moving power. We have examples of this in Scripture. When Absalom was in revolt against David, Ahithophel was his counsellor (2 Sam. xv.). The instigator of the rebellion was, without doubt, Satan ; but Ahithophel directed the conspiracy against the king. It was Dathan and Abiram, simple Israelites (though men of renown), who rebelled against Moses ; but the revolt is called that of Korah, who was a Levite, and seduced the others. In the same way, God accuses the priests and prophets of Judah of the iniquity of the people, since the civil power had only followed their evil counsels. The same has been the order of things in Christendom. Those who ought to have instructed the church, who ought to have represented the wisdom of God, and have recalled governments to a sense of their duty towards God, being themselves in a revolt against Him, have concealed the truth, have taken a form which has seduced the world, and have thus led the civil power into the same departure from God.

There will be a revolt of this latter, but the ecclesiastical power will be the soul of it.

What do we find at Armageddon ? A false prophet who falls there along with the

beast. From the beginning to the end, there is always a beast, and with the beast a false prophet. It is the one or the other who guides the rebellion. But at the end the beast takes the lead, as being able to act more directly and freely : thus it is the beast which at the last is the direct object of judgment. Such we find to be the case from Daniel vii. But spiritual energy has been ministering to its power.

From the instant that the beast, or the civil power of the fourth monarchy, shall set himself in revolt against God, this monarchy will be found in relation with the Jews ; and it is this which introduces us anew into the history of this people. You remember, dear friends, that when the fourth beast appeared on the scene of this earth, there were Jews at Jerusalem ; Christ was presented as King of the Jews to the fourth beast, represented by Pontius Pilate, who rejected Him in this character which He is never to lose. At the end of the age the same fact will be reproduced : the Jews—returned to their own land, though without being converted—will find themselves in connection with the fourth beast. There will be saints among them ; and this fourth beast, exalting himself against God, will put himself in direct opposition to Christ, as the King of the Jews. It is true, indeed,

that his deadly opposition to Christ will go much farther than at the time when Christ stood before Pontius Pilate; for he will then arrogate to himself His rights as King of the Jews; and it is then that Christ, coming down from heaven, will destroy the beast, together with the Antichrist, and will take the remnant of the Jews to be His earthly people, and will put all nations under His feet.

This being the case, you will readily understand that many things in Scripture apply to the Jewish saints, that is, to this faithful remnant of the Jews, and not to the church. We know, e. g., that, during the time of the ecclesiastical apostasy, there have been many persecutions against God's faithful children; in such cases, the saints of all times could draw comfort from the consolations of God found in such passages; but in the last times, when it is a question of persecution of the saints, the application must be made to the remnant of the Jews, whose "blood will be shed like water" (Ps. lxxix. 3).

If we consider the history of the beast in a general manner, whether in its pagan form, as under Tiberias Cæsar, and the other emperors; or, under the influence of the corrupted Christianity of the Middle Ages, we see there have been, at every succeeding

epoch, persecutions against the saints ; and we may use as of them the Scriptural expressions, " And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth " (Rev. xviii. 24). But when we come to the time when the civil power will openly raise the standard of revolt—to the moment when these prophetic facts have their full realization, it is upon the Jews that the persecutions will fall ; to whom, therefore, these citations have their primary application. From the moment that the rights of Christ, as King of the Jews, are agitated, it is the Jews who will appear on the scene ; for the Jews are God's earthly people. But where is the church then ? It will be entirely out of the scene at the time of these last persecutions.

Before we quote the chapters which treat of the apostate civil power substituted for the apostate ecclesiastical power, we would insist upon this, that the revolt of the ecclesiastical power is not the less dangerous because it has not the supremacy. On the contrary, we repeat, that this power is the secret counsellor of all the evil. The only change that will take place is, that it will cease to have *outwardly* the preponderance ; and the not seeing this has led many into error. Because men, in the use of ordinary observation only, have perceived that it

could no longer depose kings, they have supposed that the ecclesiastical power had absolutely disappeared. No attention has been paid to that which the children of God might ascertain out of His word, namely, that its moral influence would survive the destruction of its political existence; and that it was precisely this influence which would urge on the power, properly so called political, to revolt against God, and thus to its destruction.

I am not saying that it is not the will of man which, by its own energy guides the beast to its eternal ruin. This is indeed true; but in the meantime it is the ecclesiastical apostasy which, either arrogating to itself the power, or shutting the door to the manifestation of the will of God, seduces by its machinations the inhabitants of the earth to acknowledge and adore the beast.

I advert to the passages which refer to the observations just made.

First, the end of Daniel vii., where the fourth beast is found; afterwards, Revelation xvi., and especially chapter xvii., where the two are distinguished, namely, the great whore or Babylon, and the beast. In chapter xvii., we get the woman clothed with scarlet, a power whose principal element is ecclesiastical; she is mounted on the beast (civil power). After that, "the ten horns

which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore (ecclesiastical power), and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to . . . . give their kingdom to the beast."

Let us now examine the passages which concern the sources of evil, and more particularly the kind of evil which is exhibited in that power which is in rebellion against God, namely, the fourth monarchy. Let us see the form which the rebellion will take.

In Revelation xii. 3 we find the source of the power, "the great red dragon." We are there, as it were, admitted behind the scenes, and see Satan desiring to destroy Him who is to govern all nations with a rod of iron—Christ; and, in Christ and with Christ, the church. It is properly the power of Satan, and the great combat.

The word of God puts in contrast the Father and the world; flesh and Spirit; Satan and the Son of God. Here we have the great dragon or Satan, who wants to devour Him who is to govern the nations with a rod of iron; but it is in heaven that we see it. Afterwards (ver. 9), he is cast out—an event which has not yet taken place.

Here there is a difficulty to some minds. Because the devil is cast out of the con-

science, which is true,\* they suppose that he is cast out of heaven. Satan has indeed no power over our conscience if we have understood the value of the blood of Christ; but he is still in heaven, where he accuses the children of God. We see from Ephesians vi. 12 that the wicked spirits (margin) are in heavenly (margin) places: by reason of this, there will be a battle in heaven—a battle, the effect, not of intercession or of priesthood, but of power, which will take place, perhaps with the help of angels; but which will ever be a work of power. At the same time, though Satan shall be cast down from heaven, he will not yet be chained to the bottomless pit; and the fruits of his wickedness will not yet have found their limit; so it is said, “the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”

Satan, cast down from heaven to earth, will act there by the agency of the Roman empire. Revelation xiii., describes what will appear on the scene as the providential instruments by which he will seek to make good his power on earth: “I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads

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\*That is, his accusing power is rendered null by virtue of the blood and work of Jesus Christ.

and ten horns.”\* This is the terrestrial agency. This beast will unite all the characters of the three previous beasts.

The authority of the dragon becomes established in the Roman empire—in the beast with seven heads and ten horns. “I saw one of its heads, as it were, wounded, to death;” that is, one of the governing forms of the Roman empire ruined. But afterwards the mortal wound is healed, and the form which was destroyed re-established. Now, if we compare the acts of the little horn of the same beast in Daniel, we shall find that the little horn “whose mouth speaketh great things, before whom three [horns] fell”—that this very one, we say, becomes the beast itself. That is, the beast will find itself under the dominion of this little horn; as we might say, that Napoleon was the French empire, because he wielded all its resources. This beast will be the civil power, the Roman empire, in apostasy, or in open revolt against God.

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\*It is remarkable that the dragon has his crowns on his heads; the beast of chapter xiii, has them on his horns. There is no question of crowns on the beast in the last form of all that he takes.

*(To be continued, D. V.)*



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“NOT I, BUT CHRIST.”

*Galations ii. 20.*

“Not I, but Christ,” be honoured, loved, exalted,  
“Not I, but Christ,” be seen, be known, be heard,  
“Not I, but Christ,” in every look and action ;  
“Not I, but Christ,” in every thought and word.

“Not I, but Christ,” my yearning supplication ;  
“Not I, but Christ,” my longed-for, wished-for goal.  
Christ, only Christ, my fondest meditation ;  
Christ, only Christ, theme sweetest to my soul.

“Not I, but Christ,” to gently soothe in sorrow,  
“Not I, but Christ,” to wipe the falling tear,  
“Not I, but Christ,” to lift the weáry burden ;  
“Not I, but Christ,” to hush away all fear.

“Not I, but Christ,” in lowly, silent labour ;  
“Not I, but Christ,” in humble, earnest toil ;  
Christ, only Christ ! no show, no ostentation,  
Christ, none but Christ, the gatherer of the spoil.

Christ, only Christ, no idle word e’er falling :  
Christ, only Christ ! no endless, bustling sound ;  
Christ, only Christ ! no self-important bearing ;  
Christ, only Christ ! no trace of “I” be found.

Christ, only Christ, e’er long will fill my vision,  
Glory excelling, soon, full soon I’ll see—  
Christ, only Christ, my every wish fulfilling—  
Christ, only Christ, my “All-in-All” to be !

## GRACE THE TRUE SOURCE AND SUP- PORT OF PRACTICAL RIGHTEOUSNESS.

(Galatians vi. 7-11.)

It is well to remind our souls and one another, by times, that whatever may be the mighty—almighty—power of God's grace, He nevertheless always maintains His own moral principles. Whatever may be His mercy in calling a soul—whatever the fullness of love that embraces even a prodigal, He never leaves the prodigal in his evil. He never leaves the unrighteous in his unrighteousness; He never deals lightly with ungodliness: even in forgiving it, He has shown Himself utterly, irreconcilably, against it; but, thanks be to God, *for us*, against our evil and for ourselves. And this is the gospel. And as this is the manner of His love in our deliverance and reconciliation to Himself, so it is throughout that God maintains His authority in our souls, His hatred of sin, and delight in what is good. He undertakes to make the reflection of His own holiness in every soul that He delivers from the wrath to come. And let us remember there is no exception. In one sense there is no difference. Just as there was no difference in saving us as lost sinners—we were all alike lost, and yet

there were grave differences in the character of our sinfulness—so now. There may be no small differences in the measure in which we serve and resemble Christ. But there is no difference in this, that we resemble Christ—if indeed we belong to Him, we must. As God is true, He cannot give up working the active watchful work of His love in changing us into the same image, even now as we pass through the wilderness.

It is well for us, therefore, continually to bring our souls to this standard. Let us keep fast holiness. The more we value grace and seek to understand it—and I do not think it is possible to over-estimate the importance of it, both of the knowledge of it and the desire to know it more—even because of this it becomes us so much the more to take care that we never sacrifice the moral principles of God's dealings with every soul of man, and with ourselves in particular because of the mercy that He has shown our souls.

But here is a passage now before us that sometimes startles many a soul not founded in grace; a passage which those who are unacquainted with grace wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. They say, There, you see, it all depends upon what we are—how we overcome self, and how far we are changed men :

all depends upon our being thoroughly spiritual and entirely devoted. I need not stop to prove that such a statement is altogether false; that the only foundation on which we can stand at all is Christ: "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ." That foundation is not the work of the Spirit in us, but of Christ for us; it is a work entirely outside us, on which we stand forever before God. But as surely as we do stand on that foundation, there is a work of the Spirit in us, and a constant and serious work. I do not say it may not be eclipsed from time to time and interrupted. There may be sad checks to it; but I do say that God never allows such a thought as that a child of His, blessed with Christ, should not be subject to the present care, and government, and discipline of His heart and hand in our ways and conversation, so as to produce a moral conformity to His own will. He would cease to be God if He did, and He would treat us as bastards and not as sons; for "if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons."

Thus, though it may seem strange to those who little understand the ways of God, and it will be thought strange wherever there is carelessness, and anything allowed in our ways that is contrary to God,

yet it is most wholesome and needed for our souls that we should remind ourselves of such a Scripture as this: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." It is, be assured, universally true, whether of the unbeliever or of the believer—"whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." The unbeliever sows to self and nothing but self, and reaps the judgment of God on self—and of self where there is not a single good thing—nothing will stand before God. But what about the believer? There is where the difficulty comes in. The believer has the mingled crop of good and evil. For just as we know with Christianity; the field where good seed was sown and where there was good soil, yet all was not good seed—tares were sown by the enemy; so Satan may take advantage of the unjudged evil of our hearts in order to lead into sin. It may not be always a question of gross sin; but it is the lawless evil of our nature, that prefers a little present gratification of self to the service, the uniform obedience and glory, of Christ. But do we gain by it? Can you tell me of a soul that ever departed from the will of God that did not suffer in that very thing in which he pleased himself? Can you look back on any one thing in which you went contrary to God, that gave you satis-

faction as a Christian? Wherever we indulged ourselves, in that itself God dealt with us. The very thing for which we spare ourselves becomes the keen rod for our correction. And let us thank God that it is so. "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

God, then, does carry on this discipline with His people at the present time. As sure as God lives and we live, what is contrary to God must be judged. Now if we judge ourselves we shall not be judged; but if we neglect self-judgment, then He takes it up, and when He does so we are chastened of Him, that we should not be condemned with the world (1 Cor. xi.). Therefore no matter what the thing be (what some might think a matter of little moment), it is impossible that God should pass over a little sin: impossible that He could have communion with anything that is not of Christ. What a mercy that now is the time when God deals with what does not flow from His Spirit! It may have to be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ another day, when we shall receive the things done in the body according to that we have done whether good or bad.

And let us not think our Father hard. Can any one thing too hard come from such a God—the God who gave His own Son to die

that we might know our sins forgiven and ourselves sons of God with Christ for ever? Now such we know to be our place, as it is of all real Christians, let them say what they may. Nothing can alter God's truth. But a vast deal depends on our practical state and conduct as to the dealing of God with our souls in the present time. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." This does not mean anything necessarily shocking, though the very worst evil may be its end. Of course any kind of indulgence of the flesh must be dealt with by God and by God's children. But there may be that which children of God do not see. Does God pass over that because others do not see it, and we may not think much of it? Impossible that God *could* sanction what is contrary to Christ. And let us thank God for it. It is a part of the scheme of His perfect goodness towards us. It could not be otherwise. And we should prove ourselves to be little worthy of the name of Christ, if we wished it to be otherwise.

May our desire be that Christ be formed in us in everything; not only that we should have life everlasting, but that our hearts should be according to His heart—our spirit, our ways, our walk, according to the mould

of Him to whom we belong. This is what God has before Him; and it should be the object of our souls. "Therefore let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."



## THE HOPES OF THE CHURCH OF GOD.

(Continued from page 180.)

LECTURE VI (Continuation).

Read Daniel vii. 16-27.

But there is also another beast in Rev. xiii. (which is not the Roman empire) which exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him (*enopion autou*).

Rev. xiii. 11 to 14. "And I beheld . . . and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth." Here is something which has the semblance of Christ's power, and which later, in the midst of the Jews, will wear the form of Christianity; but, as understood by the apostle, it is Satan's.

It is, then, the second beast who will seduce the inhabitants of the earth, and who will cause them to follow the first, namely, the civil power of the Roman empire.

"And I saw one of the heads, as it were wounded to death." This has already happened to the imperial form of the Roman



empire; but the wound is to be entirely healed. Thus the beast loses its imperial character for a time, and its wound is afterwards healed. When this takes place in all the astonished earth, men go after it.

The imperial beast will therefore again be seen on earth, and in all the earth they will wonder after it. But we have also read that the second beast, by the great wonders which he doeth, seduces the inhabitants of the earth. This second beast will appear at the end under the character, not of a beast, but of a false prophet; all his secular power will be lost. He will no longer be a beast ravishing, devouring; this feature will be entirely effaced. And he will be seen as the false prophet,\* who will be recognized as the second beast already spoken of, by the perfect resemblance of his character, as the person, in short, who has done the things which the second beast has done, but who appears at the close under this new form. (Comp. Rev. xiii. 14, with xix. 20.)

If we take the moral side of the events already accomplished, we know who has exercised all the power in the presence of the civil authority; but there will be one

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\*The false prophet is not Mahomet. "He exerciseth the power of the first beast *before him* (*enopion autou*).” Now Mahomet has never done this.

also who will do great wonders and seduce the inhabitants of the earth.

Farther on we shall have to look into the consequences of all this ; in the meanwhile, let us gather up what we have been saying. Chapter xii., shows us the dragon in heaven, as the origin, the first cause of all this rebellion. Chapter xiii., gives us the Roman empire under its imperial form, as the providential visible agent. This beast is wounded to death, but his mortal wound is healed. There is also in its presence another power who seduces the inhabitants of the earth ; and it is when the mortal wound of the first beast is healed, "that all the world wondered after the beast." Add to this the circumstance of chapter xix., namely, that the second beast ceases to be one, and appears at the end as a false prophet.

In chapter xvii., there is a description of the first beast, which gives us other particulars. Verses 7, 8 : "And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel ? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not ; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition : and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were

not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

It ascends out of the bottomless pit, i. e., becomes positively the power of Satan towards the end; and this is what will happen when Satan, being cast out of heaven (which event will occur when the church has been caught up into heaven), will come down to the earth in great wrath. Then, under his influence the beast (the Roman empire) "that was, and is not, and yet is," resumes his strength and form; that is, the civil power, instead of being in submission to God, takes the character of Satan, and signalizes itself, at his instigation, by an open revolt against the power of God.

To find all the marks for recognizing this last form of the beast, we must wait until the imperial head of the Roman empire, the eighth king, shall appear in the world. This must take place before its ruin.

When the Roman empire existed under its pagan form, it had not ten kings; but when this beast reappears (let us keep in mind that it is the Roman empire), ten kings will give their power to it, instead of ten kings replacing it. More than this, it is after having been destroyed that it will come again into existence. In a word, it is not the pagan beast, nor the history of the

middle ages, nor of ten barbarian kings (if indeed ten could be pronounced upon with any certainty), who have taken the place of the empire, but “and yet is;” \* that is, the mortal wound will be healed, and the imperial beast will reappear.

The ten kings “shall give their strength and power unto the beast;” there will be an imperial head—an emperor, and ten kings, who will give him their power: the kingdoms will continue in existence, but it will be a confederation of them. As an illustration, we may refer to the kingdoms of Spain, Holland, Westphalia, etc., under Napoleon. There has been the beast; there have been, it may be, ten kings; but *never yet ten kings giving their power to the beast who was not, and who came anew into existence.*

“The seven heads are seven mountains.” (We are still occupied with the Roman empire.) “And there are seven kings; five are fallen, and one is”—namely, the imperial one which existed in the time of John,—“and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

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\*It is well known and sure that the genuine reading is *kai parestai* “and shall be present” (not *kaiper estin* “and yet is”). This evidently confirms the case, besides removing a sort of enigma. or paradox, in the vulgar text.

And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth (because the seven have passed), and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." That is, there will be an eighth head, one of a peculiar character, who will re-unite all the power of the beast, who will be the beast himself, and who, whilst a head apart, is still one of the seven. It is the imperial head under a new form; for there are to be ten kings, who will give their power to this eighth head; and it is in this form that it will go down to destruction. It is exactly here that the coming of Christ, and of the church, connects itself with the subject of which we are treating. (Rev. xix.; 2 Thess. ii.)

We must yet quote from Daniel xi. 36-45: "And the king shall do according to his will." (Compare this with 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4, and following verses.) We may observe, that in Daniel xi., the question is not one of ecclesiastical supremacy, but rather of wars between civil powers in the East. With verse 36 begins the history of Antichrist, of "the king who shall do according to his own will," just like the little horn in chapter vii., and who at last, after dealing in an idolatrous and apostate way in Jerusalem, finds his end with that first beast. It is a king like any other, a king of the earth, but exercising his power in the holy land at the close. Christianity, as such, is not brought

before us, nor the mystery of lawlessness in it: that had preceeded the appearance of the lawless one according to 2 Thessalonians. Again, I say, it is no question of ecclesiastical matters, but a king of this earth, who becomes an object of attack to the kings of the North and of the South.

One remark on 2 Thessalonians ii., for our consolation in the midst of this sad course of events. "Now we beseech you, brethren," says the apostle, "by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind," etc. Those who love the truth will entirely escape this deceivableness of unrighteousness, to which, on the contrary, all those will be delivered by the judgment of God, who have "not received the love of the truth;" but "have pleasure in unrighteousness." This is the evil which is coming, and the world ought to be warned of it; because some may be salutarily frightened at the thought and led to consider the word of God. And why is all this announced to the children of God? It is in order that they may draw out of it the fullest comfort, and may separate themselves from all that which drags men on to destruction. I say not that we Christians shall be involved in the catastrophe; but that, by being told before hand of the judg-

ments which will take place at this dreadful crisis, we are led to detach ourselves, even at this present time, from the causes which, by their nature, and by the justice of God, bring it on.

The apostle, it would seem, had spoken a good deal of these things to the church of the Thessalonians, and had taught them to expect the coming of the Lord. Now, what had Satan done? He had tried to terrify them, in telling them that the day of the Lord was there (*enesteken*, 2 Thess. ii. 2). No, says the apostle, I beseech you, by the coming ['presence' see Greek] of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to him [which will precede that day], that ye be not soon shaken in mind, etc. (as if we were already in it). This day will come upon the lawless one, and not upon you; you will already have been caught up to Him, and you will accompany Him personally in that great day when He will appear.\*

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\*The idea which usually prevails in the interpretation of this passage is, that *parousia* and *hemera* have the same meaning affixed to them by the apostle, and that he uses the words interchangeably. *Parousia* means "presence," not necessarily involving manifestation to the world; *hemera* "day," on the contrary, always has to do, in the Old Testament, with judgment. Here the apostle uses the presence of the Lord, and our gathering together to

The day is present, said the seducers ; the day is come ! No, says the apostle, the day will not come until you, the Lord's faithful ones, have been caught up into the air, and until the lawless one shall be revealed.

These consolations are again confirmed (vs. 9, 10) : " Even him whose coming . . . is with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth."

It is only needful to add, that in this chapter it is the description of the moral character, and of the unbridled iniquity of the lawless one, and of the power of Satan ; whilst, in Daniel xi., it is the picture of his outward character.

It is to be feared, dear friends, that the exposition of prophecy this evening has not been the view which you have been hitherto led to take of it. I have been endeavouring to open out the distinction, and at the same time the connection, which there is between the civil and ecclesiastical power ; as well as the distinction, and at the same time the connection, between the ecclesiastical apostasy and the civil apostasy. The two things are closely allied, because we read that the second beast exercises all the

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Him, in contrast with the day : " I beseech you, by His presence and our gathering to Him, not to be distracted about the day, as if it were here."



power of the first beast before him ; and that the false prophet, which is the second beast, is thrown into the lake of fire with the first.

We have also noticed that this fact connects itself with the presence of the Jews at Jerusalem, in whose vicinity the beast will come to his end—an event which will close this present dispensation, in bringing out the power of Christ upon the earth, which will lead to the union of Christ with the remnant of the Jews ; and in consequence of that, to the bringing of all nations under His sceptre. I have only spoken of the fourth beast.

There are two points worthy of remark in connection with the history of Israel : first, as to those nations who were in league against Israel, when this people were owned of God ; and, secondly, as to the nations who carried them into captivity. As yet we have only been discussing the times of the Gentiles, that period during which the kingdom was transferred from the Jews to them ; that is, the time of the four beasts—the times of the Gentiles. Daniel speaks of the four beasts only ; Ezekiel speaks of the nations before the four beasts, and after ; but never of “the times of the Gentiles,” so called.

It is during the period comprised in the

history of these four beasts that Christianity comes in, and that the moral rebellion takes place. But we have seen that the ecclesiastical power, which has been the instrument of leading to such a result, by assuming the place of God—taking away faith, and, at the same time, disgusting reason; putting aside natural religion, and, under the pretext of the rights of revelation, corrupting and perverting this revelation itself, so that men should have no other objects than themselves—this power, I say, having played a part in the drama of iniquity, which the enemy of our souls, and of the Lord, has brought to pass, will itself fall a victim to the violence of the human will—that will which itself has withdrawn from subjection to God; and as incapable, by its pretensions to religion, openly to serve Satan, as it is of serving God with sincerity—in one word, incapable of truth, it becomes the cowardly counsellor and abettor of that iniquity of which it cannot constitute itself the actor. It provokes crimes which it dare not consummate, and of which the civil power is to be the active chief and executor. Dear friends, when the natural conscience is more upright than that resulting from religious forms, it is all over with the church—it is near its end; and the candlestick will be removed where

it serves only as the instrument of wickedness, such as the world can hardly imagine. As men say, the corruption of that which is most excellent is the worst of corruptions. As to the Antichrist properly speaking, he will deny that Jesus is the Christ; he will "deny the Father and the Son" (1 John ii. 22); he will not confess Jesus Christ coming in the flesh (2 John 7); he will deny everything sacred—the Father, the Son, Jesus the Messiah, Jesus come as man. We have seen his character, his acts, his form, and the source of his power. Satan will work directly by him. It will be a sort of Satanic imitation of what God has done. The Father has given the throne to the Son, and the Spirit acts according to the power of the Son in the church before Him: similarly the dragon (Satan) will confer the throne on the beast, and great authority; and the second beast (spiritual power, real Antichrist, and false prophet) exercises all the power of this last beast (civil power) before him (Rev. xiii. 12.)

The judgment will decide in such a state of things. May God make us attentive to the character and to the end of the pride of man! The energy of his will is able to employ, and put to use, all the means which God has delegated to him—and they are great; and the results, so long as God has

patience with him, will be great also. But man will be the centre of all this, the feeling of his responsibility before God goes for nothing. God is, in reality, dishonoured and degraded. The end of all man's most noble, most worthy aims—God—is wanting in it all. In fine, it is the same principle and the same source—sin—from the beginning to the end. Man, acting of his own will to satisfy his lusts, ambitious for knowledge for selfish ends, exalting himself to a level with God, disobedient, and, as a consequence, acting under the influence and energy of Satan:—such is the character of Antichrist; such is the history of Adam in his first fall—his first sin. It is the commencement and consummation of the same wickedness, whose evidence and contrast appeared in the death of our beloved and perfect Saviour, who made its expiation for us. May His name of grace and glory be eternally blessed; and may He engrave these things upon our hearts! Certainly He will preserve His church from all these evils which menace the world, for His church is united to Him.

*(To be continued, D. V.)*

## RESTORATION OF COMMUNION AFTER CONTRACTING DEFILEMENT.

*Numbers xix.*

Without pretending to enter into the details of this chapter, I would point out some points in the type of such importance and so little appreciated by the children of God generally, that we cannot have them too often brought before us. For I think that this portion, as indeed the word of God in general, is the revelation not of the mercy that brings us nigh to God so much as of His continuing, sustaining, restoring grace. This will never sanction our distance from Him again in a practical way. Happily the considerations I refer to are quite plain.

First, there was the sacrifice; and here the blood that was sprinkled before God, as the foundation of all the rest, was a complete thing never renewed. It was sprinkled seven times before the tabernacle. Whatever might be the circumstances, the sprinkling was never renewed. To have supposed such a thing would be to endanger the foundation. It is true that God never raises a question about the efficacy of the blood of Christ. Scripture never yields such a thought as the renewal of the blood of Christ; for this is the very point in which

the sacrifice of Christ stands contrasted with the sacrifices of the law over and over again in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Wherever there is the thought of fresh sprinkling of the blood, a man is on Jewish and not on Christian ground. It is not merely that His sacrifice has been made once, but we are perfected for ever through that one offering (Heb. x. 14). It is a thing done once for all. This is the first thing to notice. "Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times."

But then there was another want. How are we to have our communion restored if broken by defilement? In fact, we know that the children of God are in the circumstances of great temptation and trial, and that they have not only a tempter without, but a nature within which would constantly drag them into sin. I do not mean that there is any necessity for a child of God to fail: there is no need for it, nor does God in any way tempt to evil. On the contrary, he who has found Christ, and yet fails in the way of sin, is always inexcusable. To allow the thought that God's providence has to do with this, is scarce short of blasphemy. Even, if unhappily wrong, let us beware of adding to it the aggravation of

throwing it upon God, and of excusing ourselves at His cost.

But what does God provide for the sorrowful circumstances of one who forgets Him? This is what we find in the second part of the chapter, and what was really His peculiar object in the red heifer. For the body of the heifer, her skin, her flesh, her dung, everything that belonged to her, was all to be burnt, and the ashes to be religiously kept. Nor was it merely what was in the heifer that had to be burned, but into the burning had to be thrown cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet: the cedar wood and hyssop referring to nature in all its extent—embracing the whole range of that which was originally very good, but which man only uses as an instrument for departure from God. Scarlet, in Scripture, is the continual figure of the pride of the world. Here then we have all these thrown into the burning of the heifer, as a witness of the circumstances of the trial, or the means of defilement. Of all this the ashes were to be kept.

It will be observed, again, that God marks in a peculiar way the defiling effects of death, because it set forth in a special manner the slips and failures of the children of God, while passing through the wilderness. And hence it is only given in Numbers, be-

cause it is a provision for the wilderness. If one had anything to do with the heifer, the person became unclean. The priest and he that burnt it were unclean. And if a person that was clean had to gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place, he too was rendered unclean. All this was to mark the nicety of God, this deep feeling about anything that had to do with our defilement. In Christ, where this is found, there is of course the absence and opposite of uncleanness. Christ was the only One that could touch a leper without being defiled. The intention was to show the delicate feeling that God would have in His people about any defilement. "He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days."

There was no haste in a soul's restoration from impurity: "He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean." If a man tampered with sin, God at least would not make light of his sin. He would give the soul the profit of being exercised about it. It was in vain for such an one to say, I am sprinkled with the blood—I am clean: why should I trouble more about the sin? Such thoughts do not come from the Holy Ghost. Instead of our being sprinkled with Christ's blood



being a reason for taking comfort in the presence of sin, it is the strongest motive for shame and humiliation. What a stain on His name, and what a pain to our hearts that, after God had attracted us by His mercy to hear His word, and had given us Christ's blood to purge our sins, here again we were indulging in that which required the suffering of the Son of God! The blood is not the appointed way for meeting sin afterwards. The flesh uses that to make light of sin. It is not the blood that was here used to purify, but the ashes of the heifer. What did they represent? The full proof of judgment. There might have been the blood without the intense suffering that the reducing of the heifer to ashes produced. It is what Christ suffered that is brought to my remembrance by the Holy Ghost. The ashes were mingled with living water. The power of the Holy Ghost—His present action in using the remembrance of the sufferings of Christ. It is not the truth of sacrifice that is used, but of His sufferings on the cross—His going through the judgment of the sin before God. My soul is brought back to this, not merely as a redeemed person, but as one who thinks of what it cost the Lord Jesus Himself.

There were two applications. There is slowness and deliberation. Every thing

must be complete. The man must be under the effect of the water seven days, going through in his spirit the sorrow of not standing in his full privileges among the people of God. Christianity no doubt has nothing to do with times and seasons ; but they are here significant of great principles. It is not that a man must now be a week before being entitled to renew his enjoyment of communion with God again. Yet this is true—that if a soul has got defiled with sin and is not led by the Holy Ghost to judge it in God's presence, he cannot regain practical communion with God. He is a liar according to the strong language of the Holy Ghost. The full force of that word applies to a man that never knew God. But so far as a Christian, through the deceit of Satan, makes light of sin, he is an offender against the true character of God. Is not this a very serious thought? I am sure there are few of us who feel its weight as we ought. We take a comparatively light view of our slips and failures in word and deed against the Lord. The effect of the failure should be to lead our souls to regard Jesus in all His sufferings, and to go in spirit through what that particular evil cost the Lord—what it was for God to judge it—what the Lord Jesus felt in taking it upon Him before God ; for indeed He did take it

all. If so, what is the effect? The man acquires a strength and a deeper knowledge of God's grace than he ever had before, and a practical acquaintance with the deceitfulness of sin and of his own heart; so that instead of Satan gaining an advantage, the man gets fresh blessing for his soul. But how often, instead of this, have we alas! to see a person tampering with evil. Then it becomes so grave that even the eyes of others see it. Then perhaps it goes farther still; the very world sees it—too truly sees a careless unholy walk. What is the consequence? The man slips completely away. He gets farther and farther, until alas! it is only the discovery to himself and to others of what was true from the first—there never was a living link between that soul and God. Still it remains true, that what is destruction to an unconverted man is dangerous and hurtful to a Christian. Wherever we tamper with sin, in ourselves or in others, there is defilement. If the unclean person touched anything, it became unclean. Sin leads on from one bad step to another, unless we turn to the Lord Jesus Christ about it.

The difference of the days I understand to be this. The third day represents that there must be the feeling of his condition as an unclean man. If it was a question of

anything evil, the principal of the law was that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word should be established. Two was the absolute number that was necessary in order to prove anything; but three was more than sufficient. On the third day the unclean was to purify himself with these ashes of the heifer. On the seventh day the thing was repeated—the uncleanness was again brought before the soul by the Spirit of God, and then the person resumes his place among the people of God.

But to take a New Testament instance, let us look at Peter. See how he broke down in spite of the Lord's warning. It is not that Peter had less affection for Christ than the other disciples: the reason was because Peter had great confidence in his love for Christ and therefore rushed into circumstances where none but the Lord could stand, and from which the other disciples held back. And therefore coming more into the light, into the place where Christ was, he only proved the flesh more clearly than the others did. The others had not come into the same circumstances of temptation. But how does the Lord restore Peter? First of all, when He turned and looked upon him, Peter goes out and weeps bitterly. That will illustrate what is meant by the third day's purifying. The whole work

might be done in a short time ; but it must be really done. It is the grave, deliberate self-judgment, the power of weighing the thing in all its hatefulness before God. Peter, when the Lord looks upon him, remembers the word that Jesus had spoken unto him. That is the way the Holy Ghost works. It is not merely a feeling, but the word of the Lord brought back to Peter's mind. Now it seems to me that the word thus brought home to him exactly answers to the ashes of the heifer applied to the man that was unclean on the third day. There was the sprinkling for the first time.

But the process was not yet complete, though it was going on. For when a man is in an actively evil state, he would not, as Peter did, desire to see the Lord again ; he would have kept away from the sepulchre. If the Holy Ghost had not been working in Peter's soul, he would have avoided, instead of desiring to be near, the Lord. But he showed living faith because he wanted to see and hear the Lord. The Lord, however, waits. The work was not done at once, and it was not till some time after that Peter is with the Lord in John xxi. The beautiful interview between them recorded in that chapter illustrates the second purifying—when the Lord so seriously and withal so affectionately asked him, “ Simon, son of

Jonas, Lovest thou me?" There was not one word said about his denying the Lord. But if Peter did not understand at first, the Lord would not let him go, and repeats once and again the question, till the whole root is laid bare, and Peter felt what the Lord really meant. Yet said He, "Feed my sheep." It was not merely that He looked for Peter himself to be by grace His faithful follower in the thing in which he had failed; but He confided that which was the precious object of His love to the man who had denied his Master. There we have the seventh day. It was the digging down to the root of the wrong. What was the occasion of this fall? Peter had trusted not in the Lord's love to Peter, but in Simon's love to the Lord. It was in no small degree a natural affection though there was more and better mixed with it. And so, I suppose, it is that the Lord calls him by his name "Simon, son of Jonas." He was resting on his affection for Christ, not on Christ Himself. and I believe we are very little alive to the extent in which we give credit to nature for being grace. There is a vast deal of nature about the truest Christian, and it was just Simon's mistake not to suspect it. But the Lord shows him that no flesh shall glory in His presence, but he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

After this, the work being done, Simon returns to his place of ease and happiness in the Lord's presence. And now too he can undertake the Lord's work, broken in spirit, and in communion with Himself, about to go at a later day both to prison and to death for His sake. How completely grace restores the soul!



## THE HOPES OF THE CHURCH OF GOD.

*(Continued from page 200.)*

### LECTURE VII.

Read Psalm lxxxii.

#### JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS, WHICH BE- COME THE INHERITANCE OF CHRIST AND OF THE CHURCH.

The last verse of this Psalm contains the subject which is to occupy us this evening: "Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations." It is God who is to judge the earth, and, as the consequence of this judgment, to become the possessor of all nations.

I have spoken of Christ, Heir of all things, with the church His co-Heir; then of the coming of Christ, or of the time when He will take His inheritance; and of the resurrection of the church, or of the moment when the raised church participates with Him in this inheritance. Even departed

souls—blessed as they are with Him—wait for the resurrection of their bodies to enjoy the fulness of blessing and of glory. It is for this reason that a Christian may desire death, because he is thus delivered from all affliction and trial; but he awaits the resurrection for the consummation of his glory. We have spoken of the progress of evil, and shown that, far from the world being converted by the preaching of the gospel, the tares are to increase and to ripen until the harvest. And we have seen the evil come to its height in the eighth head of the beast, which goes down to destruction in the apostasy of the civil power of the fourth monarchy, and in the false prophet, who, having seduced the world to do homage to the beast and to take his mark, is destroyed with him.

We have seen that there are two beasts, and that the second is transformed into the false prophet. (Comp. Rev. xiii., with the end of xix). The scene now extends itself; for not only will the fourth beast be destroyed, but the nations will be judged. All the races of men who inhabit the earth, which took their rise in the division of the children of Noah into their respective families, will be found at the end gathered together and judged by God. All that is high and lifted up will be brought low by the



power and glory of God, in order that God in full blessing, may enjoy the kingdom, and may have the inheritance of all nations.

I have touched, at our last meeting, the most difficult part, namely, the point where the two dispensations touch, and where the evil caused by the failure of the existing one (failure, of course, on man's part) requires the intervention of God; and, as a sequel, the judgment which terminates the dispensation.

I have spoken specially of the rebellion of the beast abetted by Antichrist, because it is, in fact, the consummation of the apostasy. But when this event takes place, there comes also the judgment of all nations. God does not only judge the last rebellion of the antichristian beast; but having made His power felt—the moment of His wrath being come—He judges all nations.

This is what we read in Revelation xi. 15-18: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast,

and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth."

Let us follow up the passages which speak on the same subject.

We before remarked, that the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, the true King over the whole earth, was presented to the fourth beast and to the Jews, that is, to the Gentiles and Jews (to the Gentiles in the person of Pontius Pilate, and to the Jews in the person of the high priest). He was presented to the world and to His own, and was rejected. But in a much more extended sense it is said, "The nations were angry, and thy wrath is come." It is the wrath of God breaking forth against them by the judgment of His Son.

Psalm ii. Two things are set forth. First, that the Son is anointed (margin) king upon Zion, God's holy hill, and that He has the heathen for His inheritance: Zion is His throne; the nations, His inheritance. Secondly, His way of dealing with the nations—a way entirely opposed to the gos-

pel :—"Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron." The sceptre (rod) of Christ, in the gospel, is a rod of goodness and love; it is everything that is most sweet, most powerful, in His love; it is not a sceptre of iron. The psalmist is speaking of the kings of earth: "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; . . . . kiss the Son." The decree of God is, that His Son shall be annointed, that is, declared King over all the earth; and He invites the kings of the earth to submit themselves to Him. He says to them, "I am about to speak in my wrath; I give the heritage of the nations to Christ; He will bruise you with a rod of iron; He will break you in pieces: now then, submit yourselves to Him, to my Son, King in Zion." These kings follow their own ways; their policy is settled according to the wisdom of man. Alas! it is not of Christ, King in Zion, that they think. Go and speak to the kings of earth of Christ, King in Zion: you would be taken for one out of his senses. Nevertheless, God has decreed His reign surely, irrevocably, and He will bring it to pass in spite of the kings of the earth; He will establish Him King in Zion, and will give Him the nations as His heritage, and the ends of the earth for His possession. "Now," says He by the prophet Micah, "shall He be great unto the ends of the earth" (Chap. v. 4).

At the birth of Christ, hatred burst forth upon the least appearance of His royalty. When the cry was heard that a king had appeared, immediate efforts were made to get rid of Him. Will the nations then, at last, listen to the invitation made to them to submit themselves? The answer is to be found in Psalm lxxxii.

These judges of the earth will have to give an account of their conduct. "They know not, neither do they understand." "I have said, Ye are gods," for God Himself had set them as having authority over the earth ("the powers that be are ordained of God" Rom. xiii. 1); but God can judge them. It is not Christians who hold the above language; it is He who has the right of judging those whom He has named judges—of setting aside those subaltern powers, in order to take to Himself His great power and reign.

We find in Psalm ix. 1-7, that the place where this judgment will be exercised is the land of Israel, and that the Lord will manifest Himself in this act of power. Verse 5: "Thou hast rebuked the heathen; thou hast destroyed the wicked (Antichrist); thou hast put out their name forever and ever." Vs. 15-20 is not the language of the gospel; it is the prophetic demand—the righteous demand—of judgment. This it is which explains those difficulties which

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Christians often find in the Psalms, owing to not having understood the difference of the dispensations. To convert the wicked, by the announcement of the grace of God, is the gospel; what we have been reading is something quite different. Once the gospel has run its course, Christ will demand righteous judgment against the world. It is no longer Christ, at the right hand of the Father, sending down the Holy Ghost to gather together His co-heirs; but Christ calling for righteousness and asking it (generally by His Spirit in the humble and lowly ones of the Jewish nation) against the proud and violent men. If God were not to execute judgment, the evil would only grow worse and worse without any consolation for the faithful. God does not execute it until the evil has arrived at its height. Antichrist and the nations rise up against God and His Christ, and the earth must be cleared of His enemies to give place to the reign of God Himself. It is not David asking to rule over his enemies; but Christ who demands judgment, because the time has come.

We may observe the same truth in Psalm x. 15, 16: "The Lord is King for ever and ever; the heathen are perished out of his land." There is a general principle running through this class of Psalms, of a ter-

rible judgment upon the wickedness of the nations—God acting as Judge in the midst of judges.

A passage in Isaiah ii. 12-22, also presents to us the great day of God upon the earth: "For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is high and lofty . . . . when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth." It is not for the judgment of the dead, but of the earth.

To make you understand that this judgment applies to all nations, and that it is after this, and by this means, that God will fill the earth with the knowledge of His name, we beg you to turn to Zephaniah iii. 8: "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations. that I may assemble the kingdoms to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." The intention of God is to assemble the nations to pour upon them His indignation—a terrible judgment. For our expectation then, as to when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth, we refer to verse 9. This blessing will come to pass after He shall have executed the judgment, and put away the evil-doers. This passage is a very explicit revelation.

The same truth, namely, that the knowledge of the Lord will spread by the effect of His judgment, is presented to us in Isaiah xxvi. 9-11: "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness;" for it is added, "Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness." Grace does not procure the effect, but judgment.

Again, we say, that the determination of Jehovah is to assemble the kingdoms, to pour out on them His indignation, and all the fierceness of His wrath. It will be a terrible day, and one which the world ought to be expecting.

Another passage in support of the truth we are urging is found in Psalm cx: "The LORD (Jehovah) said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Jesus is set down at the right hand of God the Father, until His enemies are made His footstool. Until that time, He acts by His Spirit to gather together Christians: He sends down the Holy Ghost to convince us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. But the day will come when God will make His enemies His footstool; and it is on this account, perhaps, that Jesus says, "Of that day knoweth no man . . . neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark xiii. 32). It is written,

that He will inherit all things. This has been prophesied of Me; Jehovah said to Me, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." It is not such a year, such a day; but I go to sit at the right hand of God until—until the moment when the Father will have accomplished this decree: for the Lord Jesus, God blessed for ever, receives the kingdom as Man-mediator. Now, as to the accomplishment of the decree, it is when "the Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion." We discern the boundary of this dispensation clearly marked, that is, Christ set down at the right hand of Jehovah, until Jehovah puts His enemies under His feet. After that come the words, "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." This is what Jehovah will accomplish, when the Lord, at the commencement of the exercise of His power, shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath; shall judge among the heathen; shall fill the places with the dead bodies, and shall wound the heads over many countries.\*

In Jeremiah xxv. 28, the same subject is presented; and it is the end of all that we see around us: "And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thy hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Ye shall certainly drink." (See also ver. 31).

*(To be continued, D. V.)*

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\* Or rather, chief over a great land.



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“SURELY I COME QUICKLY.”

*Rev. xxii., 20.*

Christ is coming ! Hark ! He says so  
In His faithful, precious word ;  
He is coming ! Signs are telling  
Far and wide throughout the world.  
He is coming ! Sinner hear it :  
Will you then be hardened still ?  
Haste to know Him and embrace Him,  
Thus fulfil His loving will.

He is coming ! O the glory !  
Clouds of angels throng around ;  
In an instant gathering to Him  
All who wait the welcome sound.  
He is coming ! Precious Saviour,  
Nought could such great joy afford ;  
Borne on angel wings to meet Him—  
O what joy to see the Lord.

Thou art coming ! Dearest Saviour,  
O prepare us each for Thee ;  
Keep our hearts in loving waiting,  
All Thy glories then to see.  
Teach us all to serve Thee truly,  
Suffer not our hearts to stray ;  
Help us—loving, working, longing,  
So to hasten on that Day.

## THE CHURCH HASTENING THE COMING OF THE LORD.

The object of this paper is to show how the Lord's coming is, in a sense, dependent on our prayers, and communion with the Lord in that blessed hope. Does not the correct rendering of 2 Pet. iii. 12 lay that thought upon the mind? "Looking for, and hastening (*speudontas*) the coming of, the day of God; wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, &c."

At once, no doubt, the objection will arise with some, What! can such an event as the Lord's coming depend on our prayers—on us? I would answer, Yes, just in the same way as whilst the Lord has ordained all else for the Christian, so has He also ordained the means, as Ephes. ii. 10 tells us.

It is, I would remark, God's great object and joy to have His people *working with Him*, partakers of His mind in whatever He does, or is about to do (Ephes. i. 9). "Surely, the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants, the prophets." (Amos iii. 7). In one sense, all the Lord's people are *prophets*. (Ps. cv. 15; John xv. 15).

Let us look at this truth as shown in the Old Testament. How is it respecting the bringing in again of Israel? Is there not a most deep and blessed communion of prayer,

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and desire respecting it? (Is. lxii. 6, 7) "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day or night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." (See also Is. xxvi.).

Is there not then many and many a sigh: "Oh! that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion!" (Pss. xiv. 7; liii. 6). And so we find it, Is. lxiv.: "Oh! that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, as when the melting fire burneth, . . . to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!" And then, I think, the answer, ver. 3: "When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou *camest down*, the mountains flowed down at thy presence. For," &c., and the whole part is full of it.

And so Luke xviii., I suppose, continues from chap. xvii., about the Lord's coming: "And shall not God *avenge* his own elect, which cry unto him *day and night*, though he bear long with (or 'over,' or 'respecting') them? I tell you that he will *avenge* them speedily."

And does not the position of the creature (Rom. viii.), as viewed in God's mind, lay

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this thought on us? The very creature is looked upon there as waiting thus intently. "The earnest expectation (*apokaradokia*) of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." Shall it be less so with us, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit? Blessed indeed it is, when He who testifieth these things saith, "Surely, I come quickly," to reply, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Blessed when such is the *real* position of our hearts—

"Our hearts are with Him on the throne,  
No more we brook delay,  
*Each moment* waiting for the word,  
Rise up, and come away"—

yet willing to stay His full time in service. Surely then, dear brethren, these things have a solemn voice to us. Should the Lord take an unwilling, careless, worldly bride to Himself? Why has the Lord revived the thought, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," but that we should have communion of heart and desire with Him? Let us remember that we are joint heirs *with* Christ—His expectations, His hopes, are ours.

May we not learn something from the history of Israel in the wilderness? God brought them out of Egypt, and in the next year, I think, spies were sent up to search the land. But, through unbelief, they despised (perhaps better, 'rejected') the land.

Consequently, they were left to wander forty years in the wilderness, until that generation was consumed. God did not lead them up into Canaan, for they were not *prepared* for it. And so again in its day, the Lord will have Israel prepared. (Zech. xiii. 9.) "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call upon my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God."

Solemnly, then, I would say, dear brethren, should these things speak to us. If we get into worldliness, carelessness, disunion and division (further than where God's truth calls for division), are we, in truth, hastening that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ? I now commend these things to the hearts of all the Lord's dear people, looking to Him for His blessing.



## THE HOPES OF THE CHURCH OF GOD.

*(Continued from page 220.)*

LECTURE VII. (Continuation.)

Read Psalm lxxxii.

There are yet two facts to remark on. First, it is at Jerusalem principally that all this disaster will take place; secondly, God

has named in His word all the nations who will participate in it. We shall see all the descendants of Noah, of whom we have the catalogue in Genesis x., reappear on the scene at the moment of this judgment of God. We shall find nearly all of them under the beast or under Gog.

As to the passages which concern Jerusalem, we may cite Joel iii. 1, 9-17; Micah iv. 11 to the end of the chapter; and Zechariah xii. 3-11: "And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people; all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. In that day, saith the Lord, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness; and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah; and will smite every horse of the people with blindness. And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord of hosts their God. In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem. The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the

house of David, and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, do not magnify themselves against Judah. In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon." Chapter xiv. 3, 4: "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south."

It is said (Acts i.) Jesus "shall come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven," that is, upon the Mount of Olives. (Compare Ezekiel xi. 23.) "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives," says the Holy Ghost in Zechariah xiv. 4; "his feet," the feet of Jehovah. Though indeed He was the man of sorrows, Jesus is Jehovah, and has been so from eternity.

As to the second point on which we have to remark, namely, that the nations, the descendants of Noah, will be ranged either under the beast or under Gog—the two principal powers; if you consult Genesis x., you will read (ver. 5), "By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands." In the generations of the sons of Japheth are named Gomer, \* Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Mesec, and Tiras. Of these we get Gomer, Magog, Tubal, Mesec, under the same names in Ezekiel xxxviii., as followers of Gog; you will also find there Persia which was united to Media (Madai), and from whose hands it received the crown (as we are told in Daniel viii., and other places), so that there only remain Javan and Tiras to be accounted for. Those mentioned above are the nations which comprise Russia, Asia Minor, Tartary, and Persia (all the people,

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\*See Hales' *Analysis of Chronology*, vol. i., pp. 352, 357.



in short, of which the empire of Russia is composed, or which are under its influence). They are described as under the dominion of Gog, prince of Rosh (the Russians), Mesec (Moscow), and Tubal (Tobolsk).

The children of Ham are pointed out in Genesis x. 6. Of these, Canaan has been destroyed, and his country turned over to Israel; Cush (Ethiopia) and Phut are also found (Ezek. xxxviii. 5, see margin) under Gog; those of Cush only in part, and for the reason that one part of the family of Cush established itself on the Euphrates, the other on the Nile, \* that is, north and south of Israel. Those of the north are then, by their position, in direct relation with the partisans of Gog. Mizraim, or Egypt (for Mizraim is the Hebrew name for Egypt), and the remainder of Cush and the Libyans, you will find in the scenes of the last day. (Dan. xi. 43.)

As to the children of Shem (Gen. x. 22), Elam is the same as Persia, of which we

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\*We learn from Dr. Hales' *Analysis of Chronology* vol. i. 379, that the descendants of Cush extended their settlements from Chusistan, "the land of Cush," or Susiana, on the coast of the Persian Gulph (into which the Euphrates falls), through Arabia to the Red sea, and thence crossed into Africa beyond the Nile. The rivers of Cush (Isaiah xviii.) may therefore well mean the Nile and Euphrates. He also makes (page 355) the descendants of Nimrod settled in Assyria to be called Chusdim, or "Godlike Cushites." (p. 354.)

have already spoken. Asshur is named in the judgment, which will take place in the last times (Micah v. 6 ; Isa. xiv. 25 ; xxx. 31) ; also in the conspiracy of Psalm lxxxiii., and in other places. Arphaxad is one of the ancestors of the Israelites. We know nothing of the family of Joktan : it is supposed to be a people of the East. Aram, or Syria, was displaced by Asshur, and is found under the title of the king of the North. The same remarks, it appears, may be made of Lud. Javan (Greece) is to be in the last combat (Zech. ix. 13). Of all the nations, Tiras is the only one besides Joktan, which is not named as to be in this great judgment. We speak only of the word of God. Profane authors unite Tiras and Javan in Greece ; but with this we have not to do.

In the present day, we may observe Russia extending her power exactly over the nations who will be found under Gog.\*

Daniel xi., introduces us to two other powers, to which we must direct our regards ; they are the king of the South, and the king of the North. The chapter contains a long account of already accomplished events, as to their wars, &c. ; but after this come the ships of Chittim (ver. 30), and then there is an interruption in their history. These

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\*We must take care to distinguish the Gog of Ezekiel from the Gog and Magog in the Revelation.

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kings were the successors of the great king of Javan (Greece) : the one, possessor of Assyria ; the other, of Egypt. The object of their fightings was Syria and the Holy Land. In vs. 31-35, the Jews are introduced as set aside during a long period of time (see verse 33). It is said, " And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end ; because it is yet for a time appointed ;" and then (verse 36), " And the king shall do according to his own will : " this is Antichrist. In verse 41, we have him in the land of Israel, in that territory which is the cause of the difference which exists between the king of the North and the king of the South. " And at the time of the end, shall the king of the South push at him.' That is, after a long interval, behold again the king of the South brought, in this chapter, upon the scene. And this has historically occurred only four years ago (A.D. 1836), after an interval of nearly two thousand years. The greater part of the nations who, as we are told, are to be at the feet of Gog, are now coming under the dominion of Russia ; " and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind." Antichrist will be the object of the attack, at one and the same time, of the king of the South, or Egypt ; and of the king of the North, the

possessor of Asiatic Turkey, or Assyria. I do not say who the king of the North will be at the end; but we see that the circumstances and the personages described in the prophecies which have reference to this time appointed—"the time of the end"—begin to appear. It is nearly two thousand years since there has been a king of the South; and it is but a few years that he has appeared anew. In the same way a great people has appeared, of which the world a century ago hardly knew the existence, and which now rules over the exact countries of the Gog in Ezekiel. We do not desire that you should fix your attention too much upon events which are taking place in our time; it is only when we have explained the prophecy, that we advert to the circumstances which pass around us. All nations have their attention occupied about Jerusalem (Zech. xii. 3), and know not what to do about it. The king of Egypt wants to call the whole country his own; the king of the North is unwilling to cede it (the Turk being the actual king of the North, or Assyria). The kings of the North and South dispute for the same country, which they fought over two thousand years ago. This is just what the prophecy says is to occur at "a time appointed." We do not mean that all this yet comes out plain; for example, the

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ten kings cannot be enumerated and Anti-christ has not yet appeared. But the principles which are found in the word of God are acting in the midst of the kingdoms where the ten horns are to appear: that is, we find all western Europe occupied about Jerusalem, and preparing for war; and Russia, on her side, preparing herself, and exercising influence over the countries given to her in the word; and all the thoughts of the politicians of this world \* concentrate themselves on the scene where their final gathering in the presence of the judgment of God will take place—where “the Lord shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor” (Micah iv. 12). It is a remarkable coincidence. In observing what is passing around us, we recognize certain prophetic descriptions; at least we see those who are to act, or upon whom God will act, developing the characters which prophecy signals.

If you take the trouble, dear friends, to follow the chapters which we have been quoting (many others, as doubtless there are), you will understand Matthew xxv., which speaks of the Lord sitting upon His

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\*Every one is aware how much more largely this is the case since these lectures were delivered, and that the dispute about the holy places has been the occasion of the Crimean war. The nations are burdening themselves with Jerusalem. (Editor).

throne, and gathering all the nations (an allusion to Joel iii.), judging them, and separating them "as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats."\*

Let us remember one thing; it is, that we Christians are sheltered from the approaching storm. We have said nothing this evening about the church: but let us recall its place to our memory. It is, that during these events (yea, even at present, as united to Him by faith), its place is to be with Christ, to accompany Him; the church has this privilege, this glory, this special character, that of union with the Lord Jesus

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\*It is commonly supposed that the judgment which is spoken of in this chapter is the last judgment—the general judgment: this is a mistake. It is the judgment of the nations living upon this earth, and not of the dead. There is no question of the resurrection, but only of the judgment of the Gentiles. What will happen to the Jews is mentioned in chapter xxiv; then, what will happen to believers, or at least professors of the faith of Christ; and then, the fate of the Gentiles. It is the judgment of the living, and not of the dead. We say it is the judgment of the living, because we read, "Before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats." That which has given rise to the supposition that it is the judgment of the dead, is this passage, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal;" but this only means, that the judgment of the living will be final, like that of the dead. When God judges, whether the dead or the living, His judgment sends the good into life eternal, and the wicked into everlasting punishment. The judgment of the living is as sure as that of the dead.

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Christ ; and if we search for the church in the Old Testament, it is Jesus Christ we find. A striking example of this truth is found in Paul's quotation (Romans viii.), taken from Isaiah l., where Christ says, "Who is he that shall condemn me?" which Paul applies to the church, the church being united to Christ.

The union of the church in a single body, whether Jews or Gentiles, was not revealed in the Old Testament ; if we seek for it, it is Christ Himself that we find. Although there are many things in the relationship of Jehovah with Zion, which also exist between God the Father and the church, nevertheless it is not in Zion that we are to look for the church. In the Old Testament, the privileges of the church are in Christ Himself, in the person of Christ, because the church has the same portion as Christ. This is it (see Eph. i. 22, 23), "which is the fulness of him that filleth all in all:" for this reason we are not to look for the church in the prophecies. The church is the body of Christ Himself ; and Christ is to judge, not to be judged. We have seen that Christ is to smite, to break in pieces the nations : this is said also of the church. The church has nothing to do with that of which we have been speaking, as if it were to be subjected to the same judgments (Rev. ii. 26, 27). Its place is not to be

in the midst of the nations that are to be broken in pieces, but to be united to Christ, enjoying the same privileges as Christ, and breaking in pieces the nations with Christ. There is nothing true, as regards Christ, in the glory which He has taken, which is not also true of the church.

It is always precious for us thus to understand our place, that of joint-heirs with Christ. And the more we think of this, the more our strength will be increased, and the more we shall become in our minds, as heirs of God, detached from this world, which is judged, as, indeed, the church is justified. The church is justified: we see not yet the effects of it, because the glory is not come. The church only has the fruits of justification in glory; the world only has the fruits of wickedness in the judgment. Nevertheless, it is true that the church is united to Christ. The world is judged because it has rejected Christ. "Holy Father," said the Saviour, "the world hath not known thee." But this is what grace has done for us. Just as unbelief separates men entirely and for all eternity from Christ, grace by faith has united us entirely and for ever to Him; and we ought to bless God for it.

*(To be continued, D. V.)*