

WORDS OF TRUTH.

"The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words:
and that which was written was upright, even words
of truth" (Eccles. xii. 10).

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WORDS OF TRUTH.

Jesus with His Disciples.

WE are aware in how many different ways our fellow-disciples try us, and grieve us; as, no doubt, we do them. We see, or fancy we see, some bad quality in them, and find it hard to bear it, or to go on in further company with them.

It has occurred to me that we may observe that, just in those same ways, the mind and heart of Jesus were tried and grieved by His disciples in the days of His flesh; and yet He went on with them, not overcome of evil, but overcoming evil with good, the evil that was in them, with the good that was in Himself.

I would mention some of these wrong things in them that must have grieved Him, and the influence of which, upon our own thoughts and feelings towards others, we well understand and continually experience.

Vanity in another tries us, an air of self-satisfaction, or the esteeming of ourselves and the putting of ourselves forth to admiration. The Lord was tried by this spirit in His disciples. The mother betrayed it, and His kinsfolk (John ii., vii.). Peter was thus self-confident, when he said, "Though all should be offended, yet will not I." And all of them were guilty of this, when they contended who should be the greatest; and also when they forbade those who followed not with themselves.

Ill-temper is a very fretful thing; it so interferes with us. Martha tried the Lord with it, when she complained to Him of her sister; and so did the apostles when they urged Him to send away the multitude, just because their privacy and repose had been intruded upon (Mark vi.).

Any show of a *covetous*, grudging spirit is very hateful to us. Jesus must have discerned this (and therefore have had to bear with it) on such occasions as Matt. xiv. 17; xv. 33.

Unkindness, whether towards ourselves or to others, is very irritating. Peter's enquiry in Matt. xviii. 21 covered, I believe, what the Lord must have seen to be the workings of an unkind and malevolent temper; as also we see it in Matt. xv. 23.

Indifference to others, and carefulness about one's self, is very vexing to us also; it is so selfish and cold-hearted. Jesus was tried by enough of it in His disciples. He asked them to watch with Him, but He found them sleeping; He spoke of His death, but they were thinking of their place and honours in the kingdom; He spoke of leaving them, but none of them asked, "Whither goest thou?" and in the ship it was of their *own* safety they thought. These were instances of cold indifference.

Ignorance is apt to try us, and make us im-

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patient. Whoever found more of it in those he was continually teaching than the Lord? Some of the plainest lessons they had not learned; and when He spoke spiritually or mystically to them, they listened to Him as *in the letter*; they were asking explanations of the simplest parables.

Unspirituality of mind in fellow-disciples is a trial to us. How much of this amongst His people was the Lord continually suffering! And He was always LIGHT in discovering it. We often, through vanity or self-esteem, mistake mere nonconformity with ourselves for it.

These are among the ways in which the disciples must have tried the mind of their Divine Master; and these are some of the tempers and characteristics which to this hour try and fret us in our brethren.

It may be thought that the instances here adduced are but faint and minute expressions of these different wrong tempers. That may be. But we must remember how pure and perfect the mind of Jesus was, and then we shall know that though the instance was faint, and the occasion a small one, yet His finer sensibility gave it more importance than the greatest occasion would give us.

And comforting it is, let me say, to see the Lord going before us in such trials as these. But if He has gone before us in the trials themselves, He has also left us an example of

a series of victories over them, and in these victories He has left us an example that we should "follow His steps"; for not only in His ways with His adversaries, but in His way with His disciples is He our pattern.

If, in not answering reviling with reviling, nor wrongs with threatenings, He is an example to us, so also in His going on still with His disciples, in spite of naughty outbreaks and many short-comings among them. For we have returned to Him as "the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls," in ALL things as the One who is a pattern to us, how we should carry ourselves to all, adversaries or brethren (1 Pet. ii. 21-25). And, as I said, He was never overcome of evil that was in another, but ever overcame it by the good that was in Himself (Rom. xii. 21).

Thus did He suffer from His disciples, and thus did He conquer. How ready are our selfish hearts to plead our right to part company, if another do not please us! But this was not Jesus. The pride, the indifference, the ill-temper, and the low unspiritual mind which the disciples were continually betraying did not tempt Him to take distance from them.

For at the END of their walk together; He is nearer to them than ever (John xiv., xvi.). He did not part company with them because they gave Him much exercise of heart, and were continually drawing upon Him. He warned

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and instructed them; He rebuked and condemned them; but NEVER GAVE THEM UP. Blessed, perfect Master; lover of our souls at all cost! (John ii. 6).

The Responsibility of Disciples.

JOHN XV. 1-18.

IT is to be remarked that in this part of the Gospel of John we have, not the sovereignty of grace toward us which saves, but our individual responsibility, consequent on our known relationship with the Father, as we walk in this place.

Christ is looking for their walk as disciples, consequent on their position as clean by reason of His words. "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father; and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (John xiv. 21).

This is the order. It is not, "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John iv. 19); but "He that loveth me shall be loved." He first puts us in a place of favour, and then follows the consequent responsibility.

There is not, of course, any question of uncertainty as to salvation; but He has put us into a certain position as saved, in which through grace we are to glorify Him. The path in which He enjoyed His Father's love

was a path of unclouded joy, and it was a path of undivided obedience. He here shows His disciples, if they are to walk in the light and favour of His countenance, they must walk in the same path as He did Himself. We should so walk that we should have Christ's joy fulfilled in us.

To one or two details connected with this I wish to refer. When I speak of an unclouded joy belonging to my place in heaven, it is another thing. We are simply perfect if looked at in Christ in heavenly places (see Eph. i.). Here He looks at Himself on earth, and we are also seen on earth; and it is as here below that He would have His joy remain, and our joy full.

Christ here takes the place of the true vine, in which Israel had totally failed. His disciples were the branches, and He looks at them to bear fruit down here. All through the chapter He puts our responsibility first. He says, "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit" (v. 5). He calls on them to abide in Him, in order that He may abide in them.

If we look at chap. xvii., the order is reversed. There it is "I in them" first.

It is not here a question of safety, or of God's keeping them to the end, but entirely one of fruit-bearing. We are called in the active reverence of our hearts to stay continu-

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ally with Christ; to abide in Him; to draw continually from Him in active diligence of heart. In this passage the words "I in you" are the consequence of our first abiding in Him. "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me" (v. 4). "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit" (v. 5). That we may bear fruit is what He is thinking of here, and so be truly His disciples. "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit" (John xv. 8).

"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (v. 7). By abiding in Christ I get guidance of heart; for then the words of Christ direct all my thoughts. Here I also get the power of abiding. Completely depending on Christ, and His words abiding in me, I can ask what I will, for it will be what He wills; and it shall be done. In this there is such dependence on Christ and living with Him, that my mind and will and thoughts are formed by Christ's words; and I have full power to ask what I will. He was constantly looking to, and living on account of, His Father; and with Him it was always perfect fruit-bearing; and we are His disciples if we follow Him in the same path.

"As the Father hath loved Me, so have I

loved you " (v. 9). It is not here simply the eternal love of the Father to the Son, but divine love to One walking in this world, whose word was, "I do always those things that please Him." This was a love that took up the disciples as walking down here. He could put them in the same relation to Himself that He was in to His Father. "Continue ye in My love" (v. 9). They were walking here on earth in that blessed relationship which He Himself had known. He wants us not only to abide in Him, and get strength, so as to bear fruit to His and the Father's glory, but that we may abide in the continual uninterrupted sense and enjoyment of His love. He gives Himself as our example: "As I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love" (v. 10). Need I say how He abode in it? "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love": it is still our responsibility, obedience to Christ's words.

It is not here a question of the Father loving the Son, as from eternity the Beloved One; but He is seen walking in this world in a path of perfect obedience, and abiding in Him. If there is in us a spirit of simple obedience to Him, we abide in His love. • If we do a thing because He said it, we abide in His love.

"These things have I spoken unto you, that

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My joy might remain (abide) in you" (v. 11). He had no joy from the world; He had perfect joy in the Father. His joy was in bringing forth fruit to the Father's glory. He thus shows us how in fruit-bearing we can have joy and blessedness down here. "That your joy may be full": this is what He wants us to have, fulness of joy. It is not from the world, but the kind of joy He had. It is His desire that we should have His own joy: "That My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." So it is to the heart that walks with and abides in Him. If we have joy, it is His joy; if reproach, it is His reproach. It is His, whatever it be, to him that walks in the blessed consciousness of being in the same path that He had here. Nothing else will do for the devoted heart. We ought not to be content without it, without the sense that we are abiding in His love, keeping His commandments, and walking like Him, in the fullest enjoyment of the Father's love, taking His words as our guide; and abiding thus in Him He puts this confidence in us. But it is all connected with responsibility.

"This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" (v. 12). If we look at the love of Christ for them, we see that it was above all the wretchedness of the poor disciples, above their every failure. When I am not above a thing, it acts on my-

self; but when entirely above it, I can think *for* it all as well as *with* it. The Lord, being above all the failure and wretchedness, could, if a right feeling, feel *with* His disciples; if an infirmity, He could feel *for* them. He could enter into it all in a divine way, because He was above it all. His word to us is, "Love one another, as I have loved you." By clinging close to Christ, and learning of Him, we can love in the same kind of way in which He loved; and in this way we can recognise anything good and of Him in our brethren, and learn to esteem others better than ourselves. This is what He looks for in us; it is impossible unless we abide with Christ. What a path was His here? There was no such an isolated man as Christ; and yet never was one who felt for others as He did.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (*vv.* 13, 14). He does not speak of His being the friend of sinners here; He speaks of their being His friends, if they did what He commanded. It is still our responsibility; and He treats them with perfect confidence. The true disciples He treats with the confidence of being His friends; otherwise it was betraying the confidence of His Father in telling His secrets. If I go to a person on a matter of business, I merely tell him my busi-

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ness, and have done with him; but if I go to a friend, I can tell him all that is on my own mind, even about what does not concern him at all, having full confidence in his love and his interest in what concerns *me*.

“Henceforth I call you not servants but friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.” Whatever I have had in my heart I have told you. What a place He sets us in! How we ought to hate ourselves for the constant way in which self hinders us from this blessed place of enjoyment! But what a comfort to the restored soul it is to find that, when we have learnt totally to distrust ourselves, Christ strengthens and trusts us! Consider those three questions to Peter, Lovest thou Me? When Peter replies, Thou knowest, Lord, that I love Thee, He puts confidence in him and says, Feed My sheep, My lambs (John xxi. 15-17). But until all that is in us is humbled He cannot confide in us. How could He, when we cannot trust ourselves?

“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” Here we have the source of the world’s hatred. Not only is it our walk for which the world dislikes us, but for the

place Christ has chosen for us, "out of the world," that we might be His own, a people for His own possession. It is because the disciples are Christ's that the world cannot bear them. We should let our light shine forth, our confession of Christ be so distinct, that the world might know to whom they are to reckon the good works: that we belong to Christ. We must take that place as thus confessing Christ here. He takes us to be His disciples, and we walk upon that ground. Of course there must be consistency on it. He looks for this; and so does the world. Whatever would not suit Christ does not suit the Christian. We should not take that name to dishonour it. He has called us out to go with Him. How far are our hearts prepared to take our place before all the world and say, I am Christ's; I belong only to Him?

If in reply they ask you what right you have to take that place, and say, We too belong to Christ, you can ask them to come and take their place with Him: else how could you own them as His?

What we desire and look for is to abide in Christ, and to bear fruit to His glory and the Father's. It is a lowly but blessed place, one of entire dependence upon Him; for apart from Him we can do nothing. May we know its exceeding blessedness for His name's sake.

Iniquity taken away, and Sin Purged.

“Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips: and thine iniquity is taken away, and they sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me” (Isaiah vi. 5-8).

THE remarkable chapter before us begins very abruptly. It tells us that the prophet had this vision of glory “in the year that king Uzziah died.”

But why is Uzziah thus introduced?

May it not be, among other things, to remind us that the very best man on earth, the potentate of Judah's kingdom, the most honoured man in the world, stands in widest contrast with **THE KING, THE LORD OF HOSTS**? For we learn in 2 Chron. xxvi., that “Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the Lord.”

Thus on the very threshold of our subject we find the humbling intimation of man's real

character of uncleanness and distance from God. Though he stand in the highest position of society, and hold the most exalted office, and that even among the most highly favoured people on earth, man has no resources at all for cleansing the leprosy of sin, and except God undertake to meet him with healing mercy, he must still remain unclean, and unfit for association with the God of holiness.

In considering this very instructive portion of Holy Scripture, we shall notice: 1. The prophet's vision of glory. 2. The effect of it upon himself. 3. The assurance of forgiveness he obtained. 4. His willing obedience.

1. THE PROPHET'S VISION OF GLORY. "*I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple.*" There, in spirit, before God, the prophet took his place. There he saw the seraphim, the servants of the most high God, His ministers that do His pleasure. He beheld them taking the place of profoundest reverence, covering their faces with two of their wings. He saw also that each of them covered his feet, to show that, while they had always walked obediently, they did not glory in their service, but with greatest humility gloried only in the Lord. He saw them also with outstretched wings, to signify their delight in doing God's will, and that they held themselves in readiness to fly swiftly at His bidding. He heard also the

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words uttered before the throne; he listened to the converse of creatures there, and found it was "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts"; and "at the voice of him that cried, the posts of the door moved, and the house was filled with smoke."

These things the prophet saw and heard. It was indeed an infinitely holy place. No unclean word was heard there; nothing impure escaped the lips of any; no irreverent action was seen; no presumptuous ways, no angry passions, no foolish action, no indolent habits, no self-willed manners, were found there; for God is holy, and nothing unclean can abide His presence. The prophet was in the light, for "God is light." He was beside the balance of the sanctuary, and all was love, and holiness, and truth.

2. THE EFFECT OF THE VISION. Deeply serious and personal reflections occupied the prophet's mind. Man never rightly learns what he is, except in God's presence. It is a well-known fact among men, that if we would understand the true qualities of anything, we must bring it to the light. So it is as regards things spiritual. We may compare ourselves with our fellow-men, and arrive at most erroneous conclusions. Thus, the temperate man, measuring himself with a drunkard, believes himself righteous; and the chaste flatter themselves with thoughts of superiority

over the licentious; while all may be equally guilty of covetousness, and other uncleanness, in the sight of God. It is therefore not wise to compare ourselves with our neighbours, but, coming into the light of God's holy presence, we shall be truly made manifest.

When Isaiah considered the peace, love, humility, holiness, purity, and truth that characterized all those who dwelt in Jehovah's glorious presence, what could the prophet's reflections be? How could he fail to ask himself such questions as, "Am I truly humble before God? Do I serve Him with reverence? Do I delight to do the will of God? Has my conversation been holiness to the Lord?"

Surely the prophet felt the light of God's presence to be a heart-searching region. It was enough to show him that he was "unclean, unclean," and that he had come short of God's standard. It was enough to make him feel that he stood "justly condemned" before God, and righteously exposed to His judgment and wrath. Hence he cried out, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips."

Notice that the prophet's intense distress was concerning himself: "Woe is *ME!* for *I* am undone; because *I* am unclean." He did not say, Woe are *we!* for *we* are undone. No; true confession is a personal thing. Many

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a sentimental professor in our day may be found ready to say, We are all sinners; we are not what we should be. Such talk about *our* Saviour, *our* religion, *our* society, etc., thus casting themselves in with others in a lump. But this will not do for God. This is not as the Spirit teaches. He convinces each one of his own sin. He so makes the conscience sensible of its guilt as to cause it to cry out, What must *I* do to be saved? “God be merciful to *ME* a sinner.” “If *I* may but touch His garment, *I* shall be whole.” “Woe is *ME!* for *I* am undone.”

But more than this, he felt he was unclean before God, a man of unclean lips. Those lips which ought to be, like the seraphim's, consecrated to His praises, had given utterance to the unclean thoughts and feelings of the heart; for “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Like another Job, he could say, “I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee: wherefore I abhor MYSELF, and repent in dust and ashes.” The light of God's holy presence made his uncleanness manifest; he felt its depths so great, its blackness so foul, its wounds so incurable, that he condemned himself as undone, hopelessly and helplessly unclean before God; ungodly, unholy, without strength, without any hope of recovery in himself. Having thus learnt himself in God's

presence, he was then able to discern that the people by whom he was surrounded were unclean also.

Such were the lessons that the prophet was effectually taught in God's presence. And so, in measure, all learn now who are under divine teaching; for though we may not be favoured with such a vision of glory as the prophet had, yet the Holy Spirit makes us feel that we have to do with God, and that every creature is manifest in His sight. When men begin to fear God, they consider that it is to Him they are responsible, as His creatures; that to Him they must give account; that He is the Judge of all; and that the holiness of heaven is the only true standard. Then they feel that they are sinners, rebels, unworthy, and have justly merited banishment from His glorious presence. Then they are awakened to their real danger; they become deeply anxious about their eternal state; and feeling despair in self, they come to the throne of God, exclaiming, "Woe is me! for I am undone."

3. Now let us consider THE ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS THE PROPHET OBTAINED. God in Christ is a blessed refuge for a sin-troubled soul; for He will be merciful to our unrighteousness, as was beautifully expressed by Elihu to Job: "God looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which is right, and it profited me not, He will

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deliver his soul from going down to the pit, and his life shall see the light." He will say, "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom."

This seems to be the rule of the throne of grace, and was just what the prophet experienced; for while he stood thus consciously before the King, the Lord of Hosts, in a repentant mind, confessing his uncleanness, groaning over his sin, condemning himself, acknowledging his undone state, we are immediately told, "*Then [mark, then]* flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."

This is very blessed. It shows us that God waits to be gracious. It is a striking instance of the mercy of God to sinful man, and manifests His readiness to pardon and accept those who take a right place before Him. The prophet had an unmistakable warrant for the fullest assurance of his sins being put away, and of standing in the favour and blessing of God.

This assurance was based on two things: the application of the live coal from off the altar, and the word of the Lord. By the altar we are to understand a place where the sacri-

fice was burnt, and presented to God. The cross of Christ is the only altar of New Testament days, and the various altars of the Old Testament were only types of it; and the coals of fire which consumed the sacrifices, and caused their savour to ascend to God, were figurative of that condemnation of sin which fell on Jesus, when He was made sin and a curse for us upon the cross of Calvary.

The application, therefore, of the "live coal" to the prophet's "unclean lips" teaches us that God has, in His grace, provided an all-cleansing remedy for sin; that that remedy is found only in the sufferings, blood-shedding and death of the Son of God; and that the moment the sin-burdened conscience realises the virtue of that blood, the soul is at once at peace with God. It is the blood of Christ which maketh atonement. It is the blood of Christ which has made peace between the sinner and God. It is "in Christ Jesus" and "through His blood" that the far-off sinner is brought nigh to God. It is the blood of Christ alone which cleanseth from all sin. It is only by the blood of Christ that any person has peace and confidence in God's presence.

The prophet knew that his uncleanness was purged by the application of the live coal from off the altar; and the sinner that believes in Christ Jesus for salvation knows also that he has peace through the blood of the cross. The

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prophet had also the word of the Lord to assure him of his pardon and acceptance; and, blessed be God, so have we. Some will try to persuade us that no one can know his sins forgiven till after death, and therefore it is great presumption for any one to say so. I reply, Who says I am forgiven? God says so; and if God says, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," why need I fear, even if the whole world says it is not so? He tells us that Christ hath put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and that my sins are forgiven, if I believe on the Lord Jesus; for "to Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts xiii. 38).

Let God then be true; for He who said to the prophet, "Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged," says also now to me, and to all that believe on the Lord Jesus, "Be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee." We wait not for dreams, or visions, or some miraculous actings upon the senses; but we rest on the precious blood of Christ, and are assured by the unalterable word of the Lord that our sins are forgiven (see Eph. i. 7; 1 John ii. 12; iii. 5).

4. HIS WILLING OBEDIENCE. Some may say, You should preach Christian duty. So say I, only put it in its right place. Jesus said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments"; for

He loves the "willing heart," and the "cheerful giver." When we know peace with God, through the amazing sacrifice of His beloved Son, it constrains us to love and serve Him to whom we owe so much. And we see the prophet was much in this spirit; for after he had received an unmistakable assurance of pardon and peace with God, he had a willing, grateful desire to addict himself to the Lord's service. He says, "I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."

This surely is willing service, happy duty; it is like taking the yoke of Jesus, whose yoke is easy, and whose burden is light (Matt. xi.). The wondrous love of Christ constrains us to love Him, who has so loved us; it calls upon us to praise and glorify Him, who has washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen (Rev. i. 5, 6).

Our place of service will ever be, in God's wisdom, the place of trial, though the place of comfort too. So it was with the Lord Jesus; He did always those things that pleased the Father, and thus He proved His love. But He had to set His face like a flint.

The Book of Experience.

I.

IN the Epistle to the Ephesians, and even in that to the Colossians, we see our place with Christ; but in the Philippians the believer is seen passing through the world, as a Christian walking in it.

There is no doctrine in the epistle; the believer is seen pressing towards the mark. And another thing: he looks at this course as run in the power of the Spirit of God; this is what characterizes the Christian, that he is entirely running the race in that power.

So there is no sin in this epistle (not the word "sin" even), and no conflict, in the proper sense of the word. Not that he has attained, but he is never doing anything but one thing: running in the power of the Spirit of God towards the goal. He had not attained, but he was doing nothing but running to attain. He was raised above all in himself, and in the world, entirely above all circumstances.

It is the epistle of EXPERIENCE, but according to the power of the Spirit of God. We learn this lesson, that though we fail, yet there is the possibility of running on in the power of the Spirit of God. Not that flesh is changed, or the thought of having attained admissible (there is no perfection down here); but the possibility of always acting consist-

ently with the calling to get to Christ in glory. There is no looking for points of progress in the world; it sets him above every kind of circumstance, or contradiction, or difficulty; for he sees the path of the Christian entirely above them all.

To have a *path* shows that we had got out of God's place, where He had set man. The moment we have a way it shows that we are not at home. It is blessed to have a way in the wilderness. Of course, Christ is the way. Adam wanted no way: he would have stayed in the garden in quietness if he had obeyed God. But we have set out from Egypt, and we are not in Canaan; we go towards the goal. Numbers of things come out on the way, but all we have got to do is to run. We get a great deal more of Christ every step; like a lamp at the end of a passage, we get more and more of it as we go on; we have not got the lamp yet, though we get more of the light of it every step we take. But there is entire deliverance from self as governing us, and a motive above circumstances, so that, though not insensible to them, they exert no influence over us.

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel, from the first day until now." The Philippians had taken a zealous

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part in the gospel, and had shown a loving spirit. How constant the intercession of the apostle was for them! Every time he prayed he was making mention of them. Mark how he carries the Church of God on his heart; and it was the same way with individuals. He was thinking of all the good in them, and thanking God for it. See the kind of interest he had for the saints; he was always thinking of them. Even to the Corinthians he says, "I thank my God always on your behalf."

What Christ thinks of we should think of. If Christ is my life, and by the Spirit the spring of my thoughts, I shall have His thoughts in everything; for *there is* that which is right according to Christ. I have to be in the midst of circumstances as Christ would be, and that is Christian life. It is never necessary we should do anything wrong, never necessary we should act in the flesh; though it is there, why am I to think by it? I shall not, if I am full of Christ, for it is He who suggests the thoughts to me.

If I get into Christ's mind and thoughts, I shall not bear to see evil in saints. I want them like Christ. He is doing the work now in the heart of the saints ("that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word") and I must be going along with Him in the same spirit; and I must be all right myself, or I cannot do that. Christ

gives Himself first for His people, and then He sets about to cleanse them, and make them what He would have them; and that should be our heart's desire to do in intercession.

There is plenty of power for this, though we are dreadfully low. He can suit His grace now just as in the brightest days of the apostle. There was much more to delight in when David was hunted as a partridge on the mountains, than in all the glory of Solomon, for then there was the power of faith. It is with ALL saints that we are to "comprehend" (Eph. iii. 18). We shorten our own blessing if we do not take them all in. There is competency with Christ, and if I go on with Him I must have peace about them.

Praying for saints gives a person the power of seeing all the good in them. We see this in the epistles, with one exception, that to the Galatians, where the apostle does not speak of what he could commend, but goes direct into all the evil, for they were turning away from the foundation. If we prayed more for the saints we should have more joy in them, and more courage about them. It is always wrong to lose courage about the saints, though it is possible it might come to be like Jeremiah, "Pray no more for this people."

The Lord is always there, and love cannot fail; so we can reckon on it with joy, and comfort, and courage. Even when Paul had

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said to the Galatians, "I am afraid of you," he adds, soon looking to Christ, "I have confidence in you, through the Lord." He had the saints under Christ's eye for a blessing. How much are we looking with Christ's heart at all the saints, with comfort and courage that there is grace enough for them? "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ"; and, as he says further on, "that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke."

"Both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace." We are little aware how real the unity of the Spirit is; we have greatly lost the reality of it, though it is owned as a truth. It is a unity by a living power which is in every saint, so that the thing must be "if one member suffer," not all *ought*, but all *do* "suffer with it."

The body may be in such a mortified state as to have little feeling left; but, supposing there were a work of the Spirit in India, do you think it would not revive the saints here? So those people who were praying for Paul, when God strengthened him, praise returned to God from them all. The working of the Spirit of God tells in blessing on all who hear. But when he had to say, "All have forsaken

me ” (they had not forsaken Christ, but they had no courage to go into danger), Paul went on alone. It is plain if I have a pain in my body all my nerves are hurt by it; I cannot read or work so well. There may be a deadening of the spiritual nerves so that there is very little feeling, but it cannot be destroyed.

At the eighth verse we get into the tone of the epistle. The apostle was no forgetful person; he remembers every little trait of kindness done to him, and he prays that they might have all kinds of knowledge and spiritual judgment, so that they might do things just fit to be done; that they might know in what one thing differs from another; that they might be *connoisseurs* in the Christian path; not only not fall into sin, but have the knowledge of just the right thing to do in the circumstances; for the standard is the *satisfying the heart of Christ*, not “Where is the harm?”

The apostle desires that they might discern things now as they will be when brought into the light in that day of Christ. It is as if he said, I want you to think of the Lord Jesus, and know what will please the heart of Christ. There is the delight of pleasing Christ, and the delighting in the thing that pleases Him as well, by the active energy of the Spirit of God.

The Sanctuary and the Sea.

PSALM LXXVII. 13, 19.

WE see in this passage of Scripture that God has a two-fold way. His way is "in the sanctuary," and His way is "in the sea."

Now, there is a great difference between these two things. First of all, God's way is in the sanctuary, where all is light, all is clear. There is no mistake there. There is nothing, in the least degree, that is a harassment to the spirit. On the contrary, it is when the poor troubled one enters into the sanctuary, and views things there in the light of God, that he sees the end of all else, everything that is entangled, the end of which he cannot find on the earth.

We have the same thing in Psalm lxxiii. "When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me : until I went into the sanctuary of God ; then understood I their end." That is, in the sanctuary of God everything is understood ; no matter how difficult, and trying, and painful, as regards ourselves or others. When we once enter there, we are in the place of God's light, and God's love ; and then, whatever the difficulty may be, we understand all about it.

But not only is God's way in the sanctuary (and when we are there, all is bright and

happy), but God's way is in the sea. He walks where we cannot always trace His footsteps. God moves mysteriously at times, as we all know. There are ways of God which are purposely to try us. I need not say that it is not at all as if God had pleasure in our perplexities. Nor is it as if we had no sanctuary to draw near to, where we can rise above it. But, still, there is a great deal in the ways of God that must be left entirely in His own hands. The way of God is thus not only in the sanctuary, but also in the sea.

And yet, what we find even in connection with His footsteps being in the sea is, "Thou leddest Thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron." That was through the sea: afterwards, it was through the wilderness. But it had been through the sea. The beginnings of the ways of God with His people were there; because, from first to last, God must be the confidence of the saint. It may be an early lesson of his soul, but it never ceases to be the thing to learn. How happy to know that, while the sanctuary is open to us, yet God Himself is nearer still, and to Him we are brought now. As it is said, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii.).

This is a most precious thing; because there we are in the sanctuary at once, and brought to God Himself. And I am bold to say, that

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heaven itself would be but a small matter if it were not to God that we are brought. It is better than any freedom from trial, better than any blessing, to be in the presence of the One we belong to; who is Himself the source of all blessing and joy. That we are brought to Him now is infinitely precious. There we are in the sanctuary brought to God.

But, still, there are other ways of God outside the sanctuary: in the sea. And there we often find ourselves at a loss. If we are occupied with the sea itself, and with trying to scan God's footsteps there, then they are not known. BUT CONFIDENCE IN GOD HIMSELF IS ALWAYS THE STRENGTH OF FAITH.

May the Lord grant us increasing simplicity and quietness in the midst of all that we pass through, for His name's sake.

It is not always in the correction of the failures which come before us that sources of unhappiness are healed; they disappear when souls are nourished upon the riches which are in Christ. We must think of this; we must, while ourselves feeding upon Christ (and He gives us to feed on Him without stint), cause others to breathe a new atmosphere, where Christ is.

A Three-fold Exhortation.

“Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment” (Ecclesiastes ix. 7, 8).

IN this scripture we see that the believer is called (1) to rejoice; (2) to be watchful; (3) to savour of Christ.

1. THE BELIEVER IS CALLED TO REJOICE. “Eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart.” He is not to doubt that his sins are forgiven, and that he is accepted in the Beloved, but to be happy in the knowledge of these things. Believing the truth of God, he is assured that he is not condemned, will not come into judgment, but that he is a child of God, has passed from death unto life, and will never perish; because Christ has died and risen again, and entered into heaven itself by His own blood. He stands as a pardoned sinner, accepted, and born again of the Spirit; therefore God now accepts his works.

He is, then, to eat and drink with joy. He is to take up the necessary matters of everyday life with a happy heart, as unto the Lord. He is to rejoice evermore; in everything to give thanks; yea, to rejoice in the Lord alway. This is true Christian experience, what the apostle Peter calls “joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

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When we find "bread" and "wine" mentioned in Scripture, we may generally be sure that the Holy Spirit is reminding us of Him who said, "I am the bread of life"; "the bread that I will give is My flesh"; for Christ is the Christian's food (see John vi.).

It is broken bread. As we cannot partake of a loaf of bread for our bodily sustenance till it is broken, so we could not eat of Christ, the bread of life, till His body was broken; therefore Jesus said, prior to the cross, "The bread that I *will* give." It is the broken body and poured out blood of Christ that is now our bread and wine; and perhaps the greatest blessing we can have, next to salvation, is a good appetite for the flesh and blood of Christ.

Nothing can compensate the believer for a lack of this. Christ is our daily bread. No Christ, no food. We are blessed in Christ with all spiritual blessings (Eph. i.), and are called to live on Him for constant spiritual supplies. When meditating on the written Word, under the Spirit's teaching, we feed on Christ. We know nothing of Christ but as revealed unto us by the Spirit in the Scriptures. "The words that I speak unto you," said Jesus, "they are spirit, and they are life."

We feed on Christ when we receive His word by faith into our hearts.. Hence it is that those who neglect the reading of the Scriptures have barrenness of soul. In this, as in

every other thing, Christ has left us an example. He lived in continual dependence on the Father; therefore He said, "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me" (John vi. 57).

Communion with God, in the person, work, and fulness of Christ, as accepted worshippers, made nigh by His blood, gives true Christian joy. A believer must know something of these things for abiding happiness and joy. So long as he feels outside the veil, not near to God, not in His blessed presence, he will not be happy; but when the blessed Comforter shows him that he is now standing in Christ, inside the veil, cleansed by the blood of Christ, and accepted in Him, with every provision made for the wilderness journey, then it is that he eats his bread with joy, and drinks the soul-cheering wine of the banqueting-house with a merry heart.

How is it that God's dear children do not more rejoice?

Because they are not believing the precious words of Christ, not living upon Christ, not feeding on Christ, not drawing out of the fulness of Christ, not apprehending their acceptance and standing in Christ, not abiding in Christ, not dwelling within the veil where Christ our life is, not having communion with God in the flesh and blood of His beloved

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Son. Hence passing things too much occupy the mind, painful circumstances quickly cast down our spirits, pleasant things easily elate us, and our affections are drawn from those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Oh, my fellow-Christians, let us look away unto Jesus, cleave to the Lord Jesus; let us hold fast our blessed privileges in Him, let us eat our bread with joy, and drink our wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth our works!

2. THE BELIEVER SHOULD BE WATCHFUL. "Let thy garments be always white." The garments of salvation are pure and spotless. The robe of Christ is white and clean. The world through which our wilderness journey lies is unclean and defiling, and our evil flesh is easily acted on by Satan; hence we are admonished to keep our garments unspotted (Jude 23).

If our children were attired in white and costly garments, and we sent them to walk along a muddy road, we should doubtless charge them to be careful how they walked, and to be watchful lest they defiled their clothing.

So our God and Father, having put on us "the best robe," tells us that the world through which we walk is evil, and lying in the wicked one, and charges us to be watchful, so that our garments may be always white.

Jesus always kept unspotted garments. He resisted every temptation, and quenched every fiery dart of Satan. He never sat in the scorner's chair; He always rejected the counsel of the ungodly. No one on earth ever so loved sinners, and yet He was "separate from sinners." The world could never force an entrance into His heart, so that He could truly say, "I am not of the world." From first to last, at all times, and under all circumstances, He kept His garments unspotted. "He knew no sin."

But we, alas! even the most watchful of us, have to mourn over our defiled garments. It is, indeed, too true. They do get spotted, they are not always white. In unguarded moments we fail, and are defiled. But even here again the grace of God meets us, and our tears of sorrow and regret are wiped away by the uplifted hands of our great High Priest; and our sighs are hushed by the still small voice of our God and Father, assuring us that, "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9). He tells us of the perpetual efficacy of the precious blood of Christ, and the all-prevailing character of His priesthood in maintaining our conscious nearness to God; and while reminding us of His holiness in commanding us to "sin not," His grace assures us that "if any man sin,

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we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John i. 7).

Thus, by the contemplation of the Lord Jesus Christ, our communion is restored, our defiled consciences are purged, our garments are cleansed, and we realize again that we have white raiment, though surrounded by an evil and defiling world.

We are called to walk with God; therefore we should be watchful, lest we slide away and fall from our high places.

We should be watchful, lest we forget our standing in Christ, and be found again trying to feed upon carnal husks at the swine-trough.

We should be watchful, lest our eye rest upon the world's vain glitter, and our hearts become attracted to it.

We should be watchful, lest we yield to evil suggestions, and give utterance to unholy words.

We should be watchful, lest we lay down the shield of faith, and slumber in the arms of unbelief.

We should be watchful, lest we lose our relish for the sincere milk of the word.

We should watch against everything that hinders our rejoicing in the Lord.

In a word, we should seek to keep our garments unspotted: but when defilement is contracted, we should at once, with confession, bring it to God our Father, and believe that

the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. May we be diligent; so that when Jesus comes we may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless.

3. THE BELIEVER SHOULD SAVOUR OF CHRIST. "Let thy head lack not ointment." Some people of the world do not consider themselves full dressed unless they have perfumed themselves with some pleasant odour, and wherever they go they leave traces of the sweet scent. So the true Christian is not only made the righteousness of God in Christ; but he is anointed with the Holy Ghost: "Ye have an unction from the Holy One" (1 John ii. 20). Hence he is called to witness for Christ, to show forth the virtues of Christ, to confess Christ. As he yields to fleshly lusts, so the Spirit which dwelleth in him is grieved or quenched, and then there will be little of Christ. It is because of this that many talk so much about Christianity with scarcely any reference to Christ; that some preach a long discourse, and if Christ be named at all, He is only briefly referred to at the close; and others write upon religious subjects with Christless pages.

If such are really God's people, yet their heads lack ointment; they are living in fleshly energy instead of in dependence on God the Holy Ghost. The apostle Paul bids us beware of every thing which is not after Christ

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(Col. ii. 8); and our Lord said, "Whosoever shall CONFESS ME before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God; but he that DENIETH ME before men shall be denied before the angels of God."

Nothing can more plainly show us, that it is not religious things or opinions to which we are called upon to give testimony, but to Christ, Christ in the infinite perfections of His Person, work, worth, and coming.

Paul and others, through grace, kept so close to Christ that the savour of His knowledge was made manifest by them in every place. He tells us that he lived by the faith of Christ, preached Christ, and so manifested Christ as to be able to say, "For me to live is Christ"; and looked for Christ's coming again. If he wrote a letter, it was full of Christ. His inspired epistles show this.

The apostle John, also, tells us that he was banished to the isle of Patmos for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. So we, being united to Christ, and indwelt by the Spirit of Christ, are exhorted to be rooted and built up in Christ, to rejoice in Christ, to have our conversation as becometh the gospel of Christ, and to wait for His coming.

For these things, we need frequent spiritual renewings, constant supplies of grace, yea, to be filled with the Spirit; thus our heads will "lack no ointment."

Am I a Help or a Hindrance to the Assembly ?

I.

OF the many favours conferred upon us by our ever-gracious Lord, one of the very highest is the privilege of being present in the assembly of His beloved people, where He has recorded His name. We may assert, with all possible confidence, that every true lover of Christ will delight to be found where He has promised to be. Whatever may be the special character of the meeting ; whether it be round the Lord's Table, to show forth His death ; or round the Word, to learn His mind ; or round the mercy-seat, to tell Him our need, and draw from His exhaustless treasury, every devoted heart will long to be there ; and we may rest assured that any one who wilfully neglects the assembly is in a cold, dead, dangerous state of soul. To neglect the assembling of ourselves is to take the first step on the inclined plane that leads down to the total abandonment of Christ and His precious interests. (See Heb. x. 25-27).

And, here, at the very outset, we would remind the reader that the object of this brief paper is not to discuss the oft-raised question : " How are we to know what meeting to go to ? " This is, assuredly, a question of cardinal importance, which every Christian, man, woman, and child, is bound and privileged to

have divinely settled, ere he takes his place in an assembly. To go to a meeting without knowing the ground on which such meeting is gathered, is to act in ignorance or indifference, wholly incompatible with the fear of the Lord and the love of His word.

But, we repeat, this question is not now before us. We are not occupied with the ground of the meeting, but with *our state and conduct on the ground*; a question, surely, of vast moral importance to every soul professing to be gathered in or to the name of Him who is holy and true. In a word, our thesis is distinctly stated at the head of this article. We assume that the reader is clear as to the ground of the assembly, and hence our immediate business with him just now is to raise the solemn question in his heart and conscience, "Am I a help or a hindrance to the assembly?" That each individual member is either the one or the other, is as clear as it is weighty and practical.

If the reader will just open his Bible and read, thoughtfully and prayerfully, 1 Corinthians xii., he will find, most clearly established, the great practical truth, that each member of the body exerts an influence on all the rest. Just as in the human body, if there be anything wrong with the very feeblest and most obscure member, all the members feel it, through the head. If there be a broken nail,

a broken tooth, a foot out of joint, any limb, muscle, or nerve out of order, it is a hindrance to the whole body. Thus it is in the Church of God, the body of Christ: "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." The state of each member affects the whole body. Hence it follows that each member is either a help or a hindrance to all. What a profound truth! Yes; and it is as practical as it is profound.

And be it remembered that the apostle is not speaking of any mere local assembly, but of the whole body, of which, no doubt, each particular assembly ought to be the local expression. Thus he says, in addressing the assembly at Corinth, "*Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*" True, there were other assemblies; and, had the apostle been addressing any of them on the same subject, he would have used the same language; for what was true of each was true of all; and what was true of the whole was true of each local expression. Nothing can be clearer, nothing simpler, nothing more deeply practical. The whole subject furnishes three most precious and powerful motives for a holy, earnest, devoted life; namely, first, that we may not dishonour the Head to whom we are united; secondly, that we may not grieve the Holy Spirit by whom we are united; and,

thirdly, that we may not injure the members with whom we are united.

Can anything exceed the moral power of such motives as these? Oh! that they were more fully realised among God's beloved people!

It is one thing to hold and teach the doctrine of the unity of the body, and another thing altogether to enter into and exhibit its holy formative power. Alas! the poor human intellect may discuss and traffic in the highest truths, while the heart, the conscience, and the life have never felt their holy influence. This is a most solemn consideration for every one. May we ponder it in our hearts, and may it tell upon our whole life and character! May the truth of the "one body" be a grand moral reality to every member of that body on the face of the earth!

Here we might close this paper, feeling, as we do, that if the glorious truth on which we have been dwelling were held, in the living power of faith, by all the Lord's beloved people, then, assuredly, *all* the precious, practical results would follow. But, in sitting down to write, there was one special branch of the subject prominently before the mind, and that is the way in which the various meetings are affected by the condition of soul, the attitude of heart, and the state of mind, of all who attend. We repeat, and with emphasis, all

who attend; not merely all who audibly take part, but all who form the meeting.

No doubt a special and very weighty responsibility rests on those who take any part in the ministry, whether it be in giving out a hymn, engaging in prayer or thanksgiving, reading the word, teaching, or exhortation. All who do so should be very sure that they are divinely called and fitted, yea, that they are simply the instruments in the hand of the Lord for whatever they undertake to do. Otherwise, they may do the most serious damage to the meeting. They may quench the Spirit, hinder the worship, interrupt the communion, mar the integrity of the occasion.

All this is most serious, and calls for holy watchfulness on the part of all who engage in any branch of ministry in the assembly. Even a hymn may prove a positive hindrance, it may interrupt the current and lower the tone of the assembly. Yea, the precious word of God may be read out of place. In short, whatever is not the direct fruit of the Spirit can only hinder the edification and blessing of the assembly. All who take part in the ministry should have the distinct sense that they are led by the Spirit in what they do. They should be governed by the one commanding, absorbing object, the glory of Christ in the assembly and the blessing of the assembly in Him. *If it be not thus, they had better be quiet and*

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wait on the Lord. They will render more glory to Christ, and more blessing to the assembly, by quiet waiting than by restless action and unprofitable talking.

“The Latter Times” and “The Last Days.”

(1 TIMOTHY IV.; 2 TIMOTHY III.)

IT is sorrowful to have to look at departures from God and His truth. It has been said of the Lord that His soul tasted some of its bitterest grief when He looked on the treachery of Judas; and ours should be thus affected when we think of the corruptions of Christendom, which are as the kiss and the treason of that apostle again.

“The mystery of iniquity ” had begun to work, we know, in the times of the apostles. And as the small seed cast into the ground carries with it the form and character of all that which the harvest is afterwards to manifest and yield, so the leaven that was working secretly then, to the keen eye of the Spirit in the apostles, had in it the varied evils which, in the progress of corruptions, were to be manifested in Christendom : so that the apostle Paul guards Timothy, even then, against the pravities of both “the latter times ” and “the

last days," as though Timothy himself were in the midst of them.

But these pravities are different.

In "the latter times," there was to be a departure from the Word of God, or from the religion of "the truth," which alone is "godliness." Consequently, there would be the giving heed to something beside the word or the truth, to "seducing spirits," and to "doctrines of devils" (or demons). Then there would be speaking lies "in hypocrisy," making an exhibition of religion; and all this, man's religion, or what man has got up, would "sear the conscience," deaden it to God's religion, or the religion of "the truth," fortified, as it would be, by man's forbiddings and "abstinences," which must be complied with and practised, though so contrary to the thoughts and gifts of God. (See 1 Tim. iv.).

"The last days," on the other hand, were not to be religious, but infidel. Superstitious vanities were to yield to man's will and independency. He would be a lover of "himself," and, in the train of that, "heady," "high-minded," "disobedient to parents," "covetous," and such like; all qualities and characters making him as one who had broken the bands, and cast away the cords; not religious, but wilful. (See Psalm ii.). And in the midst of all this, there was to be "the form of godliness"; the appearing to return to

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that from which “ the latter times ” had departed, “ godliness,” or the religion of “ the truth ”; but when looked at a little within, no “ power ” would be found, though so much “ form ” (2 Tim. iii.).

Now, here we see a great moral reaction. All the cords and bands of “ the latter times ” cast away, and man indulging and admiring himself; religious vanities gone, but human independency asserted.

And these things have had their day. In the two great characteristic eras in the history of Christendom we get them, in the times before and since the Reformation. In the times before, there was *man's religion*, opposing itself to “ the truth,” and having its own vanities; in the times since, there has been *man's pride*, asserting his independency and breaking off all bands. These have been the *characters* of the two eras. Of course, something of the second was known during the time of the first, and much of the first still lives in the second; but these different pravities are the characteristics of the two eras.

And (what is a very solemn truth), I judge that the history of corrupted Christianity will close by a kind of coalition between the two pravities. And of such a state of things we get the pattern in the time of our blessed Lord, when there was both *man's religion* and *man's independency* combined against Him, the un-

clean spirit who had gone out, having himself returned and brought with him other spirits more wicked than himself. (See Matt. xii.). There was Jewish religion, which would not let its votaries go into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; and there was Jewish infidelity, which could say, "We have no king but Cæsar."

This is a solemn, fearful prospect. Surely, there is real godliness in the midst of it all; but the sight is dreadful.

And in the Wilderness there was the counterpart of what I have been here tracing. There was, first, the "calf," and then the "captain," the two ensigns of Israel's departure from God during their journey from Egypt to Canaan, the two distinct standards of rebellion, set up at different eras. (See Exod. xxxii.; Num. xiv.).

The "calf" was the ensign of man's *religion*. Man had his own gods then, and in eating and drinking, and rising up to play, man exhibited his religion, spoke "lies in hypocrisy."

The "captain" was the ensign of man's *infidelity*. Man was his own god then, setting up himself to be his own leader, as though answerable to none, breaking all bands, "heady, high-minded."

Thus, by either the "calf" or the "captain," man is ever working against God and

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His truth. It is either false religion or a spirit of independency that is moving him. And *reaction* is always to be dreaded, even by the true worshippers and saints of God, as is also *the spirit of the times in which they live*.

Both of these must be watched against. If the present time exhibit much of the spirit of human pride and independency, of course the saint has to guard against his being drawn into the stream, and carried along the current which has set in around him. But he has also to guard against reaction. He has to watch and pray, that he may not, through dread and hatred of the present form of evil, look for relief by a return to the previous form of evil.

I believe there is very much of both of these at present. I see people who should have stood only in godliness, dropping into the *current of these times*; and in the revival of high-church principles, and return to ecclesiastical ceremonies and observances of human imposition, there is evident *unhealthy reaction* among men of a sensitive, righteous order of mind, who have marked the evil that is now predominant, and have sought relief from it, but have been turned back by Satan to the religiousness of man, and away from “ godliness ” or the religion of “ the truth.” In avoiding the evil of “ the last days,” they have returned to that of “ the latter times ”; at least in measure.

In the midst of all this condition of things, I believe the poor saint of God, who walks "in the truth," as the apostle John speaks, may now see himself (3 John). His path is narrow. Errors on both sides threaten and attract him. The "calf" and the "captain" are erected as the standards of rival parties. The Word alone is to mark his passage through both, and the Spirit to lead him along it; he is to purify himself by obeying the truth through the Spirit (1 Peter i. 22).

He has been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and his soul is to know its living communion according to this. He has to continue in the things that he has learnt, knowing the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make a child (a fool in this world's wisdom), wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus. He is to know that, as a sinner, he is cast only upon God; as a sinner, God, and not man, has to do with him; and taking his sin, yea, and his sins too, into the presence of God, he is to see them there, by faith, washed away by the precious blood of a precious Sacrifice.

He has to keep his conscience unclouded, so that his living communion with the Father and with the Son, in the life of the Holy Ghost, be not broken, and to walk in the love of the Spirit with all who are Christ's, and in the charities of the gospel with all men; doing

withal what service among the saints he may be fitted to do by gift of the Spirit, and what service to others he may have opportunity or power to fulfil; waiting daily for the Son from heaven, who, he is to know, has delivered him from the wrath to come (1 Thess. i. 10).

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II.

THEN see how he rises above all the trials of his four years of imprisonment, two at Cæsarea and two at Rome. "I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel."

He might have reasoned: If I had not gone up to Jerusalem, and there listened to these Jews persuading me to things, I might still be at liberty, preaching the gospel. He does not do that; and let me say, beloved friends, there is nothing more foolish than to be looking at second causes. Perhaps we may not have been wise, but the man who lives above things here knows that every one of them works together for good. All would turn to his salvation, he says, "through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." And we see here that there is the increased activity and energy of the Spirit of God, "the supply," as the apostle speaks; so that,

though we cannot look to Him to come (as He has come), we can and ought to be looking for the "supply," and His ministering grace through the Word.

"Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death." We see here that perfection in the flesh is all nonsense, for Paul was looking to be like Christ in glory. The heart is always upright when it says, "For me to live is CHRIST." He had no object but Christ, and he walked day by day by that: Christ as source, Christ as object, Christ as character; all the way through, Christ was his life, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that the rage of man and Satan had no power over him. Self was practically gone. When he looked at himself he did not know what to choose, whether to go and rest with Christ, or to remain and serve Him. To be with Him was better, but then he could no longer labour for Him. Thus self was gone as a motive, and he counts on Christ for the Church, and the moment he sees "it is necessary for *you* that I remain," he says, "I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith." He decides his own trial before Nero. When thinking of himself he did not know which to choose, but when he thinks of those dear to Christ needing his presence he says, "I know I shall abide."

The Lord grant, beloved brethren, that He should be our only object, and that we should not let ourselves be distracted from it, so that we may say, "This one thing I do." The Lord give us grace to be the true epistles of Christ till He come. What a bright and blessed witness the Church of God would then be! If we have less fighting and fears than Paul, it is because we have less energy.

"In nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For 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. 28, 29). It is not merely that he wants to guard them against this, but he assures them that conflict is the natural state of the Christian: "Having the same conflict which ye saw in me" (v. 30).

Here it was positive trial that they were in; but the whole of the Christian life is one of conflict with Satan; not that we need to be always thinking of it, if we have on the whole armour of God; but if we are not in the consciousness of Christ's victory, we are in danger of being terrified; and though we know little of this conflict, yet in a small degree we do.

When Satan is resisted, Christ is then in the conflict, and we know that Christ has bound him, and he has been completely over-

come; so it is, “ Resist the devil, and he will flee from you ” (James iv. 7). If we are walking with Christ, the apparent power is much greater with Satan and the world than with us; but it is all *nothing*; it is all a mistake to be terrified by it. What does it matter if the cities are walled up to heaven, if they tumble down, and you walk in over them?

It is not a question of the difficulties, as we see in the case of Peter walking on the sea. He walked on the water to go to Jesus; but when he saw the wind boisterous he was afraid. But if the water had been calm as a mill-pond he could not have walked on it; you never heard of a man able to walk on water. It was all a mistake in what he was looking at.

What we want to remember is that Christ has bound Satan, so now He can spoil his goods. He allows Satan to cast some into prison to be tried, but Satan gains nothing by that; when he meets a person walking with Christ he has no power against him at all. We may have suffering, but that is what God has “ given ”; as we see in Moses, “ esteeming ” (he does not say reproach, but) “ the *reproach of Christ* greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.” So that rough seas and smooth seas are all the same; we sink if Christ is not with us there, and we walk on them if He is.

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To turn to the second chapter. It is astonishing the grace which associates us with Christ; we are called to have the same mind as Christ. Here we get the lowliness of the Christian life, as in the third chapter we have the energy of the Christian life. Here it is in following the pattern of Christ, a lowliness shown in esteem of others, and in perfect consideration for others, and in gracious gentleness of demeanour in connection with the things of everyday life.

Thus the apostle tells them he would keep Timotheus, and send him to them as soon as he should know how it would go with him; reckoning on their true interest in all that regarded him. But he would not keep Epaphroditus, but send him, for he had been ill, and the Philippians had heard it, and were full of anxiety about him; like a child might say, My mother will be in a terrible way when she hears I am so ill. So Paul would send him that they might see him. In little things this considerateness is seen in Paul, this thorough thoughtfulness for others. Even the world can see it is lovely; their very selfishness delights in it.

The Philippians had shown these things he speaks of in their thoughtfulness for Paul, yet they were not quite united in Christ. But he does not like to come with a rebuke in the midst of all their love to him. He says, I see

how you care for me, but, if you want to make me thoroughly happy, be of one mind, “fulfil ye my joy” (v. 2). It is in the most delicate way that he rebukes them, a gentle hint; but they needed the exhortation.

Then he goes on to show the principles on which it is founded. “In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (v. 3). It is a kind of impossibility, if you look at it in one way; for, if you are better than I, it is evident I cannot be better than you. But when the heart is thoroughly lowly, walking with Christ, and delighting in Christ, he thinks himself a poor creature with nothing but the *grace of Christ to think of, and never sees anything but defects in himself; all the graces he sees in Christ; and, seeing this grace, even if he is using it, he feels what a poor instrument he is, the flesh hindering and spoiling the vessel, and not letting the light shine out.*

But when he looks at his brother he sees all the grace Christ has poured into him. What the Christian sees is Christ in his brother, and all the good qualities in him. Paul could say even to the Corinthians, who were going on shockingly, “I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. i. 4): He begins by recognising all the good. Love took hold of all the good it could, and thus he got their hearts to listen to the rebukes.

Studies on the Book of Daniel.

I. CHAPTERS I., II.

THE Book of Daniel has reference to the time during which Israel, the people of God, are under subjection to the Gentiles.

At its opening we discover an accomplishment of the threat made to Hezekiah (Isa. xxxix. 6, 7). The throne of God has been taken from Jerusalem; the power and the kingdom have been transferred to the Gentiles; and Israel, as to its actual state, being, by the judgment of God, no longer His people, is kept in captivity.

But God does not abandon them; only He administers His blessings according to their actual necessity. The things most needful for them to know, under their existing trials, were the history of this dominion of the Gentiles, to which they were subjected, and, also, the effect of these changes upon the promises which belonged to them. And as the glory of God was to be considered in this great transference of power, it was important to know how the Gentiles would use it, or what their conduct would be, whether towards God, or themselves (the Jews), under this responsibility conferred on them.

The book, then, embraces two principal subjects: first, the character and conduct of the four monarchies, which occupy the period called "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke xxi.

24), namely, from the time that God had retired from Jerusalem (His throne being no longer there), and had transferred imperial power over the world to the Gentiles, until the time of the re-establishment of His throne. And, secondly, the relationship of these nations with Israel His people, during the period in which the supremacy that had been confided to them was in exercise.

And all this is of practical importance. For the Christian is informed of the result of the politics of this world, and being "warned of God of things not seen as yet," he separates himself, whether in heart or in action, from all that of which the *denouement* will be so sad. Besides, an acquaintance beforehand with all that is to take place keeps him tranquil and composed; there is no need that he should give his heart to the world which surrounds him, for he knows, by the written revelation of God, both its course and its end.

But further, such prophetic intimation is precious to us, not alone because it refers to Christ, and to the people beloved of God, but also because, in every communication which God makes to us, there is a sensible joy in the very fact that He speaks to us. Are not our souls happy in communion with Him?

Now this is the case in the prophecies, as in every other part of the Word: we feel our nearness to Him, and His goodness to us.

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Thus our faith in Him is strengthened, and the sanctification of our souls increased and established.

This book, accordingly, is divided into two parts, sufficiently distinct, according to the two great subjects which it contains. Six chapters occupy the first, and six others the second part.

The first six contain, not the communications made to Daniel (except to interpret them), but the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar, or the things which befell the heads of the empire. We have the great general principles of the Gentile monarchies given to us, or their public history in the world announced to their rulers, or manifested in their conduct.

The last six chapters are communications made to the prophet himself, and reveal, not only the history of these empires, but what they are in the eyes of God. They also furnish details of their (the Gentiles') relationship with the Jews, and of the worship still maintained by the Jewish people. This last was important to Daniel, who, as a prophet, had the people and glory of God at heart, as well as the general history of these empires.

It is instructive to mark the character of the man who became the depositary of the intentions of God, in this time of distress and captivity of his people.

First, he refuses to defile his soul in par-

taking of the delicate food of this world. God, who prepares and orders every thing for the well-being of those who walk faithfully, in whatever circumstances they are placed, had disposed the heart of the chief of the eunuchs in favour of Daniel and his three companions. This eunuch, under whose charge they were, conceived a great regard for them. Moreover, God answers the prayers of Daniel, who "became fairer and fatter in flesh" than any of those who had given themselves over to the ways and nourishment of this world.

In a word, Daniel is faithful in all that constitutes a complete separation from the world, according to the Jewish rites, in refusing to eat of meats from the table of a pagan monarch; and this conduct of faith, which was in appearance blamable, meets the approval of God. The personal behaviour of Daniel is the basis of and introduction to the revelations of the whole book.

It is the same with us. Separation from the world, a decided refusal to have our portion in that which it furnishes, puts us into a position to receive those communications from God, which, whilst their fulness is contained in the written Word, we never receive but through the direct teaching of God (that is, for it to be the teaching of faith), whatever be the instrument which God may make use of to impart such communications to us.

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God soon finds an occasion in which Daniel is to serve Him as a witness, after having, through His grace, disposed him for the undertaking. He often acts by ways which leave the world completely at fault. He permits Nebuchadnezzar's memory to fail him, in order to force him into dependence upon the prophet whom God had chosen to show forth His divine wisdom.

Notwithstanding, at the actual moment, Daniel knew no more than others how to resolve the difficulty. God made him feel his dependence; but he had faith, and faith and dependence are identified. At the instance of Daniel, he and his companions seek the God of heaven, in prayer.* God answers them, making use of all the difficulties of the case to identify Himself with the poor remnant of His people.

Hereupon, Daniel's first act is not to hasten to the king to inform him of the discovery of the secret, and to rejoice in the deliverance; but he turns with thanksgiving to the God who had heard him. He attributes to Him all that could give comfort to the remnant during the supremacy of these ungodly and rebellious Gentile powers (ii. 21). So it ever is with a soul that walks with God.

* It is under this character of God of heaven that Daniel knew Him. He will be found, hereafter, God of the earth in fact, as He is always in right.

Daniel, when introduced into the presence of the king, is not elated; he conceals himself, so to speak, behind the glory of God. It is when we understand how to humble ourselves thoroughly, that we are truly exalted. If Daniel disappears, God Himself is manifested in him. Oh, that we might have wisdom and spiritual power to hide ourselves thus behind Jesus, in order that He might be put into the foreground! Every such act is a great and precious triumph.

As to the interpretation of the dream, a few words will suffice, as the light upon this is almost universal. All acknowledge the dream to speak of the four great monarchies, namely, the Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman. In the 37th and 38th verses, dominion is given to Nebuchadnezzar by the God of heaven, a universal dominion, absolute in its character over the earth, though not over the seas.

There is no information given how far this dominion has been realised, but the gift was bestowed; and it is the first monarchy which, it appears, possessed this power in the most pure and absolute way. It was set up directly by God. It was in the person of its chief, "the head of gold." The fourth was to break everything in pieces by its power; but at the end it was to be divided, and in this condition it was to be both strong and weak; a result of the union of the empire and of the original

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principle of its existence with heterogeneous elements, that is, in my judgment, of barbarians with that which was, properly speaking, Roman.

At the end, the God of heaven will establish the kingdom of Christ, who will put aside all these monarchies by an act of judgment. We must bear in mind that the kingdom of Christ, in this place, is His kingdom established in power in the world, and not the blessed influence of the gospel of His grace. The first act of the little stone, before it grows and becomes a great mountain which fills the whole earth, is to fall upon the statue, so that it becomes "like the chaff of the summer threshing floors" (v. 35). The stone does not become a mountain until after that. In other words, when Christ shall have executed a judgment which shall break in pieces and destroy the power of the Gentiles, THEN His kingdom, an earthly kingdom, and one still of judgment, shall fill the earth.

In this second chapter, the moral history of these monarchies is not touched upon, nor their conduct signalized. These will have their place in the four following chapters. I shall only here point out the marks which are given to us as characterizing them, as we shall return to them in another lecture.

The first is IDOLATRY, or the civil power endeavouring to make the people submit to a

law of unity in worship, the object being a statue set up by the civil power.

The second is, that the heads of the empire became BEASTS; that is, they lose the consciousness of being set in relationship with God; and instead of being in dependence upon Him, according to the light given from above, which is the only and true glory of man, they, having lost this light, descend to the rank of beasts.

The third is IMPIETY, seen in the conduct of the imperial power towards the Jews, and the God of the Jews, whose name, and all that had reference to His worship, it dishonours.

The fourth is SELF-EXALTATION. The head of the empire makes himself God, and forbids prayer to be addressed to any other than himself.

In all these events, the history ends by THE EXALTATION OF THE TRUE GOD.

In the first, the Gentile acknowledges the God of those who had preferred the fiery furnace to idolatry.

In the second, it is the Gentiles themselves who confess the God of heaven, who humbled them when they walked in pride, a pride of which Babylon was the centre.

In the third, it is judgment executed against the "wicked king."

In the fourth, it is not alone the God of heaven who is proclaimed, but His power is

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established with authority, and His kingdom is acknowledged as that which shall endure for ever.

The Reverted Shadow.

READ ISAIAH XXXVIII.

'T WAS with his twelve companion hours
The summer sun ran down,
And lit the gilded roofs and towers
Of David's ancient town :
The temple group of stately halls
Shone in the saffron light :
Not El Dorado's glittering walls
Were e'en a fairer sight.

But hushed, with sorrow overcast,
The cedar palace lay ;
A gloom across its threshold passed
On that bright sunny day :
Within, no mirth nor music sounds,
But lamentation sore ;
Pale Death, who kings with swains confounds,
Knocks at the monarch's door.

The SHADOW crossing silently
The dial Ahaz made,
Like Fate's black finger seemed to be,
Or Time's unsparing blade :

Jehovah's word had surely said,
 "Thou shalt not live, but die."
 Then Hezekiah turned his head,
 And mournèd bitterly.

"Down to the depths of Sheol* I go,
 Fair life no more to see;
 Cut off with grief and pining woe
 My shortened life must be.
 My days are passed like shifted tent
 When Arab shepherd roves;
 Quickly my little time is spent
 As the light shuttle moves:

"Like moping crane upon her nest,
 Or owl upon the tree,
 Jehovah, Lord, I am oppressed,
 Undertake Thou for me!"
 But still the SHADOW moves across
 The dial's darkening face;
 Each line records an hour's loss
 Of life's receding space.

Then did the Almighty Sovereign Lord
 Who counts each human tear,
 Send a swift answer by His Word,
 Brought by His faithful seer:
 "A sign I send that thou shalt rise;
 I've seen thy grief and woe;
 That creeping mark, to thy surprise,
 Back ten degrees must go."

* The unseen state.

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Then backwards this great world did roll
 On its great axle-tree,
 And the reluctant SHADOW stole
 Back to the tenth degree.
 The king saw in this potent sign
 The pledge that he should live:
 "The God who rules that sombre line
 Life from the dead can give!"

"The living, yea, the living soul
 Alone shall sing Thy praise;
 I bless the Lord who makes me whole,
 Will bless Him all my days.
 To Him, omnipotent to save,
 Sweet melody I'll bring;
 His might, who lifts me from the grave,
 In His own house to sing!"

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Oh! may we ever learn in grace
 As this short tale is read,
 In that great JAH our trust to place
 Who quickeneth the dead:
 In Him who raised His blessed Son,
 Lighting death's darkest hour,
 The living God, who leads us on
 With resurrection power.

Am I a Help or a Hindrance to the Assembly ?

II.

BUT, while feeling and owning the gravity of all that has to be said in reference to the holy responsibility of all who minister in the assembly, we are thoroughly persuaded that the tone, character, and general effect of public meetings are very intimately connected with *the moral and spiritual condition of all*. It is this, we confess, that weighs upon the heart, and leads us to pen this brief address to every assembly under the sun. Every soul in the meeting is either a help or a hindrance, a contributor or a waster. All who attend in a devout, earnest, loving spirit; who come simply to meet the Lord Himself; who flock to the assembly as the place where His precious name is recorded; who delight to be there, because He is there : all such are a real help and blessing to a meeting. May God increase their number ! If all assemblies were made up of such blessed elements, what a different tale would have to be told !

And why not ? It is not a question of gift or knowledge, but of grace and godliness, true piety and prayerfulness. In a word, it is simply a question of that condition of soul in which every child of God and every servant of Christ ought to be, and without which the most shining gifts and the most extensive

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knowledge are a hindrance and a snare. Mere gift and intelligence, without an exercised conscience and the fear of God, may be, and have been used of the enemy for the moral ruin of souls. But where there is true humility and that seriousness and reality which the sense of the presence of God ever produces, there you have what will most surely, gift or no gift, impart depth of tone, freshness, and a spirit of worship to an assembly.

There is a vast difference between an assembly of people gathered round some gifted man, and one gathered simply to the Lord Himself, on the ground of the one body. It is one thing to be gathered *by* ministry, and quite another to be gathered *to* it. If people are merely gathered to ministry, when the ministry goes they are apt to go too. But when earnest, true-hearted, devoted souls are gathered simply to the Lord Himself, then, while they are most thankful for true ministry, when they can get it, they are not dependent upon it. They do not value gift less, but they value the Giver more. They are thankful for the streams, but they depend *only* upon the Fountain.

It will invariably be found that those who can do best without ministry value it most when they get it. In a word, they give it its true place. But those who attach undue importance to gift, who are always complaining

of the lack of it, and cannot enjoy a meeting without it, are a hindrance and a source of weakness to the assembly.

And alas! there are other hindrances and sources of weakness which demand the serious consideration of all. We should, each one of us, as we take our places in the assembly, honestly put the question to our hearts, "Am I a help or a hindrance, a contributor or a waster?" If we come in a cold, hard, careless state of soul, come, in a merely formal manner, unjudged, unexercised, unbroken, in a fault-finding, murmuring, complaining spirit, judging everything and everybody except ourselves, then, most assuredly, we are a serious hindrance to the blessing, the profit, and the happiness of the meeting. We are the broken nail, the broken tooth, or the foot out of joint. How sorrowful, how humiliating, how terrible is all this! May we watch against it, pray against it, firmly disallow it!

But, on the other hand, those who present themselves in the assembly, in a loving, gracious, Christ-like spirit; who simply delight to meet their brethren, whether round the Table, round the fountain of Holy Scripture, or round the mercy-seat for prayer; who, in their hearts' deep and tender affections, embrace all the members of the beloved body of Christ; whose eyes are not dimmed, or their affections chilled by dark suspicions, evil sur-

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misings, or unkindly feelings toward any around them; who have been taught of God to love their brethren, to look at them "from the top of the rocks" and see them "in the vision of the Almighty"; who are ready to profit by whatever the gracious Lord sends them, even though it may not come through some brilliant gift or favourite teacher: all such are a divinely sent blessing to the assembly wherever they are. Again we say, with a full heart, May God add to their number! If all assemblies were composed of such, it would be the very atmosphere of heaven itself. The name of Jesus would be as ointment poured forth; every eye would be fixed on Him, every heart absorbed with Him, and there would be a more powerful testimony to His name and presence in our midst than could be rendered by the most brilliant gift.

May the gracious Lord pour out His blessing upon all His assemblies throughout the whole earth! May He deliver them from every hindrance, every weight, every stumbling-block, every root of bitterness! May the hearts of all be knit together in sweet confidence and true brotherly love! May He crown, with His richest blessing, the labours of all His beloved servants, at home and abroad, cheering their hearts and strengthening their hands, giving them to be steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in His

precious work, in the assurance that their labour is not in vain !

The Book of Experience.

(PHILIPPIANS).

III.

I DETECT the grace in my brother, and I do not see the evil at work in his heart; but I do see it in my own. When Moses came down from the mount he wist not that his face shone. What made it shine was not looking at his own face (of course we know he could not do that), but looking at the glory; and it shines forth from us in the measure in which we look simply and purely at it. I see in my brother all the gentleness, graciousness, courage, faithfulness; and in myself all the defects. As I said, of course if you are better than I, I cannot be better than you; but it is a question of the spirit in which the Christian walks; vain glory is gone; and it cannot be otherwise if the heart is on Christ. It is not giving me a false estimate of myself; but when I look at the grace, it is Christ. Of course I must look at myself sometimes, and judge myself; but the best thing is not to have to look at myself at all. "Look not every man on his own things" (v. 4).

Then he turns to the principle on which this is founded: "Let this mind be in you which

was also in Christ Jesus ” (v. 5). Here we get the path of Christ from the glory of the Godhead to the cross; he never did anything but go down; the exact opposite of the first Adam. “ Being in the form of God, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God ”; not only He bore everything patiently; that is true; but another side of the truth : “ He made Himself of no reputation ” (vv. 6, 7). He laid aside the form of Godhead, and was found as a man; and, being a man, He took upon Him the form of a servant. True, even coming in the form of a man, there was soon seen, in word and work and spirit and way, all moral glory shining out; but He, having laid glory aside, was always going down in lowliness till there was no lower place. “ Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.”

There is the double step in His descent. The first was laying aside the form of God; the second, that, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient. There is nothing so humble as obedience, for then we have no will at all. The Lord Jesus was not only obedient, but obedient unto death; self given up altogether, not only the will. And not only to death, but the death of the cross; the gibbet, as it would be in our day; then for slaves and malefactors

only. From the form of God right down to death; obedience and humiliation all the way, the opposite in everything of the first Adam. He was not in the form of God, but set up to be as gods, and was *disobedient* unto death; the exact opposite in the spirit and character of his ways. And as the Lord said, "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased."

Adam was humbled because he exalted himself. Christ waited till God exalted Him; He humbled Himself, "wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him" (v. 9). He sets Him as Man over all the works of God's hands. Hence we read there is one God, the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. viii. 6). This is not a question of His nature, but of the place in which He is set. He has put all things under His feet *as Man*. All things were created by Him, and for Him, but He will have it all as Man, and thus it is He takes joint-heirs. He is heir of all things as Man, and has all believers as joint-heirs with Him.

In Colossians we get Him as Creator, as Son of God, as Son of man, and as Redeemer; the fourth tells us His title (Redeemer), that which has given Him a right over everything. All things are to be reconciled by Him; I do not say *justified*, because the things had not sinned; but they were all defiled; and, having reconciled all things, He takes us as joint-heirs. Just as Eve was not one of the different

animals that Adam gave names to, neither was she lord as Adam, nor was she that over which he was lord; but she was a help meet, or companion with him over the things. And it is under the fourth title (though all remain united in His person) that He brings in creation unto undefiled blessedness. It never can fail, and we know the redemption already: “You *hath* He reconciled.” The redemption is accomplished, as it is said, “That we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.”

Then he tells us that the same mind is to be in us as was in Christ. He had “a body prepared,” or “ears dug,” as it is in another place (Heb. x. 5; Ps. xl. 6, margin). He had taken the place of a servant as man. He comes, the fulness of the Godhead, in this body, and exhibits perfect obedience in it; and God has exalted Him to His right hand. He has gone before. We are not there yet; we are left to walk like Him here. It is a blessed thing to see the place He has taken; His path coming always down, and that to be the mind in us. So God says, “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth” too; that is, infernal things will have to own His title in glory (v. 10). In that character, that He is exalted, they will have to bow to Him.

The first Adam did not become head of a

race till he had sinned; and Christ did not become Head of a new race till He had accomplished redemption, and was Head of righteousness. As man entered Paradise, so He entered the world; each began a race. Sin complete, and the race ended on the one hand; and righteousness complete, and the race begun on the other.

The Brazen Sea.

“**A**ND he made a molten sea of ten cubits from brim to brim, round in compass, and five cubits the height thereof; and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about. And under it was the similitude of oxen, which did compass it round about; ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about. Two rows of oxen were cast, when it was cast. It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the North, and three looking toward the West, and three looking toward the South, and three looking toward the East; and the sea was set above upon them, and all their hinder parts were inward. And the thickness of it was an handbreadth, and the brim of it like the work of a brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies; and it received and held three thousand baths . . . THE SEA WAS FOR THE PRIESTS TO WASH IN ” (2 Chron. iv. 2-6).

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In order to a clear understanding of the doctrine taught us in this beautiful and significant figure, three things demand our attention, namely, the material, the contents, the object. May God the Spirit guide our thoughts and speak to our hearts as we dwell upon these things!

I. THE MATERIAL. Solomon's molten sea was made of brass, which is the apt symbol of divine righteousness demanding judgment upon *sin*, as in the brazen *altar*; or demanding judgment upon *uncleanness*, as in the brazen *sea*. The Lord Jesus is spoken of, in the first chapter of Revelation, as having "His feet like unto fine *brass* as if they burned in a furnace." It is thus He is seen walking amongst the candlesticks. He cannot tolerate evil, but must, in the exercise of judgment, trample it beneath His feet. This will explain the reason why the altar where sin was expiated, and the sea where defilement was washed away, were both made of brass. Every thing in Scripture has its meaning, and we should seek, in a spirit of prayer, to ascertain what that meaning is.

Now, it is most comforting and establishing to the heart to be assured of this, that the sin which God freely pardons, and the uncleanness which He freely removes, have been both fully and for ever judged and condemned in the cross. Not a single jot or tittle of guilt,

not a single trace of uncleanness has been passed over; all has been divinely judged. "Mercy rejoiceth against judgment"; and "grace reigns through righteousness" (James ii. 13; Rom. v. 21). The believer is pardoned and cleansed; but his guilt and uncleanness were judged on the cross. The knowledge of this most precious truth works in a double way: it sets the heart and conscience perfectly free, while, at the same time, it causes us to abhor sin and uncleanness, with an ever growing intensity. The altar of brass told forth, in mute yet impressive eloquence, its double story: guilt *had been* divinely condemned, and therefore *could be* divinely pardoned. The molten sea gave silent but clear testimony to the fact that uncleanness *had been* divinely judged, and, on that ground, *could be* divinely washed away.

What deep consolation for the heart in all this! And yet it is *holy* consolation. I cannot gaze upon the Antitype of the altar, and lightly commit sin. I cannot muse upon the Antitype of the molten sea, and indifferently contract defilement. My consolation is deep and solid, because I know I am pardoned and cleansed; but my consolation is holy, because I know that Jesus had to yield up His life to procure my pardon and cleansing. God has been perfectly glorified; sin and uncleanness have been perfectly condemned; I am set eter-

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nally free; but THE DEATH OF CHRIST is the basis of all. Such is the consolatory yet holy lesson taught us in the material of the brazen altar and the molten sea. Nothing is passed over by God; and yet nothing is imputed to me, because Christ was judged for all.

II. Let us now consider, in the second place, the CONTENTS of Solomon's molten sea. "It received and held three thousand baths" of *water*. If at the altar I see *brass* in connection with *blood*, at the sea I find *brass* in connection with *water*. Both point to Christ. "This is He that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not by water only, but water and blood" (1 John v. 6). "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water" (John xix. 34). The blood that expiates, and the water that cleanses, both flow from a crucified Saviour. Precious and solemn truth! Precious, because we have expiation and cleansing; solemn, because of the way in which we get them.

But the brazen sea contained water, not blood. Those who approached thereto had already proved the power of the blood, and therefore only needed the washing of water. Thus it was in the type, and thus it is in the antitype. A priest under the law, whose hands and feet had become defiled, did not need to go back to the brazen altar; but for-

ward to the brazen sea. He did not need again to apply the blood, in order to constitute him a priest, but only to wash with water, to enable him to discharge his priestly functions. So now, if a believer fails, if he commits sin, if he contracts defilement, he does not need to be again washed in the blood, as at the first, but simply the cleansing action of the Word, whereby the Holy Ghost doth apply to the soul the remembrance of what Christ has done, so that the defilement is removed, the communion restored, and the spiritual priest fitted afresh to discharge his priestly functions. “He that *is washed* needeth not, save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit” (John xiii. 10). “The worshippers *once purged* should have had no more conscience of sins” (Heb. x. 2).

Does this make little of defilement? The very opposite. Did the provision of a molten sea, with its three thousand baths of water, make little of priestly defilement? Did it not rather prove how much was made of it, what a serious matter it was in the judgment of God, how impossible it was to go on with a single soil upon the hands or feet?

Let my reader ponder this matter. Let him examine it in the light of Scripture. Let him see that he really understands it. There is, in many cases, a great want of clearness as to the doctrine set forth in the brazen altar and

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the molten sea. Hence it is that so many earnest Christians get into spiritual darkness and trouble as to the question of daily sins and daily defilement. They do not see the divine completeness of their purgation, by the blood of Christ, and they therefore entertain the idea that they must, on every fresh occasion, betake themselves, as at the beginning, to the brazen altar, as if they had never been washed at all.

This is a mistake. When once a man is purged by the blood of Jesus, he is clean for ever. If Christ has cleansed me, I am divinely and, therefore, eternally clean. I am introduced into a condition to which perfect cleanliness attaches, and I can never be out of it. I may lose the sense of it, the power of it, the enjoyment of it. Peter speaks of some forgetting that they were purged from their old sins. If sin be trifled with, and if *self* be not judged, it is hard to say what a Christian may come to. The Lord give us to walk softly and tenderly, before Him, every day, so that we may not come under the blinding and hardening influence of sin!

But, be it remembered, that the most effectual safeguard against the working and the influence of sin, is to have the heart established in grace, and to be clear in the apprehension of our standing in Christ. To be dark or doubtful as to these things is the sure way

of falling into Satan's snares. If I am seeking to live a holy life in order to establish my position before God, I shall either be propped up in pharisaism, or plunged into some horrible sin. But when I know that all my sins and all my defilements were judged and condemned in the cross, and that I am justified and accepted in a risen Christ, then I stand on the true ground of holiness. And, if I fail, as, alas! I do constantly, I can bring my failure to God, in confession and self-judgment, and know Him as faithful and just to forgive me my sins, and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness (1 John i. 9).

I judge myself on the ground of this, that Christ has been already judged before God for the very thing which I confess in His presence. If it were not so, my confession would be of no use. The only ground on which God can be "faithful and just to forgive and cleanse" is that Christ has already been judged on my behalf; and, most assuredly, God will not execute judgment twice for the same thing. True it is, blessedly true, I must confess, and judge myself, if I have gone wrong. A single sinful thought is sufficient to interrupt my communion. Every such thought must be judged, ere my communion can proceed. But it is as a purged one that I confess. I am no longer viewed as a sinner, having to do with God as a Judge. I am now

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in the position of a child having to do with God as a Father. He has made provision for my daily need, a provision which does not involve a denial of my place and portion, or an ignoring of the work of Christ; but a provision which tells me at once of the holiness and grace of Him who made it. I am not to ignore THE ALTAR because I need THE SEA, but I am to adore the grace of Him who provided both the one and the other.

III. Having said thus much on the material and contents of Solomon's molten sea, a very few words will suffice as to the OBJECT thereof. "The sea was for the priests to wash in." Thither came the priests, from day to day, to wash their *hands* and *feet*, so that they might always be in a fit condition to go through their priestly work. A striking type, this, of God's spiritual priests, that is to say, of all true believers whose *works* and *ways* need to be cleansed by the action of the Word. Both the brazen laver, in the tabernacle, and the brazen sea in the temple, foreshadowed that "washing of water by the Word" which Christ is now carrying on by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Christ in Person is acting up in heaven *for* us; and, by His Spirit and word, He is acting *in* us and *on* us. Thus, and only thus, are we enabled to get on. He restores us when we wander; He cleanses us from every soil;

He corrects our every error. He ever liveth for us. We are saved by His life. He maintains us in the full power and integrity of the position in which His precious blood has set us. All is secured in Him. "Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. v. 25-27).

And now one word as to the "oxen" which sustained the brazen sea. The ox is used in Scripture as the symbol of patient labour; and hence their significant place beneath the brazen sea. From whatever side the priest approached, he was met by the apt expression of patient labour. It mattered not how often or in what way he came, he could never exhaust the patience that was devoted to the work of cleansing him from all his defilements. What a precious figure! And we have the substance in Christ. We can never weary Him by our frequent coming. His patience is exhaustless. He will not tire until He presents us to Himself without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

May our hearts adore Him who is our Altar, our Laver, our Sacrifice, our Priest, our Advocate, our All!

Studies on the Book of Daniel.

II. CHAPTERS III.—V.

YOU will remember that the second chapter gave a general history of the period taken up by the whole of Daniel. This was revealed in a dream which Daniel recalled to Nebuchadnezzar, and of which he gave the interpretation.

It is the history of the times of the Gentiles. The four monarchies are brought before us, and their final dispersion by the judgment which the little stone (the kingdom of Christ, Christ Himself) will execute against the whole power of the Gentiles.

I would press again upon your attention, that after having destroyed the image, and not until then, the little stone became a great mountain, which filled the whole earth.

We stated that the four following chapters, that is, down to the end of the sixth, gave the character and conduct of these empires; and that instead of existing in dependence upon God, they are found in rebellion against Him, persecute His people, and exalt themselves against Him. The consequence is judgment.

In the third chapter we observe the first and principal sin, namely, IDOLATRY, as marking Gentile power, or the power which reigns during the times of the Gentiles.

In the succeeding chapter we observe that

these empires, instead of being subject to God, became beasts, that is, they lose their proper understanding, and act as beasts, as wild beasts, who cease to be in subjection (all men, in their true place, acknowledging their subjection to God), and who lose their understanding.

In the fifth chapter there is open impiety, and in the sixth the head of the empire exalts himself as God. Then follow details and circumstances of these empires, and their special relationship with the people of God.

The principles are given us in the first six chapters, and the details in the remaining six.

The first thing which the civil power sets up is idolatry, with the *object of establishing a religious unity*, but always in separating the people from the true God, and in putting something in His place. This circumstance serves as an occasion for trying the faithfulness of God's people, and the manner of it. Nebuchadnezzar commands the people, yea, even all the nations (for there were many under his dominion), to worship a statue. This is idolatry. (Consult Dan. iii. 4-7, for the words of the proclamation).

This is not an unusual way with Satan : he excites in the civil power the desire of unity, and there is no more powerful motive for the mass, than the influence of religion.* Satan

* I am not speaking of the truth which allies the con-

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impels the civil powers to establish unity, in order that everything under their authority should be well ordered and regulated. It was thus with Nebuchadnezzar; he sets up this image in the province of Babylon, and demands the assent of all the governors to its reception and worship.

I repeat, that such a religious act is a powerful means of influencing the mass, and of holding them in submission, united in one community, and bound to the civil power, which is the centre of such religion, or at all events supports it, and is identified with it. But whenever this is the case, there must be persecution. It may be more or less violent, *but persecution there will be.*

We see it in the present case. Nebuchadnezzar's alternative is, "Whoso falleth not down and worshipping shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace" (*v. 6*).

But there is yet another important consequence, as characteristic of Gentile power; I mean IMPIETY. Impiety not only refuses to respect the conscience, but what is worse, disallows the rights of God. Respect for the conscience is necessary enough, but the rights of God are infinitely more so. Observe the words of the king: "Who is that God that

science to God Himself, and therefore gives Him His proper supremacy.

shall deliver you out of my hands?'' (v. 15).

This is impiety, that principle of blasphemy which characterises the beast under all times and circumstances. His thought is of the power which *he* (the beast) possesses and holds. May we remember that it is God who has given it, and who overrules it. (Compare Habakkuk i. 11, 15-17).

Impiety, in forgetting the source of power, would arrogate to itself all its rights, in spite of God Himself. Now, if unity be maintained, when God's own rights are set aside, it immediately becomes idolatry; for we fall into the hands of the enemy when we are at a distance from the true God. And when the civil power endeavours to establish this unity, it puts aside, not only the rights of conscience, but the rights of God Himself.

This applies in an especial manner to the word of God. It is not only that man has a right to the word of God, as between him and his neighbour, but there is a more sacred right which is interfered with, if we deprive him of it; it is that God has the right to address what He will to the souls of men, and having addressed the Word to them, those who would deprive men of it derogate from the rights, and despise the authority of God, who has seen good to send it to them.

Suppose that I have servants, dependents to whom I send orders. Evidently, if any one

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hinders the servants from receiving these orders, he interferes, not only with their rights, but with mine. And this is the great question. God no doubt will make inquisition for all this. It is bad enough to violate the conscience of another man to satisfy one's own wickedness. But here Nebuchadnezzar entirely set aside the prerogative of the true God. And this is the principle of blasphemy which attaches to the Gentiles from the beginning. This was the first act of the head of gold; and such is the commencement of the power of the Gentiles, as presented to us in this chapter.

Upon the other hand, we have a touching picture in Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They are not at all in alarm or disquietude. "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter" (*v.* 16), is their reply to the king.

Does this confidence issue in their escape from the threatened penalty? By no means; they do not escape. God allows them to be put to the proof. He does not manifest Himself beforehand, but permits Nebuchadnezzar to fulfil his threats. They are cast into the furnace of fire, as Daniel was afterwards into the den of lions.

Whilst they would not obey the will of Nebuchadnezzar in violating their conscience, they offered no resistance to the

persecution, but as to their bodies, they submit entirely to his commands. And what is the consequence? They are loosed by the fire, and nothing is burnt but the chains with which the world had bound them. Moreover, they have the Son of God as their companion in the furnace.

The consequence of this interference of God in behalf of His poor servants was that a confession was forced from the civil power that their God was a God who delivered His people, and who condescended to attach His name to theirs. "Blessed," said the king, "be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him."

This is the position of a believer; he yields up his body to death, in order to serve none other than the true God. And more than this, dear friends, these men quit the furnace as witnesses to the power of God, their God, in the sight of all the world.

It will be the same with the faithful Jews at the end; they will be in a furnace of fire, but, at the same time, God will manifest Himself as their God. Christians have a higher hope, even if we are left to suffer death. Our hope is the hope of the glory of Him who has saved us, which we shall enjoy with Him, in the place where He is. But as to the Jews, they will be delivered from death by the power

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of God, and the true God will be acknowledged as their God.

The dream of the king, concerning that great tree which overshadowed all the earth, is related in chapter iv. These are his words : “ Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed : I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great ” (v. 10).

A great tree is always the symbol of a vast power on the earth : one tree, in this instance, sufficed, because, in fact, Nebuchadnezzar ruled over all the civilised or prophetic earth. There was, as it were, only one tree, “ The beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof.”

But what becomes of this delegated power ? It is used as an occasion of SELF-EXALTATION. God had confided this power to Nebuchadnezzar. He had blessed the king beyond measure in temporal things. As a consequence, pride takes possession of him, and that in spite of the warning given in the interpretation of the dream, and the express prediction of what was to come ; for the heart gets blinded by the things which it sees.

Here then we have not unity in religious externals, and a deliverance by the hand of God, but another character of Gentile power. It is this, that if God in His providence ele-

vates man, as a consequence man elevates himself. All is then lost.

The case is this. The throne of God had been taken from the Jews, and God puts the Gentiles into the place of power, in the person of Nebuchadnezzar; but man being guilty, and thus unable to observe any law, power cannot be committed to him without his lifting himself up against God who gave it. "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built" (v. 30).

He makes himself the centre, instead of God. He becomes a beast, and loses his reason entirely. A beast may be powerful, large, stronger than man, show much sagacity in its ways, but its look is downward; there is no exercise of conscience, and, as an inference, no real relationship to God.

The only ennobling principle in man is submission; that is, submission to God. It supposes a capacity to understand the will of God. Man bows to this will, and does homage to God, as to One who is superior to himself. From the moment that he says, "I have built," he loses his moral relationship to God. All true elevation is lost, and he becomes, in this, like one of the brute creation; for, I repeat it, a capacity to maintain a relationship with God is man's true superiority; but in this God must be GOD, and man must be in submission. Whenever this connection is

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lost, we descend to objects below ourselves, to which our affections attach themselves.

Nebuchadnezzar became the companion of beasts; he had lost his proper understanding. The effect of all this is given at the close of the chapter; for when he finds himself out, he uses such language as is ever heard in such a case: "At the same time my reason returned unto me," etc. (vv. 36, 37).

Behold the effect of God's judgments upon Gentile power. It is now no longer His interposition in behalf of a poor remnant of His people, as in the case of Shadrach, etc., but He brings down the pride of earthly power (v. 37). Man exalts himself against God, but exactly where his greatest strength is put forth, the Lord is above him (Exod. xviii. 11).

The great principle, then, of chapter iv. is the evil conduct of Gentile power. It exalts itself against God, becomes brutish in its understanding, and is judged.* Seven times pass over it, and at last it confesses God. In other words, the sovereign power of the Gentiles is deprived of all real understanding during the entire period of its imperial existence; after which it confesses God.

In chapter v. we have further details. King Belshazzar makes a feast, and commands "to

* Compare Habakkuk, whose prophecy is a kind of commentary on these two chapters.

bring the golden and silver vessels, which his father had taken out of the temple at Jerusalem, that the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines, might drink therein" (v. 2).

Here is a fresh aspect of Gentile failure. It is thorough impiety, and provokes the immediate destruction of the Babylonian power. This third form of impiety is still in connection with the Jews; for God, in relation to them, is always the God of the earth, who is seen exercising a government below. It is not a question of the heavenly hopes of the Church. God has delivered the Jews as captives into Gentile hands; He has delivered *His* altar, *His* sanctuary, all the exterior signs of His presence and glory, into the hands of the Gentiles (Lam. ii. 7).

The head of the Gentiles vaunts himself, and because God has thus delivered up the Jews, he glorifies his false gods, exalts them, and dishonours God. It will be the same with the king of Babylon at the end: open blasphemy.

It will not be the principle of idolatry only; neither will it be alone that pride of heart which says, "I have built"; these things will assuredly characterise him, for he is man: but it will be an immediate outrageous act which will dishonour the true God, that God who delivers His people into the

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hands of the wicked for their chastisement: It will be an act against the God of the Jews.

The instant he did this, there "came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall," these words, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin"; the king seeing the part of the hand which wrote, and his countenance being changed, . . . "Then Daniel answered and said before the king, . . . O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour, . . . and thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of *His* house before thee," etc. (*vv.* 5, 17-23).

Judgment falls on Belshazzar, and his kingdom is destroyed. "In that night was Belshazzar king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom" (*v.* 30).

Under the Law, man could not go in; God did not come out. Now He has come out, but humbling Himself, to bring grace. Then, the work of redemption being accomplished, He has gone in, and there is no longer a veil over the glory.

Balm for a Troubled Soul.

READ PSALM CIII.

THIS beauteous psalm takes in a very wide range of truth. It comprehends the past, the present, and the future. It celebrates Jehovah's redemption, in the past; Jehovah's tender care, in the present, and Jehovah's kingdom, in the future.

I. The first great point with the soul is to be fully established in the knowledge of redemption with its results. Till this is understood and enjoyed, there can be nothing right. There will always be doubt and difficulty, anxiety and hesitation. We must know where an accomplished redemption has set us, ere we can know or enjoy anything. It is when we have found rest in what God has wrought for us, that we can say, "Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits" (vv. 1, 2).

Worship is the fruit of a known and an enjoyed redemption. It is only as "clothed in garments of salvation," that we can tread Jehovah's courts with praise and thanksgiving.

Thus, in this lovely and well-known psalm, we have great fulness of expression in reference to the vital subject of redemption: "Who forgiveth *all* thine iniquities" (v. 3).

It is not "*some*" or "*many* of thine

iniquities.” This would never do. If so much as the very smallest iniquity, in thought, word, or act, were left unforgiven, we should be just as badly off, just as far from God, just as unfit for heaven, just as exposed to hell, as though the whole weight of our sins were yet upon us. Let the reader ponder this deeply. It does not say, “Who forgiveth thine iniquities previous to conversion.” There is no such notion as this in Scripture. When God forgives, He forgives like Himself. The source, the channel, the power, and the standard of forgiveness are all divine. When God cancels a man’s sins, He does so according to the measure in which Christ bore those sins. Now, Christ not only bore *some* or *many* of the believer’s sins, He bore them “*all*,” and, therefore, God forgives “*all*.” God’s forgiveness stretches to the length of Christ’s atonement; and Christ’s atonement stretches to the length of every one of the believer’s sins, past, present, and future. “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from *all* sin” (1 John i. 7).

There is, in many minds, a great want of clearness and soundness on this point. The doctrine of the cross is not understood, even in its bearing on the question of forgiveness. It is not sufficiently seen that the believer is introduced, by the cross of Christ, from a condition of absolute ruin and guilt into a con-

dition of absolute forgiveness and justification.

This is done by the cross. It is not by the cross AND a process of some kind or another. It is by the cross alone. Christ, having died under the full weight of His people's transgressions, was laid in the grave, and thus got to the end of all that pertained to their natural condition and all its liabilities; for no one can have any claim upon a dead man. When He lay in the tomb there was not a single claim of justice, law, sin, death, conscience, angel, man, or devil unanswered. He had discharged all, and that, too, as the representative of all who believe in His name. He died in their stead, and was buried; and there was the end of every thing human, every thing natural, every thing earthly.

What then?

"The God of peace" then appeared on the scene, and, in that special character, "brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant" (Heb. xiii. 20). It was due to the One who lay in yon silent tomb, that God should come and raise Him up, inasmuch as there was no one in heaven, on earth, or in hell, who had a single claim upon Him. Why, then, should He be left there? Why should the tomb be allowed to detain a Person who had gloriously discharged every liability, met every claim, and silenced every objector?

“It was not possible that He should be holden of it” (Acts ii. 24).

Hence, therefore, God “raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,” and, in so doing, He raised up all true believers also, “having forgiven them all trespasses” (Rom. iv. 34; Col. ii. 13). It does not say “some of their trespasses,” “many of their trespasses,” or “their trespasses previous to conversion.” Oh! no; the Holy Ghost could only speak according to the measure of the love of God, and according to the value of the blood of Christ. He could not speak according to our meagre thoughts, feeble apprehensions, and shallow experiences. He fixes His eye upon a risen Christ, and sees in Him the measure and the proof of the believer’s full and everlasting justification.

If a single sin had been unatoned for, the grave would have held fast our Surety. But, blessed be God, all was done, and I see the proof of this on the throne of God, for when Christ had “by Himself purged our sins,” He “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. i. 3), and He is now the perfect definition of the believer.

The soul that simply and heartily believes on the name of the Son of God, is in Christ, accepted in Him, and one with Him; so that it is a grand mistake to talk of some of our sins being forgiven, or of our being forgiven up

to a certain time, or for a certain period. All who speak thus have yet to learn the true ground and character of divine forgiveness. They know not the gospel; they know not the peace-giving power of the blood. They have yet to learn the force and real meaning of the words, "Who forgiveth ALL thine iniquities."

The believer is just forgiven according to the perfectness of Christ's atoning work. If you want to know the extent of a believer's forgiveness, you have only to enquire the extent of Christ's sacrifice, for as is the one, so is the other. There cannot be a shade of difference. If any of a believer's sins are unforgiven, then some of Christ's work remains undone. But He said, "*It is finished,*" and therefore all the believer's sins are forgiven. This is a resting-place for an awakened conscience, a balm for a troubled soul, peace for an anxious heart. He "forgiveth all thine iniquities." And again, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us" (v. 12). He has put our sins as far away as the death of Christ could put them; and He has brought us as nigh as a risen Christ could bring us.

II. All being thus settled, as regards "our iniquities" and "our transgressions," we are brought into a position in which we can enjoy the tender love and care of God as a Father: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the

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Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust" (vv. 13, 14). Though standing in all the glorious results of accomplished redemption we are in ourselves poor feeble creatures, needing the constant care and tender mercy of One who has a father's heart. And this we have in all its perfectness. True, the title of God as "Father" was not revealed when this psalm was penned. It was reserved for the special ministry of "the Son" to *declare* "the Father." Still, the father's heart was the touching model. "Like as a father pitieth his children."

It is the Christian's privilege to feed upon the tender love and sympathy of a Father's heart; to walk in the light of a Father's countenance; to be guided by the expression of a Father's eye; to lean on the strength of a Father's arm. We often forget this. We not only fail to see where the blood of Christ has put our sins, but also where that blood has brought our souls. We are brought to God. We have not to wait till we die to get to God. We are brought to Him now; and therefore we ought to walk with Him, lean on Him, joy in Him, look to Him, continually.

If God has a Father's heart, then surely His children ought to know that; and if they know it they should be delighting in the changeless love of that heart, instead of being occupied

with the dark depths of their own. If I am brought to God, it is that I may be done with myself, and walk on with Him. It is no sign of true holiness or true humility to be dwelling on one's badness, to be writing hard things, or uttering hard speeches against oneself. The really holy, humble man is he who is not thinking about himself at all, but who is enjoying God. A man is not in sound health who is continually talking about his pains, aches, and infirmities. The best way to show that I am in good health is to get on with my work, and never allude to myself, good or bad.

"As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more" (*vv.* 15, 16). Of what use is it to be occupied with that which is "as grass," or "as a flower of the field"? How much better to delight ourselves in "the mercy of the LORD," which, like a golden chain, stretches "from everlasting to everlasting"! (*v.* 17). Precious thought! You may travel back into the unfathomed depths of eternity, and there you find "the mercy of the LORD"; and you may travel onward into the countless ages of eternity yet to come, and there you find "the mercy of the LORD." Nothing was before it, and nothing can be after it. It is infinite. The current of mercy, deep and wide, flows down from the

bosom of God, and thirsty souls may drink thereat, and be eternally satisfied.

III. Having thus glanced at Jehovah's redeeming mercy, and Jehovah's tender care, the picture would be incomplete did we not dwell, for a moment, on Jehovah's coming kingdom. "The LORD hath prepared His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom ruleth over all" (v. 19). For this we wait, in the soul-sustaining assurance that "the time is short" (1 Cor. vii. 29). "The night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Rom. xiii. 12). "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. x. 37). "The king's son shall reign, as the LORD hath said" (2 Chron. xxiii. 3).

The One who was nailed to the cross shall ere long take His place on the throne, as Lord of all creation. The One who wore the crown of thorns shall ere long appear with a diadem of glory. The One whose right hand bore the reed which impious mockery placed therein shall ere long wield the royal sceptre, to the glory of God and the joy of all created intelligences.

For this a groaning creation waits; for this the Church of God waits. We "wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. i. 10). Having found peace through the blood of His cross, and enjoying day by day His tender care and gracious provision, there is just one thing we

want; we want to "see Him as He is," for then we shall be like Him (1 John iii. 2). We want to gaze on that "countenance transcendent," that "life-creating sun." This will fill the cup. All the ingredients will then be in : perfect redemption ; gracious providence ; cloudless and everlasting glory ! "Come, Lord Jesus." A waiting Church, a groaning creation, and Israel's scattered tribes, all call aloud for Thee. May it please Thee speedily to accomplish the number of Thine elect, and hasten Thy kingdom !

There is *moral* value in learning truths through the Psalms. For there is a tendency in us to apprehend truth as an object or a proposition by the mind, and then just to talk about it. But in the Psalms, truth is delivered in company with the passions of the soul. The Psalms are, if I may so speak, the heart of the divine volume. They lie in the midst of the body ; and there the pulses are felt ; there the blood emanates and returns ; there the affections of the renewed man find their seat and exercise. And it is safe to be there at times, yea, and to use other scriptures according to the manner learnt and practised there.

The Book of Experience.

(PHILIPPIANS).

IV.

WHEN *we* talk of coming down, we mean the getting rid of pride in us. It is just the thing the Christian learns, and just the thing the flesh dislikes. Moses killed the Egyptian through the remains of court pride. Satan says, I cannot allow this; you must take the place out and out, or you cannot have it. The world's weapons will not do to fight God's battles with. Moses runs away, and is forty years keeping sheep instead of fighting. Then when God sends him he cannot go; the extreme of one side and the extreme of the other. Our part in detail is always to wait till God puts us up higher, like the man who took the low place, to whom it was said, "Friend, go up higher" (Luke xiv. 10). If we are content with the low place, we shall miss ten thousand rebuffs we should otherwise have.

Now there comes a passage which often troubles people, but needlessly, as we shall see: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do His good pleasure" (vv. 12, 13).

The mistake people make is putting God's working and our working in contrast. It is not so. The contrast is between Paul and themselves. In losing Paul they had not lost

God, who was working. He says, Do it, now that I am absent, for yourselves. Paul had been doing for them. He had met the wiles of Satan for them in apostolic blessing; his spirit of wisdom had told them what to do. Now he says, My absence does not alter the present power of grace; God works in you Himself.

“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” They were now to meet the enemy without Paul in the front to lead them on. Never mind, he says, “work out your own salvation.” I go always down, Himself working in me.

The second chapter is the pattern of Christ’s lowly walk, the Lord coming down, and always so to the end. The third, the power and energy of life with Christ, and glory its object. The effect is to produce exactly the character of Christ: “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life” (vv. 15, 16).

That is exactly the description of Christ Himself. Take every member of that sentence, and you will see it is Christ. He was all that; and that is just what you are to be.

How completely self is put down, God graciously working in us! And the effect is exactly what Christ was, constant self-humiliation, and so blameless and harmless, the Son of God without rebuke, the expression of divine grace when there was no will or human exaltation, but the contrary. We see the perfect beauty and blessedness of it. It is not the energy, as in the next chapter; it is the character of the obedience. Wherever the path of obedience led He went. Having taken the form of a servant, His perfection was to obey.

Look what was the effect produced on a creature doing his own will as Adam. What an awful spectacle for angels, the ruin and destruction of God's glory in the world! But, when we had destroyed God's glory, Christ comes, and God is a debtor to man for His glory (not to us, I need not say) just as He had been a debtor to man for His dishonour; for by the cross God was glorified in His very nature. Christ comes, and we see what sin was, deliberate enmity against God's goodness; but all that God is was glorified; His majesty maintained, and all His truth comes out; His righteousness against sin; His perfect love. But the putting away of our sins was a small part of the glory of the cross; it is the foundation of eternal glory and blessedness.

Not only does Christ take the form of a

servant, but He will never give it up. As never the place of man will be given up, so He will never give up its true place before God. He took upon Him the form of a man, and served His time on earth, as we have in the figure of the Hebrew servant in the twenty-first chapter of Exodus, and could have gone out free as man, could have had twelve legions of angels to deliver Him. But He did not. The ear of the servant was bored with an awl to the door when he would not go out free, because he loved his master, his wife, and his children, and he became a servant *for ever*. And that is what Christ is.

In the thirteenth chapter of John, when the blessed Lord was going to glory, we should have said there is an end of service. It is not so. He gets up from where He was sitting among them as a companion, He gets up, and washes their feet; and that is what He is doing now. He says, I cannot stay with you here, but I will not give you up; you must now have part with me where I am going. If I do not make you clean enough for heaven, you cannot have part with me there. So this He does by keeping our feet clean. In the twelfth chapter of Luke we learn that He still continues the service in glory: "He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth, and serve them." There we get His service in

glory. It is His glory in love, though in the form of service. Not only heaven's table for us, but Christ Himself ministering it to us. He never gives up the service. Selfishness likes to be served, but love likes to serve; so Christ never gives up the service, for He never gives up the love. It is His love expressed in ministering that makes everything doubly blessed to us. When I am brought to God, in the spirit of my mind, I can go down like Christ.

Working out your own salvation with fear and trembling is not justification, and our place with God. Salvation in Philippians is always the final result in glory. What was the effect of redemption on Israel? Not to put them in Canaan, but to make them enter on a road through the wilderness. And where were they to get food? And there were enemies in their way, too. I am to make good my way, maintaining God's name and character, and the devil is trying to hinder me; that is why there is "fear and trembling." An Israelite in the wilderness never doubted as to whether he were in Egypt or not. If I find a doubting Christian, he does not yet know that he is redeemed. An Israelite might not gather manna, and would have nothing to eat that day, but he had no thought of being in Egypt. It was only eleven days' journey from Egypt to Canaan, as we get in the first

chapter of Deuteronomy ; but they were forty years journeying before they got to the plains of Moab, except the year they were at Sinai ; for they had no courage or faith to take hold.

And so Satan seeks to hinder now. You will not get to your homes to-night without the devil trying to take away the blessing you may have got here. The devil will try to get up pride in you, and thus not let you show out this character of Christ. If you knew that you were charged to carry this character of Christ through the world, and that Satan was trying to hinder you, you would count it a very serious thing. So Peter says, " If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning *here in fear* " (1 Pet. i. 17). Satan is trying to dirty your feet, or to get you to dishonour Christ in the most awful way. I am in conflict with Satan, the world, and self ; but I am in perfect peace with God. It is totally false to confound this working out our salvation with our relationship with God. That is all settled, and my confidence in God enables me to go on working.

Beloved brethren, how far are we doing that ? Redemption is complete. How far are our souls making nothing of ourselves, and looking to manifest what Christ was here ? It flows out naturally, if I am full of Christ.

THE BOOK OF EXPERIENCE.

III

I am not saying I must do this or that like Christ, though that sometimes, too, but, "Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John iii. 3).

You will find the spirit of this graciousness and considerateness running all through the chapter in its details; it all comes out most beautifully.

I would make one remark more; that it is exceedingly blessed to see all this going on when the Church was already sunk away into ruin. "All seek their own," he says in this very epistle, and that already. How little we realize its real state when we speak of "the primitive church"! There it is, *all seeking their own*; and it was a great deal worse after. I refer to it as a matter of comfort, for he exhorts them to this path in spite of the condition around. As it was when Elijah went up to heaven, without dying, at the very time when he could find none but himself who had not bowed the knee to Baal, though God knew where to find them. There were brighter things, too, in David than there ever were in Solomon. He goes to Gibeon, to sacrifice where the ark was not (1 Kings iii. 4); not teaching to sing at the ark on Zion, "His mercy endureth for ever"; and had never a heart which God could string to play such tunes about Christ as He did in David.

It tells us never to be discouraged; to rejoice in all good. If we find that all seek their own we must only be the more like Christ ourselves. It is a comfort the Head cannot fail, though the members do. You cannot put me in a place in which Christ is not sufficient in full power and grace. All we want is to find ourselves lowly at His feet, He the Counsellor of our hearts. If we are with God in light we know our own nothingness; and if "all seek their own," His grace and blessedness come out the more.

The Lord give us to look to Him as our life and strength.

We do not sufficiently apprehend that the things which are not seen are revealed to us; that which eye has not seen, which ear has not heard, which has not entered into the heart of man, which God has prepared for them that love Him: God has (1) *revealed* these things to us by His Spirit (2) *communicated* them in words which the Holy Spirit has taught; and (3) these things are *discerned* by the Spirit. These are the three steps in the knowledge of divine things. (See 1 Cor. ii. 9-14).

The Confederacies of Men, and the Judgments of God.

I.

SCRIPTURE contemplates *hostile* associations of men and of nations. Isaiah vii., viii., was the era of one, and the prophecy of another. Joel iii. tells of "multitudes, multitudes," gathered together in the day of Jerusalem's final sorrow. Psalm lxxxiii. anticipates a confederacy against the Israel of God; and "Gog" is the witness of a host of nations leagued in infidel defiance of the Lord.

But Scripture also contemplates *civil* or *worldly* associations; and it is our business to watch their spirit, their purpose, and their working, awful indeed as they are in forming the character and history of the world, and in urging it on its way to meet the judgment of God. It was confederacy of this sort which was among the descendants of Noah. The one speech and the one language of the children of men in that day led them to judge that they were strong, and that by a little skill and effort they might wax still stronger, even to independency of God. The material under their hand in the plain of Shinar promised very fair. They were all of one language, and were journeying in one direction. They were invited by favourable circumstances (*providences*, as they might say), and they would make a common effort, and try the in-

dustrial resources of nature. Things looked well for progress. With a little skill and diligence of their own, the fruitful plain would yield them brick and mortar, and they might accomplish much. And why should they not use the resources of nature, and exercise their own capabilities? Why should they not try what "the raw material," by man's "art and manufacture," would lead to, and do for them?

This was the language of the children of men in Genesis xi. Whether God would have it thus or not, they never thought of waiting to consider. He was not before them. They did their own pleasure. They built a city and a tower, that both name and security, glory and strength, might be theirs.

Thus was it in those early days. In other and very distant days, in the days of the Saviour, it was the same; with this aggravating circumstance, that confederacies then formed themselves of strange, discordant elements, because of the working of the natural enmity of the heart to God; let that heart be disciplined or trained as it may be, whether in a Jewish or Gentile school. In that enmity, the Jew and the Gentile are found together; and so are the Pharisee and the Sadducee, the men of different politics and of different sects. *The world combined these diverse materials against an unworldly Jesus.* This was the

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secret of their confederacy. The Pharisee and the Sadducee were men of different thoughts altogether, considered simply in themselves; but the world can be their common object in resistance of Christ. This is seen in Matthew xvi. 1-5. "Show us a sign from heaven," they come together and say to Him. That is, they challenge the Lord to accredit Himself in some way that the world could appreciate; or that otherwise they would reject Him by common consent.

This is to be laid to heart. The world has power to combine very different elements when an *unworldly* Christ stands out as a common enemy. Herod and Pilate were made friends together. There may be the secular and the ecclesiastical, even the infidel and the superstitious; but let an *unworldly* Christ appear, and He will be challenged as the object of common enmity. A heavenly Stranger, sojourning on earth for a time, is resented as a trespasser by both; and however else they may differ, they can confederate, and act together against Him. God, such as man's heart or man's religion gives him, man will accept; but the true God, whose image Jesus is, will never do for him.

All this is for the present consideration of our souls. For *the world* is becoming a *common object* in these days of ours. All are aiding its advancement, and the development

of its capabilities, and the multiplying of its desirable and delectable things; and such a generation as this may easily become the material of a confederacy, or common association against the unworldly Jesus and the Church of God.

Strange coalition of this kind is presented to us by the Lord Himself in Luke xi.

It is a solemn word of warning; and, I may add, a *seasonable* word, just in this present day.

The unclean spirit had been the original tenant of this leprous house. In due time he left it, seeking other scenes of action. But after a while he returns, and finds his old house in a new condition. His absence, the absence of an unclean spirit, had left it open to *other* influences; and, accordingly, on his return he finds it "swept and garnished." This, however, does not disappoint him. He rather deems it to be more suited to his purpose than ever. And it is in this fact, this solemn, awful fact, that I judge there is something for our careful and special observation at this time, and for this generation.

This leprous house changed its style or condition, but not its owner, nor its fitness to answer the purposes of its owner. If the unclean spirit had been disappointed in his wanderings, he is not so on his return to his old dwelling. So far otherwise is it, that he

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goes to gather seven other spirits, more wicked than himself, and they all make entrance into the house, more thoroughly than ever to accomplish its ruin.

And they succeed. The last state of it is worse than the first.

This is a picture, indeed, of strange, unexpected confederacies. An *unclean* spirit enters a *swept* house, associating with himself seven *other* spirits. This is a strange coalition. Things are found together in this house which naturally suited neither the house itself nor each other. But still, there they are in company, and dwell and work together. An *unclean* spirit, with seven *other* spirits, in a *swept and garnished* house!

Is this Christendom in her last state? Is it to come to this? Is it not, I rather ask, on its way to this already? Are there not symptoms, somewhat too plain to be mistaken, of such strange, unnatural alliances, all around us? Are not elements in themselves repulsive beginning to try their capability of combining? Is not "alliance" the favourite watchword of the day? Is not the unclean spirit of darker, earlier days making fresh entrance into a reformed, and swept, and ornamented house? Is not this the Christendom of the present hour? Are not the premonitions of the Divine Prophet being realised before us and around us at this moment?

The Anointed One.

READ PROV. VIII. 22-31.

I

THE divine counsels were all laid in Christ, before the foundation of the world. The Son of the bosom was brought out in counsel then; and all the purposes of God had their foundation in Him, in the person He was pre-ordained to be, and the place He was pre-appointed to fill.* We read this in Proverbs viii.

“The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, was I brought forth, while as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens I was there, when He set a compass upon the face of the depth, when He established the clouds above, when He strengthened the fountains of the deep, when He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment, when He appointed the foundations of the earth, then

* When the fulness of time came, as we know, the Son assumed flesh: perfect God and perfect man, without confusion of the natures, yet in the unity of the one Person; and as the Christ He went through His blessed, wondrous history in life, death, resurrection and glory.

I was by Him (as) One brought up (with Him), and I was daily (His) delight, rejoicing always before Him, rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth, and My delights were with the sons of men."

What a message does this scripture bring to us from the eternal ages! It tells us of those infinite ages which were before the Creation, in ways most wondrous and excellent. How exact and special is Wisdom's account of herself in that passage! The chief part of the dust of the world was not then made, when all was planned and settled in Christ. No work of His hand had God to survey then. No evening or morning had then given Him succeeding periods for delight and refreshment, as the good and holy work advanced to its perfection.

But He had Christ in counsel before Him, His first thought, and the foundation of all His thoughts. The things of creation and redemption, the things of Providence and grace, heavenly purposes and earthly purposes, things nearer at hand or further off, all had respect to Him. "The Lord possessed me," says Wisdom, "in the beginning of His way."

In this beautiful, mysterious passage, there are two things which specially engage my mind at this time: that Christ was, "by Him, as One brought up with Him," and again,

that He was also "His delight." That is, He was ever *at hand*, so to speak, and ever *a joy*. He was God's *resource* and God's *object*.

These two things are strongly marked here; and as we pass down the current of Scripture, we find this is to be so. Let what may arise, Christ is ever *by* God, ready to be used by Him *at once*, and then used by Him with *delight*. At creation, or in Eden, among the patriarchs, under the law, in the days of the kings, and by the voices of the prophets, as well as after His manifestation in flesh, and then in the light of the Holy Ghost through the apostles, that is, from the opening to the close of the volume, this is seen. Let man be in innocency, or sold under sin, whether the elect be in simple family order, or in the organised system of a nation, or in the unity of a mystic body, whether they be ruled or instructed, under government or under revelation, Christ is God's great ordinance.

It may be that we, through unbelief and blindness of heart, get but a dim sight of Him at times. God sees Him clearly and at all times, under all changes and conditions. And this is what I would now contemplate for a little while, in some of the leading instances of it.

We know that, at the Creation, without Him was not anything made that was made.

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As soon as sin enters, He comes forth *at once*. He is the burden of the first promise which was made immediately upon the entrance and conviction of sin. He is, as we know, the bruised, victorious Seed of the woman. The Lord God brings Him forth at once, as One already provided in counsel, or, as our scripture speaks, "As One brought up with Him," as One that was ".by Him."

Sin, the great occasion for the manifestation of God and His grace, and His secrets, had come in, and Christ at once comes forth. Faith in Adam receives Him. With what measure of light we may not be able to say. But as soon as believing Adam comes out from his guilty covert at the bidding of the Seed of the woman now revealed to him, the Lord God uses Christ for him with *delight*.

The action of clothing him with the coat of skin tells us this. There was freedom and fervency in that action. It was done without reserve, and by the Lord's own hand. The coat of skin was first made by Him, and then by Him put on the naked Adam; all this bespeaking His delight in Christ, using Him, and using Him with readiness of heart, for "the sons of men" (as our scripture speaks).

The Lord God wrought in a ruined world now, as He had lately wrought for six days in an unstained creation. And, if the eternal purpose respecting Christ, the counsel of

grace laid in Him ere worlds began, had been the delight of God, so also was the manifestation of this purpose now, this earliest use and application of it. This delight fed itself in action and service, when the need arose, as surely as it had fed itself in thought and counsel in eternity.

So again, shortly after this first case of Adam, ABEL'S ALTAR AND LAMB speak the same truth. The sacrifice was to God a witness of Christ, and God had *immediate* respect to it. He answered that sacrifice *at once*, and evidently with *delight*. He had respect to Abel and to his offering. He pleads with Cain on the warrant and value of it, and would fain have had him, another sinner like Abel, serve at the same altar: all this still telling of the same purpose and joy, that His anointed was "by Him, as One brought up with Him," and "daily His delight," His equal and full delight one day as well as another, in the behalf of one sinner as well as of another, for Abel as well as for Adam.

NOAH'S ARK was just the same. Another ruin had broken forth. The end of all flesh was again before God. It was the wreck of a world a second time. But Christ was "by Him" still. "Make thee an ark of gopher-wood," said the Lord to Noah, and that ark was Christ. And when Noah pleaded Christ, in other words prepared an ark to the saving

of his house, "The Lord God shut him in," and then "the ark went upon the face of the waters." His own hand, which before had made the coat for Adam, now sheltered "the sons of men" in that sanctuary which grace had provided. And this action, this shutting of all the ransomed in that sure place by the hand of God Himself, again tells of the "delight" with which He used His Anointed for us, which He tasted when His Christ was thus trusted and pleaded by sinners.

And NOAH'S ALTAR afterwards was just what his ark had thus already been. That altar and the victim upon it was Christ. Noah took of every clean beast and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. I say not how far he discovered the Christ of God in all this. In his measure I surely believe he did. The woman's Seed promised to Adam, bruised yet victorious, was, I judge, before him, and so was Abel's lamb. But be this so, whether dimly or brightly as to Noah, as to the Lord God Himself, the One whom "He had possessed in the beginning of His way, before His works of old," was assuredly before Him; and in the virtue of His name, and of the preciousness of His blood, He said in His heart, "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake."

The Lord God "said in His heart." What words! What a witness of the profound and

perfect satisfaction God was taking in Christ, the counselled, covenanted foundation of all His purposes about "the sons of men," the treasury of all His riches and secrets of eternal, saving mercies!

And the BOW IN THE CLOUD speaks the same language. In the fine glowing style of that beautiful token, God seems, as with His whole heart and His whole soul, to pledge security to the creation. But this was all in His Anointed, for it was the blood of Noah's altar which prevailed thus to keep the token of the covenant, the pledge of the earth's security, ever under the eye of the Lord. That precious blood had drawn forth the deep, delighted utterance of His heart, as we saw, and now this token shall draw His eye in its own direction continually. The cloud big with judgment may come, but the bow shall ride upon it, and control it, and give it an appointed measure: "Here shall thy proud waves be stayed." The eye of Him who sits above all water-floods shall look upon the bow; and another witness is given, that time makes no change, successive seed-times and harvests shall go on while the earth remains; for Christ is still "by Him," and always "His delight," His predestined salvation and gift of grace, in behalf of "the sons of men."

As we still pursue our way through Scripture, or along the path of God, we still find

the same mystery; we still find Christ "by Him" and also "His delight."

In the day of the call of Abram, the world was in the darkness and abomination of idols. The family of Terah served them (Josh. xxiv. 2). Another mighty moral ruin was spreading itself everywhere. As disobedience had defiled the garden of Eden, and self-will and violence had corrupted all in the world before the Flood, so now, these idol abominations marked the apostasy of even the family of Shem; for Terah was of that line. But Abram is separated. Like Noah, he found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He was a chosen one, a vessel of mercy. Great promises are made to him; but of them all, Christ is the ground and title. "In thee," says the God of glory to him, when He called him out, "in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed"; and his blessing, as we know from the divine teaching of Gal. iii., is through faith in Christ Jesus. In that word to Abram, the gospel was preached to Abram, the gospel of Christ, in whom is all our blessing.

How simple this is! Christ, and Christ only, is still before God, at His hand or "by Him" for use in the behalf of "the sons of men," produced without delay or effort, and given to their rising and recurring necessities. And the Lord God calling out Abram to look on the stars and see if he could number them,

when Christ was about to be revealed to him, was an action which bespoke the delight which God took in using His Anointed for him. There was fervency in the action, a style about it that tells of secret joy, well marking or accompanying that moment when God was revealing Christ to the faith of His elect.

And this, in this other and later day, this same mystery re-appears. In the day of the fall of Adam, in the apostasy and doom of the antediluvian world, and now in the hour of the call of Abram from amid the over-spreading of abominations, Christ known in eternal counsels, is brought forth, and that with delight for "the sons of men."

The Gospel of John.

The more we examine the Gospel of John, the more we shall see One who speaks and acts as a divine Person, one with the Father, alone could do, but yet always as One who has taken the place of a servant, and takes nothing to Himself, but receives all from His Father. "I have glorified Thee": "now glorify Me." What language of equality of nature and love! But He does not say, And now I will glorify Myself. He has taken the place of Man to receive all, though it be a glory He had with the Father before the world was. This is of exquisite beauty.

Studies on the Book of Daniel.

III. CHAPTER VI.

IN this chapter we find the fourth principle of evil which existed among the Gentiles, and which completes the whole. It is not only an impiety which dishonours God, but it is *man* who exalts himself; he puts himself in the place of *God Himself*.

The satraps go to the king, and say, "King Darius, live for ever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors and the princes, the counsellors and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever," etc. (*vv. 6, 7*).

In short, it is proposed that no one should be confessed as God, and no request made to any, but to Darius himself. It will be thus with the Wicked one, "who opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. ii. 4).

Again, it is said of him, "The king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he

regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all" (Dan. xi. 36, 37).

It is then that he is destroyed. This is the utmost limit of wickedness: an exalting of himself against God, a desire to supplant Him on the earth. Notwithstanding, in every case, where the faithful have been put to the proof, whether by Nebuchadnezzar or Darius, the result has been the humiliation of the power of the Gentles, which, having beforetime opposed, now confesses God.

It is thus with Darius: "I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for *He is the living God, and stedfast for ever; and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall be even unto the end*" (v. 26).

There is a difference of expression to be noticed here. The confession of Nebuchadnezzar is to this effect, that the God of heaven is the God of the Jews; that is, of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; and that no God can deliver like Him. Here also we have the God of Daniel, and, therefore, of the Jews; but He is also "the living God, and stedfast for ever; and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall be even unto the end": all of which will be ushered in at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

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and the establishment of His kingdom, which will have no end.

Again, Darius says, "He delivereth and rescueth, and He worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions" (v. 27).

It is the deliverance of the Jews, that is, of a remnant, which is the public manifestation on the earth, and which gives occasion to the confession of the Gentiles that God is the true God. They will say, as Jethro said to Moses, "Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods" (Exod. xviii. 11).

The true God is, then, acknowledged by the judgments which He executes on those who exalt themselves against Him; and by the deliverance of His people the Jews. The first of these judgments (for it is one), is that the chief of the Gentiles loses all understanding as to the ways of God; and the second is the entire destruction of this king of Babylon, on the very night in which he dishonours God.

This Gentile history is sad, though glorious in its results, by the manifestation of God for His people. In chapter iii. we see idolatry, the establishment of unity in idolatry by the arm of the civil power, which to all appearances is mistress, whilst really she is the slave of Satan. Chapter iv. is the history of man's exaltation of himself. Chapter v. open impiety against the Eternal; and, finally, chapter

vi. the head of the Gentiles putting himself in the place of God.

In all these cases we find the people of God entirely submissive to the temporal power of these kings; for their power came from God. This is the principle of a Christian: he submits. The use which these established powers make of the authority which God has given them, does not alter the source of this power. Jesus acknowledged that the power of Pontius Pilate, by which that governor condemned Him, came from God: when His hour was come, He submitted Himself to that which the authority, ordained of God, commanded.

It is evident, from the use which the Gentiles make of their power, in turning it against God, that they are under the direction of Satan: while holding their power from the One, they make use of it for the other.

What course does the child of God pursue? He does not maintain himself by leaning upon the civil power; he acts according to his conscience, and seeks only the will of God; at the same time he submits; and in so doing yields up his body; for his conscience is submissive to no one but the Lord; he cannot serve two masters.

Shadrach and his friends undergo their punishment; but they refuse to do what the king, in the exercise of his power, wishes them to do. They do not seek to turn away the

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king from his plans; they are threatened and punished by Nebuchadnezzar; but they are faithful to their God, and He delivers them. They leave their case with Him: "He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king: but if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods" (iii. 17, 18).

There is yet another remark; it is that even when man is unfaithful (as were the Jews), God never loses His rights. He may confer power on the Gentiles for a time; but He never loses His rights; and, as a consequence, He never abandons His people; as He said unto Pharaoh, "Let My people go" (Exod. ix. 13). The people of Israel were a subject of controversy between Pharaoh and God. Christians have other hopes; but the principle is always true. Daniel, who had faith, spoke as faith always does; for it sees as God sees. It is true that God had said, "It is no longer My people" (Hos. i. 9); but Daniel speaks always of Israel as of the people of God; because faith confesses all the rights of God. If a Jew had faith in the heart, God recognised him, *in spite of his circumstances*; and this is very precious.

It is impossible, in spite of all Satan can do in the Church of God, that he could put us into a position where God cannot recognise faith; otherwise God would lose His rights.

In the ensuing lecture, it will be needful to

enter into details. An acquaintance with the leading features of Gentile power, from Nebuchadnezzar to the end, is of the utmost importance for understanding the things of God. For although we, as Christians, have another hope, even a heavenly, yet we are in the times of the Gentiles; and the nearer we approach the end, the more Israel will come into prominence; and it is easy to see, by their present condition, that events are leading rapidly to a termination; and the more Israel becomes important, the more it behoves us to understand the thoughts of God concerning that people.

We have seen now, in its general traits, the history of the Gentile power from Nebuchadnezzar; that is, from the ruin of Jerusalem, till the time the Lord shall come and destroy the impious and apostate power; for what we have read shows us the establishment of the kingdom of God on the ruins of the folly and impiety of man.

In the next lecture we shall have nothing more of the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar, etc.; but we shall be occupied with the revelations made to Daniel himself. It is he who represented the faithful remnant of the Jews, and it is he who interprets that which others received, and to him are confided the details of those things which relate to the people of God.

There is yet another remark to make before

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concluding this preface : it is, that these communications *from God* should have the effect of separating us entirely from this world, in making us understand, that, as to this world, God sees none else, so to speak, than Jews or these apostate Gentiles. I am not speaking of Christians (He sees them after another manner), but of external power. When it is a question of Christians, then the circumstances are beyond this world. Jesus Christ says, "Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John xv. 19, xvii. 14, 16). It should be thus in the purposes of daily Christian activity into which the energy of love leads us. As to those within, we train each other, not for Jewish hopes, but for the place which Jesus occupies, and for those mansions in His Father's house which He went to prepare for us. As for our hopes, the end which we propose to ourselves, until God shall execute His judgments, it is not a hope that the world can be improved; for we see from the Word that, until this judgment falls, the course of the world runs on in impiety and exaltation of man, which very wickedness brings down the judgment of God.

Such is the world in which we live, according to God's description of it; but He has revealed to us also the things of heaven. He has revealed to us Him whom the world rejected, and who is gone into heaven; so that

we have an object and motives which ought to govern us entirely, and direct our walk; in order that by these motives presented to the heart, and with which the new man occupies himself, we should live and walk by the Spirit, in a world to ourselves, the heavenly things into which Christ is entered, the things which are above, where He sits. As regards the earth, it is "the world *to come*, whereof we speak": whilst, on the other hand, by the warnings which God has given us here, by the details with which He has furnished us, He would detach us, and that with an enlightened mind, from the world in which we sojourn as strangers and pilgrims.

It is sad with what ease the world attaches itself to our hearts; I do not say that our hearts attach themselves to the world now, although that may follow soon as a consequence, but that the world attaches itself to our hearts.

Dear friends, if a man is covetous, this is the world. If a man is over diligent in affairs, he is occupied with the world, he lives in it, so to speak. It is extremely difficult for us to keep clear of the general principles of the world. It varies in its forms: in one it is avarice, in another it is a good position in society, in another it is an active mind, which engages itself in politics. But this world below, dear friends, is not our world; we have

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another, of which Christ will be the chief, the centre, and the joy. Our conversation is in heaven (Phil. iii. 20). And may God grant that in all the details of life, in our every-day circumstances, this separation may be realized and manifested, and that we may be able to say, "Our life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3). The treasure, the life, and the joy of all those souls who have understood what happiness it is to be with Him, is there where He is.

Which is happier, to be like water in a still place never moved, or to be poured from vessel to vessel, finding it all Christ, and Christ, and Christ? The Lord does not let the prospect of glory into the soul when any are settled on their lees, but when they are poured from vessel to vessel. He chooses the time of trial as a time to give the sweetest taste of His love. When in a time of difficulty, faith may break down, but Christ will not. He sees when the storm comes, and makes that the time to come to us, walking on the waters; and at His word the storm subsides in a moment.

The Book of Experience.

(PHILIPPIANS).

V. CHAPTER III.

We found the apostle in the previous chapter bringing our hearts in contact with the Lord Jesus giving up His divine glory on high, taking the form of a servant, and going down; and then as Man highly exalted. That is exactly what we are to do; we are to have the same mind.

He has closed, then, in the previous chapter, the state and condition of soul we are to be in, and he now looks before; onward to the glory. The things before will keep the soul from being hindered; Christ set before the soul so as to take complete possession of it. It is not the character of graciousness in the life here, and considerateness for others, as in the foregoing chapter, which looked at Christ emptying Himself of glory, and humbling Himself; but the energy of divine life which presses forward to the goal.

Sometimes we see a want of energy where there is loveliness of character; or a great deal of energy, on the other hand, when there is a want of softness and of considerateness for others. But in the things of God you must get the whole that any part may be right. Satan imitates part, but you never get the whole in what he imitates.

When you get both, when Christ is every-

thing, it delivers from selfishness, and shows itself in seeking the good of others; but it will not give way when giving up Christ is in question. I do not mean giving Him up as to the soul's salvation, but in our path here. So the apostle says, "Add . . . to brotherly kindness charity" (2 Peter i. 7); for if God is not brought in we have not power to walk according to Him in graciousness. Christ has gone up, and is everything to us; He is before us as an object; and we cannot give Him up to please the flesh; but we can look for power to press on.

He then gives the starting-point in rejoicing in the Lord: "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord" (v. 1). The effect of the ending of self is that I rejoice always; and, if I rejoice always, it is in the Lord that I rejoice. Nothing separates from the love, we know; but there is danger when we are in the enjoyment of present blessing; we are apt to rest in the blessing, and not feel dependent on the Blessor. David said, "I shall never be moved. Lord, by Thy favour Thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: Thou didst hide Thy face, and I was troubled" (Ps. xxx. 7). When his mountain was gone he found he had been trusting in his mountain, and not in the Lord. When he says, "The Lord is my Shepherd," there was no being moved, for he was resting in the Lord

Himself. If the heart is emptied of self it does rest in the Lord; but the heart is so treacherous that a person experiencing great joy as a Christian often gets a fall after it, because of having got away from the place of dependence. He is restored again, we know, as in that Psalm: "He restoreth my soul" (Ps. xxiii.)

Here Paul was just going to be tried for his life. He had been in prison four years, two of them chained to heathen soldiers, and he says he knew how to be full and to be hungry, how to abound and to suffer need (iv. 12). Pains and sorrows, and joys and comforts, he had gone through all; and he was not discouraged as a man might be who was obliged to be with brutal, uncultivated men, and in constant suffering chained to a soldier, and four years in prison.

And that was not all; he might have said, I am in prison, and cannot do the Lord's work. No, he is with the Lord, and he says, "This shall turn to my salvation" (i. 19). Even when Christ was preached of contention, he could say, "I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (i. 18). When we are weaned from everything we are cast on the Lord, and able to rejoice in the Lord, and that is when He leads us.

But what an object, what an energy-producing object there was in the Lord before

him ! He looks at everything beyond the wilderness, he a traveller across it, and on the way, always rejoicing in the Lord. Whether he was preaching in public, or quietly in his lodging receiving those who came in, he was rejoicing. It is a great setting aside of self to be always rejoicing in the Lord. He had hoped to go on into Spain after being somewhat filled with the saints' company (Rom. xv. 24, 28).

But there was now no more about Spain, or being filled with their company either, yet he was still rejoicing. You can never get inside the defences of the one whose joy is in the Lord. "Nay, in all these things," he says, "we are more than conquerors" (Rom. viii. 37). All these things are creatures : "angels, principalities, powers" : but He dwells in us ; He is near the heart, and that is the great secret ; we get Christ between us and the troubles. We understand how unbelief hinders, but this is the secret that makes everything work for good. The love of God is reckoned upon ; His love is shed abroad in the heart (Rom. v. 5). The great starting-point is, "Finally, my brethren, *rejoice* in the Lord."

We see, too, the simplicity of looking to Christ. The religion of descent, of ordinances, and of works, the moment I get these three, morally speaking, I get a Jew. It was all

works, ordinances, and descent. I could boast of all this just the same if Christ had not come. But where does it all end? "Beware of *dogs*" (v. 2). "Dog" is a name for a perfectly shameless thing.

I must get the conscience *with* God, and Christ *from* God, or I have got nothing. A Jew could bow his head like a bulrush, and do all that without his soul being with God; and therefore God puts perfect contempt upon it all. He says, "My son, give me thine *heart*" (Prov. xxii. 26). "The cattle upon a thousand hills" is mine. "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee" (Ps. l. 10, 12). It is no use your bringing offerings; I want *you*, not your offerings.

Cain had much more trouble in tilling the ground than Abel had about the lamb; but Cain's conscience had never been with God, nor seen the ruin that had come in. We see the hardness of his heart as to sin, and his ignorance as to the holiness of God. He brings what was the sign of the curse, what he had got by the sweat of his brow. Abel brought a lamb, and was accepted. If we have got the real knowledge of the work of atonement, and acceptance in Christ, we are like Abel. The testimony as to righteousness refers to the person of Abel. What it was founded on was his offering, which was a type of Christ.

Studies on the Book of Daniel.

IV.—CHAPTER VII.

IN this second part of the book, we have no longer the interpretation of dreams made to Nebuchadnezzar, etc., but the communications made to Daniel himself. You remember also that the subject of which the Book of Daniel treats, is the Jews. God's ancient people were in captivity, and had been replaced, as to the throne of the world, at least as to the rights of this throne, by the Gentiles. God had had, until lately, His throne at Jerusalem. He was no longer there, as He had once literally been there. Before the captivity God had placed His glory in the temple. He exercised the functions of government, punishing the wicked at times by instant judgments. He was in immediate relationship with the people. It was a pure theocracy, though connected with the monarchy of the house of David at the close.

But all that was entirely gone. The Jews, instead of conducting themselves as those under the government of God ought to do, had become thoroughly unfaithful; they had made their children pass through the fire to Moloch, and had worshipped idols. The consequence of such conduct was that God could no longer identify Himself with the nation: He rejected them, took away His throne from Jerusalem, and confided the dominion and empire of the

world to the Gentiles (see chap. ii. 38). Upon this Nebuchadnezzar takes Jerusalem, and the times of the Gentiles begin.

There are two aspects to this part of the subject : on one side the responsibility of the Gentiles ; and on the other the circumstances of the Jews in those times, and in particular of the faithful remnant, the special object of God's care.

We have already seen the general characters of the Gentile kings. But now we come to more intimate details of these beasts, in their relationship with the Jewish people and with the remnant who had their expectation from God. These beasts, as we have seen, had lost their knowledge of God, and had persecuted His people ; and thus, in order to bring out more perfectly the circumstances of the Jews, we are given a more minute history of some of these beasts, together with some account of the remnant under their power ; and also many circumstances, as we shall presently see, which will have their accomplishment in the holy people.

We must note a feature in this book, as also in the prophetic part of the Apocalypse : that there is nothing addressed to the people of God. In the other prophets (for instance, Isaiah and Jeremiah), there are many particulars concerning these same things ; but the prophet always addressed the people of God,

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because they were still acknowledged. But when this is no longer the case, God may give to a prophet, to Daniel, to a remnant, revelations having reference to the people; but the prophet no longer addresses himself to the people. Thus Daniel is full of joy at these communications; but he does not say a word of them to the Jews directly. God was with the remnant, even Daniel.* He had nothing more to do with His people in the government of the world; but He had a remnant, and He communicated to the faithful whom He had chosen His intention concerning this remnant, and the events which were to take place. It is thus in the Apocalypse in its prophetic part. Certain things are told to John: it is not John speaking to Christians.

Such prophecies are a kind of depôt of certain truths, which is for the blessing of the Church at all times, and for the Jews whenever they believe. As to the people of God not being acknowledged, I believe this ought to have its weight in studying the Apocalypse, and you will do well to consider it.

We are now going to enter into the second part of the book, wherein the conduct of the beasts, and of the different powers of the Gentiles, is given in detail, as well as the circum-

* Daniel is, in many ways, a type of Christ, as having the Spirit of Christ in His sympathies with the remnant, and as being their representative before God.

stances of the saints during the Gentile dominion, and the judgment of God which comes down at the end.

Chap. vii. is an introduction, and contains three visions. There is the first general fact that there would be these four beasts, but the fourth was of the most importance; for although the others had been wicked enough, whether in acting against God or His people, it was under the fourth that the open revolt was to take place, whether of Jews or of Christendom, against God; a revolt which should result in the entire destruction of the beast, because of its lifting itself up against the authority and glory of God.

The first vision gives the description, however, only of the three earlier beasts, whose dominion was successively taken from them, but whose lives were prolonged; that is, they were not entirely destroyed.

The second vision is the circumstantial history of the fourth beast previously mentioned (v. 7).

The third vision is the opposite of all this; namely, the dominion given to the Son of man (v. 13). The explanation follows.

FIRST VISION.

“ Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea ” (v. 2).

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The great sea, in prophetic language, constantly signifies masses of people; thus Babylon (Rev. xvii. 1, 15; Jer. li. 13) is described as dwelling "upon many waters"; that is, people not yet, at the time of the vision, formed into kingdoms, empires, and as such acknowledged by God as prophetic objects. These last are rather called the earth.

"And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another" (v. 3). You will find the distinction between the sea and the earth in chap. xiii. of the Apocalypse, where the first beast comes out of the sea, whereas the second comes from the earth, because the first beast was the empire which rose amidst the confusion of nations, whilst the second beast appears when the first was already upon the earth, and his empire established.

FIRST BEAST. "The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it" (v. 4). This was the Babylonian monarchy, the first which carried everything before it. Pharaoh desired to do so, but his fate was sealed at Carchemish, near the Euphrates (Jer. xlvi.). This lion with wings was Nebuchadnezzar; his empire lasted only seventy years. Darius the Mede took the kingdom, and Babylon remained a great city after its dominion

was taken away. There was a subsequent judgment upon it; for it was besieged and taken a second time, and then it stood upon its feet as a man, submissive, and no more ravaging the nations. It became a province, and was no longer mistress of the world.

SECOND BEAST. "And behold, another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it; and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh" (v. 5). This is the Persian empire. I will not discuss this, because all who have studied the prophecies are agreed about it.

THIRD BEAST. "After this, I beheld, and lo, another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it" (v. 6).

This is without doubt the empire of Alexander. The beast is described more under the features which it took after the death of that prince, when his empire was divided into four parts, than under those which it had when united under his power. This is important, because in fact two of the parts into which it was divided have had much more to do with the Jews than the empire had in the time of Alexander himself. Of these, two are afterwards called the king of the north and the king of the south (chap. xi.).

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Daniel said, in a general manner, that there were four beasts, but the fourth is reserved for a special vision.

SECOND VISION.

FOURTH BEAST. "After this, I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it: and it had ten horns" (*v. 7*). That which particularly marks this beast, was that it had ten horns (ten kings). "I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots, and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things" (*v. 8*).

This description is not only that of a power hurried into action under the influence of his passions, or of a conqueror who goes about ravaging everywhere; but there was something more in the ways of this little horn, namely, exceeding arrogance, intelligence, design, counsel, reflection, etc.; he had eyes as the eyes of a man. It is said of the Lamb, in the Apocalypse, that it had seven eyes; an expression for the perfection of foresight and understanding. Here it is not perfection, but at

least intelligence, reflection, and design; all these are represented by the eyes; "and a mouth speaking great things": namely, prodigious boasting; and this characterizes particularly this horn. It is on account of the words which this horn spoke that the beast was destroyed. He is the one who causes the judgment of the fourth beast. The little horn is he who morally influences and characterizes the beast. "I beheld till the thrones were cast down (placed),* and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool . . . the judgment was set and the books were opened" (v. 9).

This is an assize. The thrones are not overthrown, but placed. The Ancient of days sits in judgment; myriads and myriads are there before *Him*. The books are opened. But as yet the Son of man does not appear; but only the Ancient of days. In another sense, Christ is Himself the Ancient of days, but here, a little further on in the chapter, He is presented to Him (the Ancient of days) as the Son of man. In the Apocalypse, when John sees the Son of man, it is with all the attributes of the Ancient of days (chap. i.). But here the Ancient of days is seen Himself apart in vision, because Christ, in this book, is always

* There is no doubt, I believe, that *placed*, or *set*, is the true, the only true sense.

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considered as the Messiah, or as the Son of man, in His own separate and proper character as such;* as the Anointed One (and thus also as Man), because it was under this character that He was known to the Jews, or as inheriting the rights of man, on the part of God, in this world.

Herein we have the distinction in the expressions, Messiah and Son of man, and this difference may be particularly traced in the Gospels by Matthew and Luke.

In His quality of the Anointed One He appeared as King down here. When He came thus as Messiah He was rejected: the Messiah, we are told, was cut off, and had nothing (Daniel ix. 26, margin). But when God at a future period shall set up His throne (we are not speaking of His heavenly glory, for that is, in Him, already accomplished), it will not be only as the Messiah.

It is not the way of God to re-establish that which has been spoiled: such a procedure would be unworthy of God: if Satan spoils His work, He is not satisfied with simply mending it. Whenever the folly of man, and the malice of Satan, have perverted any passing blessing which God has given to man, God establishes something infinitely superior.

* Verse 22 of this chapter is an exception, claiming the character of Ancient of days for Christ Himself; and identifies the Ancient of days, Jehovah, with Christ as coming.

We have a striking instance of this in Jesus Christ Himself. Man was placed in innocence upon the earth. This state of things was soon altered by the folly of man, tempted by the devil. Does God re-establish again an innocent man on the earth? No. He sets up His own Son, a glorified Man in heaven and earth. Thus God, in allowing the things which He has presented or confided to man to be corrupted, afterwards Himself establishes something infinitely superior, according to His own purpose.

In this manner the Messiah was offered as King of the Jews. Faith, indeed, confessed Him as the Son of God; but as the Son of David, if He had been received, He would have possessed the throne of David.

Man, being a sinner, would not receive Him; but when He returns, it will not be as Messiah, nor as the Son of David only. He is gone to receive a kingdom from the hands of His Father, an inheritance over all things, not only as Messiah, but as the Son of man; for God has decreed that "all things shall be subdued unto Him" (1 Cor. xv. 28). It is for this reason that He is seen coming with the clouds of heaven as Son of man.

The Confederacies of Men, and the Judgments of God.

II.

THERE are many spirits abroad at present, "gone out into the world." The old "unelean spirit" is abroad in growing vigour, the spirit of idolatry or superstition. The *infidel* spirit is abroad. The *worldly* spirit is abroad, that energy which, with its ten thousand arts, is embellishing and furnishing its native place, using refinement of all sorts, morals, religion, intellectual culture and intellectual delights, science and music, books and pictures, everything that can set off and recommend the world, and linking "the million" with nobles in the enjoyment of it.

Thus is it in the history of this present hour. The affecting truth that Jesus is the *rejected* Jesus in this world, is practically forgotten in all this. That mystery is scorned by some, denied or slighted by others, and but coldly, carelessly, and feebly acted on by us who thoroughly and entirely own it among the deep and precious things of God. For we say, How could God meet anything in this world but rejection? The world had already departed from Him, ere He came into it. It had set up for itself long before, even from the days of Cain and the city of Enoch. But how deep-seated its enmity must be, when it refused to know such a One as Jesus! This

enmity of the world was as the enmity of the Jews, who could forget all their hatred of the Gentile, settled and rooted as that hatred was in the very heart of the nation, and say, in the desire to rid themselves of Him, "We have no king but Cæsar." They refused the waters of Shiloah that flowed softly, and rejoiced in Rezin and Remaliah's son.

But confederacy has not closed its history, or spent all its energy yet. Far otherwise. It must be witnessed in full action at the end, as it was at the beginning. We have seen it in the early days of Babel, and in the matured meridian days of the Lord Jesus, and are still to see it in the declining days of the Apocalypse. And the "old Serpent" will be the life and instigator of confederacies at the end, as he was at the beginning, and has been hitherto. The Book of the Apocalypse witnesses this, specially in the mysteries or symbols of the "Woman" and the "Beast."

The Woman sits on many waters. Multitudes, tongues, nations, and peoples, all receive the cup of fornication at her hand. Kings of the earth, merchants of the earth, every shipmaster and sailor, and such as trade in the sea, are subject to her. The Beast has the whole world wondering after him. In himself he combines the lion and the bear and the leopard, and he has ten horns and seven heads. The false prophet ministers to him,

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and the kings, by one consent, give their power to him. All that dwell on the earth worship him. Small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, receive his mark in their forehead.

These are awful tokens of confederated energies of evil. And in them we see the beginning reproduced at the end. For confederacy is the mode or form in which man makes display of his natural pride and apostasy.

And in that form of confederation God will judge the revolted children of men speedily, as *He has already done in early days*. At the beginning, it was the alliance between the woman and the serpent that He broke, saying to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman." It was those who were gathered in the rebel plain of Shinar that He scattered over the face of the whole earth. And so it is the body of the Apocalyptic Woman in her pride He will give to the burning flame; and His supper, "the supper of the Great God," shall celebrate the doom and ruin of the Beast and his associates.

Our present victory, beloved, is by separation. Separation is holiness, if it be separation to the place and character which the calling of God suggests.

The purpose of the serpent in the garden was to withdraw Eve from the condition in

which the Lord God had put her. She was to sacrifice that, and get advancement from him. She consented; and at once as a "chaste virgin" she was ruined. Her purity was lost. Whatever she gained, she lost that. She lost what God had made her.

The Church, like the Eve of Genesis ii., should be what the hand of God has made her, taking, as it has done in this age, the cross of Christ as its instrument or material. And that cross has brought her nigh to God, but estranged her from the world. And when the principles of the world propose to cultivate and advance the Church, and such proposal is listened to, we see again, what of old we saw in Genesis iii., the mystic Eve has lost her virgin purity.

The proposal to advance the Church by such means is attractive. But so was the proposal of the serpent at the beginning: "Ye shall be as gods." This was an angel of light, a minister of righteousness, in the judgment of flesh and blood. But it worked corruption and utter moral ruin, for it beguiled her from the state in which God had left her.

And this generation is doing its best to commend the world to the church, the tree to the woman again. It speaks as though the world were now a very different thing from what the cross of Christ has declared it and proved it to be. It speaks as if Christ were no longer a

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rejected Christ. But if the saint listen, as of old Eve did, he is so far corrupted, for he is surrendering the place, the condition, and the character which the cross of Christ has given him and made him.

The serpent would fain give man a garden again. And a happier garden it shall be than God once gave him. He shall have *every* tree in it. The world shall be a wise world, a religious world, a cultivated world, a delightful place, and still advancing. The man of benevolence, the man of morals, the religious and the intellectual man, the man of refined pleasures, all will find their home in it. And this shall be the world's oneness. And all who desire their fellow-creatures' happiness, and the common rest after so many centuries of confusion and trouble, will surely not refuse to join this honourable and happy confederacy.

Nothing will withstand all this but "the love of the truth"; nothing but faith in that word which gathers a sinner to Jesus and His blood, and the hopes of a poor world-wearied believer to Jesus and His kingdom. Come what may to you, beloved, though it be moral and refined, or religious in its bearing, it is "unrighteousness," if it be not of "the truth" (2 Thess. ii.).

The Anointed One.

II.

BUT as we go on with the Book of God, we find the Christ still. See this in the day of the EXODUS. It was a time of judgment, as the time of Noah had been. But another Ark is prepared, and that Ark, like the former, in the day of the Flood, is Christ. "They shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side-posts and on the upper door-post of the houses wherein they shall eat it. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment; I am the Lord; and the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses wherein ye are, and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt."

The blood was upon the Jewish lintel, and that blood was Christ sheltering the house in the day of judgment and death. His Anointed, after this manner, was again "by Him," for the use of "the sons of men" in the day of their necessity. And, as a people thus redeemed by Christ, and standing before God in the value of Christ, God takes them up as with His whole heart and His whole soul. In the cloud of His Presence He joins them on the road, as soon as they are freed from the

place of judgment; He takes counsel with Himself about them; then He acts for them; He raises a wall of partition between them and their pursuers; feeds them with bread from heaven and with water from the Rock; and conducts them in strength and triumph, till He sets them in the place of glory at His own holy hill: and all this (with the song which He put into their lips on the banks of the Red Sea) tells us of the full "delight" with which He had brought forth His Anointed for them (Exod. xii.-xviii.).

This is surely a great and magnificent scene, and all is unchanged. The Christ of God "set up" from everlasting, is still with God for us, though our need arise again and again. He is at hand as One prepared and provided for "the sons of men," and brought forth in their behalf with "the delight" of God, according to this beautiful word in Prov. viii.

And I may here pause to say, prophets and oracles have also told this, and His own lips have uttered it. "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect in whom My soul delighteth," says Jehovah of His Anointed by Isaiah (xlii. 1). "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," was heard over Him again and again in the days of His flesh here (Matt. iii.; xvii.). "Therefore doth My Father love Me," says Jesus Himself, "because I lay down My life that I might take it again" (John x.

17); such words and like words telling, like the whole current of divine history, the joy which is known in our God over the manifestation and work of His Anointed in the behalf of us sinners.

But now, in still following that current of divine or scriptural history, we reach Exod. xix., and there we see God in a character in which we had not seen Him since the day of Gen. ii. He is now a Lawgiver a second time. He who had been in a burning bush, has now taken His seat on a burning mount. The God of the fathers, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of grace, now appears as the God of destructive righteousness and judgment. Through the self-confidence of Israel, their God is now rather a Lawgiver than a Redeemer; a character, again we say, in which He had not appeared since the time of Adam, and the garden of Eden. (See Rom. v. 13, 14).

This was a change indeed. The people had procured it for themselves; and however ruinous it may prove, they have to accept it all at *their own hands*.

But then we read: "The covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul" (Gal. iii. 17). And so, the eternal purpose, which had been taken ere the world was, and not merely four hundred and

thirty years before, could not be disturbed by all this. No, indeed! The Anointed One, "brought forth" and "set up," possessed of God "in the beginning of His ways, before His works of old," no after-works could displace. This we have already seen, at different successive seasons from the beginning; and now again we are to see the same in this day of man's self-confidence, leading the God of grace to the hill of judgment. Quickly again is Christ "by Him, as one brought up with Him," ready at hand to be used, and used with "delight" for "the sons of men"; all this changing, shifting scenery, which sin, and judgment, and law, and human assumption induce, only sealing and verifying, and settling for ever, the unchanging purpose of God, and His grace in the person, and work, and value of His Anointed.

This new condition, into which Israel had now brought themselves, would work ruin as surely as sin had wrought it in Eden. Fallen man can no more answer law than innocent man had resented temptation. But God's Anointed is still "by Him." We see this now in Exod. xxv., as we saw it then in Gen. iii. The shadows of good things to come, now shown to Moses, tell us this now, as the promise to Adam had told it then. Moses is called up to a region above and beyond that of darkness and thunder and tempest; and there,

in figure, Christ is shown to him, Christ in the sanctuary of peace. The people had not yet broken the law when this is done; at least, they had not been convicted. The national or conditional covenant is sealed in chap. xxiv., and this exhibition of the Anointed One is made to Moses in chaps. xxv.-xxx., that is, *immediately* afterwards. No delay takes place, for Christ was "by Him." The thing is done suddenly. No counsel or preparation was needed; for counsel had been taken "in the beginning, before His works of old." Just as in the day when sin entered, God's resource was in Him that had been "set up from everlasting," and thus was at hand for immediate use; so that He now left the fiery mount, the place of judgment, for the higher regions, the place of grace and of His Anointed One, not to say with all *convenient*, but with all *immediate* speed.

And "delight" again waits on this action, as it had done in earlier days, as we have already seen. For when the congregation, in the obedience of faith, prepare the Tabernacle, and all is finished, the glory enters, and takes its place there, and takes it with most evident and full joy. It will have the whole of it to itself, so that even Moses could not follow (Exod. xl.); all this again bespeaking the delight of the Lord God in seating Himself where Christ was seen.

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It was not after this manner He had taken His place on Mount Sinai. He had gone there with evident reserve. See this in chap. xix. But now it is not with reserve He fills the sanctuary, but with readiness and fervency, and manifest enjoyment, occupying the whole of it, courts and holy places and all. As we sing at times,

“His wakened wrath doth slowly move,
His willing mercy flies apace.”

And all this was but the *expression* of that “delight” which our scripture (Prov. viii.) tells us was known in counsel before the world was. For this delight is a “daily” delight, as fresh after ages as at the beginning, *in action* repeated again and again, as it was *in counsel* ere the world was.

There might be other witnesses to prove that Christ, the Anointed One, is God’s resource in the day of the need of “the sons of men,” and is still called forth for them. But I would pass on only to one other illustration of this.

The nation of Israel are set in the land, and there they are proved again, as they had been under the law in the wilderness. But they violate the very first article of their commission, as they had broken already the very first commandment of their law. They strike *confederacy* with the peoples of the land, the nations of Canaan, whose *destruction* had been enjoined upon them, and the angel of the

covenant weeps at Bochim over the insulted covenant (Judges i., ii.).

All, therefore, is wreck and ruin again. Adam in the garden, man under law, Israel with their covenant in the land, alike witness this wreck and ruin. And as it thus began, so it goes on, with the nation set in their inheritance. This unfaithfulness, beginning in Judges i. with the tribes, is found again in their own king, Saul, the son of Cis, in 1 Samuel. Like people, like prince, as Judges i. and 1 Samuel xv. tell us. But God is the same in grace, if man be the same in unfaithfulness and apostasy. For upon all this we quickly read, "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul?" (says the LORD to Samuel, who was weeping over the fall of the king, as the angel had wept over the fall of the nation at Bochim), "how long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse, the Bethlehemite, for I have provided Me a king among his sons" (1 Sam. xvi.).

This son of Jesse was unknown to men, but in secret God had provided him for Himself. David, the beloved, was known to God in counsel now, and David, the beloved, was the witness or the type of the Anointed One. Bethlehem carried the witness now, as it did, in due time, the Christ Himself. In the ear of faith, "good tidings of great joy" were now,

in their measure, heard in the fields of that town of Judah. "Out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel," began to be said to her now (Matt. ii. 6). David was an arrow in the Lord's quiver, and he was the arrow of the Lord for deliverance to Israel, in this terrible day of Israel's calamity. He was the Bethlehemite, the anointed, the beloved, the pledge of Him who has since appeared for redemption and salvation, the type of Him who in purpose was the Anointed One ere worlds began.

Thus, in these various but consistent forms, was this mystery again and again told out, that Christ was provided for "the sons of men" in their time of need. On the entrance of sin; in the day of the doom of the world, before the Flood; in the call of Abraham forth from the overspreading of abominations; in the hour of the judgment of Egypt; in the ruin of Israel under the law; and again, in the day of their ruin under their own national covenant, Christ is at hand, "set up" and "brought forth" for sinners; the One whom God has "by Him" for immediate use, and that, too, at all times, and with "delight," for "the sons of men."

I might, of course, have gone further down, even to the end of the volume, with this story of God's grace in His Anointed One; nay, with a more vivid witness of it, as we get to

the New Testament. But I stop here. The promise, the first promise, that of the Seed of the woman, began to tell this story; and, after many other witnesses to it, as we have now seen, David, the shepherd-boy of Bethlehem, of the stem of Jesse, repeats it in our hearing, after so long a time.

The Book of Experience.

(PHILIPPIANS).

VI. CHAPTER III., *continued.*

GOD cannot refuse me when I present Christ to Him; He accepts me according to the pass I bring. I cannot think of going through a process to make my soul up in some way. In coming to God I must come in God's way, which is Christ, and nothing else; and with my own conscience; not with ordinances, which are all outward things.

It is remarkable the way in which the apostle treats the subject in this chapter. It is not the conscience with sin on it, but the worthlessness of all ordinances. So he calls it "the *concision*." Have your *hearts* circumcised; that is the true ordinance. "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit" (v. 3). Even as Jeremiah says, "Circumcise . . . your heart" (Jer. iv. 4). It must be the flesh totally put down. The flesh

has a religion as well as lusts; but the flesh must have a religion that will not kill the flesh; satisfying the flesh in mortifying the body, a voluntary humility, not sparing the body, that is easy work; but it is not easy work to be *done with the flesh*.

Suppose I could say, "An Hebrew of the Hebrews," "touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless," perfectly religious; who would be accredited by that? Paul; not God or Christ. It is not worth a farthing, this righteousness. It is giving *me* a good place. It is *I* all the while, not *Christ*. And it is in this that it is detected, the moment it accredits the flesh. It may be costly and painful; it may be things by which I punish myself; but it is utterly worthless. I have seen a person irritated to the last degree when told it was not worth anything. Thus strikingly Paul takes it up; not as sin, but as something perfectly worthless; legal righteousness, and the true religion as man can see it. "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ" (v. 7). He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and after the strictest sect he lived a Pharisee: that was gain to him.

Then he says, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (v. 8). There

was no question of sin; when he speaks of righteousness, it is not as meeting sins, but as contrasted with righteousness according to the law. We can always detect it; all it does is to accredit self; that is the mischief and the evil; for who would have filthy rags (that is what our righteousnesses are called) when he could have Christ for his righteousness?

He had such a perception of the excellency of what Christ is in God's sight, what God delights in, that he says, I am not going to keep this wretched righteousness, or add it to that which is of God. The deceitful lusts are bad enough, but this religious flesh is worse. It was not real righteousness; it was self puffed up, not self judged; it was self eked out, and painted over. Now he wants to get rid of self, and have Christ instead of it.

That is the place; and now he unfolds it. Remark, it is not when I was converted I counted all things loss. We find when a person is converted Christ is everything; the world is a vain show, vanity, nothing. It has passed from the mind, and things unseen fill the heart. But afterwards, as the man goes on with his duties, and intercourse with his friends, though Christ is still precious, he does not continue to count all things loss; often it is only that he *counted*. But Paul says, I *do* count, not *did*. It is a great thing to be able to say it. Christ should hold always the place

He had when salvation was first revealed to our hearts. Of course, if a man has not Christ at the bottom he is no Christian at all; but I mean even where Christ is in a man, and you may find him walking blamelessly, yet, if you speak to him of Christ, there is not an echo in his heart, though his life goes on smoothly. Christ at the bottom, and a fair Christian walk at the top, and between these two a hundred and fifty things that Christ has nothing to do with at all. His life is practically passed without Christ. This will not do. It is the terrible levity of the heart that goes on without Christ, until it becomes the highway of whatever the world pours into it.

He now tells us what is the power for this. He wants to win Christ, and it looks like a terrible sacrifice to give up everything for this. But it is just like a baby with a plaything. Try to take the plaything from it, it will hold it the faster; put a prettier before it, and it will let the other drop.

He counted everything loss and dung; the things were gone. I shall have temptations, I know; but nine-tenths of the temptations that beset and hinder would not exist if Christ had His place. Things would not tempt and beset us, as gold, and silver, and pretty things, if "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus" had its place in the heart; that kind of conflict would be gone. We should then

know the snares of Satan, and suffer for others; it would not be the struggle to keep my own head above water, but to keep others from being drowned.

Christ having got this place, other things have lost their value. His eye is single, and the whole body is full of light. He *had* suffered the loss of all things; but he says, "*I do* count them but dung." He was looking at Christ as such a blessed object that everything was given up for Him. And he kept this place for Him, so that he goes on to *win* Christ. He had not got Christ yet, but Christ had got hold of him; and he was running the race to get there, and looking at the end of the journey. No matter what the road is; it may be rough, but I am looking to the end.

There are these two things here; first, that I may win Christ; and second, that I may not have my own righteousness. A man with a threadbare coat, if he gets a right good one, is ashamed of the old one. Paul would not thank you for the kind of righteousness he had before. I cannot have my own and God's; I would not have my own if I could. This is blessedly brought out in the First of Corinthians, "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30). What we are in life of God, Christ is *of* God towards us.

Three Evils and their Remedies.

THERE are three things from which many of the people of God suffer severely, and which may truly be called "sore evils," namely, a legal mind, a morbid conscience, a self-occupied heart. We can do little more in these few lines than name these things, and point out the remedies for them, praying the Lord, in His great mercy, to give full deliverance to any of our readers who may be tried by any or all of these things.

I. And, first, as to a legal mind. This is a very common evil, and one hard to be laid aside. In many cases, it cleaves to the very last, and robs the soul of that peace and liberty which are the proper portion of all the children of God. It exhibits itself in various ways. It hinders the soul in its enjoyment of the free grace of God, and of the salvation which that grace has accomplished, and lowers the whole tone of the life and character. Furthermore, it falsifies the character of God, by presenting Him as an Exactor demanding a certain amount of duty, instead of a Giver delighting in praise. In a word, a legal mind, in so far as it is allowed to work, spoils everything. It creates a dark cloud between the soul and God, and in doing this it throws everything into confusion. There may be the most scrupulous attention to the letter of Scripture, the most earnest desire to keep the standard of

conduct up to what that letter enjoins, all right enough, no doubt, but the legal mind renders all cold, formal, heavy, and ungenial. Service is put as a duty instead of a delight. It chills the affections, and hinders their going out after God Himself.

Thus much as to this first sore evil. And now one word as to the remedy. What is it? GRACE. Yes; grace is the grand remedy for a legal mind. Let the free grace of God, in all its sweetness and heavenly power, enter into the soul. Let God be known and enjoyed in His true character as the Giver, the One delighting in worship, inhabiting the praises of His ransomed people. Let grace possess the whole being. Let it be known and realized that we stand in absolute grace, that we are not under law, but under grace, that every yoke is broken, and every fetter burst, that we are looked at in Christ, and loved as He is loved, washed in His blood, and brought nigh to God. Let these divine realities be laid hold of in the power of simple, child-like faith, and the shadows of a legal mind will be chased away, and all its hateful workings counteracted. A heart established with grace is the sovereign remedy, the divine specific, for the sore disease of a legal mind.

II. We shall now dwell for a moment on a morbid conscience. How does this evil work? It, too, works in various ways, and cuts out a

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vast amount of sorrowful work for the soul. It is continually creating difficulties and suggesting doubts. Instead of being governed by the plain precepts of the word of God, it is ever and only governed by its own fears. No one who has not been troubled with a morbid conscience can have any idea of the amount of suffering it entails upon its possessor. If it should so happen, and it often does, that a morbid conscience stands connected with a legal mind, the poor harassed soul must be a stranger to joy and peace in believing.

Now, what is the remedy for this sad and afflictive disease? TRUTH. The plain truth of God, the authority of Holy Scripture, the conscience brought into immediate contact with the Word, and subjection to it alone, this is the remedy for a morbid conscience. In this way, the soul is governed simply by the claims of divine truth, and not by its own scrupulous fears : an immense deliverance !

III. Finally, as to the grievous evil of a self-occupied heart. It would be utterly impossible to trace its workings, so manifold and various are they. There are few who do not know something of this, even though they may not suffer from a morbid conscience or a legal mind. A self-occupied heart leads us to look at things, and think of things, and estimate things in reference to ourselves. We value people in proportion as they adapt them-

selves, or are agreeable, to us. There is, though we may not be fully aware of it, a manifest leaning toward persons who suit us in tastes, feelings, opinions, and habits of thought. We like those who agree with us in all our peculiar views and prejudices. Men and things are not looked at in simple reference to Christ and His interests, but rather to self and its interests.

This is indeed a sore evil. We may say, and say it, too, with much decision, that self-occupation is the death-blow to fellowship; fellowship with God, and fellowship with God's people. And what is the remedy? What is the infallible cure, the divine specific for self-occupation? THE PERSON OF CHRIST. GRACE is the remedy for a legal mind, TRUTH for a morbid conscience, and the embodiment of grace and truth, even Christ Himself, for the self-occupied heart. May we know the real power and blessedness of these things!

It is of the very essence of idolatry so to lean upon another as to relieve ourselves of that which is ever irksome to the flesh; namely, direct, continuous, and absolute dependence upon God.

The Confederacies of Men, and the Judgments of God.

III.

THE world is to wonder after the beast (Rev. xiii. 3) before every tongue confesses Jesus to be Lord (Phil. ii. 11). Each will be in its day; but the beast will have his day, his day of the rule of evil, ere Jesus has His day of the dominion of light and righteousness.

The saint has to walk apart from those schemes or confederations, which are undertaking to make the *world* what God can accept, till the rejection of Christ be answered from heaven. Little do many who favour the system of religious ordinances, and assert the rights and dignities of office, think that they are combining with those who are cultivating the masses and the people by liberal institutions.

But it is so; for all are *cultivating* man, instead of *renewing* him. All are doing something against the truth, and not for the truth (see 2 Cor. xiii. 8). The attempt is very specious. The system of the beast and his kings will, in its day, be very fair. They have all "one mind"; and from the attractiveness of such unity nothing will preserve the soul but the faith that knows the principles of God, and that anything or everything that proposes

to set the world in order till judgments have cleared it, is of the god of this world, and not of heaven. The thing that is to have this "one mind" is the very thing that withstands the Lamb, and is judged of God in the day of the Lord (Rev. xvii. 14; xix. 19, 20).

Easy to write this, beloved; but I know that it is the *power* of separation that is to be cherished by us. It was so in the soul of the dear apostle, as we have seen him in 2 Timothy. In that affecting epistle he breathes a spirit which was "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus," and consciously treading the borders of the glory. And with this he had ardent love for the prosperity of the Church, and of his beloved Timothy. Here was the hidden virtue of his beautiful and distinct separation from the world, or the corrupted "great house," which was then rising up before him and around him. His separation was in the power of this faith and hope and charity. And to like grace the Spirit calls us in this day, when the "great house" of that epistle has become the Christendom of this day.

The scenery of the prophets (and that scenery is as real as what at this moment is under our eye), and I may say, very specially that of the Apocalypse, is acquiring increased distinctness in the thoughts of many of the saints of God in these days. In other days it

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was looked on as dim and clouded. And is not this, I ask, some symptom that we are *approaching* those regions, that we are conscious of increasing distinctness because of *nearness*?

And besides; there is something of an instinctive turning to thoughts of judgment and of glory among us. There is something of a sense of this solemn fact, that God is about to interfere in some way or another with the course of things around us. The energies of evil are seen to be very active, and the world to be very haughty and self-sufficient. The present day is the *manhood* of the world. The world is playing the man now. It speaks of other days as one would remember his childhood. It is boasting itself beyond all former pretensions, and promising to do greater things still. And so will it proceed, till in the moment of its loftiest pride the judgment of God overtakes it.

The people of God should wait with the *girdle* and the *lamp*, which are the beautiful standing symbols of their calling till the Lord appears; that is, with minds girt up unto holy separation from present things, and with hearts brightened up with the desire and expectation of coming things (Luke xii. 35).

These thoughts of judgments may profitably move our hearts at this hour. But let me add (for it is a comfort to remember it) that the

judgments of God are always only *by the way*. They never *close* the scene, or terminate His action and purpose. He does indeed pass through them; but He only passes through them, or rather with them, onward to glory and the kingdom, which is His calling.

The Deluge, one of His judgments, led to the new world under the government of Noah. The judgment of the cities of the plain was survived, and Abraham is seen on high, the next morning, above it all, and Lot is delivered. The judgment of Egypt was the redemption of Israel destined for the inheritance.

And for still further strength and comfort I may add, that if the mind could be delivered from the blinding and prejudicing power of self-love, it would speak the judgment of righteousness, and justify God in His judgments. Look at Adam. His hiding behind the trees of the garden gave judgment against Himself with God. Look at the camp in Numbers xiv. Their utter silence the moment the Glory appeared did the same. It was like Adam's hiding of himself. Look at David. Nathan catches his conscience when he appealed simply to his moral sense, his estimate of right and wrong, his measure of iniquity and its retribution. He got from David such a sentence as justified the judgment of God against himself. He little suspected that he

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was pronouncing sentence in his own cause. But it was so; and self-love being dismissed, or set aside for a moment, and the moral sense being left alone in company with the offence, David out of his own mouth is judged, and God's judgment is justified.

So the husbandmen of Matthew xxi. Like Nathan with David, the Lord catches the conscience of the Jews, and makes them pronounce their own condemnation. And all this, because self-love was again, as it were, sent out of court, and the mere moral sense, the sense of good and evil, right and wrong, is alone on the judgment-seat. The decree of God against them is there anticipated by themselves.

And so with the man without the wedding garment in Matthew xxii. He got into the marriage feast with a careless heart, just thinking of himself in the power of some form or other of mere nature. But again, in his case, when the sense that judged what was fitting and necessary was called into exercise, and there was nothing to interfere with its action in the conscience; when the simple, unmixed thought is presented to him, whether any person in *such* a dress should be in *such* a place, he is "speechless," he is convicted, he has nothing to say, and his own judgment tells him that such a one as he has no business in such a place as that.

These may be used by the soul as illustrations of the great truth, that the Judge of all the earth will do right, that He will be justified when He speaks, and clear when He judges (Gen. xviii. 25; Ps. li. 4). Out of our own mouth will He condemn. When Eve pleaded the serpent's guile, and Adam pleaded Eve's gift to him, the Lord God did not condescend to answer the pleas. And who of us at this hour does not justify Him in pronouncing that sentence without replying to those excuses? All this is for us, and for our comfort, when we think of Him with whom we have to do; and we may sing of Him and of His praise, when the subject is either "mercy" or "judgment" (Ps. ci. 1).

But judgment, again I say, never *closes* the scene. It is never "the end of the Lord" (James v. 11). The things of Job were all set right, and much more than that, ere "the end of the Lord" in his history was reached. His things in the *world*, in his own *person*, both mind and body, in the *family*, and in the *Church*, were all in confusion. His cattle were stolen, his houses were in ruins, his children were dead, and his brethren were set against him, he misunderstanding and reviling them, and they injuriously reproaching and condemning him. All was thus out of order, within and around him, as to the world, the family, and the Church.

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How could there be more confusion? But God's "end" lay beyond all this; for we never reach God's *end* in either discipline or judgment, the discipline of an individual saint, or the judgment of a people or a world.

So does the Holy Jesus alone close and crown the book which details the coming judgments of God (Rev. xxii.).

How little does the soul rise up in the power of these things which are so easily discerned, and so freely spoken of and written about!

Principles are not power. If principles occupy the mind, even with the most earnest desire for accuracy, so as to become the object instead of Christ, there will be the absence of spiritual power. The secret of power is not merely having orthodox principles, but exercising faith in God, according to the truth He has graciously revealed. For instance, many accept, as a divinely given principle of truth, that where two or three are gathered together in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, there He is "in the midst of them." But those only who have faith in the Lord as present will have the power and comfort of it. This is individual. The power and blessing therefore of a company of saints is connected with the individual faith of those gathered.

The Book of Experience.

(PHILIPPIANS).

VII. CHAPTER III., *continued.*

HE then goes to the next thing : “ That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection ” (v. 10).

The first thing was winning Christ; the second, knowing Christ. There is the victory over the whole power of evil : death, and everything else. I want to know Him, His perfect love and life; to have Him as the object before the soul, occupying soul, and mind, and heart, and so grow up into Him; and to know the power of His resurrection, for then the whole power of Satan was set aside.

He had spoken of the righteousness as that which he sought in Christ, not in himself and the law; and now he wanted to know the power of the life expressed in the resurrection of Christ. When he has known Christ as a Person, and victory over death, he can take up the service of love as Christ did, and can know “ the fellowship of His sufferings ” (v. 10).

How different to fearing, and dreading, and creeping on, as the apostles did when told of His death, in the tenth of Mark : “ They were amazed, and as they followed, they were afraid,” instead of rejoicing because death was before them. But if I know the power of resurrection, death is behind me, all its power

is broken. So when He rose He said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth"; "preach the gospel to every creature"; "be not afraid of them that kill the body"; they have killed *My* body.

When I have got the power of resurrection I can serve in love. Paul was looking death in the face, and not speaking lightly. Satan says, You want to follow Christ? Yes. There is death in your way. Very well; I shall be all the more like Christ for going through it.

"The fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (vv. 10, 11). Paul so came into this that he uses words Christ Himself might use: "I endure all things for the elect's sake" (2 Tim. ii. 10). It was all of grace, a totally new place, all pretension to righteousness gone, and what I am as man too, and Christ substituted as righteousness for me. And then Himself, to know *Him*. That is where progress goes on to; the affections are now engaged. When I see suffering before me I get the power of His resurrection, and then the privilege of the fellowship of His sufferings. Paul had a large share of this; we have a little. He says, "If by any means I might attain"; that is, Cost what it will, if death is on the road, all right, I shall attain what He did, resurrection from among the dead.

This is a special word, and very seldom found in fact in the New Testament. When we look at the resurrection from the dead, we find it to be a matter of all possible importance.

Christ was the first-fruits; not of the wicked dead, of course. What was Christ's resurrection? God raised Him from the dead, because His delight was in Him, because of His perfect righteousness, and glorifying Him. And it is the same with us. Resurrection is the expression of God's satisfaction in those raised; it is His seal on Christ's work. Christ was the Son He delighted in, and now it is the same with us because of Christ. In Him it was His own perfectness; with us it is because of Him. He comes in in power to take His own out, while the rest are left behind.

"From among": in that lies the whole force of the expression (v. 11). So at the transfiguration; He charged them not to speak of it "till the Son of man were risen from the dead." They questioned among themselves "what the rising from the dead should mean" (Mark ix. 9, 10).

What astonished them? It was "the rising *from among* the dead." It was this very thing. God stepped in in power, and raised Him up, and set Him at His own right hand; and when the time is come He will raise His saints too. It is an immense act of divine power, for divine righteousness is there.

In the fifteenth of the First of Corinthians there is no reference but to saints. It is not a general resurrection, for the wicked are not raised in glory. I do not know anything that has done more harm to the Church than the notion of a general resurrection. If all are raised together, the question of righteousness is not settled; but it is, "if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. viii. 11). The whole character and nature and meaning and purpose of this resurrection is entirely distinct. "From among" is the expression of divine delight in the person raised; and we are all raised because of it; else there would be no sense in the expression "attained" (v. 12).

He says, "if by any means." If it cost me my life it is all nothing. "That I may win Christ" is the first thing (v. 8). But, in *winning* Him at the close of the race, it is also as a present thing: "That I may *know* Him" (v. 10). It has been asked whether this refers to the present effect, or to the future glory. I say it is present effect *by* future glory.

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling" (v. 14). The high calling is the *calling above*. We see the immediate connection of the object with the present effect.

He wanted to be like Christ now, not only when he should be dead in his grave, and his spirit in Paradise. If he were to die he would be then like Him; but that was not what he was looking for; namely, to be conformed to the image of the Son of God in glory (Rom. viii. 29).

That he would be, of course; but that I never shall be till Christ comes, and raises the dead. That I wait for. I am conscious of never attaining; but I wait for it; and every day I am more like Him, suffering in the power of the love in which He served the Father; and there is a continual growing likeness to Christ inwardly from looking at Him in the glory. The only thing I care for is to be like Him in glory, and with Him.

The whole of Paul's life was founded on that, and completely formed by that. The Son of God was forming his soul day by day, and he was always running towards Him, and never doing anything else. It was not merely as an apostle that he entered into the fellowship of His sufferings, and conformity to His death, but every Christian ought to be doing the same.

A person may say he has forgiveness of sins. But I say, What is governing your heart now? Is your eye resting on Christ in glory? Is the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus so before your soul as to govern

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everything else, and make you count everything loss that is in the way? Is that where you are? Has this excellent knowledge put out all other things? not only an outwardly blameless walk, and able to say you love Christ; but has the thought of Christ in glory put out all other things?

If it were so, you would not be governed by everyday nothings. If a labouring man has a family, he does not forget the affections of his children because of his work. On the contrary, when his labour is done, his tools are thrown down, and he returns home with all the more joy because he has been absent from it. His labour did not hinder or enfeeble the affections of his heart.

Studies on the Book of Daniel.

V. CHAPTER VII., *continued.*

WHEN Christ presented Himself to the Jews as Messiah, and even to the Gentiles under Pontius Pilate, He was rejected; after which God does not establish Him as Messiah alone, but as *Heir* of all things.

Is this done by the will of man? By no means. *Christ has been presented to the good will of man*; but He was received with hatred and disdain. They crucified Him. He will be established by the decree of God.

Now when this little horn speaks great things; when all its insolent pride is manifested; when it has come to its height; then the thrones are placed, and God begins to exercise His power. When power, as confided to man, is turned into rebellion against God, it is time for God to act, and for the thrones of judgment to be placed, for the books to be opened, and for man to give account to God.

The result of this judgment on the part of the Ancient of days, is to give the kingdom to the Son of man. It is a question here of this power, these rights of the Ancient of days: it is the demonstration that He who had possessed the rights from the beginning to the end, although He had been concealed, was He who gave the power to the one and to the other.

God had been hidden, so to speak, during the time of the other beasts. Nevertheless His providence acted. The Babylonians were replaced by the Persians, and these latter by the Greeks. All this was done, as things are done even now, by the arrangement of that Providence which governs the world; because the Ancient of days (whose rights, notwithstanding, cannot be annihilated), was not yet sitting to execute judgment on account of the acts which had been committed against Him. But it will not be thus at the end. As yet the open revolt had not taken place. The fourth

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beast had not yet said, "I am, and none else beside me" (Isa. xlvii. 8). As was said to the Prince of Tyre, "Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God?" (Ezek. xxviii. 9). The judgment of this fourth beast will be as against man, in a state of open rebellion against God.

Now the attention of Daniel is entirely taken up with the little horn. "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" (v. 11). He is amazed to hear there, in the very presence of God, this horn speaking blasphemous things. He wondered that God should permit it; but he saw the beast slain. This was the result. Then he says, "As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away" (v. 12). That is, after the dominion had been taken from Babylon, it continued to subsist for some time, as did the Persians likewise; but the destruction of the *fourth beast* shall be entire. To the others, a prolongation of life had been granted after the fall of the empire; but here the judgment and the destruction go together.

THIRD VISION.

Consequent upon all this is a third vision. It is the Son of man presented to the Ancient of days. "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, . . . that all people . . . should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion," etc. (vv. 13, 14). This is the kingdom which will be confided to Him, and which He will administer for the subjection of all things to God Himself.

Now we come to the explanation given to the prophet. "The visions of my head," says Daniel, "troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me," etc. "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth." But he adds a fact, not before mentioned: "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever" (vv. 15-18).

It is not alone the history of something which takes place by the interposition of Providence, or by the judgment of God; but the interpretation is occupied with the people of God, the saints of the Most High. We always find, whether in prophecy or in parable, that the explanation goes beyond that which the original statement itself contains. There is always some new fact. So here, the truth is added that the saints of the Most High are to obtain and to keep the kingdom. The general thesis of the chapter is, that four

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beasts would rise on the earth, and be finally judged by God. The truth added in the explanation is, that the saints of the Most High would receive the kingdom, the beasts being set aside.

“ Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast . . . which brake in pieces and stamped the residue with his feet ” (v. 19). This violence and cruelty has always marked the conduct of the fourth beast; it is Europe, at all events, in the west.

“ And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up . . . even of that horn that had eyes . . . ” (v. 20). The horn had intelligence and designs. Three of the horns (kingdoms) fell before this horn, which, little at the beginning, becomes in appearance more stout than his fellows, and at last rules in the midst of the horns. And you will see, as we proceed, that this horn usurps all the power of the beast, or at least, stamps the whole with its character. The horn gets the power. *As it is the conduct of this little horn which determines that of the beast, so also is the horn the cause of the beast's destruction.*

“ I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the

kingdom.” Afterwards the explanation is given, and the little horn is more fully mentioned (*vv.* 21-25). This horn is not to be an ordinary kingdom, but a special power which raises itself up in the midst of the others.

The fourth beast is to do three things. First, it speaks great things against the God who is on high, ruler of heaven and earth : secondly, it wears out the saints of the Most High ; those, namely, who own God in the high (heavenly) places ; also, it makes war with the *faithful* Jews who have returned to their land ; thirdly, it not only destroys the saints, but it thinks to change the times (that is, solemn days, certain days which return from year to year, and which mark certain epochs among the Jews, as Pentecost, the feast of Tabernacles, etc), and the law itself.

They shall be delivered into his hands, that is, these times and the law, until a certain period ; it will not be for ever. The beast, then, apostatizes against God, makes war against the saints who confess Him, and lastly, completely sets aside the Jewish ordinances. This is the final character which the beast takes.

We shall still have to consider this beast, and consequently, we must follow with care this part of the book, because of the important place which the little horn occupies in the revelations of God. Meanwhile, let us remember

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that, whilst the prophetic part of this chapter, as contrasted with the explanatory part, treats of the beast being destroyed, and delivered to the fire, in the latter part, the Spirit of God is almost entirely occupied with the actings of the little horn. The judgment is to sit, and its dominion to be taken away (that is of the little horn) (v. 26). We shall see that the ten horns give their power to the beast; but this little horn rules the beast, morally speaking, and so all the others, by its intelligence and influence; so that the Spirit of God can speak of the little horn as being everything.

Notwithstanding it was still the beast, for the little horn possessed all the power of the beast, and its (the little horn's) conduct characterized the beast; for as it was the horn which blasphemed, persecuted, and changed the law, so is its dominion which is taken away.

At the same time bear in mind, that although the little horn was principally before the eyes of the prophet, the others had not ceased to exist. There yet remained seven horns after three had been swallowed up, so that we do not see in the little horn all the empire of the fourth beast, considered geographically. The little horn is morally, but not geographically, the beast. Seven of the horns which existed previously will still subsist.

The features of the beast, then, are that we have one particular horn which is very different from the others, small in appearance when it rose, but whose looks and words were stouter than the others, three of whom fell before it. It is the horn that persecutes and changes the times, and represents completely the beast before God as to the judgment; but at the same time, as to physical and material power, there are seven other horns in other places, but within the limits of the Roman empire; and who are thus the instruments of the moral evil of the little horn. One horn is the great worker of evil, whilst the mass of the empire, divided into seven parts, gives the power to that one.

Napoleon may serve to give us an idea of this state of things. Spain, Belgium, Westphalia, etc., followed him; they were his auxiliaries; but he personally stamped his character on the whole course of events. And so with these seven: their authority may exist within their own limits, but their power will be given to him who will exalt himself against God and His saints.

The thirteenth and seventeenth chapters of the Apocalypse also bring this beast before us. In chapter xiii., he is shown as seated upon the throne, and wielding the power of Satan, by means of another beast who helped to glorify the first on the throne. In chapter xvii.

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he is shown more in his relationships with Babylon; whilst here, in Daniel vii., he is represented to us as making war against God Himself, in his relationship also with the saints of the Most High, and with the Jews. In the east, in the Jewish or glorious land, is the special place where the evil will be finally concentrated. In Isaiah xiv. and Zechariah xi. we have details which I shall now examine.

In 2 Thessalonians ii. the power of evil is seen in another aspect; namely, in connection with apostate Christendom; just as in Daniel xi. it is considered with respect to the evil conduct of "the king" in Palestine; whilst here, it is seen rising from among the Gentiles, acting against the saints of the Most High and the faithful Jews.

I do not make any allusion, in this place, to chapter viii., because it is my conviction that the little horn of that chapter is not the same as this one. Some who have studied the subject are not of this opinion; but for myself, it is my belief that it is another power which will be found there, in special connection with the Jews, invading those eastern countries, but which is not the little horn of chapter vii.

There is still another passage to be referred to in regard to the little horn. It is the latter part of Dan. ix., in connection with the desolation of Jerusalem. I mention it only that the chain of passages may be complete.

In examining this book, I have no pretension to give a complete exposition; but only to notice some leading points which may assist you, and myself also, in further inquiry. One of the most remarkable facts in this chapter is the open revolt of man against God. It is that which so astonished Daniel. In the end man will arrogate to himself *power*, as if it was found in himself, instead of derived from God; just as it was the religion of man among the Jews, which dared to reject and crucify the Messiah.

But this power of man, in complete apostasy, given up to Satan, is the instrument of the war which Satan wages against God and His Anointed. *It is not iniquity alone, and the commission of sins, but the open revolt of sin as a principle.* Under whatever form man is found in connection with God, this beast will give himself the trouble, so to speak, to unite in himself all these characters in opposition to God.

Is it a question of God Himself? he derides Him, and sets himself up against Him. Is it a question of the saints? he persecutes and destroys them. His object is to overturn everything for the setting up of himself. He speaks great words against the Most High. Satan gives him his throne, after he has been driven out of heaven, three years and a half before the judgment: when, having but *a short*

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time, he acts in great wrath, establishing thus the wicked one upon his throne on earth; inspiring man, and putting him forward, as the head of everything here below, and destroying all relationship with God.

In 2 Thess. ii. we learn this solemn truth, that the rebellion against God, as known in Christianity, is based upon the apostasy of those who bore its name; and then the Man of Sin rises, and shows himself as God in the temple of God: all those who have not received the truth in the love of it, having been deceived by the lying wonders of the power of the enemy.

And then the events of Revelation xiii. will be realized, namely, that Satan gives the beast his throne; and at that time, I judge, the horrible character of open revolt, in all its bearings, will be publicly manifested. The evil works beforehand in principles, in mysteries; but when the throne of Satan is set up down here, after he has been driven from heaven (at least three years and a half before the end), and in consequence is no longer able to deceive, after a religious sort, in making himself God on high; and the saints, as a result, having no combat to sustain in the heavenly places, then he gives his throne to the beast; and open rebellion will follow, rebellion against God; the *wicked one* in speciality as such will be revealed: "that wicked

one shall be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume," etc. (2 Thess. ii. 8). Then the throne will be given to the Son of man.

It is very important, through God's grace, to see where *the course of this world* will end; and be assured that it is not necessary that man should be outwardly degraded in habits, in order to serve Satan, or that these events should take place; for the little horn had the eyes of a man, all the intelligence of man, his capacity, clear-sightedness. These faculties distinguished him.

Nevertheless, he will reject God; his conscience will not be in exercise; he will have no sense of responsibility towards Him; whilst the desire of self-elevation and aggrandizement will choke every trace of love: just as Adam, in wishing to be like God, put God aside.

But the judgment will come in, and Christ will be manifested in all His glory; and it is this for which we wait, as regards the improvement of things here below. But thanks be to God, we have, as Christians, a better portion, even a heavenly, which consists in being like Christ, and with Him for ever.*

* The reader will remark that Rev. xiii. shows us there will be a double agency in this manifestation of evil. The throne of the first blasphemous beast given to him by Satan and the active diabolical machinations of the second, or false prophet, who had horns like a lamb.

Truth for the Time.

I.

THERE is a character of truth in the Epistle to the Galatians very seasonable at this present time, and very strengthening to the soul at all times.

It teaches us to know that the religion of FAITH is the religion of IMMEDIATE PERSONAL CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST; a truth which is (again I say) seasonable in a day like the present, when the provisions and claims of certain earthly church forms, and a system of ordinances suggested by the religious, carnal mind, are abundant and fascinating.

To learn, at all times, that our souls are to have their immediate business with Christ is comforting and assuring. To be told this afresh at such a time as the present is needful.

The apostle is very fervent in this epistle; naturally and properly so; as we all should be, as we all ought to be, when some justly prized possession is invaded; when some precious portion of truth, the dearest of all possessions, is tampered with.

In this epistle, in the first instance, as at the beginning, the apostle lets us know with great force and plainness that he had received his apostleship *immediately* from God; not only his commission, or his office, but his instructions also; that which he had to minister and testify, as well as his appointment and ministry itself. He was an apostle immediately from

God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ; and what he knew and taught he had by direct, immediate revelation.

And in connection with this he tells us that, as God had thus dealt immediately with him, so had he, in answering confidence, dealt immediately with God. For, having received the revelation, having had the Son revealed in him, he at once withdrew from conversing with flesh and blood. He did not go up to Jerusalem, to those who were apostles before him, but down to Arabia, carrying, as it were, his treasure with him; not seeking to improve it, but as one that was satisfied with it, just as it was; that is, with the Christ who had now been given to him.

And here let me say, this brings to mind the Gospel by John, for that gives us, before this time of Paul, sample after sample of the soul finding its satisfaction in Christ. Every quickened one there illustrates it. Andrew, and Peter, and Philip, and Nathanael, in the first chapter; afterwards the Samaritan and her companions at Sychar; and then the convicted adulteress, and the excommunicated beggar, all of them tell us, in language which cannot be misunderstood, that they had found satisfaction in Christ, that, having been alone with Him in their sins, they were now *independent*; having had a personal, *immediate* dealing with Him as the Saviour, they looked

not elsewhere. Arabia will do for them as well as Jerusalem, just as in the experience of the Paul of the Galatians. They never appear to converse with flesh and blood. Ordinances are in no measure their confidence. Their souls are proving that faith is that principle which puts sinners into *immediate* contact with Christ, and makes them independent of all that man can do for them.

How unspeakably blessed to see such a state of soul illustrated in any fellow-sinner, in men "of like passions" with ourselves, like corruptions, like state of guilt and condemnation! Such things are surely written for our learning, that by comfort of such scriptures we may have assurance and liberty.

And what is thus, in living samples, *illustrated*, for our comfort, in John's Gospel, is *taught and pressed upon us* in this fervent Epistle of Paul to the Galatians. Having shown the churches in Galatia the character of his apostleship, how he got both his commission and his instructions immediately from God, and was not debtor to flesh and blood, to Jerusalem, the city of solemnities, nor to those who were apostles before him for anything; and having discovered, as it were, his very spirit to them, telling them that the life he was now living was by the faith of the Son of God, he begins to *challenge* them. For they were not in this state of soul.

He calls them "foolish," and tells them they had been "bewitched." For how could he do less than detect the working of Satan in the fact that they had been withdrawn from the place where the Spirit and the truth, the cross of Christ and faith, had once put them. But then, he *reasons* with them, argues the matter, and calls forth his witnesses. He makes themselves their judges, appealing to their first estate. "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"

He cites Abraham in proof that a sinner had *immediate* personal business with Christ, and through faith found justification. And he rehearses the character of the gospel which had been preached to Abraham, how it told of *Christ*, and of *the sinner*, and *blessing* being put together and alone. "In thee [Abraham's seed, which is Christ] shall all nations be blessed."

Precious gospel! CHRIST, AND THE SINNER, AND BLESSING, BOUND UP TOGETHER IN ONE BUNDLE. And he goes on to confirm and establish this, by teaching them how Christ bore the curse, and therefore, surely was entitled to dispense the blessing.

Surely these are witnesses which may well be received, as proving the divine character of the religion of faith, which is the sinner's immediate confidence in Christ.

But then he does further and other service in this same cause. He goes on to tell us the glorious things faith works and accomplishes in us and for us. "After that faith is come," he tells us in chap. iii. 25-27, "we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children [sons] of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

Here are precious deeds of faith! It dismisses the schoolmaster, it brings the soul to God as to a father, and then it clothes the believer with the value of Christ in the eye and acceptance of God. And "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (iv. 6). And "we are redeemed from under the law" (iv. 5).

Can any more full and perfect sense of an *immediate* dealing between Christ and the soul be conceived than is expressed and declared by such statements? We are brought from under the law (the schoolmaster, and, with him, tutors and governors are gone), we are children at home in the Father's house, and have the rights and the mind of the First-born Himself put on us and imparted to us. Can any condition of soul more blessedly set forth our independence of the resources of a religion of ordinances, and the poor sinner's personal and immediate connection with Christ Himself?

"The Hope of His Calling."

EPHESIANS I. 18; 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 verse 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," etc. 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, and shows them, as it were, the corpse they were, the pit they were in. God loves to be the Centre, to have round Him a circum-

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ference 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 the Epistle to the 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? (Gal. ii. 20).

God promised a son to Abraham; his cir-

cumstances said, "Impossible, you cannot have any children." But Abraham said, "Let God alone. He must 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, etc., it is that we may have communion with Himself through this Christ dwelling in us 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 talking about Christ always; Christ at home in the heart. I look up and say, "There is a Man on the throne of God, and He has all

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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 Godhead."

If you know Him, you may get all the fullness 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 it 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!

Our Lord's Loving Request.

"This do in remembrance of Me"

(1 Cor. xi. 24, 25).

WE do not go to the Gospels for our instruction and authority as to the Lord's Supper; for about this He has since then spoken to us from heaven, as was revealed to the Church by the apostle Paul (1 Cor. xi. 23).

True it is that in the Gospels we find, after keeping the Passover, that our Lord took bread, gave thanks, brake, and gave to His disciples, saying, "Take eat, this is My body," etc.; and so far we may speak of it as the Lord's institution of His supper. But though it is more or less spoken of by all the four Evangelists, it is only Luke who records our Lord's special request: "This do in remembrance of Me," and he names it only once. Moreover, in the Gospels by Matthew, Mark and Luke, the hope connected with it was the *kingdom*: "I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom"; for the Lord was then *looking to the restoration and blessing of the nation of Israel*, ere He will know joy in the world; and then His people will share it with Him.

When He was drawing nigh to the cross of Calvary, He said to His disciples, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me"; and truly it is the case that since He was taken down from the cross no worldling's eye has rested upon Him. His mission to the earth then closed; and joy on earth, in which He will participate, can only be when He takes to Himself His great power, and establishes the long-looked-for kingdom on earth in righteousness.

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With Christ rejected by the world, and hated without a cause by His own nation, but raised by God from among the dead, and glorified as Man on His own right hand, an entirely new order begins. The world being now under sentence of judgment, the Jews dispersed in governmental displeasure because of their sin, the *kingdom* so often spoken of by prophets is in abeyance until He shall come, whose right it is.

Meanwhile the Holy Ghost is received and shed forth by the exalted Saviour, the veil of the temple having been rent from the top to the bottom; and the Forerunner having gone into heaven itself by His own blood, the Father's love, counsels, and ways are having their accomplishment in calling out a body and bride for the Son; while we are taught to look for His coming again, at any time, to take us bodily and for ever out of this scene to the Father's house, and so be for ever with the Lord (1 Cor. xv.; 1 Thess. iv.).

It is not difficult then to see why, when Israel for a time is governmentally given up, and a new order of blessing begun in connection with the Son of man being in the glory of God, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, instead of looking forward to the *kingdom*, we are taught by the Lord from heaven to keep His Supper "till He come."

As those who know we have redemption in

Christ, and by His precious blood, it is surely the delight of our hearts to do what is pleasing in His sight who said, "This do in remembrance of Me"; and observe that in this loving request we have something to do, as well as some One to remember. It is also the expression of one body (1 Cor. xii. 12; Eph. iv. 4). "This do" implies an act to be carried out with others. We may have sweet remembrances of the Saviour's precious words and ways and suffering unto death for us when alone; but here it is something to be done. Our Lord took bread, gave thanks, brake, and gave them saying, "Take, eat." "This do in remembrance of Me." After the same manner also He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come."

It is not true, then, that I can remember the Lord at home, when alone, in the same way as when gathered with others to His name to carry out His mind, in thus eating of the bread, and drinking of the cup. There is, in carrying out this special request of our Lord, something to be done: "This do"; so that if I do not do it, I do not carry out His mind.

Then there is a Person to be remembered; not what He has done, blessed as it is always

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to think of it, but Himself. We are to remember Him; not, as is often said, that we come together to remember His death, but to remember *Him*. And surely the difference is great in its effect on our souls, whether we are thinking of a work done for us, or of the loving One who did it.

No doubt, when we are occupied with Him in eating the bread and drinking the cup, we cannot forget His death, and the love that brought Him there for us, that love which many waters could not quench, nor all the power of man or Satan hinder. But while in doing this we remember Him, we also announce or show forth His death. This should be our employ "till He come." "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. xi. 26). How soon He may come for us!

In our doing this, there is not only the discerning of the Lord's body, but the expression of the "one body" in our breaking and eating of the same loaf. We have our *individual* thoughts and exercises of faith and love in thus remembering Him; but here believers are gathered together, and because we are "many" we are *collectively* the expression of being "one body" in Christ. "For we being many are one bread" (or loaf): "for we are all partakers of that one loaf" (1 Cor. x. 17).

It is important to see this as characterizing the Lord's Table, as we are so instructed by the apostle who was specially called to minister to the Church (Col. i. 25). We have no such thoughts in the account given in the Gospels of the institution of the Supper, because Israel had not then been formally given up, nor had the mystery of the Church been revealed; but when the Assembly was revealed to Paul, and made known to others by the Spirit, then the fitting time came for teaching those who were members of the body of Christ, that in the act of doing this, in remembrance of the Lord, there is the expression of our being one with all other believers, "one body."

Let us not fail to notice also that in the Evangelists' account of the Lord's Supper only apostles (men, and not women) partook of it; but when the Church is set up on earth, then ALL believers are addressed as to their great privilege in thus remembering the Lord till He come.

May we know more of the Lord's mind as to this, and of our accountability to Him who is in the midst of those gathered together in His name.

The Book of Experience.

(PHILIPPIANS).

VIII. CHAPTER III., *continued.*

TO be in our daily occupations as to Christ, we have also to watch against another danger. When there are not other objects, there are distractions. We must watch the distractions as well as the objects, and have habits of jealousy of heart for Christ, else there is immediate weakness. And then when we go into God's presence, instead of rejoicing in the Lord, the conscience has to be talked to. It is sad indeed when the walk in the world has been such that, on going back to Christ, we find He had not been thought of in it.

Could you say, as Paul to Agrippa, Would to God you were not almost, but altogether such as I am? Are you happy enough to say that? Can you say, I am so rejoicing in Christ, and see such excellency in the knowledge of Him, that I would to God you were like me? What we have to look for in hearts is, not I *have* counted, but I *do* count. Do your hearts count, as a present thing, all things loss?

Two things we have to watch against, having another object, and, what is even more subtle, distractions. The Lord give us to have our eyes so anointed with eye-salve, so to see Him, as to detach our hearts from other things; to have no other object than Himself

before them. Perhaps we shall have the cross to take up; but mark, then it is not merely suffering, nor always exactly *for* Him either, but it is always *with* Him.

The Lord give us (for we have to pass through a place where people do not care about Christ), to have the eye thus fixed on Him, having Him as a sanctuary, as the power and energy which carries us through. The Lord give us (and it is in His heart to give us) to say, "This one thing I do." The Lord give us truth of heart, and diligence of heart too.

We were seeing, beloved brethren, the way in which Christ being before the eye gives earnestness of purpose in running towards the glory. Christ had laid hold on Paul for it; and he wanted to lay hold on Christ in glory. We were seeing too that this epistle looks at the Christian as travelling across the wilderness, with everything at the end. But remember this, that, all through, the power of Christ's resurrection being in him, he had already the power in life, and wanted it in glory; and the practical effect was to make him run as a person who had only the glory in view; one single object, winning Him, and being raised up himself into the glory.

That is what we are predestinated to, "to be conformed to the image of His Son"; not

looking forward to being like Him when our bodies are in the grave and we in Paradise. True, "when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2). But "our conversation" is *now* "in heaven"; our *citizenship*, though I do not much like the word. It means *all our living relationships*. As we say, He is an Englishman; that is what distinguishes him. What distinguishes us is, we are of heaven.

So he says, "This one thing I do," running towards the place; it has determined my whole life; "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling" (v. 14). The high calling means the calling above. We can have no notion of perfection but as in that glory.

The moment I have seen Christ come down, obedient to death for me, there is nothing too great to expect as the answer to it, for all is the fruit of the travail of His soul.

The "earnest of His love" is nowhere in Scripture; it has been taken, I think, out of a hymn. The earnest of the glory we have. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts (Rom. v. 5). Paul felt the power of the glory on his spirit; and that is how we are to run. But all Christians do not know it. If a man is a Christian at all he must know the cross as that through which he is redeemed; but he may not know that he is going to be with Christ in glory.

The "little children" know that their sins are forgiven (1 John ii. 12). This is the common knowledge of all. And the children know the Father, have the Spirit of adoption. But the "perfect" in Christ, as they are here called (v. 15), know the evil of their own hearts far better, and at the same time see the perfect love of God in giving Christ on the cross, love come down to the sinner in his sins. They see not only that they are forgiven, but that we are all done with as children of Adam.

The "little children" have not that. They do not know that they are entirely set aside as to their Adam nature. The old nature is dead to faith, and "when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4). And faith has got the place now: "Herein is love with us made perfect . . . because as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17). There is the man "perfect."

He says, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you" (v. 15). He may be at the beginning, and you further on; if so, you ought to show him the more grace. However, Christ has laid hold on him, and forgiven him his sins, and he will yet know another thing, even that he has died with Christ; that, not only sins are forgiven, but that sin is put away

by faith; that he himself is put away; that self which troubled him a great deal more than his sins. They are to be likeminded, as those who know that they are associated with the Second Adam. Even if this is not seen by all, they are yet to go thoroughly together; God will reveal it to the others.

He then turns to the contrast, and, in doing so, puts himself forward in a remarkable way as their example (*v.* 17). There are those whose "conversation is in heaven," and there are those who "mind earthly things" (*vv.* 18, 19). The end of the latter is destruction; they are contrary to Christianity. It is now not a question of not seeing clearly, but of having the mind on earthly things.

That is not Christ in glory; I cannot mind earthly things and Christ too. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God" (James iv. 4). "All that is in the world . . . is not of the Father" (1 John ii. 16). The children are of the Father.

When I was first awakened, I was astonished to find so much about the world in God's word; but I soon saw, when I had to do with Christians, how it dragged them back, always soliciting their hearts.

Studies on the Book of Daniel.

VI.—CHAPTER VIII.

I RESERVE some further remarks on chapter vii. till we come to the end of chapter ix., and I proceed to chapter viii. In it the Spirit of God takes two empires, namely, the second and third of the four beasts previously seen, to give a more detailed history of them.

“In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me.” “And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan, in the palace, which is in the province of Elam ” (*vv.* 1, 2).

This land of Elam, or Persia, was the body of the second beast. The bear of chapter vii. is now the ram. “The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia ” (*v.* 20). These two kingdoms were united into one. In chapter vii. this kingdom is told to “arise, and devour much flesh,” whilst here the ram is said to push “westward, and northward, and southward.”

The he-goat of verse 5, which attacks the ram, is the empire of the Greeks, which commenced under Alexander. This “notable horn,” having united the Greeks, led them into Asia against the empire of the Persians. In three years he overthrew it; it crumbled into nothing before his energy, which earned

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for him, among men, the name of Great. We know from history that he died, whilst yet young, of a fever, the consequence of his excesses.

“When he [the he-goat] was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven” (v. 8). Alexander traversed the greater part of Asia, and penetrated as far as India, proving his capacity, not only as a general, but as the founder of a solid empire. But God laid His hand upon him; and “for it came up four notable ones.” The same truth is presented in chap. vii. 6 under the figure of a leopard with four wings and four heads. After Alexander’s death, his kingdom was divided into four distinct monarchies, with two of which we have principally to do, because two of them came into connection with the Jews; just as, lately, the Turks and Egyptians were at war about this same Holy Land.

We must remember, if we would understand this prophecy, that even the geography of Scripture is always considered according to the position of the Holy Land. If we have a king of the south, it is a king to the south of Palestine; for Palestine is the centre of all God’s thoughts, as to the government of this world. Jerusalem is His chosen city. “For the Lord hath chosen Zion,” it is said; “He

hath desired it for His habitation. This is My rest for ever " (Psalm cxxxii. 13, 14). From one of the kingdoms designated under the four horns (it is not said from which, but distinctively from one), comes a little horn, whose acts form the important part of this chapter.

" And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land," namely, the Holy Land (v. 9).

In considering Scripture, it is needful to place oneself, so to speak, in the point of view from which God looks. He says, in Deut. xi. 12, and 1 Kings ix. 3, that He will never take His eyes off Palestine. Now the activity of faith always hangs upon this regard of God. And this knowledge of God's thoughts is the power of service in the Church. God keeps His sheep always, that is to say, He *always* loves them. If I see one of these sheep wander, it is very sorrowful; and looking at it with man's judgment only, one might be inclined to abandon it; but remembering that it is a sheep, I act towards it as God thinks of it; that is, faith takes up the thoughts of God, as to the object of His love.

As far as the world is concerned, Jerusalem is nothing. It is a city trodden down, with neither commerce nor riches. Superstition is established there upon the sepulchre of the Lord. It is true, indeed, that the kings of the

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earth are beginning to look that way, because Providence is leading in that train; but as for God, He ever thinks of it: it is always His house, His city. His eyes and His heart are there continually. Now, faith understands this.

And what was Daniel's position? He was a captive among the Chaldeans at Babylon; but Palestine was for him "the pleasant land." His captivity takes off nothing from its interest. It was a very small province of an immense empire, almost unknown *in the empire*, so small was it in comparison. But to God it was everything. His purposes were ever towards it.

"The little horn waxed exceeding great towards . . . the pleasant land." We shall never understand the Old Testament prophecies if we do not see two things: First, that the thoughts of God are upon the glory of Christ, who, on His reappearance, will reign over the earth. If this thought be not kept in view, whilst considering the details and events of Scripture, nothing will be understood; for God will and does make all the events of the world work together to that end.

Secondly, we shall equally fail in understanding prophecy, if we forget that the Jews are the habitual objects of the thoughts of God; for although He cannot recognize them for the moment, as being under His chasten-

ing hand, they are nevertheless still His people; for "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. xi. 29): and however we may apply this assertion to the Church (for it is true of every one who is possessor of a divine life), yet the context shows that the Jews are meant, who, although supplanted during their judicial blindness by the Church on earth (the Gentile dispensation), yet will by-and-by be re-established in all their privileges.

When we have once laid hold on these two thoughts, that Christ is the aim and the end of all the counsels of God, and that the Jews are the object of His counsels *here below*, there are a multitude of expressions that become easy of apprehension. For example, "the pleasant land"; it is the land of the Jews: nothing ennobles before God but His gifts and vocation. And who are the people and land which He has chosen? No other than the land and the people which He promised to Abraham (Gen. xv.), and which Christ, as the Seed of Abraham, will inherit, together with Israel, who are the people whom God has chosen.

"And it [the little horn] waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them" (v. 10).

There is an alteration in the next verse, to

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which I must here draw your attention, as it relates to a matter of no little importance, namely, the complete destruction of the worship of God at Jerusalem. If we were meditating on doctrines connected with salvation, I would not trouble you with questions of criticism; but I venture to do so here, as we are occupied with the intelligence of Scripture; and much is, in this instance, dependent on a just translation of verse 11, the main correction of which is afforded by the margin of the English translation. I give what I believe to be correct. "And he* magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and *from* him [the prince of the host] the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place† of his sanctuary was cast down, and a certain time‡ of distress was appointed to the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression."

All this I should, moreover, put in parenthesis. The material change is, that the taking away of the daily sacrifice is not attributed to this little horn. The actings of the little horn are resumed after the word "trans-

* The change from "it" to "he" is to be noted here. It does not agree immediately with the little horn.

† This word in the original gives the idea of something solid, permanent, established; and comes from the word to establish.

‡ Where in verse 12 it is said "an host was given him," I take the word in the sense in which it is used in Job vii. 1, xiv. 14, and perhaps x. 17: an appointed time of distress; a miserable condition which is ordained to any one.

gression.” “And *it* cast down the truth to the ground,” etc. (v. 12).

In the actings, then, of the little horn, it is not a question of uttering blasphemy and exalting itself against God; but of something very definite and precise; “it waxed great, even to the host of heaven.” It attacks those who, in those days, are there, the Jews who have a place around their chief; that is, those who in the moral heaven surround the throne of God: I judge it to mean the priests and heads among the Jews at Jerusalem, or such as God owns there.

Observe God’s estimate of things. He attaches more importance to the priests and governors among this poor people, than to anything else which the beast has been doing in the world. He lifted himself up “*even to the host of heaven.*” It is infinitely more dangerous to meddle with things that belong to God, and things upon which God looks, to *endeavour to efface His glory, all tarnished* though it may be in our hands, than to overturn or to found empires, or to achieve the greatest victories; although God in His providence may superintend these events.

The little horn might overthrow nations; but to say there should be no worship of God was an event far more serious: it was to destroy the only link which permitted God to recognize the state of things on the earth.

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Such, then, is the special conduct of this little horn. It magnifies itself even to the host of heaven, and casts down a part of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamps on them. At the end, he who fills the anti-typical place of this little horn, exalts himself even so as to rise up against the prince of the host. He aims even at Him who is the true Head of all things. Those who were at Jerusalem in such a place, represented God, whilst Christ will soon be manifested as the true Prince of the host. God further permits that the daily sacrifice should be taken away from this Prince. We see, therefore, who is this Prince. It is the Lord. The sacrifice is taken away from Him, and the place of *His* sanctuary cast down, in this time of terror.

God calls His house at Jerusalem the place of His sanctuary, the sanctuary of Christ. He was, and is always, the God of the Jews. It is not a simple treading down of the people by the permission of God, as chastisement on account of their sins; but that it should be so, the temple is allowed to be cast down, as indeed it was at the time of the captivity of Babylon; and this must be the case, in order that God may show that He has completely abandoned His people to the fruit of their ways. While He owns His honour there, He must stand up in their defence, though He chastise; but if that be destroyed, and their

city prostrate, then He leaves them indeed to the matured fruit of their sins, though He may still have the intention of bringing them back.

One might have supposed it impossible that His fixed habitation should be cast down; but the Spirit of God puts these facts in contrast, that we may see that the things which God Himself had established, and preserved for centuries, He abandons, whilst still calling them His own. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance"; but He overturns everything that He has set as a witness, in the place which He has chosen for His dwelling, and breaks His bonds with the people, whilst still saying that they are His tabernacle, His places of assembly, His altar and His sanctuary (Lam. ii. 6, 7). Because of the unfaithfulness of the people, God no longer allows the worship which should have been offered to Him; and, by permitting the daily sacrifice to be taken away, the visible and exterior link between Himself and the people is broken, and all that manifests His favour in the world (His house and worship) is set aside.

Divine Titles.

IT is at once interesting, instructive, and edifying to mark the various titles under which God appears in the Holy Scriptures.

These titles are expressive of certain characters and relationships in which God has been pleased to reveal Himself to man; and we are persuaded that the Christian reader will find solid profit and real spiritual refreshment and blessing in the study of this subject.

We can do little more, in this brief paper, than offer a suggestion or two, leaving the reader to search the Scriptures for himself, in order to a full understanding of the true meaning and proper application of the various titles.

In the first chapter of Genesis we have the first great title: "God" (Elohim): "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." This presents God in unapproachable, incomprehensible Deity. "No man hath seen God at any time" (John i. 18). We hear His voice and see His work in creation; but Himself no man hath seen or can see. He dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto.

But in Genesis ii. we have another title added to God, namely, "Lord" (Jehovah). Why is this? Because man is now on the scene; and "Lord" is expressive of the divine relation with man. Precious truth! Precious beyond expression. It is impossible to read these two chapters and not be struck with the

difference of the titles, "God" and "the Lord God"; "Elohim" and "Jehovah Elohim"; and the difference is, at once, beautiful and instructive.*

Genesis vii. 16 presents an interesting example. "And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as *God* had commanded him: and the *Lord* shut him in." God, in His government, was about to destroy the human race and every living thing. But Jehovah, in infinite grace, shut Noah in.

Mark the distinction. If a mere man were writing the history, he might transpose the titles, not seeing what was involved. Not so

* We shall here give the various divine titles given in Scripture; and the reader can, if so led, examine for himself the passages in which they occur, and see the way in which they are applied.

"Elohim": God. "Jehovah": Lord. "Adonai" also rendered Lord; see Psalm xvi. 2. Adonai or Adon signifies the base or foundation. In some English Bibles, Jehovah is rendered in capital letters, LORD; Adonai, Lord. Thus the distinction is easily seen. "O my soul, thou hast said, Jehovah, Thou art my Adonai" (Ps. xvi. 2). This is very striking and beautiful.

Then in Genesis xiv. 22, we have "Elion": the Most High God. This is His millennial title. And in chapter xvii. 1 we have "Shaddai," the "Almighty." "I am the Almighty God: walk before Me, and be thou perfect." In Psalm xci. 1, 2, we have a very beautiful application: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of Elion shall abide under the shadow of Shaddai. I will say of Jehovah, He is my refuge and my fortress; my Elohim; in Him will I trust." All this is full of precious instruction: and we trust the reader may be led to pursue the study for himself. It is hardly needful to add that, for the ineffable title and relationship of "Father," we must turn to the New Testament.

the Holy Spirit. He brings out the lovely point of Jehovah's relationship with Noah. Elohim was going to judge the world; but, as Jehovah, He had His eye upon His beloved servant Noah, and graciously sheltered him in the vessel of mercy.

How perfect is Scripture! How edifying and refreshing to trace the moral glories of the divine volume!

Let us turn to a passage in 1 Samuel xvii., where we have the record of David's encounter with Goliath. He boldly tells the giant what he is about to do, both to him and to the host of the Philistines, in order "that all *the earth* may know that there is a *God* [Elohim] in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the *Lord* [Jehovah] saveth not by sword or spear; for the battle is Jehovah's, and He will give you into our hands" (vv. 46, 47).

"All the earth" was to know and own the presence of God in the midst of His people. They could know nothing of the precious relationship involved in the title "Jehovah." This latter was for the assembly alone. They were to know, not only His presence in their midst, but His blessed mode of acting. To the world He was Elohim; to His beloved people He was Jehovah.

Well may these exquisite touches command our hearts' admiration. Oh! the living depths, the moral glories of that peerless revelation

which our Father has graciously penned for our comfort and edification ! We must confess it gives us unspeakable delight to dwell on these things, and point them out to the reader, in this infidel day when the divine inspiration of Holy Scripture is boldly called in question, in quarters where we should least expect it.

But we have something better to do, just now, than replying to the contemptible assaults of infidelity. We are thoroughly persuaded that the most effective safeguard against all such assaults is to have the word of Christ dwelling in us richly, in all its living, formative power. To the heart thus filled and fortified, the most plausible and powerful arguments of all infidel writers are but as the pattering of rain on the window.

We shall only give the reader one more illustration of our subject from the Old Testament. It occurs in the interesting history of Jehoshaphat. " And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, It is the king of Israel : therefore they compassed about him to fight : but Jehoshaphat cried out, and *the Lord* [Jehovah] helped *him* ; and *God* [Elohim] moved *them* to depart from him " (2 Chron. xviii. 31).

This is deeply affecting. Jehoshaphat had put himself into an utterly false position. He had linked himself with the most ungodly of Israel's kings. He had even gone so far as

to say to the wicked Ahab, "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war." No marvel, therefore, if the Syrian captains mistook him for Ahab. It was only taking him at his word. But when brought down to the very lowest point, into the very shadow of death, "he cried out," and that cry went up to the gracious and ever-attentive ear of Jehovah, who has said, "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee" (Ps. l. 15). Precious grace!

But mark the lovely accuracy in the use and application of the divine titles; for this is our thesis. "He cried out, and Jehovah helped him," and, what then? A mere human authority would, doubtless, have put it thus: "Jehovah helped him, and moved them." But no; Jehovah had, as such, nothing to do with uncircumcised Syrians. His eye was upon His dear, though erring, servant; His heart was toward him, and His everlasting arms around him. There was no link between Jehovah and the Syrians; but Elohim, whom they knew not, moved them away.

Who can fail to see the beauty and perfection of all this? Is it not plain to the reader that the stamp of a divine hand is visible upon the three passages which we have culled for his consideration? Yes, and so it is upon every clause, from cover to cover, of the divine

Volume. Let no one suppose, for a moment, that we want to occupy our readers with curious points, nice distinctions, or learned criticisms. Nothing is further from our thoughts. We would not pen a line for any or all of these objects. As God is our Witness, our one great object in writing this paper is to deepen in the hearts of our readers the sense of the preciousness, beauty, and excellency of the Holy Scriptures, given of God for the guidance, help, and blessing of His people in this dark world. If this object be gained, we have our full reward.

But we cannot close without referring, for a moment, to the precious pages of the New Testament. We shall ask the reader to turn to Romans xv., in which we have God presented to us under three distinct titles, each one of which is in perfect and beautiful keeping with the immediate subject in hand.

Thus, in the opening verses of the chapter, which properly belong to chapter xiv., the inspired apostle is urging upon us the necessity of patience, forbearance, and kindly consideration one of another. And to whom does he direct us for power to respond to these holy and much needed exhortations? "To the God of patience and consolation." He presents God in the very character in which we need Him. Our small stock of patience would soon be exhausted, in seeking to meet the varied

characters which cross our path, even in intercourse with our brethren.

There are constant claims upon our patience and forbearance; and, most surely, others have need of patience and forbearance with us.

Where are we all to get the means of meeting all these claims? At the exhaustless treasury of "the God of patience and consolation." Our tiny springs would soon dry up if not kept in unbroken connection with that ever-flowing fountain. The weight of a feather would be an over-match for *our* patience; how much more the ten thousand things that come before us even in the Church of God!

Hence the need of the beautiful prayer of the apostle, "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God."

Here lies the grand secret, the divine power of receiving one another, and going on together in holy love, heavenly patience, and tender consideration. We cannot get on otherwise. It is only by habitual communion with the God of patience and consolation that we shall be able to rise above the numberless hindrances to confidence and fellowship that continually present themselves, and walk in

fervent love to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

But we must draw this paper to a close, and shall merely glance at the other divine titles presented in our chapter. When the apostle speaks of the future glory, his heart at once turns to God in the very character suited to the subject before him. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, through the power of the Holy Ghost." If we would have the hope of glory brightened in our souls (and truly we need it), we must turn our eyes to "the God of hope."

How marked and striking is the application of the divine titles, wherever we turn! Whatever may be the character of our need, God presents Himself to our hearts in the very way adapted to meet it. Thus, at the close of the chapter, when the apostle turns his eyes towards Judæa, and the difficulties and the dangers awaiting him, his heart springs up to "the God of peace." Precious resource in all our varied exercises, anxieties, sorrows and cares!

In a word, whatever we want, we have just to turn in simple faith to God, and find it all in Him. God, blessed for ever be His name, is the one grand and all-sufficient answer to our every need, from the starting-post to the goal of our Christian career. Oh, for artless faith to use Him!

Truth for the Time.

II.

BUT Paul finds the churches in Galatia in a backsliding state. They had turned again “to weak and beggarly elements.” They were “observing days, and months, and times, and years.” It was all but returning to their former idolatry, as he solemnly hints to them, “doing service to them which by nature are no gods,” as they had been doing in the days of their heathen ignorance of the true God (iv. 8). What a connection does he here put the Christianity that is merely formal and observant of imposed ordinances into! Is it not solemn? Was it not enough to alarm him? And does it not do so? “I am afraid of you,” says he to the Galatians in this state, “lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.”

But, dear man as he was, gracious, patient, and toiling, according to the working of Him who was working in him mightily, he consents to labour afresh, yea, more painfully than ever, *to travail in birth again of them*. But all this was only to this end, that *Christ* might be formed in them. Nothing less or more, or other, than this. He longed for restoration of soul in them, and that was that they and Christ might be put *immediately* together again; that faith might be revived in them; the simple, hearty, blessed religion of personal and direct confidence in God in Christ Jesus;

that as in himself, the Son might be revealed in them; that, regaining Christ in their souls, they might prove they needed nothing more.

How edifying it is to mark the path of such a spirit under the conduct of the Holy Ghost! How comforting to see the purpose of God, by such a ministry, with the souls of poor sinners! How it lets us learn what Christianity is, in the judgment of God Himself!

The going over to the observance of days and times, the returning to ordinances, is destructive of this religion. It is the world. "Why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" as the same apostle says in another place (Col. ii. 20). Confidence in ordinances is not faith in Christ. It is the religion of nature, of flesh and blood. It is of man, and not of God.

And surely it carries in its train the passions of man. Man's religion leaves man as it found him; rather, indeed, cherishes and cultivates man's corruptions. This showed itself in Ishmael in earliest days; nay, in Cain before him; but in Ishmael, as the apostle in this same epistle goes on to show. And he declares that it was then, in his day, the same; and generations of formal, corrupt Christianity in the story of Christendom declare the same. "As then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so is it now." Man's religion, again I

say, does not cure him. He is left by it a prey to the subtleties and violence of his nature, the captive still of the old serpent, who has been a liar and a murderer from the beginning.

The decree, however, has been pronounced. It was delivered in the days of Isaac and Ishmael, of Abraham and Sarah; it is rehearsed and re-sealed by the Spirit Himself in the day of the apostle Paul; and we are to receive it as established for ever. It is this, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son" (iv. 30).

What consolation to have this mighty question between God and man settled! And, according to this consolation, we listen to this further word: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (v. 1).

All surely is of one and the same character. The Holy Ghost, by the apostle, is preparing the principle, the great, leading, commanding principle of divine religion. It is FAITH. It is the sinner's personal and *immediate* confidence in Christ. It is the soul finding satisfaction in Him, and in that which He has done for it.

And with such a religion as this, the sinner, in possession of this faith, is set, as I may express it, next door to glory. The apostle quickly tells us this, after commanding us to

stand fast in the liberty of the gospel, for he adds, "We, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith" (v. 5). This hope is the glory that is to be revealed, "the glory of God," as a kindred passage has it (Rom. v. 2).

We do not wait for any improvement of our character, for any advance in our souls. Should we still live in the flesh, only fitting will it be to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. iii. 18). But such things are not needed in the way of title. Being in Christ by faith, we are next door to glory. "Whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. viii.). Being in the kingdom of God's dear Son, we are "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. i.). As here, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, we wait only for glory. Glory is the *immediate object of our hope*, as Christ is the *immediate confidence of our souls*.

It is all magnificent in its simplicity, because it is all of God. No wonder that Scripture so abundantly discourses to us about faith, and so zealously warns us against religiousness. The "persuasion," as the apostle speaks, under which the Galatians had fallen, had not come of God who had called them; and the apostle sounds the alarm, blows the blast of war on the silver trumpet of the

sanctuary, uttering these voices in their ears, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Again, "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law" (v. 8, 9, 18).

And in the happy structure of this epistle, as I may also speak of it, the apostle ends with himself, as he begins with himself. We have seen how he told them, at the first, of the peculiarities of his apostleship, how he had received both his commission and his instructions *immediately* from God, and how he had then, with a faith that was an answer to such grace, at once conducted himself in full personal confidence in Christ, and independently of all the resources of flesh and blood. And now, at the close, he tells them that, as for himself, he knew no glorying but in the cross of the Lord Jesus, by whom the world was crucified to him and he to the world. And he tells them, further, that no one need meddle with him or trouble him, neither fret him nor worry him, with their thoughts about circumcision and the law, or the doings of a carnal religiousness, the rudiments of a world to which he was now crucified, for that he bore in his body the marks of the Lord. He belonged to Jesus by personal, individual tokens, immediately impressed on him, as by the appropriating hand of Christ Himself, and no one had any right to touch the Lord's treasure.

Precious secret of the grace of God, precious

simplicity in the faith of a heaven-taught sinner! It is not, beloved, knowledge of Scripture, or ability to talk of it, or even teach it from Genesis to Revelation; it is not the orderly services of religion; it is not devout feelings; but, oh! it is that guileless action of the soul that attaches our very selves to Jesus in the calmness and certainty of a believing mind.

The life to live is Christ. The first impression on my heart when converted was, "Enoch *walked* with God." That was my start. "Now, then," I said, "I will walk with God." Beautiful, as far as it went; but I very soon found, as Luther said to Melancthon, "You will find old Melancthon stronger than young Philip." I came to my wit's end; for I wanted a *fund* whence to draw, so as to live it out. You are unable to live out of resources in yourself; you must not act as though your life is separate; CHRIST must be the fountain. They say there are springs in Thermopylæ, exactly the same as those written about two thousand years ago; they have been gushing up two thousand years, and are the same as ever. That is nothing to the life of Christ, and the waters there. If a believer gets to this, "To me to live is Christ," he must think of Christ not merely as the END of all he does, but as the FOUNTAIN.

The Book of Experience.

(PHILIPPIANS).

IX. CHAPTER III., *concluded.*

HE says those "who mind earthly things" are the enemies of the cross of Christ. What was the cross? It had judged all this. I find the Son of God the spring and root and plant for all glory to grow on. The cross was all He got in this world. And what is the world? The world would not have Christ on any terms; so I have done with it. "The world seeth Me no more" (John xiv. 19). The Holy Ghost is not come to be seen; "Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John xiv. 17). That is how we know the Holy Ghost.

Evil and good came to an issue at the cross. It was the turning-point; it was where the two met. And now the whole question is, Am I with the world that turned Christ out, or with Christ whom the world turned out?

There is nothing like the cross. It is both the righteousness of God *against* sin, and the righteousness of God in *pardon*ing sin. It is the end of the world of judgment, and the beginning of the world of life. It is the work that put away sin, and yet it is the greatest sin that ever was committed.

The more we think of it, the more we see it is the turning-point of everything. So if a person follows the world he is an enemy of the cross of Christ. As Christians we have to look into it, how far this vain show puts a spider-film over our hearts, so as to hinder us from seeing. If I take the glory of the world that crucified Christ, I am glorying in my shame. Where is a man at home? In his Father's house, not in the dreary desert he has to cross in going there.

The meekness of the path we saw in the second chapter. Here we have the power and energy that deliver from the world that would hinder our being like Him.

“Who shall change our vile body”; the body of our humiliation, not vile morally (v. 21). I have Adam's body now; I shall have Christ's then. All our “living associations” are where He is. As Saviour, He will come, and accomplish all in changing our body, and conforming it to His glorious body. The price has been paid, but the final deliverance of what has been paid for is not yet come. “He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God” (2 Cor. v. 5). But we have not yet got it. We are waiting till He comes to get it.

Ah! beloved brethren, if our hearts really felt that God is going to make us like Christ, if we practically believed that He is going to bring us as brethren to be with and like

Christ; well, we should have altogether another thought about the world; we should be perfect then, pressing towards the mark.

If I die meanwhile I am always confident. I do not want to die; I want mortality to "be swallowed up of life"; but if death comes it does not touch my confidence: "absent from the body, present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 1-11).

He first speaks of the hope; that is what I want. Then he looks at the two things that are man's portion: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27). As to death, it is gain to me, for to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

But what about the judgment? It is a solemn thing. It is "the terror of the Lord." I think of the poor things not converted, and I "persuade men." It makes him think not of himself but of other people, though he says, "we must *all* appear" (that is, be manifested) "before the judgment seat of Christ." We persuade men, and are made manifest to God.

The day of judgment had its effect on him; it made him feel now the effect of the presence of God, as it will do in the day of judgment. It keeps my conscience awake and alive; it is a sanctifying power, not a terrifying one. Divine power will take us; as Adam had Eve presented to him, Christ, being God, presents

His Eve (His Church) to Himself, as second Adam.

Persons have asked if this is present or future, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection." It is the present power of looking at it objectively. "He that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John iii. 3). It is the present effect of having the eye fixed on Him, and waiting for Him. Final redemption will come, and make good, as to the body, what is true now of the soul. He will make us like Him in the Father's house; and, what I feel is so blessed, He will have us there without even the need of a conscience.

Here I must always have my conscience on the *qui vive*. If not, I am at once caught in a snare of Satan. There I shall not want it, where all around will be blessedness. We shall have the Holy Ghost then, too; and His whole power spent in enabling us to enjoy the glory. Now "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us," but much of the power is spent in making the ship go (Rom. v. 5).

As a matter of fact a number of us have cares, and trials, and temptations. God has thought of all that; He has counted the very hairs of our heads, and given us something that takes us out of them all. He thinks of the weather for us even: "Pray ye that your

flight be not in the winter ” (Matt. xxiv. 20). Nay, even a sparrow falls not to the ground without your Father (Matt. x. 29). God thinks of everything, and gives us complete superiority over everything.

It is blessed to see that the apostle goes from the most exalted thoughts of the revelation of God to the commonest things a saint has to push through. From things so exalted he turns to two women who were not getting on well together. So it is to-day. There is no forgetfulness in grace. It takes up to the third heaven, but goes down to the smallest things. Even when a runaway slave is in question, the delicacy with which Paul deals with it has been admired in all ages—(Epistle to Philemon).

What was Christ's comfort on the cross? He could not tell the poor thief that he was going to Paradise without telling him that He was going there too : “ To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise ” (Luke xxiii. 43). So Paul, when thinking of the women who laboured with him, says, “ Whose names are in the book of life ” (iv. 3). God being there, there were divine affections; we are put in the place of divine affections.

Studies on the Book of Daniel.

VII. CHAPTER VIII., *concluded.*

“**T**HEN I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said to that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? ” (v. 13). The question is about the length of the time of affliction. The thoughts of the inquirer are not upon the exploits of the little horn, but about the desolation of the Jewish worship and temple.

This distinction is important. I do not say that such desolations do not announce the last days; only, these two things are distinct, namely, the conduct of the little horn, and the desolation of the temple. In the explanation given in the course of the chapter, concerning the end of the indignation, there is nothing on the subject of worship. It refers only to circumstances concerning the king of fierce countenance and understanding dark sentences, without speaking of the temple. And lastly, there is not a word said that it is this little horn who takes away the daily sacrifice.

This answer precedes, and is distinct from, the interpretation given to Daniel of the little horn. It is possible that, in the history, the little horn may have done all these things (allowing Antiochus Epiphanes to have been

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the type); but the Holy Spirit does not use them all* when He speaks of what is to fill up the picture at the end.

“And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” (v. 14). We shall be helped in the consideration of these verses by recurring to verse 10. “It waxed great . . . it cast down some of the host, etc. . . . and stamped upon them”: and in verse 12, we again find the expression, “*it* cast down the truth to the ground.”

Now, between these two expressions all is in parenthesis, that is, the whole of the eleventh and a part of the twelfth verse. “It cast down the truth to the ground,” is the conduct of this horn in the last days, of which we have an explanation at the end. “So he (Gabriel) came near where I stood.” “And he said, behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be” (vv. 17, 19).

The word *indignation* is often found in the prophecies, and is particularly mentioned in Isaiah x. Iniquity had ripened, and its chastisement had begun in the days of the faithless successor of David, Ahaz. It went on

* I would remark here in passing, that we must not conclude that all the circumstances connected with the occasion of a prophecy, apply to the events which accomplish it at the end of the age.

increasing. The Jews would not repent, and the hand of the Lord was heavier upon them; and will continue until the people shall return to Him who smote them (see Isaiah x. 5, 8, then 12, 17, 21, 25).

It began, comparatively lightly, with the attacks of the Syrians, and the loss of provinces; to these succeeded the conquests of the Babylonians; after that, the captivity. But the Jews would not repent at these judgments. Afterwards, God sent them His Son. You know how they treated Him. When they shall be again in their land, they will give themselves over to idolatry, and will receive Antichrist instead of Christ. At last, "the abomination of desolation" will be set up, until Christ Himself shall destroy the enemies of the people, and then the indignation will be accomplished.

This time of indignation consists in the people being abandoned by God to the power of their enemies, more or less; but that which is specially called the indignation is the attacks to which the Jews, on account of their sins, are subjected in the last days, the days of Antichrist. I do not say that Antichrist is the indignation; but the Jews are delivered to the instruments of the indignation of God on account of their relationship with Him. God has determined its duration beforehand. (Compare Isaiah x. 5-25).

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“ And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up ” (*vv.* 20-23). I have no doubt that the type was the king of the Syrians, the king of the race of the Seleucidæ; but it is quite certain that this was not the end of the indignation; and in the explanation which Daniel gives, he confines himself to what the antitype will do at the time of the end (*v.* 17), the end of the indignation against the Jews (*v.* 19). We must put the Church altogether on one side in this case: it is a question of the Jews in the latter days, at the end of the indignation.

“ In the latter time of their kingdom [namely, of the kings who divided the Greek empire], . . . a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up ” (*v.* 23). These kingdoms, then, must be re-established; there will again be the king of the south and the king of the north. Turkey in Asia, at this moment, embraces the territory of the king of the north, and Egypt that of the king of the south. They must reappear as two kingdoms. We must apply this prophecy to that which is called “ the end,” “ the time of the end ”; that is, the end of the ways of God towards the Jews, “ the end of the age,” as a general term. Egypt will then be on the scene, but particularly the king of the

north, whoever may then possess that dignity.

An important fact in the accomplishment of prophecy in the latter day is, not only the return of the Jews to their land; but that, being found there, their wickedness will still increase. Those words of the Saviour will be accomplished in them, "If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John v. 43). And again, "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits, more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation" (Matt. xii. 43-45).

That is, the Jews having returned to their land, the wicked spirit, the spirit of idolatry, which had left them (for there was no idolatry at the time of Jesus Christ) enters into his house empty, swept and prepared, and brings with him seven other impure spirits, and the last state of the nation shall be infinitely worse than the first. This may be true of others, but the Saviour applies the passage to the Jews: "Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation." Thus "the transgressors will

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have come to the full," the transgression of the Jews against Jehovah will be at its height. It will be, speaking generally, the end of the age, and particularly the end of those four monarchies of the divided empire of Alexander; the Jews having become absolutely apostate, and in rebellion against God; not only as seen in their present condition, but much worse, having also returned to their land. And this scene will be in Palestine, and with a king out of one of the Greek monarchies, of whom the king of Syria, Antiochus Epiphanes, has certainly been a type.

"And . . . a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up." He will not only have force of arms, but also a spirit of wisdom, so as to be able to explain or interpret enigmas, a sort of prophet (though not, of course, in a good sense), who expounds profound and mysterious things. He acts by a deceitful and penetrating spirit, and in this way upon the Jewish nation, as much as by his arms.

"His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power" (v. 24). He will be a king in dependence upon some other potentate; strong but not entirely by his own force. "And he shall destroy the mighty and the holy people." Notwithstanding their perfidy and rebellion, the Jews are, to the prophet, *the holy people*, or, people of the saints (compare vii. 27).

“ And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many ” (v. 25). That is, it will not be by force of arms, but he will deal with the Jews in the way of peace; and by penetration and subtilty, as a kind of rabbi, he will exercise much influence over the Jewish nation.

Finally, “ He shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.” Christ is the Prince of princes, “ the prince of the host.” This king, then, will not only overthrow many Jews; but, at the same time, will obtain immense influence over the nation; and setting himself against the Prince of princes, he will be destroyed without hand.

You will observe that in this explanation of the conduct of the little horn, the daily sacrifice is not mentioned; its taking away is not attributed to him; and thus we perceive the importance of the correction of verse 11. He oppresses the Jews, and triumphs over them by the subtilty of his spirit; he will destroy many by peace and prosperity.

This is the account of a power which emanates from the Greek monarchy in the east, and who will act in the midst of the Jewish people, and who will be destroyed because he exalts himself against Christ at the end. So much for his locality, his conduct, and his end. The

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only mention that Daniel makes of the daily sacrifice and of the sanctuary, is in the two last verses. "And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true" (v. 26). A single remark will suffice concerning the calculations of dates that have been made. I have made them myself, and I have taken all possible pains to resolve that of the *two thousand three hundred days* (v. 14); so that I do not mean it as condemning others, when I avow that I do not think they can be counted as years, and I am inclined to believe that these days were accomplished of old. But, in any case, if dates are to be assigned, we must remember that the subject is the Jews and Jerusalem, and these dates must therefore be applied to the Jews and Jerusalem, and not to the affairs of Christendom.

There may be analogous circumstances in Christendom, because the mystery of iniquity has already set in; for although the wicked one has not yet been revealed, his principles and his pride are found in its developments, etc.; but if we are to speak with exactness and to *ask if these things have been precisely accomplished*, then we must apply these passages to Jerusalem and the Jews; namely, to what is to occur at the end of the indignation. Now, certainly, this has not yet happened.

In conclusion, the subject of this lecture is one with which we may appear to have but

little concern. The other little horn has more connection with us, because it belongs to the last beast; and we have to do with it, as living in those countries which will come under its dominion, as France, England, etc. (which formed a part of the Roman Empire); and also, as being where Christianity has been developed, during the existence of this last beast; whereas we are not in the territory of the little horn spoken of in this lecture.

But if it is important, on the one hand, to avoid the evil which is about to appear in the west, in the very midst of the circumstances in which we are placed; on the other hand, the necessity of doing so tends to pervert our judgment; for we are liable to attach a great importance to ourselves, and to suppose we possess the whole scope of Scripture; whereas God, as far as regards the possession and promises of this world, has given the Jew a much larger place than ourselves.

Nevertheless, we perceive at the close that our history again enters into what so much interests us, namely, the counsels of God as to His Christ; for the last thing which we see in the great events which are to take place, is this *little horn lifting up himself against the Lord of lords*; and before this world can be blessed, it is necessary that the Lord should break this little horn; in order that, under His own rule, the blessings of peace may come upon all.

The Name of Jesus.

LOOK where you will, whether it be in the domain of science, of religion, of philanthropy, or moral reform, and you see the same sedulous and diligently pursued purpose to banish the NAME OF JESUS.

It is not said so in plain terms, but it is so nevertheless. Scientific men, the professors and lecturers in our universities, talk and write about "the forces of nature" and the facts of science in such a way as practically to exclude the Christ of God from the whole field of nature.

Scripture tells us (blessed be God!) that by the Son of His love "all things were created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and BY HIM ALL THINGS CONSIST" (Col. i. 16, 17).

And again, speaking of the Son, the inspiring Spirit says, "Who being the brightness of His [God's] glory, and the express image of His Person, and UPHOLDING ALL THINGS BY THE WORD OF HIS POWER, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. i. 3).

These splendid passages lead us to the divine root of the matter. They speak, not

of the "forces of nature," but of the glory of Christ, the power of His hand, the virtue of His word. Infidelity would rob us of Christ, and give us instead "the forces of nature." We vastly prefer our own beloved Lord. We delight to see His Name bound up indissolubly with creation in all its vast and marvellous fields. We vastly prefer the eternal record of the Holy Ghost to all the finely-spun theories of infidel professors. We rejoice to see the NAME OF JESUS bound up in every department of religion and philanthropy. We shrink, with ever increasing horror, from every system, every club, every order, every association, that dares to shut out the glorious NAME OF JESUS from its schemes of religion and moral reform. We do solemnly declare that the religion, the philanthropy, the moral reform which does not make the NAME OF JESUS its Alpha and its Omega is the religion, the philanthropy, and the moral reform of hell.

This may seem strong, severe, ultra, and narrow-minded; but it is our deep and thorough conviction, and we utter it fearlessly, in the presence of all the infidelity and superstition of the day.

No new truth can unsettle an old one. None can unsettle the absolute authority on which alone all truth is founded; namely, the Word of God.

The Heart's Questions.

(1 KINGS x.; MARK x.; JOHN XXI.)

THE Queen of Sheba presents to us the condition of soul of one who finds that however great and extended may be his own resources, they are wholly inadequate to meet the questions which arise within the heart, questions which none can meet or satisfy but *One*, even He whom "God hath made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30).

The case of the young man in Mark x., who sought the Lord for that which he knew not how to obtain for himself, is one both of analogy and contrast. Both seek a Solomon; both feel that they need Him; but the one finds in Him all that satisfies her heart, so completely that there is "no spirit left in her," while the other, though conscious of His greatness, feels it too great a sacrifice to renounce all that he had trusted and rested in for Him. That is, he does not see in Him that supreme blessedness and glory, that all his own was (like Paul's) "dross" in comparison, or that the survey of that glory left him, like the Queen of Sheba, without spirit, overwhelmed, lost in it.

Practically, we all feel that we need Christ, whatever be our natural resources; but the question is, How do we seek Him? Is it as

the Queen sought Solomon; or as the young man the greater than Solomon?

The answer to this question determines the result. If, like the Queen, I begin by conferring with Him of all that is in my heart, her blessing will be mine; but if I do not confide in the wisdom which I seek to engage on my behalf; if I cannot confide my *whole mind*, there will be an imperfection in the relief, and in proportion to that imperfection of relief, will there be an inability on my part to fix my heart and attention on the One who can relieve me fully; and consequently to find an interest in His ways and doings; for this last can only be the result of the "questions" of the soul being met and satisfied.

True, the Lord knows all my mind and state; but in presenting myself before Him in order to receive from Him, and to have all my "questions" and anxieties resolved by Him, I must spread them before Him *consciously to myself* (so to speak) that I may feel where His counsel and wisdom can touch and colour each of them.

In this the young man failed; there was no conferring of heart with Him. The woman of Samaria was drawn into conference with Him, and the discovery that He knew "all things that ever she did," inspired her with confidence as to His ability to meet the sense of need which He had awakened in her soul.

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Peter was touched by it: "Lord, thou knowest all things," he exclaims; and then he is fully restored (John xxi.). The young man asked *what he was to do*. The Queen, the woman of Samaria, and Peter, felt how dependent they were on the wisdom of God, not on their own, like the young man.

On Him, "God manifest in the flesh," my soul depends. I confer with Him, of all that is in my heart, whether as a sinner, now first awakened, like the woman of Samaria, or as a disciple, like Peter. In either case the conferring of heart must be full, or the appreciation and attraction of His blessedness will not be revealed to me; neither shall I be fixed and concentrated on Him, unless I find how entirely and wondrously He has seen into the lowest depths of my heart, and met every "question" arising from the confusion and evil there.

If I fall short in knowing His wisdom, I fall short in appreciating Himself, and if I do not entirely and surpassingly appreciate Him, above all my resources here, I shall, like the young man, go back to them, though doubtless "*sorrowful*."

But if the soul is consoled and satisfied with His wisdom, a wisdom adapted to its own needs and questions, all that concerns Him will then engage it. It was no effort for the Queen of Sheba to enter into all the doings

and interests of Solomon; nay, they so engrossed her that self had no place; there was no spirit left in her.

And in like manner Peter, having learnt the Lord's sufficiency for himself, can enter into His interests in His sheep and lambs; and not only so, but he can find it *easier to follow Him than to leave Him*. And need I add, that a soul that is following Him must know that joy and gladness of heart which spring from the happy communion with Him in His interests, which it has *entered into, through the light* that has disclosed to it the wisdom and fulness of Himself to meet all its questionings, its needs, and its distress?

These are momentous times; all is shaking; and the Holy Ghost knows on what truths to fix the attention of the saints now. Free inquiry is abroad, often without the smallest respect for the Word of God. I am persuaded that the safe way for a soul to meet it, and all the difficulties that may arise, is perfect subjection to the Word of God. Then let him inquire and search as much as he can, provided it be humbly done, in dependence on grace, in true subjection to the authority of the Word. The conscience will thus be kept in play, and divine authority will be maintained over the soul; and that is all-important.

The Living Stone.

THE mystery of the Stone, as I may call it, is found in all parts of Scripture. Something is said of it here and there from beginning to end; in Genesis, in the Psalms, in the Prophets, in the Evangelists, in the Epistles, and in the Apocalypse.

In the words of Jacob to his twelve sons, in Gen. xlix. we begin to hear of it. The patriarch had been speaking of the sons of Joseph, and the honour that had followed them; and in these things, the Spirit leads him to see a type or foreshadowing of Christ. He says, "From thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel." That is, he prophesied that by death and resurrection, the Lord Christ would be made a Shepherd and a Stone to Israel; every thing, as I may say, to His people.

This prophetic word, therefore, tells of the quarry where this wondrous Stone was to be found; how it was, that the Lord would become a help to His people; and surely we know this is so. No help for us, even in Jesus Himself, but through His precious death and glorious resurrection.

Isaiah takes up this thought, surely, under the same Spirit, and speaks of Christ as a "tried Stone," and also as a "Foundation" (Isa. xxviii. 16), thus adding a second thought, or bringing this Stone out of the quarry where it was found, to use it as a foundation-stone; and Peter quotes this of Isaiah (1 Pet. ii. 6).

The Psalmist then instructs us further; telling us that this stone was disallowed by the people of Israel, to whom God offered it as a foundation (Ps. cxviii. 22). And this is referred to by the Lord Himself in Matthew xxi. 42, and by the Holy Ghost in Acts iv. 11.*

The Psalmist, the Lord, and the Holy Ghost in the same places thus tell us that this wondrous Stone, thus rejected and disallowed by Israel on the earth, has been taken to heaven, and there seated in the chief place of dignity and strength, or as "the Head Stone of the corner."

Isaiah, the preaching of Peter, and Peter in his epistle, then, concur in teaching us further, that this Stone, thus exalted to heaven after its rejection by the builders here, that is, Christ in resurrection and glory, in His ascension after His death, is still a sure foundation to all poor sinners who will but lean on Him and trust in Him; a sanctuary to them, life and salvation to them (Isa. viii. 14; Acts iv. 12; 1 Pet. ii. 6).

The Lord Himself further tells us, that this exalted Stone, now the Head of the corner in heaven, shall by-and-by fall on all who now disallow it, refusing to use it as a foundation, or stumble over it, and thus grind them to powder (Matt. xxi. 44).

* The stone for foundation became a stone of stumbling.—Romans ix. 33.

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Daniel tells us, in company with this, but in a larger, or national form, that this judgment shall indeed be executed; and then further instructs us, that when this Stone has thus exercised itself in judicial power, it will display itself in kingdom-glory, or like a great mountain, a universal monarchy, as we speak, fill the whole earth (Dan. ii. 35).

This is the great, final destiny of this mysterious Stone. And thus scripture after scripture, detached in all parts of the wondrous, divine volume, completes in a great sense the story of this Stone. We first see it as in the quarry, formed there for future use, according to settled counsels. We then see it offered as a foundation to Israel, and refused by them. We next see it lifted up to heaven, and again offered as a foundation, the secret of life and salvation to sinners all the world over. We then follow it in its course as returning or falling from heaven, to crush its rejecters and its adversaries. And at the last, we see it, in its glory, as a mountain or a kingdom filling the whole earth.

This is a wondrous sight, afforded us by the one Spirit through Patriarchs, Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles.

We have, however, a little more to learn of it. That is, we learn what this Stone does with those who use it as their foundation. Peter teaches us that the Lord, as this Stone,

imparts Himself *fully* to those who believe on Him or come to Him. He is a living Stone, and they become living stones. He is a precious Stone, and they become precious stones (1 Pet. ii. 4-7). And these things we see and read, for the same Lord in another place says, "Because I live ye shall live also"; and we see, as in the holy Jerusalem, the symbol of saints as the Bride of the Lamb, stones in their varied preciousness, as jasper, chalcedony, emerald, and the like; thus verifying, in that form, the word of Peter, that Christ imparts His preciousness as well as His life to His saints; and thus also bringing in the Apocalypse to bear its testimony, with all Scripture, to this mysterious Stone, at which I am now looking (Rev. xxi)

It is indeed a theme of wondrous value. But if I have now dismissed my subject, I would ask a question.

Is there not something of an allusion in 1 Pet. ii. 4-8 to Matt. xvi. 16?

In Matthew, Peter confessed to Jesus that He was "The Son of the living God" (Matt. xvi. 16). The Lord then recognized that fact, that truth, His own Person as "the Son of the living God," as the Rock on which the Church was to be built.

Here in his epistle Peter, according to this, speaks of the Lord as "A LIVING STONE," to whom we must come, and on whom we must

build; teaching us moreover that thus we become "a spiritual house, a holy priesthood," conducting the service that is acceptable to God. And in this teaching, he leads us somewhat beyond the point, up to which the Lord had instructed us in Matthew xvi.; for he shows us something of the ways of that Church the building of which the Lord had but just anticipated.

So that I judge I may answer my own inquiry, and say that there is a connection between Matt. xvi. and 1 Pet. ii.

But what an answer does all this afford, to those who speak of Peter as being the rock on which the Church is built! Peter himself being witness, we boldly say that Christ is that Rock, the living Stone, to whom we must come, and on whom we must build, in order to be the Church of the living God, or the spiritual House of His present dispensation. Surely, surely this is so.

But again, as to the connection between Matthew xvi. and 1 Peter ii.

In Matthew, Peter had resented the thought of his Master being rejected in this world. When He spoke of His going to Jerusalem, and of His there being put to death by the wicked of the world, a martyr at the hand of man, Peter said, "Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall not be unto Thee." But now, in the day of his epistle, he has so thoroughly learned

the lesson which he then refused to sit at, that he teaches us that now there is no spiritual house, no church, that is not built on Christ as disallowed of man.

This is to me very striking indeed. Most satisfactory and confirming it is to see the Peter of Matthew xvi. thus re-appearing in 1 Peter ii.; but re-appearing in such advanced condition of soul; able now, not only to seal the word which he had himself there uttered, that Christ was the Living One, but to carry on our knowledge of His ways as the Living One beyond what He Himself had then taught us; and ready now, not only to seal the word which the Lord had there uttered, that He was to be disallowed and cast out, but to carry out that fact to some of its weighty consequences as to the House or Church of this dispensation.

The moment I suppose anything cannot be for blessing, I limit God. This is a great sin; doubly, when we think of all He has done for us. The Holy Ghost ever reasons from God's revealed, infinite love to all its consequences. He reconciled: surely He will save to the end. He did not spare His Son: how should He not give all things? This, however, is goodness infinite; but doubt of power is doubting He is God. It hinders our setting our hope in God. Experience ought to strengthen faith; but there must be present faith to use experience.

The Book of Experience.

(PHILIPPIANS).

X. CHAPTER IV.

THERE is nothing I feel more in going out to visit than the desire that Christ should be so there that the thing should come out that would come out of Christ; not my own thoughts. We do not know half how blessed it is to have the mind of Christ; but the mind of Christ was to go down to the cross.

“ Rejoice in the Lord alway ” (v. 4). Who was a fit person to say that? The man who had been in the third heaven? No. The man a prisoner at Rome. That was rejoicing *always*; as we have in the Psalms, “ I will bless the Lord at all times ” (xxxiv. 1). When I get the Lord as the object of my heart, there is more of heaven in the prison than out of it.

It is not the green pastures and waters of quietness that make him glad. “ *The Lord is my Shepherd* ”; not the green pastures, though green pastures are very nice. And even if I wander from them, it is “ *He restoreth my soul.* ” And if death is in the way, I am not afraid, for “ *Thou art with me.* ” And though there are dreadful enemies, there is a table spread in their presence. Now he says, “ *My cup runs over.* ” He carries him through all the difficulties and trials of his own feebleness. Ah! he says, “ surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my

life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever " (Ps. xxiii.).

The man who trusted in the Lord, the more trouble he was in, the more he proved that all was right. Paul says, I know Him free, and I know Him in prison. He was sufficient when he was in want, and sufficient when he abounded. So he says, " Rejoice in the Lord *always*."

What could they do with such a man? If they kill him they only send him to heaven; if they let him live, he is all devoted to lead people to the Christ they would destroy.

It is more difficult to rejoice in the Lord in prosperity than in trials, for trials cast me on the Lord. There is more danger for us when there are no trials. But delight in the Lord delivers us altogether from the power of present things. We are not aware, until they are taken away, how much the most spiritual of us lean on props. I mean we lean on things around us. But if we are rejoicing in the Lord *always*, that strength can never be taken away, nor can we lose the joy of it.

" Let your moderation be known unto all men " (v. 5). Do you think people will think your conversation is in heaven if you are eager about things of earth? They will only think so if there is the testimony that the heart does not stick up for itself. " The Lord is at hand." All will be set right soon. If you

pass on in meekness, and subduedness, and unresistingness, how it acts in keeping the heart and affections right; and the world can see when the mind and spirit is not set on it. So he says, let it be "known unto *all* men."

"Be careful for nothing" (v. 6). I have found that word so often a thorough comfort. Even if it be a great trial, still "be careful for *nothing*."

Oh! you say, it is not my petty circumstances, it is a question of saints going wrong. Well, "be careful for *nothing*." It is not that you are to be careless, but you are trying to carry the burden, and so you are racking your heart with it. How often a burden possesses a person's mind, and when he tries in vain to cast it off it comes back and worries him! But "be careful for nothing" is a command, and it is blessed to have such a command.

What shall I do then? Go to God. "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Then in the midst of all the care you can give thanks. And we see the exceeding grace of God in this. It is not that you are to wait till you find out if what you want is the will of God. No. "Let your requests be made known." Have you a burden on your heart? Now go with your request to God. He does not say that you will get it.

Paul, when he prayed, had for answer, " My grace is sufficient for thee " (2 Cor. xii. 9). But peace will keep your heart and mind; not you will keep this peace.

Is *He* ever troubled by the little things that trouble us? Do they shake *His* throne? He thinks of us, we know, but He is not troubled; and the peace that is in God's heart is to keep ours (v. 7). I go and carry it all to Him, and I find Him all quiet about it. It is all settled. He knows quite well what He is going to do. I have laid the burden on the throne that never shakes, with the perfect certainty that God takes an interest in me, and the peace He is in keeps my heart, and I can thank Him even before the trouble has passed. I can say Thank God, He takes an interest in me. It is a blessed thing that I can have this peace, and thus go and make my request (perhaps a very foolish one), and, instead of brooding over trials, that I can be with God about them.

It is sweet to me to see that, while He carries us up to heaven, He comes down and occupies Himself with everything of ours here. While our affections are occupied with heavenly things we can trust God for earthly things. He comes down to everything. As Paul says, " Without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us " (2 Cor. vii. 5, 6). It was worth being cast down to get that

kind of comfort. Is He a God afar off, and not a God nigh at hand? (Jer. xxiii. 23). He does not give us to see before us, for then the heart would not be exercised; but, though we see not Him, He sees us, and comes down to give us all that kind of comfort in the trouble.

PHILIPPIANS IV. 8-23.

The first two verses I have read are the last of the exhortation in this epistle.

We have already seen the way in which, in entire superiority to all circumstances, the Christian is to go on. All through the epistle that character of the power of the Spirit of God is brought out. In the eighth verse we get the effect of what we were speaking of last time: "Rejoice in the Lord alway"; "let your moderation be known unto all men"; "be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." The heart is set free, for the peace of God, which is immutable, keeps the heart and mind. There is nothing new or strange to God. He is always in peace, working all things after the counsel of His own will (Eph. i. 11). It is thus that the heart is to be at rest, and then it is free to be occupied with what is lovely and blessed.

It is a great thing for the Christian to have the habit of living in what is good in this world, where we necessarily have to do with what is evil. We were evil ourselves once, and nothing else was in heart, thoughts, and mind; and there is still evil not only in the world, but in our hearts, and we have to judge it where it is allowed.

But it will not do to be always occupied with it. It defiles even when we judge it; just as when the man had to do with the ashes of the red heifer, in the nineteenth of Numbers. He was really doing a service in gathering them up, and laying them up without the camp; yet he was unclean until even, and the same as to him who applied them.

It is soiling to our minds even to be judging evil. There is in some hearts a tendency to be busy about evil, but it will not do to live in. Of course, I am not now speaking of living in it actually, but of even in thought judging it.

It is a great thing to have the heart toned and tuned to take delight in the things God delights in. Even in the sense of judging evil as evil it is not happy. I am to be living now as with God in heaven, and has God to be judging evil in heaven? We know He has not; and it is a great thing for our souls to be above with the Lord; not only doing the things that please Him, but being also in the state of mind in which He can delight. Take

one day only, and ask yourself, Has your mind been living in the things that are lovely and of good report? It is that the apostle speaks of here. Is it the habit of your mind to be dwelling on what is good?

Evil forces itself on us in these days, but it will not do to be dwelling on it. It weakens the mind; the mind gets no strength from thinking of it. It may awaken disgust, where the mind is in a spiritual state; but even judging it we are not doing it rightly unless the heart is dwelling on what is good. We might be bringing down fire from heaven, when Christ would merely go to another village (Luke ix. 51-56).

He walked in the full power of communion in what was good in the midst of evil, though He had to do with it; He had to say, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees." And we may have to do with it too; but it is never done rightly unless we are living in what is good; there would never be softness (and by this I do not mean softness towards evil; we have to judge that peremptorily, but) there would be no gracious softness. Paul had to say, "I would they were even cut off which trouble you" (Gal. v. 12). There is no softness here; but still even this comes out in love.

Studies on the Book of Daniel.

VIII. CHAPTER IX.

IN chapter vii. we trace the history of the four beasts in general, specially of the little horn who spoke great things, who blasphemed against God, who was the enemy of the saints, who represented the beast; that is, who acted as he chose, according to the power of this beast; and in chapter viii. we have the history of the horn who will be raised up from one of the four Greek monarchies, and who at the end will lift himself up against the Lord of lords, and will be destroyed without hand.

The prophet now directs his thoughts and heart towards a subject different from that in the midst of which he stood; namely, to the desolations of Jerusalem. Such is the theme of this chapter.

And how was he led into this train of thought? Simply because those words were on his heart, "How long, O Lord?"

It is a mark of faith thus to cry, when judgments are weighing heavily upon the people of God: for faith views the people according to the promises which God has made to them. A people who have laid hold of the mind of God, whose faith is in exercise, and whose heart responds, however imperfectly, to the heart of God, must desire that they should enjoy their proper blessings, the blessed con-

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sequences of their relationship with God : as it is said, "Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation" (Isa. xxxiii. 20).

Thus, when affliction weighs heavily upon the people of God, and they are not enjoying all the privileges which faith realizes as belonging to them, faith says, "How long, O Lord?" On the one hand, such a one cannot rest satisfied with the misfortunes under which the people of God are labouring; and upon the other, he knows that it is impossible for God to abandon His people. Faith says, This state of suffering will have an end. The wicked, it is true, will not be relieved, but the people of God must be. Hence the frequency of such expressions, in the Psalms and Prophets, as, "How long, O Lord?" and, "There is none to say, How long?" there is no one who knows how to count on the faithfulness of God. When, under chastening, there is no faith to use this expression, a worse one is used, "I have loved strangers, and after them will I go"; and the people abandon themselves to wickedness (Jer. ii. 25).

Now Daniel is here acting in faith. He had, moreover, the consolation of knowing that when God pronounced the judgment of captivity upon His people, He had also declared its limit. Jeremiah had predicted that it should last seventy years, and that afterwards God would judge Babylon by the hand of

Cyrus. Hereupon, wrapped up in the interests of the people of God, his thoughts are occupied with this promised deliverance.

But the faith which comprehends the goodness of God, and sighs for the time when the people shall enjoy their privileges, always confesses the sin which has obliged God to deprive His people for a time of these privileges. Faith never becomes discouraged, as if God were unfaithful; on the contrary, it insists upon the blame being with the people, and that God has only acted faithfully in thus dealing with them. Our chapter begins in this way. The interest which Daniel felt in his people led him to the consideration of the prophet Jeremiah; and then he entreats the Lord to confirm this blessing which He had promised by Jeremiah; that is, that He would accomplish the deliverance of His people from captivity.

Another important fact which we remark here, and which was manifested in the Lord Jesus in perfection, is that faith always thoroughly identifies itself with the affliction in which the people are found; and more, even with all the sins of the people of God. This is the distinguishing mark of the Spirit of Christ. Christ, indeed, went much further, inasmuch as He was able to make atonement for those sins with which He identified Himself; but faith, according to its measure, always does

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so. The faith may be very feeble, but if there be any sense of the privileges of the people of God, and of the glory of God in His people, faith must have reference to this glory. But if it considers the glory, it considers also the sins which have been the occasion of the chastisement.

Faith identifies itself with the state of the people, and in placing itself in their condition, perceives the cause of the judgment; for faith identifies the glory of God with His people, and itself with both; and the state of the people before God becomes the principle which animates the heart; and the more faith there is, according to the measure of its intelligence, the more does it enter into the depths into which the offenders have fallen, pass their sins in review, and confess them in identification with them; and if faith did not do this, there could be no presenting of these sins in confession, in order to their being pardoned. The Spirit which is in us (and yet more fully than the spirit of prophecy*) necessarily looks at the thing morally. My distress at the condition of the saints is in every sense incom-

* When I speak of this spirit of prophecy I mean, not a revelation, but the intelligence of the thoughts of God as to His people, and interest of heart in their blessing, as in God's behalf. The heart being the depositary of these interests. This spirit is in the body. Compare, too, Gen. xx. 7.

plete, unless the cause of that condition in God's sight is taken notice of; just as the high priest confessed all the sins of the people upon the scape-goat.

It is fully admitted that there may be imperfection in the act; but according to the principles of faith, there must be identification, a full confession before God. If I thought to get remission of sins (in the sense of removing chastenings) by partial confession, or without having felt their enormity, it is evident I should be mocking the just government of God; so that it is absolutely necessary, if I wish to suffer with Christ, for His Church (and the case of the Jews serves morally for us), if I am led by His Spirit in love and care for His sheep, that I should humble myself, recognizing the fallen condition of the saints, and confess all their sins. Just this did Daniel.

“ In the first year of his [Darius's] reign, I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face unto the Lord God, . . . and I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love Him, and to them that keep His commandments ”
(vv. 2-4).

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Daniel has the prophecy of Jeremiah present before his mind. When I speak of the spirit of prophecy, I do not speak of a revelation made to the prophet; it is not a question of the answer which God makes to a prophet, when he presents the wants of His people. Daniel was a prophet; but there is, in this instance, no special revelation made to him. Hence we are told, that he had understood by books. He was simply one of the faithful studying prophecy. God afterwards gives him a direct revelation : but, in the present instance, faith alone was acting, and he was only made to understand what God had already spoken about His people. All is revealed in the Bible; and in searching it we can, like Daniel, know and understand what God has already written about His people.

There are many questions which we cannot resolve, because we are not spiritual enough. The teaching of God is as necessary for the understanding as for the revelation of His thoughts. It is interesting to remark this. Daniel had understood by books that the captivity was to last seventy years. As a faithful man he interests himself in the people of God, and searches by the spiritual intelligence which is given to those who walk with God what are His thoughts and ways.

I do not say that we have the same faith and intelligence, but we are upon the same ground.

Daniel represents the faithful remnant, who have their hearts full of desires for His grace towards His people, and who to this end study the word of God. As a consequence, the Spirit of God leads him into supplication; for, whatever be the intentions of God, there is always in His acts of government a recognition of the moral road which He has ever traced out for His people, certain moral principles by which He leads them. "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock" (Ezek. xxxvi. 37). Faith does not lead us into mere speculative knowledge, the head may be full of dates, etc., things, in a certain degree, useful; but when the Spirit of God really acts, we turn to the Lord with prayer and supplication, and with humbleness of soul, recognizing the actual condition of His people. It was thus with Daniel. "I set my face," says he, "unto the Lord."

Daniel had been led captive when very young, and he had taken no part in the actual iniquity of Israel. There was, therefore, no ground for self-accusation. But the fact is, there is no such thing as a Christian separated from the interests of his brethren. This could not be. The Spirit of Christ, which, in a certain sense, is more powerful in us than among the faithful in the time of Daniel, is nothing

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else than the Spirit of Christ in Christ; that is to say, the principle by which He acts. Christ has done, He alone, that which no other could have done; we know this well. But the tendency, the feelings, the affections of the Spirit of Christ in us, cannot be other than the Spirit of Christ in Christ.

If then Christ identifies Himself with all that the people have done from the beginning, Daniel also can say, "We have sinned" (vv. 5-7). He identifies himself with all, in the unity of the same people, though he had not been partaker of any of these sins: "O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face; to our kings," etc. (v. 8). These kings were no longer in existence, but he saw the whole thing together: "We have not hearkened to the voice of Thy servants the prophets."

The prophets had not prophesied to him, and had a deaf ear turned to their words. Behold, then, the whole mass of Israel in this confusion of face, behold the justice which belongs to God.

But there is another thing which the Spirit of Christ confesses: "To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him" (v. 9). This is a singular reason; but he had such a conviction of the goodness of God that he says, It is not only the justice which punishes that is found in God, but *though we have sinned* there is

mercy. As David says, "O Lord my God, pardon my iniquity, *for* it is great." As if to say, Nothing will do for me, or meet my case, but mercy. I cannot offer sacrifices, like the Jews; I must have recourse to Thee. I must have mercy and pardon. The prophet draws this as a consequence : there is sin ; well, then, this can be met by mercy alone.

Pardon and justification are not the same thing. PARDON is the favour and kindness of a person wronged passing over faults against himself; an act of prerogative goodness; so that kindness flows forth unimpeded by the wrong; though in this case [of the sinner against God] it be by the blood of Christ. JUSTIFICATION is the holding not chargeable with guilt. The latter refers to righteous judgment; the former to kindness. Where one is a sinner against God, they approach one another, and run together, in fact; but are not the same, nor is the effect the same in the heart. JUSTIFIED, I do not fear judgment; PARDONED, my heart returns in comfort to Him who has pardoned me; but by Christ's blood we have both. It is another *aspect*, not another *act*.

The Year of Jubilee.

LEV. XXV. 8-16.

SOMEONE has truly remarked that the institution of the Jubilee had a double testimony. It testified of man's confusion, and it testified of God's order. During forty-nine years, many things were suffered to get into disorder, under the hand of man. One man got into poverty, another into debt, another into bondage, another into exile. Again, one man, through extravagance, had let his inheritance slip through his hands; another, by his shrewdness or penuriousness had added to his.

Thus it happened during man's day. But the trumpet of Jubilee changed, in a moment, the entire condition of things. No sooner had that hallowed sound fallen on the ear than the debtor was released, the slave emancipated, and the exile brought back. The Jubilee was God's year, and He would have no debtors, no slaves, no exiles. All should be free and happy, and all abundantly supplied throughout Jehovah's year. When the Lord alone is exalted, all must be right.

Now it is interesting and very practical to note the various ways in which men would be affected by the approach of the year of Jubilee. The man who had lost property would be glad because he should get it back. The man who had gained property would be sorry because

he should lose it. But the man who had done neither, who had neither lost nor gained, the right-minded Israelite who had retained his patrimony, and was satisfied therewith, this man would regard the Jubilee, not with reference to his gains or his losses, but simply as a noble testimony to God's order, and as securing the blessing of the entire nation.

Thus it was with the Jew in reference to the Jubilee; and thus it should be with the Christian in reference to the glorious appearing of the Son of God from heaven. We should simply look forward to that blessed event as the moment of Christ's exaltation, the moment of His full investiture with the kingdoms of this world, the moment in the which a period shall be put to all man's misrule and confusion, and the order of God be established for evermore. Blessed, longed-for moment!

And be it noted here that the cross of Christ is at once the remedy for all man's confusion, and the basis of God's order. This is strikingly brought out in the ordinance of the Jubilee. "Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; *in the day of atonement* shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land" (see Lev. xvi.). The trumpet of Jubilee and the day of atonement were inseparably linked together. The blood of the cross is the foundation of everything. In the times

of the restitution of all things the river of life will proceed out of the throne of God and of the Lamb (Rev. xxii. 1).

Signs of the Times, and Waiting for the Son from Heaven.

IN the calculations of men, events unfold themselves as the effects of causes which are known to be operating. But, while this has its truth, to faith it is God who, in His supremacy, holds a seal in His hand, to stamp each day with its character or sign.

This gives the soul a fresh interest in the passing moments. Some of them may be more impressively stamped than others, but all are in progress, and each hour is contributing to the unfolding of the coming era; like the seasons of the year, or the advances of day and night. Some moments in such progresses may be more strongly marked than others; but all are in advance.

Every stage of Israel's journey through the desert was bringing them nearer to Canaan, though some stages were tame and ordinary, while others were full of incident. And so all the present age is accomplishing the advance of the promised kingdom, though some periods of it have greater importance than others.

These "signs of the times," or sealings of God's hand upon the passing hour, it is the duty of faith to discern; because they are always according to the premonitions of Scripture. Indeed, current events are only "signs" as they are according to or in fulfilment of such previous notices.

The words of the prophets made the doings of Jesus in the days of His flesh the signs of those days (Matt. xii. 22, 23). And have we not words in the New Testament which in like manner make all around us at this moment, or in every century of the dispensation, significant? Have not words which we find there abundantly forecast the characters of such dispensation, and given beforehand the forms of those corruptions that were to work in Christendom? They have told us what now our eyes have seen. They told us of the field of wheat and tares; of the mustard seed which became a lodging place for the fowl of the air; of "the unmerciful servant," or of the Gentile not "continuing in God's goodness"; of the great house, with its vessels unto honour and dishonour, and of other like things. They told us of "the latter times," and of "the last days," and they still tell the deadly character which that hour is to bear that is to usher forth "the man of sin," and ripen iniquity for the brightness and the power of the day of the Lord.

All this is so. And let me ask, If every hour is, after this manner, bearing its character, or wearing its sign, what mark are we individually helping to put upon this our day? Is the purpose and way of the Lord, ripening into blessedness, at all reflected in us? Or are we in any measure aiding to unfold that form of evil which is to bring down the judgment? If the times were to be known and described according to *our* way, what character would they bear; what sign would distinguish them?

These are inquiries for the conscience of each of us. We cannot be neuter in this matter. We cannot be idle in this market-place. It may be but in comparative feebleness, but still each of us within the range of the action of Christendom, is either helping to disclose God's way or to ripen "the vine of the earth" for "the winepress of wrath."

The Lord tells us that the sign on which our *faith* must rest is that of a *humbled* Christ, such a sign as that of Jonah the prophet. Our faith deals with such a sign, because our need as sinners casts us on a Saviour, or a *humbled* Christ. But *hope* may feed on a thousand signs. Our expectations are nourished by a sight of the operations of the divine hand displaying every hour the ripening of the divine counsels and promises, in spite of the world, and in the very face of increasing human

energies. These signs may be watched, but watched by the saint *already in the place and attitude assigned him by the Spirit*. They are not to determine what is his place, but they may exercise him in it. His place and attitude are beforehand and independently determined for him, waiting for the Son of God from heaven.

This posture the Thessalonian saints assumed on their believing the gospel (1 Thess. i. 9, 10). The apostle seems afterwards to strengthen them in that posture, by telling them that from it they were to be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. iv. 17). And again afterwards, he seems to guard them against being disturbed in that attitude, against being tempted to give it up, by further telling them that that place of *expectation* should be exchanged for the place of *meeting* ere the *day of the Lord fell in its terrors on the world and the wicked* (2 Thess. ii. 1).

And still further. This very posture of waiting for the Son from heaven had induced a certain evil. The Thessalonian saints were neglecting present handiworks. The apostle does not in any wise seek to change their posture, but admonishes them to hold it in company with diligence and watchfulness, that while their eye was gazing their hand might be working (2 Thess. iii.).

Other New Testament scriptures seem also

to assume the fact that faith had given all the saints this same attitude of soul; or that the things taught them were fitted to do so (see 1 Cor. i. 7; xv. 23; Phil. iii. 20; Tit. ii. 13; Heb. ix. 28).

Admonitions and encouragements of the like tendency; that is, to strengthen us in this place and posture of heart; the Lord Himself seems to me to give just at the bright and blessed close of the Sacred Volume.

“I come quickly” is announced by Him three times in the twenty-second of Revelation; words directly suited to keep the heart that listens to them believingly in the attitude of which I am speaking.

But different words of warning and encouragement accompany this voice.

“Behold, I come quickly : blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book ” (v. 7). This warns us that while we are waiting for Him we must do so with watchful, obedient, observant minds, heedful of His words.

“Behold, I come quickly ; and my reward is with me, to give every one according as his work shall be ” (v. 12). This encourages to diligence, telling us that by the occupation of our talents now during His absence, on the promised and expected return He will have honours to impart to us.

“Surely, I come quickly,” is again the

word (v. 20). This is a simple promise. It is neither a warning nor an encouragement. Nothing accompanies the announcement, as in the other cases. It is, as it were, simply a promise to bring *Himself* with Him on His coming again. But it is the highest thing, the dearest thing. The heart may be silent before a warning, and before an encouragement. Such words may get their audience in secret from the conscience. But this promise of the simple personal return of Christ gets its answer from the saints. "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."

Thus the Lord, after this various and beautiful manner, does the business of the Spirit in the apostles. His own voice, in these different and striking announcements, encourages the saints to maintain the attitude of waiting for Him.

Great things are a-doing. The Church, the Jew, and the Gentile are all in characteristic activity, each full of preparation and expectancy. *But faith waits for that which comes not with such things.* The rapture of the saints is part of a mystery, a part of "the hidden wisdom." The coming of the Son of God from heaven is a fact, as I judge, apart altogether from the history or the condition of the world around.

The Christian at Home.

EPHESIANS V. 22 TO VI. 9.

I.

THE family is especially dealt with in the epistles which treat of the Church. Those epistles which take up church order and rule take up also the order and rule of the family; and those epistles which show the Church as the body of Christ, show also how this relationship, and the principles it involves, affect the family life.

Family relationships were instituted by God in Eden, and confirmed after the fall. Christianity does not change their outward character, but infuses into them new and divine principles. The husband is the responsible head of the house, and the mutual obligation subsisting between him and his wife, his children, and his servants, is the subject of the portion now before us. The question is not one of rights on either side, but rather of the way in which each, as having the life of Christ, should exhibit this in his conduct towards the other.

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church: and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing” (vv. 22-24).

Part of the curse pronounced on the woman at the fall was, "Thy desire shall be [subject] to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen. iii. 16).

Christianity confirms this order, but so re-models it that all trace of the curse disappears. The subjection of the believer to the Lord, or of the Church of Christ, is no curse or bondage, and these are now the models of wifely subjection; for she is to be subject unto her own husband, "as unto the Lord," and as "the Church is subject unto Christ." How beautiful to see a human relationship, and one too which derives a part of its character from the fall, thus transformed into a type of the mystery in which God displays His "manifold wisdom" unto "the principalities and powers in heavenly places."

The subject is expanded in dealing with the other side. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be holy and without blemish" (vv. 25-27). Here, though natural affection is owned, a far higher order of love is brought in, so that the earthly relationship is re-cast, as it were, in a heavenly mould. The past, present, and

future love of Christ to the Church are all made to bear on the duty of the husband to his wife. And how beautiful the unfolding of this love is! Christ loved the Church (not only saints, but the Church), and gave Himself for it. It was the "pearl of great price" for which He sold all that He had. Now He watches over it, cleansing it from defilement by the application of His word. Soon He will present it to Himself in His own beauty, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," the object of His own eternal delight (Rev. xxi. 2).

And here the order of creation is brought in, and made to blend, as it were, with that love of Christ of which it furnishes so beautiful a type. "So ought men to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church: for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh" (vv. 28-31).

The peculiar mode of Eve's creation out of Adam both gives marriage a special sanctity, so that the wife is to be cherished as a part of the husband's own being, and furnishes an exquisite type of Christ's relationship with the

Church. As Adam was not complete without Eve, so Christ, though Head over all, is not complete without the Church, "the fulness [completion] of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 23). As Adam fell into a deep sleep, so Christ went into death. As Eve was formed out of Adam, so the Church is quickened with Christ, and has His own life. As Adam acknowledged Eve to be bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, so does Christ acknowledge the Church. As Adam was bound to care for and cleave to the woman thus formed out of himself, so Christ delights in nourishing and cherishing the Church which is His own body. How wonderfully all that belongs to this divinely instituted relationship is raised by being thus linked up with the tender, watchful love of Christ over the Church!

This, of course, is the grand subject, and therefore the apostle writes: "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." Still the relationship of husband and wife is also in his view, so he adds, "Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband" (vv. 32, 33). Though the believer is not promised his portion in this life, yet he is told that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. iv. 8).

We have an illustration here. Who cannot see the happiness that would reign in the house where the relationship of husband and wife was formed on the godly model here furnished?

The subjection of children to their parents is part of God's order as seen in nature; and under the law a special blessing was attached to the observance of the commandment in which this duty was enjoined. Christianity takes up the obligation, but transplants it from natural to divine ground. "Children, obey your parents *in the Lord*; for this is right. Honour thy father and thy mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (chap. vi. 1-3).

Thus the obligation of children, as of wives, is connected with "the Lord." It is not merely the dictate of nature, though perfectly right, but the acknowledgment of the Lord's claims as represented in the parents. The blessed Lord Himself, who "learned obedience," was the beautiful example of this. Of Him in His lifetime it is recorded that He went with His parents "to Nazareth, and was subject unto them" (Luke ii. 51). The law is not here introduced as showing that believers are under it, but as proving the special value which God attached to this duty, so as even to depart from the ordinary character of law,

by coupling it with a promise which makes known the connection between this duty and earthly blessing.

But the duty is not one-sided. The apostle adds, "And ye, fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (v. 4). Both parents are to be obeyed, but this admonition is addressed only to the fathers. This may be partly because fathers are more likely to err in the provoking of their children to wrath than mothers; but the principal reason is that the father, as the head of the house, is responsible to God for the bringing up of the children, and he is treated on the ground of this responsibility.

This principle, as seen in Eli's case, runs throughout Scripture. It is all the more solemn because under Christianity the children are already holy, as belonging to the house of God; and the obligation is therefore the greater to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The Israelites were holy by birth (not personally, but as belonging to a nation set apart to God), and therefore the fathers were to instruct the children in the law, their then link with God. So Christian parents are to instruct their children as to what becomes the holy character which attaches to them as members of a Christian family.

The Book of Experience.

(PHILIPPIANS).

XI. CHAPTER IV., *continued.*

SUPPOSING we have to judge evil, we have to do it in the power of the good that is in us. Here is the path in which our souls have to walk : “ Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things ” (v. 8).

The Lord give us, beloved brethren, to remember them. God may have to judge, but He dwells in what is good.

We then get (and what a blessed thing it is for a man to be able to say it !) “ Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen *in me*, do ” (v. 9).

Mark here, that is the way of having the God of peace with us. When our cares are cast on God, he says, “ The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus ” ; but this is more. Paul stood in a special, peculiar place, filled by the Spirit of God, though the chief of sinners, as he says, yet “ always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus ” ; “ death worketh in us, but life in you ” (2 Cor. iv. 10, 12).

It was a great deal to say. He had to have a thorn in the flesh to enable him to carry it out; it was not that his flesh was naturally any better than yours. He did not only say, I am dead, but he carried about *death in the flesh*, so that it did not stir. He was a chosen vessel, we know; and it was through the grace and power of Christ that he did it. But he *was* doing it; and so, as we remarked in beginning, there is never sin mentioned in this epistle, because it is the proper experience of Christian life. Doctrine is scarcely alluded to either. Paul speaks throughout in the consciousness of his experience.

If I look to walk after Christ, I must reckon myself dead. I never say I must die, because that would be supposing the flesh there working; of course it is there, but I say it is *dead*. I quite understand a person passing through a state by which he learns what flesh is, and such processes are more or less long. But when brought thoroughly down to say, "In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing," then God can say, Reckon yourself dead; do not let it have dominion over you (Rom. vii. 18; vi. 11). The spring from which all power flows is that you *have died*. That is the fundamental truth as to deliverance. Deliverance comes when by the power of the Spirit of God we reckon ourselves *dead*. It is not so but to faith. Christ is there in power,

and I reckon myself dead, and then I can deal in power.

“ This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son ” (1 John v. 11). But is that all? No. For supposing life is there, and that the old nature is still alive, there is nothing but conflict between the two, and, unless I have the power of the Spirit of God, no settled freedom from sin; and supposing I have, still there is conflict. Only if I say I am dead really, my deliverance from the working of the flesh is fully realized.

The apostle says, In the power and being of this life, I am dead; and when he comes to carry it out it is, “ Always bearing about in the body the *dying* of the Lord Jesus.” I have received Christ as righteousness before God, and as life in me, and I treat the old thing as dead. It is not only that I have life, but I have died; so it is not an even chance between the two which shall have the upper hand. It is the way till I am brought to the discovery that there is no good in the flesh, and that I have died with Christ. Then I learn that not only I have done bad things, but that the tree itself is bad, and that Christ, who is our life, has died to sin, as well as for sins; and, when I reckon the old thing DEAD, I find liberty.

I do not say forgiveness, but deliverance. “ The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus

hath made me *free* " (Rom. viii. 2). Of course I may fail, and may be brought under the power of sin for a moment; but I am not a debtor to it any more. How has He condemned the flesh? IN DEATH. Then I am free, in the fact of life treating the old thing as dead.

We are always to manifest this life of Jesus. Keeping in faith this dying of Christ, I have got the cross for the flesh. The apostle says, The death of Christ works in me, old Paul, and so nothing but the life of Christ flows out for you; and he says, Go you, and do like me: "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you" (v. 9). He Himself will be then present with you.

What a wonderful thing it is, beloved brethren! The life of Christ given, the flesh reckoned dead, and we walking accordingly. Is God then going to keep Himself separate from you? No. "The God of peace shall be with you."

It is wonderful how often He is called "the God of peace," while He is never called the God of joy. Joy is an uneven thing. Joy gives us the thought of hearing good news, and sorrow may be there too. There is joy indeed in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, for that is good news there; but it is not

God's nature like peace. It is an emotion of the heart. Man is a poor, weak creature. He hears good news, and he has joy; he hears sad news, and he has sorrow. It is the ups and downs of a creature nature. But He is "THE GOD OF PEACE." It is a deeper thing.

Look at the world and the human heart; do you ever see peace there? Joy we do see in the animal nature even; as in a beast let loose. And we may see a kind of joy in the world, but there is no peace; the heart of man is "like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest" (Isa. lvii. 20). Incessant harassment for amusement, and they call that joy. The world is a restless world, and if it cannot be restless in activity to get what it wants, it is restless because it cannot. We never find peace in this world except when God gives it.

If we are walking in the power of the life of Christ, "the God of peace" is with us. We have the consciousness of His presence. The heart is at rest; there is no craving after something we have not got. Even among Christians we see persons who have no peace because they are craving after what they have not got. That is not peace. But enjoying what is in Him, though surely craving to know Him better, is blessed rest of heart; it is peace. It is a blessed thing to have such a sanctuary in this world, "the God of peace" with us.

We then see how Paul is superior to all circumstances. He had been in want, though in a kind of free prison, and his heart felt it. "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again." He says, "Now at the last," as if they had been a little bit careless. But there is a gracious delicacy towards them; he at once withdraws what he had said, by adding, "but ye lacked opportunity" (v. 10).

There is never insensibility in the Christian's superiority, else it is no superiority. In all circumstances the heart is free to act according to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and He was never insensible. We steel ourselves against circumstances; our poor selfish hearts like to get away from suffering. But He was always Himself in the circumstances. So, as has been said, there was no character in Christ. He was always Himself. Perfectly sensitive to all things, but never governed by them; always in them in the strength of His own grace. We never find Him unmoved. When He saw the crowd He was "moved with compassion towards them"; and when He saw the bier which carried out the only son of the widow He had pity on her; and at the grave of Lazarus "He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled"; a strong expression; it is, He *troubled Himself inwardly*. The power of death in the people around Him pressed on His spirit.

No matter where He was, He was never insensible, but was Himself in grace for that He was sensible of. On the cross He had the right word for the thief. Even when He had to say, "How long shall I be with you, and suffer you?" He immediately adds, "Bring thy son hither." He was perfectly sensitive (as we are not) with His grace always ready to be called out. What shows itself in Christ is what we should seek to be; being perfectly sensitive to all circumstances, but that they should meet Christ in us, so as to draw Him out.

We have seen how Paul corrects what he had said, "at the last your care of me hath flourished again," by adding, "ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity" (v. 10).

We never find the Lord correcting Himself. Paul was a man of like passions as we are. He could not stop at Troas, though a great door was opened to him for preaching the gospel; he had no rest in his spirit because he did not find Titus. In Macedonia, too, his flesh had no rest. And he says of that epistle, which gives us inspired directions for the assembly (we could not do without it), that he was not sorry he had written it, though he had been sorry; and yet he had been inspired to write it. His heart had sunk below the place he was in, when he thought all the Corinthians had turned against him. It is blessed

in one sense to see that, though he was an apostle, he was so like us; but we would not see it in the blessed Lord. Perfect sensitiveness, but perfection in it, is what we see in Him; while we see the apostle was a man, though it is interesting to see him feeling in that way.

He then goes on to show that he was superior to all these circumstances. "Not that I speak in respect of want, for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (v. 11). "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (v. 13).

Power has come in for us, beloved friends. People say, "Oh; we can do all things through Christ," as a kind of absolute truth. I say, Can you? *You* cannot. Oh! you say, a person can. And that is perfectly true as an absolute statement, but that is not what the apostle meant. He meant that *he* could do all things. He had learned it. It was a real state for him, not an abstract proposition. "I am *instructed* both to be full and to be hungry" (v. 12). If full, He keeps me from being careless, and indifferent, and self-satisfied; if hungry, He keeps me from being cast down and dissatisfied.

Studies on the Book of Daniel.

IX. CHAPTER IX., *continued.*

ALL have transgressed the law. It does not do to say, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego have not done so. Josiah had done much that was good; David was a man after God's own heart: but this or that instance is lost in the idea of a broken law. If the people of God are no longer in the enjoyment of their privileges, it is because they have sinned, and that sin is punished. Certain alterations for the better may have retarded the judgment, but judgment having once come in, the way of the Spirit is to say that all have sinned.

Besides all this, there is a government in detail, as we see in the case of Hezekiah, where chastisement was announced, and afterwards postponed. They were to go to Babylon, but not in his time. As to further matter of detail of government, consult the case of Josiah; he fell by the hand of Pharaoh-Necho, although it was said, "Thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace" (2 Kings xxii. 20). But he was taken from the evil to come. The circumstances were afflicting, for it would appear that he should have listened to Pharaoh. Josiah was chastened individually; but he did not see, like Daniel, all that came upon Jerusalem. What a sparing from sorrow was that!

“The righteous man perisheth . . . none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come” (Isa. lvii. 1).

“Yea, all Israel have transgressed Thy law . . . yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand Thy truth”; that is, not only have we transgressed, but when the chastening came we did not turn to the Lord with a true heart, to turn us from our iniquities. Here sin reached its height (vv. 11-13).

“Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil and brought it upon us,” as He watched upon the good to bless (v. 14). How terrible, when the government of God watches upon the evil to make it come upon His people!

“And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought Thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten Thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. O Lord, according to all Thy righteousness, I beseech Thee, let Thine anger and Thy fury be turned away from Thy city Jerusalem, Thy holy mountain” (vv. 15, 16).

The words of Daniel are quite touching. He deeply felt that it was the sin of the people that had brought down all the evil. Nevertheless, he reiterates, It is a question of Thy

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name. He says nothing about the name of the people. He had truly felt their wretchedness and sin; moreover he was humbled for it; but he insists upon this point, that Jerusalem is the city of God, and so he says, "Let Thine anger be turned away from *Thy* city Jerusalem."

In confessing the sins of his fathers, he could not bear the idea of the city of God being in desolation; but these sins being the cause, they must be forgiven before the city can be restored. It was called by God's name, and in the eyes of Daniel his people were, so to speak, the name of God in the earth, as it is said, "This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob" (Ps. xxiv. 6).

This, then, was the pleading of Daniel: he confesses all the sins of Israel. Thus, "For *our* sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and *Thy* people are become a reproach. . . . O my God, incline Thine ear and hear . . . for we do not present our supplications before Thee *for our righteousness*, but for *Thy* great mercies. Defer not, for Thine own sake, O my God, for *Thy* city and *Thy* people are called by *Thy* name" (vv. 16-19).

God Himself is made the motive. That faith which perceives the sins of the people, by reason of the glory of God which identifies

itself with such people, can claim deliverance from the results of these sins; because this very glory necessitates the forgiveness, God having identified Himself in goodness with the people: and so much the more, inasmuch as it is this glory upon which faith feeds and is preoccupied, and which, as before said, causes the extent of sin and failure to be felt. But if God is to act for His name, He must deliver Jerusalem, for there was no other place on the earth which bore His name.

If the same spirit animated us, as Christians, we should be saying, It is for the sins of the Church that we are suffering, and that we are held in contempt by all the world.

Something remains to be said, dear friends, as to the place which Daniel takes prophetically. It has struck me in reading the chapter that he does not take the position in which the promises made to Abraham would have placed him. The full blessing of the Jews will be grounded on another truth than that which Daniel pleads here.

The blessings of the Jews, such as they are yet to enjoy, are based upon the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, without condition. These are not touched upon here by Daniel. They have never possessed the land under the law, properly speaking; but they have had it according to the promises made to Moses, in favour of the people, at the

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time of his mediation at Sinai. The land has never been possessed on the principle of obedience to the law; for immediately after it was given, the apostasy of the golden calf came in. Moreover, they have never yet enjoyed the land in quality of Messiah's people. In order to enjoy the land according to the promises, they must enjoy it according to the new covenant: but as yet neither the Messiah nor the new covenant have introduced the people into it.

The new covenant is not yet established with the Jews. The promises cannot yet have been accomplished; because Christ is the true Seed of Abraham. The Jews have been rejected, and the accomplishment has never yet taken place. These, namely, the Messiah and the new covenant, are two great elements of the future blessing of this people.

The fact is that God, after the idolatry of the golden calf, placed His people Israel (consult Exodus xxxii., xxxiii., xxxiv.) under a government, founded half upon law and half upon grace; for when Moses ascended the mount of Sinai God declared His name as "the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth" (Ex. xxxiv. 6). This was grace, whilst at the same time He gave him the law of the ten commandments; so that the people were placed under a condition of obedience. This

was the condition under which Israel was placed from the time that Moses ascended Sinai the second time. Although he had previously confessed the sins of Israel, and by his intercession obtained the pardon of the people through grace, yet God, notwithstanding, replaces them under a condition of obedience to the law.

In all that there was no question of Jerusalem, but only of the great principles which were the groundwork of the relationship between God and His people. Later, as in Lev. xxvi., we have the threats made to the people should they fail in their conduct. It is a long chapter, where blessings are promised in the event of obedience. He engages even to place His tabernacle in their midst, and every earthly blessing was promised them (*vv.* 3-13); "but if ye will not hearken to me" (*v.* 14), they are menaced with the heaviest judgments, and at last are to be cast out of their land (*vv.* 31-39).

This was precisely what befell them when they were carried captive to Babylon (compare 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21, with Lev. xxvi. 34), and the land enjoyed her Sabbaths during the time of the desolation of Jerusalem.

Peace and Power.

HOW few of us really taste the sweetness of communion with a risen Christ! How little do any of us know of that fixedness of heart upon Him as our one paramount, engrossing, undivided Object! We are occupied with our own things. The world creeps in, in one way or another; we live in the region of nature; we breathe the atmosphere (the dark, heavy, murky atmosphere) of the old creation. Self is indulged, and thus our spiritual vision becomes dimmed; we lose our sense of peace; the soul becomes disturbed, the heart unhinged, the Holy Ghost grieved, the conscience exercised. Then the eye is turned in upon self, and back upon its actings. The time that else might be spent in holy and happy occupation with our Object is and must be devoted to the business of self-judgment (heavy, but needed work) in order to get back into the enjoyment of what we should never have lost, even a perfect conscience.

Now, the moment the eye is turned off from Christ, darkness must set in; oftentimes darkness that may be felt. It is only as the eye is single that the whole body is full of light. And what, beloved reader, is a single eye, but having Christ for our one Object? It is thus that light divine pours in upon us, until every chamber of our moral being becomes lighted up, and we become lights for others, "as when the

bright shining of a candle doth give thee light" (Luke xi. 36). In this way the soul is kept happily free from obscurity, perplexity, and anxiety. It finds all its springs in Christ. It is independent of the world, and can move on, singing,

"Salvation in that name is found,
Cure for my grief and care;
A healing balm for every wound,
All, all I want is there."

It is impossible for words to convey the power and blessedness of having Jesus ever before the heart as an Object. It is perfection, as we have it in Philippians iii. 15, where the apostle says, "Let us therefore, as many as be *perfect*, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be differently minded, God shall reveal even this unto you" (Phil. iii. 15).

When Christ stands before the heart as our absorbing and satisfying Object we have reached our moral end so far as an object is concerned; for how can we ever get beyond the Person of Christ, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily? Impossible. We cannot get beyond the blood of Christ for the conscience; neither can we get beyond the Person of Christ for the heart. We have therefore reached our moral end in both; we have perfection as to the state of the conscience, and as to the object of the heart.

Here then we have both PEACE and POWER,

peace for the conscience and power over the affections. It is when the conscience finds sweet repose in the blood that the emancipated affections can go forth and find their full play around the Person of Jesus. And, oh! what tongue can tell, what pen unfold, the mighty moral results of gazing upon Christ? "But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. iii. 18).

Observe, "*Beholding . . . are changed.*" There is no legal bondage; no restless effort; no anxious toiling. We gaze, and gaze, and what then? Continue to gaze, and as we gaze we become morally assimilated to the blessed Object, through the transforming power of the Holy Ghost. The image of Christ is engraved upon the heart, and reflected back in ten thousand ways in our practical career from day to day.

Reader, remember this is the only true idea of Christianity. It is one thing to be a religious man; it is quite another to be a Christian. Paul was a religious man before his conversion; but he was a Christian afterwards. It is well to see this. There is plenty of religion in the world; but alas! how little Christianity! And why? Simply because Christ is not known, not loved, not cared for, not sought after. And even where His work

is looked to for salvation, where His blood is trusted for pardon and peace, how little is known or thought of Himself!

We are ready enough to take salvation through the death of Jesus, but oh! beloved reader, how far off do we keep from His blessed Person! How little does He get His true place in our hearts! This is a serious loss. Indeed, we cannot but believe that the pale, flickering light of modern profession is the fruit of habitual distance from Christ, the central Sun of Christianity. How can there possibly be light, heat, or fruitfulness, if we wander amid the gloomy vaults and dark tunnels of this world's pleasure, its politics, or its religion? It is vain to expect it. And even where we make salvation our object, when we are occupied with our spiritual condition, feeding upon our experiences, and looking after our frames and feelings, we must become weak and low, inasmuch as these things are certainly NOT CHRIST.

There are many who, as we say, have retired from the world, have given up its balls, its parties, its theatres, its exhibitions, its concerts, its flower shows, its numberless and nameless vanities, who nevertheless have not found their object in a risen and glorified Christ. They have retired from the world, but have gone in upon themselves. They are seeking an object in their religion; they are en-

grossed with forms of pietism ; they are feeding upon the workings of a morbid conscience or a superstitious mind ; or they are trafficking in the experiences of yesterday.

Now these persons are just as far from happiness, as far from the true idea of Christianity, as the poor pleasure-hunters of this world. It is quite possible to give up pleasure hunting, and become a religious mope ; a morbid, melancholy mystic, a spiritual hypochondriac. What do I gain by the change ? Nothing ; unless, indeed, it be a vast amount of self-deception. I have retired from the world around to find an object in the world within : a poor exchange !

How different is this from the true Christian ! There he stands, with a tranquilized conscience, and an emancipated heart, gazing upon an Object that absorbs his whole soul. He wants no more. Talk to him about this world's pleasure. Ask him has he been to the International Exhibition ? What is his calm and dignified reply ? Will he merely tell you of the sin, the harm of such things ? Nay. What then ? " I have found my *all* in Christ. I have reached my moral end. I want no more." This is the Christian's reply.

It is a poor affair when we come to talk of the harm of this or that. It often happens that persons who speak thus are occupied, not with Christ, but with their own reputation,

their character, the consistency with themselves. Of what use is all this? Is it not self-occupation after all? What we want is, to keep the eye fixed on Christ; then the heart will follow the eye, and the feet will follow the heart. In this way, our path shall be as the shining light, shining more and more until it becomes lost in the blaze of the perfect and everlasting day of glory (Prov. iv. 18).

May God, in His infinite mercy, grant to the writer and the reader of these pages to know more of what it is to have reached our moral end, both as to the state of the conscience and as to the object of the heart.

The apostle Paul was a man whose whole course and career were marked by an Object that was before him. And it is the object that is before us that marks our course, and gives it its moral character. Paul followed after CHRIST. Let us ask ourselves, Are *we* following Christ in this way? Is this what governs us? I do not say we may not be distracted; but is HE the Object after which we are running? We cannot have two objects at the same time. Has there been such a revelation of CHRIST to our hearts that we have HIM as the only Object before us?

The Death and Resurrection of Lazarus.

(JOHN XI.).

“**S**ORROW is a sacred thing,” it has been justly and beautifully said. But it is a fruitful thing also. If a sorrowing house be a sanctuary, so that no rude foot should trespass, it is also a spot for divine husbandry, and ready to yield its good and profitable fruit.

The sickness and death of Lazarus procured for the loved family at Bethany a visit from the Lord; a circumstance in itself full of blessing and of promise; and in that visit we see several things which may well engage our heart and attention.

He sympathises with the sorrow, and then removes the cause of it. He “wept” first, and afterwards said, “Lazarus, come forth.” The purpose which He carried with Him of removing the occasion of the misery, left His heart still the seat of present compassion with it. It was so in sending out the apostles. He was about to give them pastors according to His own heart; but looking on them as sheep that had no shepherd, He had compassion on the multitudes. It was so again in His feeding the people. He was about to give them bread enough and to spare; but on seeing them He had compassion (Matt. ix., xv.).

No prospect of the future, be it as bright and certain as it may, can rightly close the heart

to the claims of the present. The follower of Christ will "weep" as he enters the house of mourning or the chamber of death, though he knows that the power of resurrection, in season, will close the scene in all its own magnificence and joy.

With this sympathy, and this power over the cause of the sorrow, we see moreover the instructions of wisdom and the lessons of God enjoyed through His sorrow.

Martha speaks of her grief to the Lord, and much ignorance is expressed through the natural, and in some sense pardonable, exercises of her wounded heart. But Jesus teaches her the way of God more perfectly. He lets the light of some wondrous truths break in upon her soul; truths deeper and more precious than the hours of her undisturbed ease and happiness had been able to discover. The light of the day of prosperity had not shown her what Jesus now brought with Him in this night of weeping. She is made to see some bright shinings of the glory of God through the tears of that sorrow, through that gloom of death which had entered her dwelling.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life," said Jesus; "he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." The place was indeed a sanctuary, and Jesus Himself treads softly. He wept. He owned the claim of such a moment. But it was a spot for Him to culti-

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vate also. It was a garden of the Lord's; and He enriches it with fresh fruit and growth of knowledge.

Again, let me say, of this affecting scene, that it is made productive to others also. Many believe, when they witness how the grace and power of the Lord had dealt with this sorrow. "Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and saw the things which Jesus did, believed on Him."

I ask, Is not all this as much the history of this our day as it was of the day of Martha and Mary? Who need live long or travel far to know that the sorrows of the saints still draw the willing visits of Christ; and that, during such visits, He sympathises and teaches? Who, I ask, need live long or travel far to know this?

Gracious it is in the Spirit, and gracious to us, to have the record of such things in the Book "written for our learning" (Rom. xv. 4; 1 Cor. x. 11). But is it less gracious in Him, or less gracious to us, that these things are not merely the things of history, but the common things of experience and observation?

And further. This sorrow is the occasion of fresh acts of supplication and of worship: "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me," said the Lord. And is this at all more strange, or less a matter of experience, than the others? What say our own souls?

“ Trials make the promise sweet;
 Trials give new life to prayer;
 Trials brings me to His feet,
 Lay me low, and keep me there.”

This is not history, but experience. It is not the light of other days which, as we hear, was wont to cheer the night of weeping or the house of mourning, but the light which, as we know, is still wont to hold its court, and display its power, in the dark valley, and in the shadow of death.

I am bold also to add another thought; a thought, too, lately made very precious to my own heart; that the blessed Lord, in unjealous love, allows both our sorrows and our mercies to be fresh links between Himself and our poor fond hearts.

The widow of Sarepta was afresh bound to the prophet when she received her son from the dead. Her joy in one she so loved being restored to her, acted as another link of tenderest and yet strongest texture between her heart and the man of God, the witness of Christ; and the Spirit allowed it, I am sure (1 Kings xvii. 24).

So, in much later days, the Lord allowed His servant to be thankful, and take courage, on seeing brethren again, after a long separation; though during that separation he had enjoyed His presence and encouragements in a sweet and large measure (Acts xxviii.).

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And so here. Receiving their brother from the dead, the dear family at Bethany are more than ever the Lord's. In the power and joy of resurrection they sit with Him. They delight in Him afresh through the mercy which their common natural human feelings had received (John xii. 1).

GRACE has reference to what GOD is, and not to what *we* are, except indeed that the very greatness of our sins does but magnify the extent of "THE GRACE OF GOD." I have got away from grace if I have the slightest doubt or hesitation about God's love. I shall then be saying, "I am unhappy, because I am not what I should like to be." But this is not the question. The real question is whether God is what we should like HIM to be; whether JESUS is all we could wish. If the consciousness of what *we* are, of what we find in ourselves, has any other effect than (while it humbles us) to increase our adoration of what GOD is, we are *off the ground of pure grace*. The effect of such consciousness surely should be to humble us, but also to make our hearts reach out to God, and to His GRACE as abounding over all our sin.

The Christian at Home.

EPHESIANS V. 22—VI. 9.

II.

THE next class of household relationships differs from the others in being one instituted by social rather than natural causes. The servants here named were bondmen. Whether slavery is right or wrong, humane or cruel, is not the point here. Christianity takes men in the social position in which it finds them, and shows how they may live Christ in that place. It is not occupied in remodelling society, but in teaching the believer to exhibit Christ. He was to be subject to the powers that be; and as these authorized slavery, he was to obey the laws in this as in other matters, seeking freedom lawfully if he could, but if not, to be content with his lot. The service rendered under present social conditions differs in its legal basis, but this does not alter the obligations on either side named by the apostle. Nay, if there is any difference, the obligation is even stronger; for service rendered for wages should surely be given as cheerfully and performed as thoroughly as service exacted by bondage.

“Servants,” therefore, are exhorted to “be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the

servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men" (*vv.* 5-7). Here again the obligation is taken out of the range of the old creation, and connected with Christ in glory. Like wives and children, the servants are exhorted to render their obedience "as unto Christ." This at once transfers their duties to a higher region than either the legal compulsion of the old system, or the legal contract of the present. Even a slave's duties were at once ennobled and sweetened if he could say, "I am doing this, not for reward, nor to escape punishment, but to please Christ." It was not to be a question of whether the task imposed was reasonable or unreasonable, light or arduous. Wrong endured, or severe labour performed for Christ's sake, might be cheerfully borne.

How beautifully our Lord Himself furnishes the example of this. He "took upon Him the form of a servant" (*Phil.* ii.). Though entitled to be free, He submits to tribute lest He should offend them. So the believing servant, under the cruelest and most tyrannical treatment, was to show out the life of Christ in him. "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully . . . for even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow

His steps" (1 Peter ii. 19-21). And as the cheerful and diligent obedience of the servant was the means of showing forth Christ, so any failure in the respect or subjection here enjoined would bring reproach on His name. Hence the apostle, in writing to Timothy, says, "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed" (1 Tim. vi. 1).

Nowhere is the honour of Christ spoken of as bound up with the conduct of the believer, so remarkably as in the case of the servant. The very hardships of his lot, the very injustice and cruelty with which he was liable to be treated, only rendered the power of the life of Christ in him the more conspicuous. And before none other is the reward of his conduct so distinctly set, "Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free" (v. 8). How cheering to the suffering bondman, to look beyond the drudgery and unrequited labours of his earthly lot, and to know that the faithful toil endured with good will for the Lord's sake here is not, and never will be, forgotten, but will all "be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ!" (1 Peter i. 7).

And if Christ, as the Lord of the inheritance, holds out the hope of reward to the ser-

vant, so He utters words of warning to the master : “ And ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening : knowing that your Master also is in heaven ; neither is there respect of persons with Him ” (v. 9). “ The same things ” probably mean what is called in the Colossians, “ that which is just and equal.” The principle here is the counterpart of that in the last verse. Even a Christian master might forget that social distinctions, though recognised and sanctioned on earth, have no existence in Christ’s judgment. Master and servant will all answer to Him. To the one whose low position might cause discouragement He holds out, therefore, the prospect of reward for faithful service ; to the one whose high position might lead to oppression, He holds out the judgment that will follow an abuse of power. Though the law might give the injured servant no redress, the master was reminded of another tribunal before which he must stand, and in which his conduct to his servant would be judged, not according to man’s laws, but according to the estimate of Him that is holy, Him that is true.

Thus Christ is made the standard of everything in the Christian’s walk. Whether as wife or husband, as child or parent, as bondman or master, the rule is, that having Christ’s life, the walk of Christ is to be shown forth in the believer’s ways. (See 1. John ii. 6).

Studies on the Book of Daniel.

X. CHAPTER IX., *continued.*

ONCE every seven years there was to be a year of rest; but the people had not faith in God to observe it, and the consequence of their not believing God in not allowing the sabbatic years, was that God found this means of enforcing obedience to His law. A promise succeeds this threat: "If they shall confess their iniquity," . . . "then I will remember My covenant with Jacob," etc., that is, they would be brought back (*vv.* 40, 42).

The same principle is presented in Deut. xxviii., xxix. We have conditional blessings and cursings, and subsequently (*chap.* xxx.), promises; that is, grace for those who repent in the land whither they have been carried captive.

It was this special case that Daniel had to do with; the case, namely, foreseen in the threatenings. I would call your attention also to 1 Kings ix.; for there God shows, in answer to Solomon, what He would do in case of infidelity; and He identifies His name with the city of Jerusalem, and particularly with the temple (1 Kings viii. 29). In his prayer he does not ask for the accomplishment of the promises made to Abraham, but only of those made to Moses, which place the people under the condition of obedience when in their land

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(v. 56). It was this prayer which was answered.

We have seen what passed with Moses. And when Solomon dedicates the temple to God, he asks Him to acknowledge it always according to His principles of government as revealed to Moses. Now, the people having sinned, Jeremiah had prophesied that there should be a special chastisement for seventy years, and Daniel takes this up. He does not go back to the promises made to Abraham, but no further than the words of Solomon and Moses (Dan. ix. 11).

“Let Thine anger and Thy fury be turned away from Thy city Jerusalem, Thy holy mountain” (v. 16). God had, according to Solomon’s prayer, chosen Jerusalem. We will not now enter into the answer which God gives, except to say that He declares all that should happen to Jerusalem; but in taking as His occasion the return of the captives to that city, He goes on much further, even to the circumstances of that city to the very end. He does it, as it were, under a Mosaic point of view, and not in revealing its final state of blessedness, as being an answer to the prayer respecting the judgments which had befallen the Holy City, on account of the violation of the law of Moses; the result of which was, that the city was placed under the judgment which Moses had threatened.

It may be well to point to two or three passages as to this choice of Jerusalem; for instance Ps. lxxviii. 68, lxxxvii. and cxxxii. This last opens with a description of finding and bringing back the ark, and giving it a place. Then Jehovah speaks: "If thy children will keep My covenant . . . For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is My rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it" (vv. 12-14). Nothing can be more striking than the goodness of God throughout this Psalm. God goes beyond all that is asked of Him. The prayer is, "Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let Thy saints shout for joy" (v. 9). But the answer is, "I will also clothe her priests with salvation; and her saints shall shout aloud for joy" (v. 16). Again, the prayer had been, "Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest, Thou and the ark of Thy strength" (vv. 8-10); and the reply is, as we have seen, "The Lord hath chosen Zion: this is My rest for ever," etc. Again, the prayer is, "For Thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of Thine anointed" (v. 10), to which God answers, "There will I make the horn of David to bud." In every case the answer largely surpasses the request.

There is yet a passage in Zechariah ii. 12, which shows the exceeding joy which Christ will feel over Jerusalem in the last days. "And

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many nations shall be joined to the Lord in those days, and shall be My people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee; and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent Me unto thee. And the Lord shall inherit Judah His portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again " (see also Zephaniah iii. 17).

These blessings follow upon all the trying and humbling circumstances of which Daniel treats, for it must be remembered that in Zechariah it is "after the glory" (v. 8), that is, beyond the period included in Daniel's prophecy. Again, in Zech. xii. 2, "Behold I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling to all the people round about." It is an elect city, just as Israel is an elect people, or the Church an elect bride.

Let it be again observed that whilst Daniel is personally concerned with the return of Israel from Babylon, under the circumstances predicted by Moses, the Spirit of God uses this thought to continue the history of the people, or rather of the city (introducing the chief events of the first coming of Christ), as far, but only as far, as the point where final blessing commences; for the matter of Zechariah and the Psalms, but now touched upon, is not entered into. The essential point, however, is the spirit in which Daniel identifies himself with the people of God, confessing before God all their sin as his own.

Verses 20-27 relate the answer to the confession and prayer of Daniel. The faithfulness of God is in full action, exactly as promised in Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and in the answer to the prayer of Solomon. He had promised that if they were led into captivity, and should, in the midst of their enemies, turn to Him with all their heart (He never said, if they kept the law to the letter, for this would not have been possible to them), He would bring them back.

“ Whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation ” (v. 21).

He repeats twice, “ whiles I was speaking.” He had not finished before Gabriel appeared, and arrested it by the delivery of the prophecy following.

It is not, we may say in passing, always so. On another occasion Daniel spent three weeks in fasting and prayer, for God was trying his faith. The angel was to accomplish the purpose of God before communicating it. The Lord permitted that the prince of Persia should hinder its accomplishment for three weeks. It was a question of deciding something at the court of Persia; and those there who were opposed to an edict for favouring the Jews could put obstacles to its promulgation. When

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the angel of God had prevailed in these counsels, he came and said so.

This is very instructive to us; for God always governs the world. Whilst the throne of God was at Jerusalem, He governed the world immediately; not only Israel, but the world, and this according to the good or bad conduct of Israel; whilst after that, although He did not cease to govern anywhere, already, even in this book (Israel being in captivity), He is seen acting by the secret springs of His providence, and not by the immediate action of the revealed rule of His law, as in the midst of His people.

The Book of Esther is a striking instance of the secret government of God at a time when He could not recognise His people publicly; and I judge this to be the reason why God does not permit His name to appear throughout the book. If He had been named He would not, so to speak, have permitted Esther to remain the wife of Ahasuerus.

Although the child of God is able to confide entirely in Him, for "the very hairs of our head are numbered," it is happy to see the government of God manifested openly in the world. It will be the case in the Millennium; the government will be immediate and direct, so that the justice of God will be seen by men, whilst now all goes on secretly. His ways are often a labyrinth to us now; for our

normal position, as being saints, is quite different. God is perfecting us for heaven, and has no object in manifesting in us His righteousness upon earth. The heavenly thing is much better and more precious. He makes us pass through all kinds of earthly trial, with this object in view. A Christian is often astonished at what he suffers individually for righteousness' sake. It is a general case. But for the Jews, God will appear, according to His promise, the moment they turn with humility and confession to Him. Thus does He answer Daniel.

We have already observed that faith never forgets that Jerusalem is the city of God's holiness, and that His eyes are there continually; that when even the Israelites have failed, and God is obliged to abandon them for the time, it ceases not, to faith, to be the holy city of God.

“About the time of the evening oblation” (v. 21). This expression makes us feel the Jewish atmosphere we are in; for of course there was no evening sacrifice at Babylon. Jerusalem was burnt, but faith remained. It was the time of the evening sacrifice. The Jewish scene fills his thoughts.

“And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding . . . for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the

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matter, and consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city." Observe how the angel accredits the faith of Daniel, making him the representative both of Jerusalem and the people: "To finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity,* and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the holy of holies" (vv. 22-24).

Many Christians find great difficulty in this entire passage, from their not seeing that, whilst it has already had an accomplishment, as far as is needed for the establishment of its truth, on the other hand it has not been fulfilled at all. If we do not see this, it is impossible to understand the events that are still future.

* The author translates "to make reconciliation for iniquity," by "to cover iniquity," to which expression he annexes this note.—Psalm xxxii. 1. I prefer employing the word "to cover," than to explain it; it is employed for expiation or for pardon, that is, either for an expiation, or its application, viz., pardon. TRANSLATOR.

GRACE does not set itself to change the state of the world and of society, but to lead souls to heaven by renewing them after the image of God.

The Book of Experience.

(PHILIPPIANS).

XII. CHAPTER IV., *concluded*.

WITH Paul it was not a *man* can, but *I* have found Christ so sufficient in every circumstance that I am under the power of none. He had been beaten of rods, five times he had received of the Jews forty stripes *save* one; he had been stoned, and he had gone through all sorts of things; but he had found Christ sufficient in them all.

And do not say, Ah! that was when he was a mature Christian; it was very well to say it at the end of his life.

If he had not found Christ thus sufficient from the beginning right through to the end, he could not have said what he did at the end. Faith reckons on Christ from the starting-point of Christian life. It is the principle I was referring to in the twenty-third Psalm. When the psalmist had gone through everything, he says, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Full or hungry, I shall always find that He is enough. But to be able to experience this at the end it must be experienced by the way.

Do not say, Oh! he was an apostle! he was a wonderful, blessed man, far above the evil that is torturing me!

No such thing! He had a thorn in the flesh

while he was writing; and though that was not power, it put him into nothingness, where the power could come in. The Lord would not take it away when Paul besought Him. "My grace is sufficient for thee," was His answer (2 Cor. xii. 9). It seemed a hindrance; but when he preached Christ's power, not Paul's, was seen.

I refer to it so that you should not say that he was free from the difficulties and snares of the flesh. God had put him in danger of being exalted above measure by taking him up to the third heaven, and He sent him a thorn to make nothing of him; and then His strength was made perfect in weakness.

Divine strength cannot be where human strength is. If it had been human strength, Paul's converts would have been worth nothing; but God's converts were worth eternal life. It is a great thing that we should be made nothing of. If we do not know how to be nothing, God must make us nothing. A humble person does not need to be humbled.

Paul was dependent upon Christ, absolutely dependent on Christ; and we find the infallible faithfulness of Christ to him. But, I repeat it, he could not have said it at the end if he had not experienced it by the way.

It is a blessed testimony. God is sufficient for us where we are; but He must bring us to the point of uprightness. The soul must be

in the truth of its state before God. Till the conscience gets into the place where I really am, till it gets the consciousness of distance from God, and unfaithfulness to Him, it is not upright. But when it gets there, Now, says God, I have got you right; I can help you.

Job said, "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me; because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him." I did this, I did that.

That will not do, says God; that is all me, me, me. So He lets the devil loose upon him, till Job curses the day in which he was born, and till he says, "Now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself" (Job xxix. 11, 12; xlii. 5, 6).

That will do, says God; now I can bless you. And He did bless him.

God would have us not merely holding our heads above water, but going on in the strength of His grace.

"Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity" (v. 15).

Love is never forgetful; it treasures up acts of service. And the apostle treasured up in memory the things wherein he had been cared

for. God delights in service done to His saints; even what is done to the world He delights in too.

“But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (v. 19). Mark the intimacy there is in “MY GOD.” It is emphatic. It is saying, I know Him; I can answer for Him. I have come through all kinds of things, and I can answer for it that He never failed me. I know the way He acts, even in the small things of every-day life.

It is a great thing to trust God daily and hourly; not thinking we can provide for ourselves, and secure ourselves against the power of evil; but to trust God thoroughly.

And what is the measure of the supply?

Nothing short of “His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” He must glorify Himself, even in the falling of a sparrow; for there is nothing great and nothing small with God. He thinks of what His love must glorify itself in.

“My God shall supply all your need.” How could Paul tell that? He knew Him. Not that he had not been in a condition of want; but he had felt the preciousness of being met in it by God.

Things may look very dark; but we have always found that, if He led us by the wilderness where there was no water, He brought water out of the stony rock for us there. He

always exercises faith ; but He always meets it. Their coats even did not grow old for forty years (Deut. viii. 4).

This is a blessed result : “ My God shall supply all *your* need.” He was counting on blessing for others. What a comfort ! Instead of walking by sight, to be passing through this world in the blessed consciousness of what God is for oneself, and so able to count on Him for others.

We find ourselves sometimes almost dreading to press a person into the path of faith ; but we should not dread, but count on grace for them. Faith is always triumphant.

The Lord give us to count on Him always, and we shall then say, “ I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me ” (v. 13).

“ Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen ” (Jude 24, 25).