

A  
V O I C E  
TO  
THE FAITHFUL.

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

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VOL. IX.

LONDON GOSPEL TRACT DEPOT,  
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PATERNOSTER ROW.

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# A Voice to the Faithful.

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## MARK'S GOSPEL.

### CHAPTER V.

IF calming the winds and the sea shews the Lord's power over creation, that which follows shews it over devils: He casts out a Legion by His word. But now we find the effect of the manifestation of His power upon the world, even when it worked for the deliverance of men. They beseech Jesus to depart, and He goes away. Poor world! the quiet influence of Satan upon the heart is more disastrous than His outward and visible power; this is sad enough, but the power of the Lord is quite sufficient to drive it away; whereas on the other hand, the quiet influence of Satan in the heart, drives away Jesus Himself. And remark that when the presence of God

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is felt, it is more terrible than that of Satan : man would wish to free himself from the latter, but cannot ; but the presence of God is *insupportable* when it makes itself felt : and indeed man has driven God (in the person of Christ) out of this world. Jesus gave Himself for us, it is true ; but as regards man's responsibility, he has driven out the Lord. I do not doubt that all this scene is the representation of the end of the Lord's history ; and that the swine present to us the end of the Jews, who are hurried into perdition as possessed of the devil, at the end of their history. The world did not wish to have Jesus ; the Jews are cast down into hopeless ruin.

The man who is cured is quiet ; he wishes to be with Jesus who is going away, but this is not allowed him. He must go and announce to others what God had done for him. Here is the position of the disciples and of all Christians after the Lord's departure from this world. They desire to go and be with Him, but are sent again into the

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world to declare the blessed work that the Lord has done in their own persons; they can by their own experience say what is the grace and the power of Jesus. But how deplorable is the state of the world and of man! The presence of the devil is more tolerable for him than that of God. He would wish to check the violent manifestations of the power of Satan, but cannot—the bands are burst asunder, and the man is as bad as ever. God is not a tyrant like Satan, He is good, full of grace, and frees men in Christ from Satan's power; but this being the proof of the presence and power of God, man shews that this presence is insupportable to him, even when God manifests Himself as the deliverer from all the evils which sin and Satan's power have introduced.

The history which follows reveals the true relationships between Jesus and Israel. Jesus came to heal Israel; but Israel was in fact *dead*, speaking spiritually; when Jesus arrived, it was necessary to raise him, if it were God's will that he should live; the Lord could

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do it, and will do it for this nation in the last days. But then being in the way with the people, the crowd of Israel surrounded him; and if individual faith touched him, the person was healed, and this is what happened to the poor afflicted woman. Let us notice some of the details of the story:—the Lord distinguishes between true faith and the eagerness of the crowd which was attracted by His miracles and by the benefits it had received. Sincerity was not wanting in the crowd, the people saw the miracles and enjoy their effects, but they had not faith in the person of Jesus. But there was good in the woman, by grace, that which is always found in faith, a felt need and the perception of the excellence of His Person, and of the divine power that was in Jesus accompanied with true humility with regard to herself. The poor woman is sure that if she touch only the hem of His garment, she shall be healed; and in fact it is this that takes place. As soon as the woman is healed, Jesus perceives that the power

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which is in Him, and which has gone out from Him to the woman has worked with efficacy. And it is always thus ; many can hear the gospel and delight to listen to it, but faith is another thing ; and faith always receives the Lord's answer to the need which it presents to Him. He may make one wait, if He finds it good to exercise the faith, but He always answers in love : the woman is perfectly healed. Faith makes the believer humble about his wretchedness : the woman wished to remain hidden, but the Lord encourages the believer, saying in this instance, " Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace." However timid and fearful the soul may be in the Lord's presence in spiritual things, and however much it may feel its wretchedness, when the call is true, it opens out and confesses His grace, not the misery which had rendered this grace needful. It is then that the Lord encourages and speaks peace to the heart. Personal faith is here plainly distinguished from the eagerness of the crowd which followed



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Him, whether for curiosity, or for the benefits which Jesus conferred upon it. But the power of resurrection was found in Him and through Him. Israel, though dead, was only sleeping; the Lord's voice will call him into life in His time.

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“AS THE TRUTH IS IN JESUS.”

(Eph. iv. 21.)

ONE of the prerogatives of God is, that He “quickeneth the dead”—and another, that He “calleth those things which be not as though they were”—and these two are indispensable for all efficient action, that would meet and deliver out of the ruins where we dwell. They were therefore especially stated in reference to Abraham “who is the father of us all,” and in connection with the promises which “the God of glory” made to him. It is evident that a natural man, who judges “by the seeing of his eyes and the hearing of his ears,” cannot walk with God, in a path

“AS THE TRUTH IS IN JESUS.” 7

like this—and that if Abraham (the head of the family of faith) is “called out to walk before God, and to be *perfect*,” it must be upon the bestowment of some adequate principle, equally extraordinary in a man; and which in its exercise, would practically link Abraham with these prerogatives of God, in present living communion and joy. This new principle is “faith”—that faith which is declared to be the gift of God, and without which “it is impossible to please him,” or to take a single step with Him, in this pathway of power from death unto life, which as the God of glory, He makes for Himself in the midst of ruins; and for those whom He calls out to be blessed, and to be made a blessing. Indeed it is the combination of these characteristics of God—with this distinguishing principle of a real living faith, on our part—which makes the path so wonderful and brilliant, in the midst of this present evil world, as we see afterwards in Caleb or Paul. Nor is this principle merely God’s own *gift* to us—but He who im-

## 8 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

parts it, loves to state its nature and record its exercises, as well as to produce them. “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, for by it the elders obtained a good report.” Still further, as regards its object—“he that cometh to God, must believe that he is—[or else, why come to Him?] and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him”—[or else, what advantageth it us, to accept His path, and to walk with Him?] The illustrious names of the departed, who lie at Machpelah and Hebron; or who are enrolled in Hebrews xi., as those “of whom the world was not worthy;” supply an unequivocal answer as to the “blessedness of the men” who then walked with God. These precious records establish the unchangeable fact, that “without faith it is impossible to please God,” whether in an earthly calling unto blessing in Canaan, as with the patriarchs, and the nation of Israel in Jerusalem afterwards—or much more as *now* in a heavenly standing and state before God, in Christ

“AS THE TRUTH IS IN JESUS.” 9

the Son of His love, as united to Him, who is “Head over all things to the church which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

It is obvious that those of whom we have just spoken in Hebrew xi. are not yet “made perfect ;” and it is equally clear that those who have fallen asleep in Christ, as well as those who are alive and remain upon the earth, are not in their final state of blessing ; “God having foreseen some better thing as to us, that they should not be made *perfect* without us.” What perplexity and confusion would attach, therefore, to all the departed as well as to ourselves, if the confidence of “faith” could not lay hold on our perfection “in righteousness and true holiness” in Christ, at such a moment, in the unchanging “prerogatives” of God, by which He still works out His will towards us, as the Quickener of the dead ; and as the One who calls things that are not, as though they were ! Faith, which is the gift of God, brings us out to walk with Him ; and faith thus readily links itself with

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the Father, who has life in Himself, and who quickens and raises the dead.

To these effects of this mighty power, by which we pass from death unto life we must yet add the hope of a "glorious resurrection," or else "the blessed hope of the Lord's coming" and our rapture as parts of our own calling and history, in a "walk with God" till the day of Christ, when "that which is perfect is come, and all that is in part be done away." The teaching of Jesus with His disciples was to establish this same link of connection, between the children of God then, and "the children of the resurrection;" when He said "now that the dead *are* raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, for he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him," and will be manifest as such in the kingdom of God on the other side of the rapture. We have thus reached a further and necessary point by these scriptures, namely "that he who hath begun a good work

“AS THE TRUTH IS IN JESUS.” 11

in us, will perform it until the day of Christ,” and that these prerogatives of God, when in their fullest scope and exercise, are made to us “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” That they become, in fact, faith’s reckonings; for the one and simple characteristic of faith is, that it sees with God in the light in which He beholds things, and leads us therefore to call things that are not as though they were.

We may now pass on to consider how immensely practical is this reckoning on our part (where we are, and as we are), in order that *our* communion with God may be in the sunlight of His grace towards us in Christ; and not be obscured in our own souls, by any or all the contradictory experiences that spring up from the existence of the flesh within us, as well as from the diverse character of Satan, and men, and things around us. It is important to notice here, the vast difference produced by the incarnation of Christ—in whom a new order of manhood was introduced and

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established upon earth ; and a correspondingly new order of relations revealed through His death and resurrection, in heaven with the Father, and the Father's house. Life and death, which were only known aforetime in Adam, come out thus in another character and sphere in the second Man, the Lord from heaven. Consequently a believer in Christ, is no longer in an Adam standing before God—nor is he in a sin-state, or part of a fallen creation, though for a while he is in it, and in the likeness of the first man. As one with Christ, the head of a new creation, and a new race, “all things are yours . . . . life, death, the world, things present, things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's,” and it is, as thus seen in Him, that by grace we learn them *now*, as ours. If we trace some of these early reckonings between faith and God, in the exercise of His own prerogatives, as they are developed in the first chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, we shall discover how exactly they are maintained for us after

“AS THE TRUTH IS IN JESUS.” 13

this new pattern, by the Holy Ghost's testimony and teaching, since the resurrection of Christ from the dead, by the glory of the Father. It will be of great moment, to see that our reckonings are well kept, and correspond with this charter of our liberty—as we pass out of death unto life, “in him.” Were these things actually true in us, they would be matter of realization and experience *now*; and need not be reckoned true either by us on our part, or by God who “callesth those things which be not as though they were.” The truth respecting ourselves as believers in Christ, is not as yet made actual and real to us, except by the witness of the indwelling Spirit; nor will it be, till our resurrection into the likeness of Christ, in the day when “we put off the image of the earthly man,” and we are presented by the Lord, “unblamable in holiness and unrebukable in love, in the presence of his Father.” In the meanwhile, we are called to reckon a state, or condition to be true of us to “faith,” because God has made it to be eternally true of us in



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fact, before Himself somewhere; and by grace to us (as we know) in another Person, as our substitute. This He has done at the cross, and in Christ; where all the questions arising from the flesh, and the world, and Satan, have been settled for ever by God in righteous judgment, by the death of His Son. In Romans iv. the examples of Abraham, “the friend of God,” and David, “a man after God’s own heart,” are introduced as illustrative of these facts—and observe, as regards their righteousness and iniquities. Of the first it is said, he “believed God and it was reckoned to him for righteousness”—whereas David not only says this, but affirms “the blessedness of the man to whom God reckons righteousness, without works.” Moreover this righteousness is reckoned to each, as the result of grace, and not of debt.

Again, as to transgressions, David adds, “blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will *not* reckon sin.” Who is it, we may

“AS THE TRUTH IS IN JESUS.” 15

ask, that will not reckon iniquities to the man who committed them ? and will reckon righteousness without works, to the man who was without any ? It is God, in the exercise of the prerogatives of which we are speaking, and which belong to Him as His new rights through the redemption that has been accomplished in Christ Jesus. This is clearly stated as the ground, upon which this double action of reckoning and not reckoning proceeds, in chapter iii. 25 : “whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness : that he might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” It is quite plain, that God has been righteous in the judgment of our transgressions and sins upon Christ, at the cross ; and that He is equally righteous in raising up Christ from the dead for our justification. It is upon these two facts that God acts in grace and truth towards us, as regards

## 16      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

our standing and state, and upon which we reckon by faith towards Him ; and all proper christian experience flows from these divine realities. Moreover, righteousness is imputed or reckoned to us, “if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” Our offences are gone with His death, and that for ever—and His resurrection is become the proof of our justification. A new ground is thus laid, as the basis of all God’s actings towards us ; and faith, that sees as He sees, accepts *this* as the scale of its own reckonings with Him : till our resurrection, or translation at the second coming of our Lord, shall make it as manifest and plain to sight and sense and inward feelings, as it is now incomplete or even unreal to them. “ Beloved, now are we the sons of God ; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is.” We are justified and made complete in Christ, and

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 17

are "as Christ is" before God, in *fact*; because Christ sits at His right hand in glory, as our representative; and we in Him and with Him, in risen life, as our Head. Past, present, and future are all alike to God, and therefore He can call things that are not as though they were; and by that faith, which is the gift of God (and the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen) we can reckon them true of us, in that same Christ, and count upon the power of God to make what we reckon now, to be manifest in us when Christ who is our life shall appear, and we appear with him in glory.

*(To be continued.)*

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## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

## THE REWARD OF SEPARATION.

It has been often said, God is both love and light. Because of His love we are born of God; and we are children of the light. As God is love He never fails in love to His children, whom of

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much higher and greater, and the reward of separation unto God.

Every saint who is subject to the word has his feet washed, but the Lord does not manifest Himself to anyone who does not *keep* His word; and certainly he must be separated, or washed by His word first, before he can keep it; and when we keep it, and are walking in the holy path which it defines, then our reward is the manifestation of Christ, and the abiding presence of Him and of the Father.

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## THE REMNANT AT THE CLOSE.

“He must increase, but I must decrease;”—the key-note to all His ways with us. The only things that I could as a ruined creature give Him were my sins, my nakedness, my lost condition: to wash out the first; to hide me in His own acceptance as to the second; and to share His own given glory for the third. But even these I could not give up to Him, so as to have done with them, for

## THE REMNANT AT THE CLOSE. 29

I was not greater than the "I" that loved myself : but He has adjusted that difficulty, and we are mutually satisfied; He, with His Father's service in so doing, and I (renewed) with the delight He had in so acting. John's reference to the words I suppose was as to service—the herald is of importance until the One heralded appears. But truly as to us, He works our works in us. John xii. 24, "*it bringeth forth much fruit.*". . .

What is wanted in our day, methinks, if He is to be magnified upon earth, ere He comes to fetch us, is a fresh action of the Spirit; it may be a hidden and quiet one, as that that wrought ere He came the first time. But there was in the temple Zacharias; and near it Elizabeth, Mary, Joseph, Anna, Simeon, &c., &c. So there might be going on now, a silent formative power, preparing for the bright and morning Star's appearing. Do you judge that in heaven there is no sensational movement toward that hour? Surely it is the present mind of heaven which has acted upon us; the very mind that says, "Surely

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I come quickly," which has led to our saying, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus:" and led to our looking at what there may be still around ourselves practically inconsistent with that hope.

6-9-74.

G. V. W.

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IN THE HOLIEST.

No more veil ! God bids me enter  
By the new and living way—  
Not in trembling hope I venture,  
Boldly, I His call obey—  
There with Him, my God, I meet  
God upon the Mercy-seat.

In the robes of spotless whiteness,  
With the blood of priceless worth,  
He has gone into that brightness,  
Christ rejected from the earth—  
Christ accepted there on high,  
And in Him do I draw nigh.

Oh, the welcome I have found there,  
God in all His love made known !  
Oh, the glory that surrounds there  
Those accepted in His Son !

## IN THE HOLIEST.

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Who can tell the depths of bliss,  
Spoken by the Father's kiss!

All His joy told out unhindered,  
Nought but Christ His eye can see,  
Christ into His joy has entered,  
And in Christ He welcomes me.  
Would I know how dear to God?  
Priceless, as Christ's precious blood.

“There,” He saith, “and thus I meet thee,  
On the Mercy-seat above;  
There I commune with thee, greet thee,  
Tell thee all thy Father's love;  
There thy blest reward shall be,  
All that Jesus is to me.”

One with Him, O Lord, before Thee,  
There I live, and yet not I,  
Christ it is who there adores Thee,  
Who more dear, or who more nigh?  
All the Father's heart mine own—  
Mine—and yet His Son's alone.

Place of glory, place of blessing,  
Place where God His heart displays,  
All in Thee, O Christ, possessing,  
Thine the voice that leads our praise,  
Thine the new eternal song,  
Through the ages borne along.



## 32 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

As within His Temple olden,  
Was there seen no costly stone :\*  
Nought but cedar, carved and golden,  
Nought but Christ, and Christ alone ;  
So the stones so dearly bought,  
God in heaven beholds them not.

All the worth I have before Him  
Is the value of the blood ;  
I present, when I adore Him,  
Christ the first-fruits unto God.  
Him with joy doth God behold,  
Thus is my acceptance told.

\* 1 Kings vi. 18.

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### FRAGMENT.

SUITABILITY to Christ is of a double nature ; on the one hand, it is separation from what would draw away our hearts from him ; and on the other, it is the manner and ways learned from Himself, which I may call appropriation. In the one, the ground is cleared of weeds ; in the other, it is planted with choice plants suited to His mind.

## MARK'S GOSPEL.

### CHAPTER VI.

BUT however great His divine power, He was manifested in a form that could lend nothing to the pride and vanity of human nature. Man was responsible to receive Him because He manifested the character of the Godhead ; He would not flatter and give support to human passions, nor to those of the Jews as a nation. If man is to receive God, he must receive what God is ; but this is just what his fallen nature will not do. The divine character was much more fully manifested in the humiliation of Jesus, than if He had come as a glorious King ; but He was not that which man's heart desired. He was the carpenter's son, and that was enough to cause His rejection : they judged according to the flesh ; the kindred of Jesus were in their midst, and they did not look any further. Astonished at their unbelief, He leaves them after having done that which the wants of some of them de-

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manded, for His grace never failed. A prophet is not without honour but in His own country; for it is there that he is known according to the flesh. So it was with Jesus, not only in Nazareth, but also in Israel. Remark what an obstacle unbelief is to the exercise of the power of God. The faith of the sick woman who touches His garment, causes His power to come out, but the unbelief of the inhabitants of His own country hinders its exercise. We find, "He could not do any mighty work there," &c. May God grant that we may not put any obstacle to the activity of His grace, which is always ready to act; but, on the contrary, may we know what it is to profit by His power by causing it to act towards us by faith. (Chap. vi. 1-6.)

Now the Lord sends His disciples to preach, and we have a proof of His power more remarkable than that of His own miracles. He gives them the power to perform miracles themselves, power to cast out all devils. This is a power evidently divine: God makes

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man capable to perform signs and wonders; but what *man* can give this power to another? Christ gave it, and His disciples, capacitated by His gift, cast out devils in reality: Christ was God manifest in grace upon the earth. We have already called attention to the fact that all the Lord's miracles and those of His disciples are not only the results of power, such as the miracles of Moses, of Elias, &c., but they are the fruits of divine goodness. One may except the cursing of the fig-tree, but this after all is a proof of the same thing. The testimony of the Lord, stamped as it was with love, and confirmed by His miraculous works, had been rejected; and Israel—man's heart—under the influence of this goodness, of the manifestation of God, of all the care which God had lavished upon it, had not brought forth any fruit. Thus the bad tree is judged for ever, so that it can never bear fruit again. Thus man, having shewn himself to be nothing but guilty, and so guilty, that all the means employed by God, even to the gift of His

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only-begotten Son, have been found to be unable to awaken a single good sentiment towards God, as to His state in the flesh, he is finally rejected of God. God can save him in giving him a new nature by the Holy Spirit, but in himself he is without hope. Who will do more than that which God has done ?

More than this ; the Lord has not only power to give to His disciples authority over evil spirits, but He can also dispose of human hearts. The disciples were to start without taking anything for their journey ; and nevertheless, as we read in Luke, the disciples bore witness, in answer to the Lord, that they had wanted for nothing. Sustained by the power of Emmanuel, whose power extended everywhere, and armed with His authority, they were to stay in the house into which they had entered until their departure from each place ; thus they were to conform themselves to this mission ; possessing the Lord's authority for their message, they were to act accordingly. And wherever their message should not be received,

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they were to shake the dust off their feet as a witness against that city; whose fate should be worse than that of Sodom and Gomorrha. It is true that the Lord, full of goodness and patience, sent seventy disciples again before His face when He went up to Jerusalem at the end of His career upon earth, and these were to preach the gospel; but as to the principle of the mission, that which we find in Mark was the last testimony given to Israel before the judgment of the nation. This was to be a last appeal to the conscience and heart of the people, in order that it might receive the Saviour and repent and turn to God and escape the terrible judgment that awaited it; and that there might be at least a remnant which moved by the powerful word of God, might return to God to enjoy His goodness in the Saviour, and a better hope than Judaism had been able to give them.

The disciples went forth preaching that men were to repent. What grace there is in the sending forth of the

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gospel ! Not only does God give us to enjoy salvation and His love, but employs men as the instruments of the activity of His love. O how we ought to bless God that He condescends to make use of us to carry the testimony of His ineffable love and of His truth to men's hearts—at least to their ears, in order that He Himself may cause it to reach their hearts in His grace ! We know at least what it is to have our hearts full of love, whether we preach or not, so that they may be a true expression of that grace which seeks men. Thus the power of God accompanied the disciples ; they cast out devils and healed the sick.

At this time the report of the works and power of the Lord reached the king's ears ; his conscience was troubled at it because he had put John the Baptist to death. Here begins the history of the facts which shew practically the opposition of man's heart to the testimony of God. The enmity against the truth and the light which was fulfilled in the death of Jesus, manifested itself

## MARK'S GOSPEL.

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already in the death of His predecessor. Herod's natural conscience had induced him to listen to John; the fear that he had of the holy man who had been faithful in rebuking him, caused him to have some regard for him, and to keep him from the enmity of Herodias; but that which is natural is not enough to form a barrier to the flesh. The excitement of a banquet and royal pride are enough to cause the prophet's death. Painful instance of the manner in which man deceives himself; and when he imagines himself strong enough to shew forth his power, all he can do is to reveal his weakness and his slavery to his passions. All this does but accomplish the will of God; this enmity of man's heart must shew itself, and must introduce, by the rejection of John the Baptist and of Jesus Himself, things infinitely better, through the sovereign grace of God.

The disciples come back and relate to Jesus all that they have done and taught; it was natural that they should be full of it. But the Saviour does not say



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anything about it; for Him, power was a natural thing, and He wishes the disciples to come apart in a desert place to rest a little in solitude. It is always a good thing, even necessary for us whatever the blessing may be—all the more the greater it is—for us poor creatures who are so incapable of bearing the effect of power when the work is by our means, so ready are we to attribute it to ourselves without perceiving it; it is necessary, I say, to retire into God's presence, and there in His presence to find out what we are in truth, to enjoy in safety His perfect love; but to be occupied with Him and not with ourselves. This is what the Lord did in His tender consideration for His own.

But the love of God does not find repose in this world; and man, finding but little love in human hearts, is afraid of wearying the Lord when He is present there; but divine love never refuses to attend to man's wants. The people recognized Jesus and ran together from every city, coming out of their solitude to see Jesus; and He, seeing this great

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multitude, was moved with compassion, because they were as sheep without a shepherd. He begins to teach them; this is the first and true need of the people abandoned of their human shepherds; but the Lord still thinks of all the needs of His hungry people. The disciples would have wished to have sent away the crowd, but Jesus wishes to feed it. This miracle has a great meaning in itself, from the place it holds in this Gospel. Jehovah was the true Shepherd of Israel and was there present in the person of Christ, who in truth was rejected; Nevertheless His compassion and His love were not weakened by the ingratitude of the people.

To shew that He is really Jehovah, He acts according to Psalm cxxxii. 15: "I will satisfy her poor with bread." This is a Psalm which predicts the time of the Messiah, which will be fully accomplished in the latter days; but He who shall accomplish it was there present, and though He be rejected, He gives the proof that Jehovah has visited His people—He satisfies the poor with

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## 42 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

bread. His love was far superior to the malice of His people. He had already said that the Son of Man would be put to death, and that the people would not receive their Saviour God. With all this, Jehovah does not abandon His love; if the people do not want Jehovah, Jehovah wants the people. He gives the precious testimony that Jehovah's love does not grow weary, but remains superior to all the folly of man. May His name be praised and adored for it! We can all the more count upon His un-failing goodness not to allow us to fall into negligence, but to sustain us in our weakness; for His love is greater than all our failings, so that we can adore His patience.

But there is another important truth which we find here. The Lord does not say, "I will give them to eat," but, "Give them to eat." The Lord wishes the disciples to know what it is to use His power for the good of others, and that they may know how to use it by faith. Oh, what a thought that true faith employs Jehovah's power, and in

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circumstances which shew that His love is above our unfaithfulness and failure! How important a truth for us, that Christ is the expression of this love, of the superiority of God's grace over all our sins; for "God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." This was the proof of it; but that which was manifested in His death, is always true for us in His life. "Much more," says the Apostle, "being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Faith, therefore, counts upon the unfailing faithfulness of this love, and uses the strength which is made perfect in weakness. The flesh in the disciples sees nothing but carnal means, and does not look at God's love and power, but at that which is seen. But the Lord gives food in abundance to the hungry multitude, and shews Himself to be both the God and Saviour of Israel.

The story which follows gives us the picture of the separation caused by the Lord's rejection, and the welcome which will be given to Him at the end of the

## 44 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

history of this world, which has rejected Him. He does not speak of the judgment of His adversaries, but of the change of the world itself. The Lord constrains His disciples to depart alone, whilst He sends away the multitude; and when they are gone, He departs into a mountain to pray. This is exactly what the Lord has now done: the disciples are tossed upon the tempestuous sea of the world: Jesus has sent away Israel, and has ascended to heaven to intercede for us. In the mean time the wind is contrary and we toil in rowing with difficulty and trouble, being outwardly left of the Lord; but He intercedes for us always and obtains mercy and grace for us in the time of need. Israel has been dismissed.

More exactly, the disciples upon the sea represent the Jewish remnant, which in fact has become the church; but here it is considered in its character of the Jewish remnant. Jesus overtakes the ship, walking upon the sea, for He can walk calmly upon circumstances which cause us great trouble. The disciples are

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afraid, but Jesus comforts them assuring them that it is Himself, their well-known friend and Saviour. Thus it will be at the end of the times,—Jesus will appear superior to all the circumstances by which His people are troubled ; and He will be the same meek and humble companion who walked upon earth with His disciples “in the days of His flesh.” “Now when He entered into the ship, the wind ceased.” I repeat that the judgment of His adversaries is not mentioned here, but that which will happen to His people amongst the Jews, when He shall return. Then the world will be again full of joy. The land of Gennezareth which had sent away the Saviour after He had healed the demoniac, receives Him now and owns Him, and all the people everywhere enjoy His presence with delight.

Are our hearts ready to receive this teaching? Have we learned that to carry one's cross is the true position of the Christian, the path into which the Lord has led us? To walk thus we have need of an object which can rule

## 46      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

the heart, which can possess its affections and can fix them on what is on before, and lead them on ; an object to which too the cross is united—that is *Christ* who has loved us, and who gave Himself upon the Cross for us ; Christ who is now in glory to which He is leading us, and who shews us what the path of the cross is, in order that we may be with Him and like Him, following the path which the Lord has trod for us in His love. “If any man serve me, let him follow me ; and where I shall be, there shall my servant be also.”

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“AS THE TRUTH IS IN JESUS.”

(Eph. iv. 21.)

*(Continued from page 17.)*

THERE is however in Romans vi. a subject treated namely, “our old man crucified, and the body of sin destroyed” which is often more difficult to reckon than concerning our own righteousness and sins, which has been referred to—it is in the statement, “reckon ye also

“AS THE TRUTH IS IN JESUS.” 47

yourselves to be dead indeed unto *sin*, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” To be called thus, to learn our own death and life outside ourselves, and in a new form and application towards us, in Christ; so that we have to reckon them to be true of us “by faith” (in our communion with God, too) while they are not actually made matters of *fact* in us, is indeed to walk with God in a pathway of His own. What an elevation it is to be thus carried beyond all that which is merely natural to us in our thoughts, feelings, and experiences (to which the activities of self, in its guilt and ruin, give birth) and to learn the new and eternal realities about ourselves by knowing Christ raised from the dead, and ourselves married to Him that we might bring forth fruit unto God. He is, in all things, become the Head to us, as new creatures; and we belong to the new creation, of which He is as the second Adam, the beginning! We can only reach *this* by keeping as our rule of faith whatever the final object may be to which God is



## 48      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

working, for His own glory and our blessing at any given time. Abraham, for instance, walked with "the God of glory," in the light and truth of the promise, "a father of many nations have I made thee;" and his faith, in order to be at home in the vastness of this promise and its results, must need go along in company with "the Quickener of the dead," and speak with God upon things that are not, as though they were. This distinguished the faith of Joseph also, or else why did he give "commandment concerning his bones?" David's last words are equally instructive, for he refused to look at his son Solomon as the resting place of his hopes, for prosperity and peace even on earth; but looked over Solomon's head (as Abraham did over Isaac's) to see the true Seed, in whom the "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure," would be made good, in final accomplished blessing: which will not be till the second coming of the Messiah.

If we are taught that the true and ultimate object of our Father's love is that

## “AS THE TRUTH IS IN JESUS.” 49

we are predestinated “to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren,” it can only be held in a growing intimacy with Him who calls things that are not as though they were. We too must reckon Isaac dead, and Solomon buried; and the true Seed, even our Lord Jesus Christ, crucified, risen, and ascended to the right hand of God, and we also dead and risen in Him, as the necessary steps to the coming of Christ in glory, and our predestinated conformity to Him: every intermediate state and condition, that still attaches to us as children of Adam, must be got rid of in reality; for “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.” Actually, and in matter of fact, all those who are Christ’s will experimentally and manifestly “put off the image of the earthly man, and put on the image of the heavenly,” as declared in 1 Corinthians xv. at their resurrection, or translation. But in order to this, will Christ have added to His work, or done

## 50      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

anything *more* as the ground on which God can then exercise this mighty power to us-ward, by which we shall be changed, or else wake up in His likeness in the day of our Lord's second coming, to receive us to Himself? Certainly not, every Christian must say.

Accomplished redemption has thus opened a new ground for our faith, and for God's action in grace and power. Christ's finished work has brought forward the reckonings of faith, and the purposes of the Father's love, to rest upon the sure basis of the cross, and we have arrived by His death and resurrection at this new centre. We are henceforth taught by the Spirit to know ourselves according to these divine and eternal realities—"faith is the substance of things hoped for," and our time-reckonings spring out of these certainties; or, in other words, "as the truth is in Jesus."

Is there not some part of scripture which embraces these great facts between God and ourselves, and which bids us in this little while to reckon ourselves

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to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord? The answer to this query is, distinctly and decidedly, yes,—and chapters vi., vii., and viii. of Romans are the chapters of our liberty upon this important point; founded, not only upon the death and resurrection of Christ for us, but “that our old man has been crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” We often want to get the truth *in* ourselves, and realize it where we are, and before the time; but our wisdom is to keep our reckonings with God, by the witness of His Spirit, and the Word of His grace; and to know the truth about ourselves is only to be learned, in “learning Jesus;” and that in *Him* we have put off the old man, and “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” This is the only truth about us before God now. This intermediate chapter (vi.) gives us our reckonings, till they are manifestly turned into fact at our rapture, and “the reproach

## 52      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

of Egypt rolled away from us " entirely, and that for ever.

There is no perfection short of this, for it is our being like Christ and being with Him, that will alone satisfy the Father and the Son ; nor is there anything short of *this* to which the Holy Ghost witnesses, who dwelleth in us. If any question their title to walk in this liberty with the Father and the Son, in the power that quickeneth and raiseth the dead, and which therefore must call things that are not as though they were, they will also necessarily fall short in their faith and communion, of the ultimate object of God in that which He is working unto. Occupation with self instead of Christ follows, and leads such to accept something lower and less, as regards perfection and light and holiness, which will come within the range and reach of their own ideas and attainment. Grace is the only source and spring of perfection, or life, or holiness, as regards the Father and ourselves—these have been manifested to us, in and by Christ, the Son of God's love in whom

“AS THE TRUTH IS IN JESUS.” 53

they dwell ; and by His accomplished work in death and resurrection, all that “he is” is ours ; and we are created anew, in Him. God Himself acts towards us, “according to the mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead” and will not fail to glorify Himself and His well-beloved Son, in every purpose, whether now or hereafter, which He is working out—“He has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love,”—and who can say he has attained to *this*? We reckon it by faith, in present communion—and we “walk with God” in the power which makes it good in us. Again, “we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” It is only as we pass consciously by grace out of all our old relationships in the flesh with Adam the sinner, through the death of Christ, and our own death as buried together with Him, that we are free to rise up with

## 54      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

Him into our new relationship with God the Father through the Spirit of adoption, in the liberty of sonship, and in the enjoyment of new affections, which this oneness with the Father and the Son can alone supply.

How necessary is it for us, who are set in this fellowship, to maintain it by reckoning upon the rights and prerogatives of God in their largest exercise ; so that our faith may take hold of nothing less ; and in the power of the indwelling Spirit may we judge all that is of self down to death, and as to the glory cultivate our hearts, by it, in the growing sense of His all-sufficiency and grace towards us. How else could He encourage us to be “imitators of God as dear children ; and walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour ?” Like the sun in his strength, which clears everything before him, to make room for what is to follow—so may we “be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man . . . . that we

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 55

may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fullness of God."

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## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

"PERFECTING HOLINESS"  
IS NOT INDEPENDENT OF CORPORATE  
HOLINESS.

THE principle of holiness will be admitted by every believer, but it is regarded too often as merely a personal thing. To see that it is as necessary for me in my associations as it is for myself individually, requires an enlarged sense of what holiness really is. Each believer learns holiness first in his own person, that is to say, he must learn it for himself, but he cannot arrive at true personal holiness apart from corporate holiness. If believers now were simply individuals, and each one independent of the other, then holiness would be merely personal. Thus



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we are placed, you are not capable of understanding holiness or truth in connection with any of the other circles ; and the highest epistle, the Ephesians, therefore sets forth all our relationships in the most heavenly colours. Thus, one might be conscientious and godly, and yet be far away from the true measure of holiness, because he had not learned the right sense of it in that place of nearness in which God in His grace had placed him. Thus we see that there cannot be “perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord” independently of corporate holiness, because, as the saint derives a right sense of holiness from God in His own dwelling place, so must there be deficiency or lack in himself when he accepts an association or an order of things for God’s house, where holiness is not the reigning rule in everything ; requiring the same of every one connected with it, and refusing every one not able or willing to conform to it.

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## MARK'S GOSPEL.

### CHAPTER VII. 1-23.

THIS seventh chapter is full of the most interesting teaching: 1st, the Lord's judgment upon the outward piety of the heads of Judaism, which was altogether external and nothing less than hypocrisy, and which set aside the law of God. All these washings are despised by God; the Pharisees had set aside the commandment of God to keep their own tradition. 2ndly, the Lord shews that that which cometh out of a man's mouth defileth the man, because it arises from the heart; not that which entereth into the man. Then having thus judged Israel and man, He shews forth in the most touching manner the sovereign grace of God which passes by every barrier to reach man's need: outside of all rights founded upon the promises, demanding only that the heart should recognize it in order that it may be entirely the pure grace of God in love which does the good; revealing itself as love when man

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is bad, and without any hope outside of this sovereign grace.

Outward things are easy to do ; man likes to make his religion of them, for they do not need a pure heart ; man likes to do them, and to exalt himself and to distinguish himself from others in doing them. By them man boasts of great piety before other men, and gains a great reputation for it ; but he can be bad at the same time ; these outward acts do not bring him into the presence of God who searcheth the heart. Man by these acts is religious without possessing holiness, and he finds that this just suits him. One does not find Pharisees only in our Lord's time ; they are to be found in all times. This system always attaches itself to the influence which a man exerts over another by means of a position outwardly holy ; it is not the faith which possesses truth and grace for itself, which truth and grace came by Jesus Christ, and which produce holiness and communion with God who reveals Himself in them,—but the official influence that a man uses to his own

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advantage, carelessly leaving on one side the will and the commandments of God. Thus it was amongst the Jews; they washed their hands, but not their hearts; they were very scrupulous about that which entered their mouth, and careless about that which came out of their heart.

Thus is man's religion always; he can observe such a religion as this, and deck himself with it as with a glory. But he cannot get real holiness in this way, and this is evident to the eyes of God, who sees all that goes on in the heart. True holiness shews itself in the practical walk; one may fail, but the soul sustained by grace only seeks the approbation of God; it has the consciousness of failure, and rejoices in God, for it is He who dwells in the soul, and keeps it humble. But the Pharisees and Sadducees amongst the Jews profited by their reputation and position to induce the pious to give many gifts to God, whom they represented. Thus duties towards parents were slighted and God's law countermanded. They

## 68      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

honoured God with their lips, but their heart was far from Him. They drew near to Him with their mouth but not with their heart ; this was full of covetousness and iniquity. God refuses altogether this kind of honour. “In vain do they worship me,” says the prophet Isaiah, and the Lord repeats it. God wants a pure heart sanctified by the Spirit and by the truth ; and He wants a worship which is to be rendered in Spirit and in truth ; the Father seeketh such to worship Him. He wants grace, but the truth is required to be able to draw near to God, a heart where the divine life exists. All this human religion, outward, Pharisaical, priestly, is judged of the Lord once and for all times. God demands a pure heart and true obedience. Men put on this kind of religion giving honour in it to antiquity and to the traditions of their ancestors, to which man’s imagination attributes great value. All that is seen through the shades of antiquity is imposing enough ; but with God it is a question of the *heart*, and it was the

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same then as it is now with us ; we are before God, and He sees us just as we are. Man's actual state is the question.

But what are these poor hearts in their natural state ? This is the second question the Lord takes up. He has already torn the veil of the hypocrisy by which the Pharisees and priests tried to conceal the impurity of their hearts, and to turn to their own account the external piety which they taught ; the motives of their hearts are manifested, and the efforts which they make to cover the impurity and avarice of their heart appear ; their hypocrisy is manifest. But the Lord does not only rend the veil of hypocrisy, but discovers also that which the heart produces. This is what God does ; he searches our hearts and manifests them, and then reveals His own. But this is not merely the uncovering of the hearts of the Pharisees, but of the hearts of all men ; that which goes out of the mouth defiles the man, because it proceeds from the heart. What a picture ! The product of the human heart consists of malice, corrup-

## 70      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

tion, envy, . . . . in a word, of nothing but vices.

Was the Lord wanting in benevolence or love toward man ? His coming is the proof of God's love. Did He wish to hide the good that might be found in man ? Was He the only one capable of discovering the evil ? Could He wish to slander the being He had come to bless, to save, and to whom He would give a place with Himself ? Impossible : this could not be. But instead, knowing man's heart, He was obliged to say the truth. It was love which disclosed the utter perversity of the human heart, in order that man may not remain in this state. It is indeed better that it should be disclosed now in the presence of grace than in the day of judgment, when all that is manifested will be punished, and man condemned.

Observe also that when practical holiness and obedience are no longer to be found in the life of the leaders, a religion founded by God becomes the power of sin and of hypocrisy, and tends always to pervert the mind, to destroy the con-

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science and uprightness in all ; because that which is looked upon as God's authority encourages hypocrisy and iniquity ; and also tends to produce unbelief, because men see that religion attaches itself to that which even the natural conscience condemns. Oh how sad a story is that of the human heart and of the Church of God, such as men have made it ! Observe also the influence of the corrupt religious authority to blind men and to destroy spiritual intelligence. What can be clearer than that which the Lord says ? But the natural conscience does not recognize the truth that it is not that which entereth into a man's mouth that defileth the man, but that which comes out of it, for it proceeds from the heart. The thing is simple enough.

The disciples do not understand, and ask for an explanation of it ; their natural intelligence had been blinded by the tradition of the elders. The manner of reasoning acquired by the authority of the latter had spoilt their understanding. And indeed do we not find many



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who believe that that which entereth into a man's mouth defileth him? And yet they are sincere souls; and not only so, they believe also that to eat a certain kind of food one day defiles, and that another day it does not: and this because of the tradition of the elders. This really is what the disciples did substantially; and the Lord reproves them, saying "Are ye so without understanding also?" Here we see the judgment of the Lord against many things which keep many souls in bondage, and sincere souls even, like those of the disciples.

But let us turn to the precious display of God's love in the words of the Lord to the poor woman. We find that all the privileges of the Jews are recognized first; but we find also the truth of God which rises far above such privileges to manifest grace and love wherever a need may be found; not indeed where there is a *right* to the promises, but towards an accursed race, towards a woman from a country notorious for its hardened state. God mani-

## PHILIP "THE EVANGELIST." 73

festated Himself in rising above all the barriers that man's iniquity and the exclusive system of Judaism had set up, even the system which He had Himself established, which was shewn to be abolished by the rejection of Christ.

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## PHILIP "THE EVANGELIST."

THE name evangelist is applied in scripture to but one man, namely, Philip. No other is ever thus specially designated. The word occurs three times only, namely, in Ephesians iv. 11, where evangelists are mentioned as being amongst the gifts; 2 Timothy iv. 5, where Timothy is told to do the work of an evangelist; and Acts xxi. 8, where mention is made of Philip the evangelist. The verb "they evangelized" is used several times, sometimes joined with the names of the preachers, sometimes simply referring to them without even so much as giving their names. Special mention is made of a brother in the following

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## 74 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

passage: "and we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches" (2 Cor. viii. 8), but nowhere except in the above mentioned verse in the Acts do we find the word "evangelist" specially connected with any particular man. This gives Philip a special place in scripture, and any details therefore which are recorded therein concerning one so distinctly marked out by the word of God as a bearer of the glad tidings, cannot fail to be deeply interesting to any desiring to do the work of an evangelist in the present day. The history of Philip's work and service is found in the eighth chapter of the Acts. The first thing to which we would call attention is that his sphere of service was beyond the region which up to that time had been the place of testimony. We hear of him as preaching not in Jerusalem or Judca, where there had already been so much blessing, but in Samaria, to which place not only had the work not extended but where the people themselves were looked upon by

## PHILIP "THE EVANGELIST." 75

the Jews as an inferior race. (John iv. 9.) We find him used there in a remarkable manner. The people with one accord gave heed to him and there was great joy in that city. News of the work there reaches to Jerusalem and the result of this is to lead out two of the apostles from the original place of testimony into a wider field and perfectly in accordance with the character of their testimony as marked out by our blessed Lord Himself in Acts i. 8. Peter and John are sent by the apostles to Samaria. No doubt the grace and care of God may be discerned in thus preserving the unity of the Spirit amongst those at Jerusalem and Samaria, and very interesting it is to trace how this was done, but to follow this would take away the attention from the special work of the evangelist to fix it upon a truth which rather pertains to the whole church. The next thing we find is that Simon Magus is baptized. The workman, unless kept, is liable to be carried away or affected, not (as is sometimes incorrectly stated) by the blessing, but

## 76 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

by that in himself which, in the midst of the blessing, has its influence and power from principles in direct antagonism (however sincere the workman may be) to the One who alone is the source of all the blessing. Whether Philip was to any extent thus affected, or whether there was any failure in spiritual discernment, we are not told; the fact remains, that one who had no part or lot in the matter had been baptized, and appears to have kept close to him whom he naturally looked upon as the leader in the whole movement. The presence of Peter and John who had been brought from Jerusalem through the result of the preaching of a less gifted vessel than themselves was used to bring to light the true character of that which had been admitted amongst the sheep and lambs. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, and the principle of corruption then admitted has since spread to the fullest extent. The apostles themselves, taken out of their habitual course, preach in many villages of the Samaritans. Philip has thus

## PHILIP "THE EVANGELIST." 77

been used to lead them in the order of that testimony in Acts i. 8, to which reference has already been made. Jerusalem 1st, Judea 2nd, and Samaria 3rd; it being reserved for the one born out of due time to complete the testimony by carrying the word to the uttermost part of the earth. (Col. i. 23.) Thus Philip had been greatly used. The whole city had been moved at his word, and (as is always the case where an evangelist works faithfully and according to his measure) had been enriched by the presence of other servants of the Lord more fitted to carry on the subsequent work than he who first brought into it the glad tidings. Are there not some who at the present day are acknowledged and accredited as evangelists who would consider such blessing to be the token for working in as large or even a larger sphere? Not so with Philip. The next step must be, as regards the earth, with one instead of many, but angel and Spirit must come in to share in this work. Philip is told by the former to go to the south, the road to

## 78      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

the desert. No multitude can be found there, and the attentive and eager population of the city is succeeded by one solitary studious proselyte of Ethiopia, who with but little intelligence is so occupied with his book that he reads it aloud, not even observing the one who had been sent for the purpose of bringing to him light upon its page. The Spirit had said to Philip, "Go near and join thyself to this chariot." The result happily is well-known to most of the readers of this book. The work was done; and the same Spirit takes away the workman, but not the joy that that workman's word had caused. The water of life had flowed from Philip in the desert, and as regards Philip is no longer there, but it leaves therein a well which in its turn is to give forth its waters in the far off regions of Ethiopia.

The next thing we read of Philip is, that he was found at Azotus and that thence he preached through all the cities until he came to Cæsarea. We find no further mention of him until we come

## PHILIP "THE EVANGELIST." 79

to chapter xxi. of the Acts where the expression is used which has occasioned these remarks. We thus have three distinct places named, 1st, Samaria; 2nd, the desert; 3rd, Azotus; after that there is a reference to the cities. The order of service is remarkable. 1st, with a large number. 2nd, with but one man. 3rd, no record whatever of any result either at Azotus or the cities between that place and Cæsarea. Many might say, "What could ever have taken Philip to Azotus? I never heard of any conversions there." The Spirit had caught away Philip from the eunuch, and we may justly conclude that he was not otherwise than in the line of the Spirit's action when found at Azotus. Surely there is a voice in such a history as this for any one who goes forth to preach the gospel in our own day, not only that he should bring exercise of heart as to his being in the current of the acting of God's Spirit and as to mistrust and judgment of self, so as not to be deceived by the enemy into mixing the vile with the precious, but



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also to encourage him in being instant in the work of the gospel whether with many or with few. But there is a yet higher, fuller, and more blessed way of taking up the truth contained in this chapter than merely looking at the character of work to which this dear servant, so specially marked out as "the evangelist," was called. We are too apt to notice merely the work and the workman and to fail in entering into the thoughts and ways of the One who alone calls, raises up, sends, and directs for blessing. We would therefore desire that the reader should leave for a little while the scene in Samaria, the desert, and Azotus, and in spirit (1 Cor. vi. 17) be with Him who works all things according to His own will. The Lord sends forth His servants. He may use trouble, affliction, and persecution for this end. It was so in Philip's case; the persecution that arose upon the death of Stephen had been used to send the former outside Jerusalem and Judea, but God looks down from on high and sees this city of Samaria and intends to

## PHILIP "THE EVANGELIST." 81

have a vast number taken out of it who are to be not only blessed on earth, but to be made like unto His Son in everything, to be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, and to be manifested forth hereafter in the same glory. Angels may not carry the message to them. Who shall? Philip is the vessel to be used and the work is done. Again God looks down from on high and sees this one solitary traveller, and it is His will that he too shall be blessed for ever with that Son. Who shall be sent? Philip had been willing and obedient in the city to the multitude, he shall be the messenger to the Ethiopian. If Philip can thus in the work be led by Him who is on high, what room, opportunity, or desire, has he to measure the work by that result, or, alas, too often apparent result, which so influences and affects minds which estimate the blessing by that which the eye can see and the ear hear and the natural mind and will accept and accredit. If looked at only from the earth, much would be thought of the work in Samaria, less of that in the

## 82      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

desert, and nothing of Azotus, but when looked at from on high the three places may well stand side by side. It is to be noticed that angel and Spirit are both mentioned in connection with the work in the desert, but neither are found mentioned in connection with the city. There may be much more intercourse and communion with the Lord in a quiet and comparatively unknown work than in one as to numbers far more extensive.

These remarks may cause some of the dear and devoted evangelists of the present day to seek and to value more than they have hitherto done the direct leading of the Spirit in the work to which they have been called, to be more careful to discern the character of that which is, or seems to be, the result of their work, and to persevere in that work, whatever may be the outward circumstances which accompany it, ever bearing in mind the exhortation to the Corinthians, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 83

work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

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## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

PROGRESS ENTAILS EXERCISE AND  
FERVENCY.\*

THERE are two experiences in a quickened soul; one, the assurance of a gift conferred; the other, the comprehension of the value and effect of the gift, and an ever deepening acquaintance with it. With every gift that is accepted there is a sense of possession, but in order to know the value of the gift there must be study of it, and exercise, or there will be no progress. For example, the

\* *ἐκρένεα*. The word "fervent," or variations of it, is used five times in scripture. Acts xxvi. 7, "Instantly [or in intensity] serving." Luke xxii. 44, "He prayed more earnestly." Acts xii. 5, "Prayer without ceasing," literally intense. 1 Peter iv. 8, "Fervent charity among yourselves." 1 Peter i. 22, "With a pure heart fervently,"

## 94 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

of men, that he has to surmount; he subjects himself of his own accord to what I may call soul discipline. He writes, "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest when I have preached to others, I should be myself a castaway;" and "I endure all things for the elect's sake."

In conclusion, as the knowledge of Christ increases, and this the apostle was as much set upon to the last as if he had never attained to any of it, there must be exercise as to what is contrary to it. The knowledge of good entails the knowledge of the contrast. "Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even to them who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil." The man of God as he progresses in the things of Christ, has the corresponding obligation of maintaining what he knows of Him, and resisting everything that is contrary to Him; and this must always produce more exercise, more fervency, more prayer, more conflict, more self-surrender, more zeal.

## THE ROBING ROOM, ETC. 95

The Lord grant that our experience may be, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up;" and this will be in proportion as we know what it is, and the One to whom it belongs.

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## THE ROBING ROOM AND THE PRESENCE CHAMBER.

THERE is the robing room and the presence chamber. The presence chamber is the place where the robes are worn, and where you enjoy the beauties of the new sphere, but you cannot be there without the robes of state. It shews good taste to desire to be there, but if you knew the nature of the presence chamber, you would feel how impossible it is to get in without the robes. You *are* really robed; but the soil and tarnish which clings to us here must be *washed* away, before we "have part" with Christ where He is. This washing of the word is really the robing room, and there must be this separation in heart and mind from what separates us

## 96      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

from Christ, before we can "have part" with Him. This "part" with Him is a known enjoyment. Are you separated by the word of Christ from everything which distances or separates you from Him? His service by the word is that there should be no break or sense of distance between us and Him.

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## FRAGMENT.

WHEN we have settled we are going hence, we have to wait here till He calls. He may keep us for service, if He do not take us to rest. We are His, not our own, and it is a privilege to serve, if better to be gone. I find it a good thing to think of going, I feel my life depends on Him, not simply on age. The old Psalm version says, "Tarry thou the Lord's leisure, be strong and he shall stablish thine heart." Some have to walk in His hands, and as service is a privilege *from* Him, so the work is done by Him, but we ought to work from Himself.

## MARK'S GOSPEL.

### CHAPTER VII.

THE Lord goes into the borders of Tyre and Sidon ; He wishes to be quiet, but goodness joined with power are too rare in the world to remain unnoticed ; and the need felt awakens the soul and makes it clear-sighted. A poor woman had a daughter subject to the power of an unclean spirit ; feeling her own wretchedness and believing in Jesus' power, she goes to seek Him ; the weight of misery that oppressed her made her hope in His goodness. The Lord keeps to the promises made by God to the Jews ; and in His answer puts forward the rights of God's people ; He could not take the children's bread and give it to the dogs. Observe that the woman herself was of the accursed race ; if we look at the ways of God in the midst of Israel, there was not a single promise for her ; and she had no right belonging to her in common with the people of God. According to the Jews and the legal



## 98      A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

economy, she was nothing more than a dog: but present needs were there, and the power of God, always employed as it is for His own good purposes, was there too, and this inspires her confidence.

It is always thus; need and faith in the goodness and power of the Lord give perseverance, as in the case of those who carried the paralytic man when the crowd pressed around Jesus. But there is something in the woman's heart besides confidence which grace had produced there. She recognizes the rights of the Jews as God's people; she owns that she is but a dog with regard to them; but she insists upon her demand, because she feels that even though she be but a dog, the grace of God is sufficient for those who had no rights. "Even the dogs," she says, "eat of the children's crumbs;" she recognises what *she* is, but also what *God* is. She believes in His love towards those who have neither rights nor promises; and in the manifestation of God in Jesus outside of and above all dispensations.

## MARK'S GOSPEL.

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God is good, and the fact of being in misery is a claim with Him: Could Christ say "No, God is not good as thou dost suppose?" He could not say this, it would not have been the truth.

This is great faith, faith which recognizes our own wretchedness, that we have right to nothing; but faith which believes in the love of God clearly revealed in Jesus, without any promise, but fully revealed. God cannot deny Himself and say "No, I am not love." We have no *right* to expect the exercise of this love towards us, but we can be sure that coming to Christ, impelled by our wants, we shall find perfect goodness, love that heals us, and the healing itself. Let us remember that true need perseveres, because it cannot do without the aid of the power which was manifested in Christ; nor without the salvation which He has brought; nor is there salvation without the help which is to be found in Him for our weakness. And that which is in God is the source of our hope and of our faith; and if asked how we know what is in God's

## 100     A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

heart, we can answer, "it is revealed perfectly in Christ." Who put it into God's heart to send His own Son to save us? Who put it into the Son's heart to come and suffer everything for us? Not man. God's heart is its source? We believe in this love, and in the value of that which Christ has done and accomplished upon the cross, putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Besides He does all things well, He makes both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.

The grace of God was fully shewn forth towards the poor woman, who had no right to any blessing, nor to any promise; she was a daughter of the accursed Canaan; but faith reaches even to the heart of God manifested in Jesus, and in like manner the eye of God reaches to the bottom of man's heart. Thus God's heart and man's heart meet, in the consciousness that man is altogether bad, that he has not a single right; indeed he owns truly this state, and in it gives himself up to the perfect goodness of God. But the Jewish people who pretended to

## MARK'S GOSPEL.

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possess righteousness and right to the promises, is set on one side ; and, as to the old covenant, is shut out from God's favour. Only Jesus opens the eyes and the ears of the remnant brought to Him in faith. And it was not only the Jewish people which was to be set aside (and as to the first covenant for ever), but man also was set aside on the ground of righteousness, which is the principle of the first covenant.

Then the Lord leaves again the borders of Tyre and Sidon and returns to the country of Galilee ; where He found Himself in the midst of the people of Israel. But, as we have said, He was virtually rejected by the people. Jesus has the consciousness that the beloved people is lost, and all that He does is to expect its ruin. They bring to Him a man who was deaf with an impediment in his speech, and beseech Him to put His hand upon him to heal him. Then Jesus takes the man and leads him aside from the crowd : and then puts His fingers in his ears, and having spit, touches his tongue. Then He looks

## 102 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

toward heaven : power is always present in Him, but sorrow oppresses His heart, because the people were really deaf to the voice of the Good Shepherd ; their tongue was tied and incapable of praising God. The Lord's sighs are the expression of this feeling ; inasmuch as the state of the poor man represented the state of the beloved people. Nevertheless they were happy in that the love of Him whose counsels never change, rested in spite of all, upon them. And indeed the Lord was there, and worked according to this love, and these sighs ; He looked up to heaven, the source of love and of power, and never grew weary until the people in favour of whom He exercised this power, would no longer support His presence. It is true they would not have been able to put Him to death, if He had not given Himself up of His own free will, but the time would come in which He would give Himself up to accomplish redemption ; and until that moment arrive, He shows Himself always as the God of goodness towards the afflicted, and for all the people's need.

## MARK'S GOSPEL.

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In the 33rd verse we see that He separates Himself from the mass of the people in healing the deaf man. In chapter viii. 23, we have the same thing; He leads the blind man out of the town, but He heals him; only there the state of His disciples is shewn. It is touching to see this look that the Lord gives toward heaven, and the sigh of His heart as He sees the people deaf to God's voice, and incapable of blessing His name; and to see the Lord's heart for hardened men, and how this heart was in harmony with the heaven which He always manifested. There He found the certainty of this love that man rejected; and rested in the same feelings that reign in heaven, and of which He was the expression upon this ungrateful earth. The Lord's power showed itself the very moment; the ears were opened, and the tongue was loosed. The people could not hold their peace, but published everywhere that which Jesus had done, saying, "He hath done all things well; he maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."

## 104 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

The Lord's work opens the ears, and gives cause to humble hearts to praise God, and to recognize His love. But, alas ! how many remain deaf to the voice of God's love ! " They are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear ; which will not listen to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely."

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## SELF-SURRENDER.

ONE lately asked, " Is not the fact that I have surrendered myself to God, a great motive to a life of holiness?" The answer was, " Certainly not : if your motive is simply to be consistent to your own act, you cannot have a lower one ; for as water cannot rise above its source, and for the most part lies below it, so the motive that springs from self cannot raise you above self." It is not what we can do towards God, but what God has done for us, which constitutes a true and perfect motive. Our own acts and resolves, however sincere, are never stable, and to them we are never consistent,

## SELF-SURRENDER.

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and with the discovery of their instability, and of our inconsistency, will come discouragement. On the contrary, "the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance;" He changes not, and when the soul has tasted of His love, it has tasted of that which never varies; and when our motive is to live to Him, we have an abiding motive, even though we may not be always perfectly true to it. But before we talk of self-surrender, it is as well to understand what we mean, and look for a little while at the question of the Christian's standing before God.

God's salvation, and all that pertains to it is a free gift, and unconditional. "We are saved by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God." Communion with God in the path of faith and of service is conditional. Thus, "If any man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." "If any man serve me let him follow me, and where I am, there shall also my servant be." Obedience to the word,

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## 106 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

and following in the path of Christ, are the conditions of communion and service.

It is a great gain to the soul to lay hold on these two principles of God, that, established in His grace, we may not confound salvation and communion; and further, that we may get a true motive for our devotedness and service.

We must know first of all that God has given to us Christ, in death and life for our portion, and has made Him unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Where this is not fully known to the heart of the believer, the motive will always be imperfect. It is the depth of the riches of the grace, shewn unto us, and the height of the glory in which this same grace has set us, which furnishes him with a true motive for his walk and ways. Again we must repeat, it is not what I can do for God, but what God has done for me, which alone can really and rightly move my heart. And what God has done for the believer is to deliver His Son, the Lord Jesus, for his offences, and to

## SELF-SURRENDER.

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raise Him again for his justification, and in Christ thus risen and now glorified, to bless him with all spiritual blessings. The present and eternal blessing of the true Christian is so secured in Christ, that of such it is written, "As he is, so are we in this world," and, "we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Perfect blessing thus furnishes a perfect motive, and the existence of any lower aim in a Christian, than that set before him by the Spirit of God in the word, may without exception be traced to an imperfect apprehension of the full grace of God in which he stands.

Power to raise must come from above, this is attractive power, and it is positive and divine. If the motive power comes from below, it is at best negative, and it is also human and earthly. It is perfectly true that the cares and sorrows of the earthly path drive the believer to seek his rest above, but no one will assert that this is so true, so pure, and so high, as to be drawn upward and

## 108 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

heavenward, through the attraction which the heart has found in Him, whose love it has learnt in death and judgment on the cross; with whom it has by faith gone down into the grave; and whom it has now followed to His glory at the right hand of the Father. "We love him because he first loved us." "If any man serve me, let him follow me." The one who knows where the Master is now, can afford to follow with patience and hope the path which He trod down here.

Now we must remember that the flesh, whether in sinner or saint, can never submit itself to God. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Again, the "old man" cannot surrender itself to God. Man may speak of self-surrender, and of giving the heart to God, but God's way of dealing with man in the flesh, is by death and judgment, and true christianity requires the acknowledgment of this; therefore

## SELF-SURRENDER.

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faith discovers in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ its resource and deliverance from the old standing and responsibility as a sinner, as also from the penalty to which sin has rendered man liable. Thus we read, "In that he died, he died unto sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Again, "our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed." And again, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts."

Now it is on the statement of Christ's death to sin, and the believer's reckoning himself as also dead to sin, and alive to God, that is founded in Romans vi., the exhortation to "yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead." There can be no yielding self to God, no self-surrender, except on this ground of death and life. To surrender self in order to die to sin, is reversing the order of God, and, to use a homely phrase, is to put the cart

## 110 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

before the horse. The revelation of Christ's death for us as sinners proves that all were dead morally before God. The acceptance of the death of Christ, not only as the death of our substitute, but through faith, as our own death, is our only deliverance from the present power of sin and of the world. The believer has died to sin, and to the world, in the counsel and judgment of God; and in accepting this judgment, consists the only self-surrender of which man is capable. It is true self-surrender, and self-denial, for it puts us in the place of being dead in and to the world, and thus separate from it in our life and in our ways. In it, as witnesses for Christ, but not of it, the Christian stands in separation, even as by death itself, from its fashions, its motives, its hopes and fears, and even from its religion. This humbles man, and it is a hard saying to many, who, though true believers doubtless, are yet not prepared to break with the world altogether whether in its good, or its bad aspects. Hence an easier path is planned, in which deliv-

## SELF-SURRENDER.

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erance from sin and its present power may be sought without thus morally passing through death and the grave; and "self-surrender" is substituted for the divine way of reckoning self *dead* with Christ unto sin, and alive unto God. Human effort thus takes the place of divine faith; and more, that old nature which God has for ever condemned in the cross of Christ, is presented to God, instead of being reckoned as buried in the grave with Christ. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things have passed away and behold all things have become new, and all things are of God." It is because the "old things" have passed away and all things are become new; because the believer accepts and acts on this, as dead, and alive again in the power of resurrection, that he yields himself to God, and his members as instruments of righteousness to God. It is as such that he is told, that "sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace." In thus taking the place of death with Christ, and life in Christ, the

## 112 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

self-surrender, or the yielding of ourselves to God which *follows*, is without doubt an act of faith. Not however a sudden action of mind or will, as some teach, by which the soul devotes itself to God once and for ever, without further effort or conflict, but it is the true action of a faith which submits to God and to His word, for true faith acts not *from* self, as an effort of will, but always on the word of God. This makes the difference between faith, which is submission to God in and through His word; superstition, which is submission to external authority, not of God, or founded on His word; and fanaticism, which is founded on no external authority, but is the result of fancy or of feeling, the fruit of the will of the flesh, or of the mind.

People may be honest and sincere under each of these influences, but the only one which God can own, or which safely guides the soul in eternal and divine things, is faith; that power which calmly and deliberately bows to Him at all costs, and gives Him the glory; justi-

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 113

fies His word and ways ; lets God be true ; denies self and sin, the world and Satan ; and gives victory to the soul through Jesus Christ our Lord. The just shall live by faith, and though it is a hard path for the flesh, yet it is the path of peace, of communion, and of blessing, leading to the truest self-surrender, not by one sudden act merely, but in *every* act of the whole life long. "Because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again."

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## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

"WILD GOURDS ;"

OR, MAKING THE WORD OF GOD OF  
NONE EFFECT.

WHEN Christianity, an entirely new thing, and of the utmost importance to man, was introduced among men ; when habits of thought and modes of commu-



## 124 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

make man the sole object of consideration ; and this in the church does not lead to the improvement of man in a worldly and rationalistic way, but in applying all the benefits of the gospel to man for his gain, as if he only were to be thought of ; as if it were quite immaterial whether there is any testimony for Christ : just as one would appropriate and turn to one's own account the benefits derived from some great Benefactor, without ever thinking it necessary or obligatory to do homage to the source of them. The benefits are appropriated, but Christ, the Benefactor, is unhonored.

The church of the Laodiceans boasts of being rich and increased with goods, and having need of nothing when Christ is outside. Now they could not speak in this manner unless they had partaken of the benefits of the gospel light, &c. ; but though they have received from Christ the safety which man's ruined state required, yet the abandonment of the old man for Christ is neither seen nor admitted, but the contrary, and thus the greatest and fullest expansion of

## FRAGMENT.

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the truth results in such a deterioration of the testimony, that the church, the organ of testimony, becomes so abhorrent to the Lord, that it will be spued out of His mouth, and will no longer be the sphere of privilege and blessing upon the earth. The wild gourds have brought death into the pot. (2 Kings iv. 40.)

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## FRAGMENT.

I HAVE no doubt that evil is increasing, and we are warned of it; but I believe the getting into the truth of real Christianity, the light it brings, makes the darkness and evil more visible. Heartlessness for God is what is most striking, and the pretensions of reason, and man who makes a God of his own imagining. Growth in knowledge is needed; that is, a return back to the original truth as in the word, and the light it gives, both in what is spiritual, in our relationship with God; blessed truth it is; and throws light on all that is around us. But while this is needed to walk in these times, yet assuming this, what I feel

## 126 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

anxious about as to brethren is, their being devoted, and not conformed to the world. Simplicity, and undistractedness of walk, and in these ways, non-conformity to the world, that the testimony may be distinct, and the effect of these truths. This, and walking in living communion with God is what I pray for, for brethren. The word of His patience, and we, as men who wait for their Lord, is what we need to have at heart; but the Philadelphian state connects itself directly with Christ. *My word, my name*; and such He will shew that He has loved, and that is worth all the rest. We must not forget, in the sense of the evil around us, that the Lord remains the same. What was heart infidelity before, as return to truth developes itself, becomes open and positive infidelity, and Christianity must take its relative place of positive faith, faith wrought by the Holy Ghost in the word, direct faith in it, not by education, nor by the church. Any profession merely will be rather the corruption and moral apostasy of ritualism, a very real thing, but which makes

the church the ground of believing ; for faith it is not. Direct faith in the word, that is in God, is the test of real Christianity. The church becomes a judged thing, not the ground of believing. This is a very definite position, but which allows nothing but real faith, always true, but brought out to light by growing corruption and evil. But then it is of all moment that devotedness and a holy walk be maintained, because men judge more by this ; and as a testimony, this must be and ever was so. 'He that is holy,' is with 'he that is true' in Christ's character for the Philadelphian state. One thing is needed for workmen ; good courage because of the Lord ; not terrified by adversaries (see Josh. i. and 2 Tim.) ; beginning the work, and when the evil had come in, and the last days were in view. The Lord is above the evil, though He does not set it aside till judgment, and faith recognizes that He is. Did He set it aside, He must judge, and then the time of grace would be over.

J. N. D.

## THE LORD LOOKETH ON THE HEART.

IT is not so much what one does, as what one thinks about at the time, that gives value to the act ; for the manner of the action is always in keeping with the mind. Every one sees the action, the faith is shewn by the works, but what is really so precious to the Lord, is the thought that was in the heart. No doubt the works indicate what is in the heart, but works of the same class done by two persons, may, to a discerning eye, be very different, though with the mass bearing the same name. It is the *purpose of the heart* that imparts the peculiarity. The same act of kindness done by two different people affects you in a very different way ; hence, it is not the mere act, but something conveyed in the act by one, which cannot be conveyed by another ; and this something is only acquired by personal intimacy and affection. All the value of the act consists in the *mind* in which it is done.

## MARK'S GOSPEL.

### CHAPTER VIII.

THE Lord continues to manifest divine goodness. It is the chief thing to be noticed in this part of the Gospel. He had already given the hungry people to eat, a manifest sign of Jehovah's presence, as we have before remarked—a sign that should accompany His presence. Here it is more simply the divine power, without alluding to the kingdom which was to come. The number *seven* is the expression of perfection in spiritual things. The Lord's compassion makes Him think of the needs of the poor, whilst the disciples think only of human and visible means to satisfy themselves. This is the case only too often with real believers.

Then the Lord leaves the crowd, and goes into the parts of Dalmanutha. There the Pharisees ask for a sign from heaven, although they had already seen enough, but unbelief is never satisfied. But now the time of trial was passed,

## 130 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

it was too late; the Lord leaves them. But observe the Lord's spirit towards the perverse generation; He sighed deeply in His spirit, saying, "Why doth this generation seek after a sign? There shall no sign be given to it." The end *had come* morally; it was useless to give proofs to hearts who had resolved not to believe. Perfect patience, love, deep pity, and sorrow in thinking of the unbelief of the leaders of the people were all there in Him, and manifested themselves all the more clearly as their hearts were hardened; and signs were useless for hearts who would not believe, and also it was not suited to God's majesty to give any to men who would not receive Him. It would be casting pearls before swine.

Now we find that the disciples themselves were really blind, not wilfully, but in fact. The Lord warns the disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod. The disciples had forgotten to take any bread, and alas, also, the power of Jesus manifested in the miracles, by which He had fed

thousands of people with a few loaves. The Lord reproves them, saying, "Perceive ye not, neither understand? Have ye your heart yet hardened?" They were as it were hardened at seeing so many miracles, and had understood nothing of Jesus's miracles in the multiplying of the loaves.

But the fact which follows shews the state of the disciples in contrast with the people. The latter did not see anything at all, and would not receive the light; the disciples saw indistinctly; they saw men as trees walking. They really loved the Lord, but Jewish habits prevented them from grasping fully His glory. They believed indeed that He was the Messiah, but the Messiah for their hearts was something else than the Christ of God, the Saviour of the world. They had attached themselves by grace to the person of the Lord, but they did not understand that divine glory which was, as it were, hid in that person, which revealed itself in His words and works. They had left all to follow the Lord; intelligence was wanting, not



## 132 A VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL.

faith, however small it might be. The spirit was willing but the flesh was weak, as we have already remarked. The Lord leads the blind man out of the city, separating him from Israel. First of all the man only sees partially, men seemed to him like trees walking. But the Lord's patience, as great as His power, gives a picture of the state of the disciples' heart, and also a picture of His untiring goodness, which does not leave the blind man until he sees clearly. Thus He did to the disciples, only here He does not speak of the means: when Jesus had ascended to heaven and had sat down at the right hand of God, He sent the Holy Ghost which led them into all truth, then they saw clearly.

But the Lord forbids the blind man to enter into the town, or to tell it to any one in the town, not only because He did not seek the vain glory of men, but also because He wished to avoid a large concourse of curious persons who were but an obstacle to His real work in consciences and hearts; and also be-

## MARK'S GOSPEL.

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cause He wished to shew that the time of testimony in Israel was at an end. Rejected by the world, He commands the man who has been delivered from the power of the devils to return to his house, and there to proclaim that which God had done for him. The disciples would have done that—would have proclaimed His work—when Christ should have left this world, but here it was a question of Israel who had rejected the Lord, and God's testimony had no longer any place in their midst.

The Lord's discourse which follows touches upon this in the question which He asks His disciples, "Whom do men say that I am?" And they answered, "John the Baptist; but some, Elias; and others one of the prophets:" different opinions, but no faith. Then He asks them, "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter answers, "Thou art the Christ;" and the Lord forbids the disciples to tell it to any man, in the most positive manner. This is the clearest proof that the testimony in the midst of the people was entirely at an end. He

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was nevertheless the Christ, but He was rejected by the people, which shewed itself to be its own enemy in rejecting the wondrous grace of God. Now He begins to teach His disciples openly that He must suffer as *Son of man*; a much greater position and title, both as regards the extent of His power, and the greatness of the dominion which belonged to Him; for all things will be subjected to the sway of the Son of man. But in order that the Son of man might take His place in glory, He must first suffer, be put to death and rise again; it was necessary that redemption should be accomplished, and that man should enter into a new position, into an entirely new state, in which he had never been even when innocent. Christ's position as Messiah was now set aside for this time, and He enters into one greater where old things are left behind beyond death; and all that is founded upon Christ's work, upon His death, enters upon a state altogether new and eternal.

Here the subject is treated more with

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regard to His sufferings; He puts the cross before the disciples, but He always speaks of death and resurrection: "And he spake that saying openly." This was a stumbling stone for Peter who did not wish that his Master should be despised in the eyes of the crowd; but the cross is the portion of those who wish to follow the Saviour. Peter in saying this placed a stumbling block on the disciples' path; the Lord thinks of this, and turning about and looking upon His disciples, He reproves Peter, who had confessed him but a moment ago, by the grace of God, and says to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou savourest not of the things that be of God, but of the things that be of men." We have here an important lesson, indeed, more than one lesson. First, the Christian needs to understand well that the way of salvation, the way which leads to glory and to heaven, the way in which Christ Himself walked, and in which He wishes us to follow Him, is a way in which we must deny ourselves, suffer, and conquer. Secondly,

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let us learn that a Christian can have true faith, and be taught of God, as in Peter's case here, without having the flesh in him judged so as to render him capable of walking in the way into which this truth brings him. It is important to remember this; sincerity may exist without knowing oneself. The new position of Christ, that of Son of man which embraced the heavenly glory of man in Him, and the supremacy over everything, rendered the cross absolutely necessary. But Peter's heart was not ready for the cross; when the Lord announces its practical effect, he cannot bear it.

How many hearts there are in this state! Sincere, no doubt, but they have not the spiritual courage to accept the consequences of the truth they believe. See the difference in Paul, made strong by the presence of the Holy Ghost and by faith. He says in the presence of death, "To know him [Christ] and the power of his resurrection, and the communion of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his

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death." (Phil. iii. 10.) But there was in him the power of the Holy Ghost, and "he bore always in his body the death of Jesus in order that the life of Jesus should manifest itself in his body." Happy man! always willing to suffer everything, rather than not follow fully the Lord Jesus, and to confess His name whatever the consequence might be; and having walked faithfully, by grace to obtain at last the prize of His heavenly calling.

But the Lord does not conceal the consequence, nor does He wish to do so. He warns the crowd, and He warns us also that if we wish to be with Him, if we wish to follow Him, we must deny ourselves and take up our cross. Let us receive the Lord's words: if we wish to be with Him for ever, we must follow Him, and if we follow Him, we shall find upon the road that which He found. Of course it is not a question of expiatory sufferings, of that which He suffered from God's hand for sin, but of His sufferings from man, the contradiction of sinners, the

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opposition of men, abuse and even death. We know but little what it is to suffer for the name of Jesus, but remember, Christians, that which the Lord says first, "Let him deny himself;" you can always do this by grace. It is by doing this that we learn to suffer with Him, if God should call us to it. And what shall we give in exchange for our soul? This leads us to a third lesson, which requires a little more development.

That which nourishes the flesh and self-love is the great system which is called the world. Man wishes to be something in his own eyes, he would like to forget God, and make himself happy, if possible, without Him. Thus Cain, when he was driven out from God's presence, after Abel's death, went away from before His face, judged in such a manner by God, that he could not hope to be admitted again into His presence to enjoy communion with Him; for God had made him to be a vagabond and a wanderer on the earth (a striking type of the Jews at this time, after having

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put to death the Lord Jesus, who had become, so to speak, their brother). But Cain was not willing to remain a poor vagabond ; at all events he did not wish to leave his family in such a state ; he wished it to escape his own proper lot ; and to this end he built a city in the land of Nod (Nod is the Hebrew word translated *vagabond* in the first instance) ; he desired that his family should be established in the country where God had made him a vagabond. He names the city after his son, as do the great people of this world. There is to be found the father (that is, the inventor) of music, the father of them that work in brass and iron ; there the riches of this present age were heaped together, much cattle. This is the world !

Man's heart, alienated from God, tries to make the earth, where he was set at a distance from God, as pleasing to himself as possible ; and in order to accomplish this, he uses God's gifts and creatures to be able to do without Him. It is said that there is no harm in



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these things:—this is true, but this is not the question. They are good as being created things; it is said (as a figure) that there will be music in heaven also; but in heaven it will not be employed in order to divert the mind without God. It is a question of the use we make of these things. For instance, there is no harm in strength, but in the manner of employing it; with it one does harm to one's neighbour. Is it not true that the world which knows not God, uses all kinds of pleasures to enjoy itself without Him? The heart which has not God in it, endeavours to amuse itself, and for this it employs all the things which are seen, heard, and invented; as for instance the theatre, music, and every kind of thing, because it is empty and sad, and cannot satisfy itself; and after a few years during which it has kept up its natural spirits, it finds itself tired and weary, even of trying everything, and says with Solomon after having essayed all, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." God is neglected, and the soul lost.

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For the Christian too, amusements only lead him away to a distance from God, and destroy his communion with Him. All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but of the world. The world and its lust pass away, but he that does the will of God abideth for ever. The prince of this world is Satan, who seduced Eve with these things, having first of all destroyed her confidence in God; and it was with these things that he tried to seduce the Lord also, although, thank God, in vain. But with little trouble he succeeds but too often to seduce the hearts of men and of Christians; and to cause the pleasures of the world to have more power upon the soul than Christ Himself, than the love of a dying Saviour.

It was thus with poor Peter! It is true, he had not yet received the Holy Ghost, but this does not change the nature of his desires. He wished for this world's glory, and that under the appearance of love for the Lord. Notice

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here too, the Lord's love for His disciples and how great is His tender care for them ; He turns round and sees how great a stumbling-block Peter's words may be for the other disciples, and re-proves him as severely as his words deserved. Then the Lord puts two principles before the disciples ; first, the soul is worth more than everything, it is not to be exchanged for anything ; secondly, the Lord is about to come in glory, and whosoever shall be ashamed of Him in this corrupt world where He is rejected, of Him will the Son of man be ashamed when He shall come in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.

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## THE ONLY GROUND OF CONFIDENCE FOR AN EVANGELIST.

It is always of immense importance, but especially so in a day like the present, that the servant of God should possess clear and distinct intelligence as to the nature and character of the new order of things to which he *himself* now

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belongs, for if he fail in this, the testimony which he has to maintain, must inevitably suffer. I do not assert that he will not be used to the blessing of souls, for that would be to deny—what it would be impossible to disprove, that, in the sovereignty of grace, God does use to this end even the least intelligent; but, admitting this to be so, it neither lessens the responsibility of one who has the place of a servant, to be in the intelligence of God's mind about his service, nor alters the fact that failure in this respect will affect not only the manner in which he delivers the message entrusted to him, but also the mode of its reception, so that the fruit of his labour will be lacking in healthy form and vigour, and will need much after care in order to its full and proper development.

Now the word declares that “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold all things become new; and all things are of God.” As to standing then he is out of Egypt, morally, and the Red Sea is the impass-

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able barrier between him and the place out of which he has been delivered, so that he can never return to it. But more than this, it has severed him as a freed man from *all that contributed to his sustenance and enjoyment as a bondman*, so that now his *resources are new and of a distinct order* from the old, totally unsuited to meet the requirements of one in his former condition, and therefore demanding a new taste before they can be appreciated. This new taste he has, so that manna is not only his sole sustenance now, but it suits his taste too, and so long as there is practical maintenance of the standing, there will be no hankering after the "fleshpots of Egypt," because they are unsuited to his newly acquired taste.

Now if he is living in the apprehension and full enjoyment of all this himself, he will *know and understand* that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him"—that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which

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God hath prepared for them that love him ;" and he will consequently have no confidence in natural capacities or apprehensions for the reception of testimony to God, and the things of God. It is not that natural *channels* cannot be used in the communication of the truth—for we all know that it is by the eye and ear that the word of God is read and heard, but he will distinguish, as the word of God itself distinguishes, between the *channel* of communication, and the *power* that appropriates what is communicated. In natural things, the brain, heart, and organs of sense are in sympathy, so to speak, so that whatever pleases the eye or ear, is just what the mind or heart accepts. Hence, I have no difficulty or hesitation in attempting to reach the affections by appeals to the senses, when natural things are concerned, but when the things of God are in question, it is very different. The word may be read by the eye, or listened to by the ear, but neither the one nor the other has anything to do with the reception or appropriation of it; and as I am

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impressed by this I shall refuse all ground of confidence for blessing other than God Himself, so that while thus recognizing fully every instrumentality, in myself or those I have to do with, I shall be looking for results to the power of the word itself accompanied by the Holy Ghost, knowing that while “faith comes by hearing, *hearing comes by the word of God.*”

Now where there is not this exclusive confidence in the power of God and *His* word, a measure of reliance on that which is purely natural will inevitably follow, and the result will be not only that appeals will be made in preaching the gospel to human sensibilities, by the accompaniments of music, singing and passionate appeal, as if by such means its acceptance could be facilitated, or the carnal mind bribed into a temporary suspension of its enmity against God; but the word itself, by this very aim of the preacher, which practically denies its exclusive sufficiency as well as its divine prerogative, will be hindered in the exercise of its native force by the

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attempt to adapt it to taste naturally and wholly averse from it. There is in such a case a disowning, or at least a forgetfulness of the fact, that men are called upon to *bow to* the word, rather than to accept it, in the ordinary sense of the term, and that it makes its way to the heart by its divine *power* rather than by its *attractiveness*; for "the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Manna was a suited provision for a people fully delivered out of Egypt, and although entirely new to them, they found it was not given without a taste to appreciate it, and so long as all went well, it continued to be *acceptable* food, as well as "bread from heaven" divinely provided. But no sooner did Israel begin to remember "the fish which they did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlick," than "the people



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went about and gathered the manna, and ground it in mills or beat it in a mortar and baked it in pans and made cakes of it." (See Num. xi.) The things which were behind—upon which they had turned their backs, were not forgotten, and as memory indulged itself with the retrospect, the taste for them returned, and with it a corresponding distaste for the manna, and so they resorted to the various expedients already quoted, to make it as acceptable as possible to their vitiated tastes.

Now it is just after the same fashion that the word is dealt with whenever the preacher allows himself to trust to, and indulge in appeals to what is merely natural; for in the endeavour to render that which has come down from heaven, palatable to those who delight in leeks and onions and garlick, he finds himself under the necessity of doing that which answers to the grinding in mills, and beating in a mortar, &c.

The Lord, in His mercy, lead every one of His servants to be exercised as to this, that he be not drawn into the

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 149

current of that which is now so common, but that he be kept in the only true place for a servant who seeks to act in full intelligence of the nature and character of the message with which he has been entrusted, so that his preaching may not be with the "enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

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THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.  
THE CANDLESTICK AND THE  
BRIDE.

It is plainly set forth in scripture, that where we have failed in respect to the present calling of the saints, there is no restoration of that which has failed in our hands; and yet there is, according as there is faith, a revival, or an acquisition of fresh power, not by a return to what has failed, but by our deriving new and peculiar vigour from what is coming, and still future. We fail in our calling, when we lose sight of our hope; but when we are revived as to our hope, we become morally in keeping with it,

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shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the laws thereof, and write it in their sight; *that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.*"

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“THE VOICE OF MY BELOVED.”

'Tis deepening night; and slumbering there  
Unmindful of *His* sleepless care,  
Forgetful of His parting prayer,  
She sleeps, who once shone wondrous fair—  
The Church—His Bride!

'Tis midnight; hark! a cry is heard—  
“Behold the Bridegroom!” At the word  
Affections kindle, hearts are stirr'd;  
And rising now in haste to meet,  
And be the first her Lord to greet,  
Goes forth attir'd in raiment meet—  
His own—the Bride!

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## MARK'S GOSPEL.

### CHAPTER IX. 1-29.

Now the Lord finds the occasion to manifest this personal glory of His to establish the disciples' faith, and also to shew that His presence in grace as Messiah, in the midst of Israel, was soon to come to an end ; and that the new glory of the Son of man with His own was soon to be inaugurated, although it would be necessary to await the time when all the co-heirs should be gathered together. " Verily I say unto you," says the Lord, " There be some of them that stand here which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." Six days afterwards the Lord went up into a mountain with Peter, James, and John, and was transfigured before them ; His raiment became shining and exceeding white as snow ; Elias and Moses appeared with Him glorified in like manner, speaking with Him. We know that this apparition was the mani-

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festation of Christ's glorious reign over the earth.

We read in 2 Peter 1-16, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his Majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased;' and this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount." These are the words of the apostle Peter when he relates that which happened to him when he saw the wonderful vision of the mountain of the transfiguration. From this we learn what the kingdom is as regards its manifestation upon earth, for they were upon earth. The bright cloud which covered them was the Father's dwelling-place, whence the voice came and into which (according to St. Luke) they had entered.

What a privilege for poor mortals, for

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sinner to have been able to gaze upon the Son of God in glory, and to have been manifested with Him in the same glory upon earth ; to be His companions, to converse with Him ; to possess the testimony that they have been loved as He has been loved (John xvii. 23) ; to be with Him, and like Him in everything as Man, for His own glory ! Wonderful proof of the value of the redemption He has accomplished ! And the nearer we shall be to Him, the more shall we adore Him, being with Him as we shall be in the Father's house. But here our evangelist does not speak of the kingdom ; comparing however Luke ix. we find it nevertheless true that they entered into the cloud out of which came the Father's voice.

It was according to God's counsel that we should be with Christ, the second Man, the last Adam, and in the same glory with Him. We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son in order that He may be the first-born among many brethren. It is for this that He became man : He

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that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call us brethren. What would a Redeemer be without His redeemed? It is most certainly a far better thing to be a companion of the Lord Jesus in the Father's house, than co-heir of His glory before the world: yet both the one thing and the other are wonderful for poor creatures like ourselves. Elias and Moses are in the same glory; and we shall be like Him when He shall appear.

But the Lord's personal glory is always maintained; Peter wishes to make three tabernacles, putting Christ, Moses, and Elias upon the same footing—the three grand characters of Israel's history. But Moses and Elias disappear immediately, and the Father's voice recognizes Jesus as His beloved Son; it is to Jesus' testimony that we must listen. All that Moses and Elias said is the truth, God's word, and by their means we learn God's thoughts; but they give testimony *to* Christ, not *with* Him. It is from Him alone that we

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learn fully the will of God, and His truth fully revealed. Jesus is the truth, and grace and truth came by Him. The death of Christ, His resurrection and completed redemption have put everything upon a new footing for men.

The believers who lived before the Lord's coming, believed in the promises and prophecies which announced His arrival; and they were accepted by faith; their sins committed during the time of God's patience, and which He bore with because He knew what He would do later on, are forgiven; and God's righteousness in forgiving them is manifested, now that Christ has died. But now God's righteousness is manifested, and the power of the divine life is shewn forth in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. All is new in our relationship with God, the veil is rent, and we enter freely into the holiest. "The righteousness of God without law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets." Behold Moses and Elias: but the glory in which both Moses and Elias appeared is the fruit,



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not of the law nor of the prophets, but of the work of Jesus Christ; and one can only possess it in the resurrection state. The Lord's resurrection too was absolutely necessary, as being the power of life beyond death, and as a proof that God had accepted the death of Christ as having answered to the question of sin. The glory belonged to another world, gained for those who believe by the sacrifice of Christ, the Son of God, although this had to be fulfilled in this world. It belongs, therefore, to the state into which Christ, the second Adam, has entered by resurrection, and is based upon accomplished redemption.

Thus, although this was well-suited to strengthen the faith and increase the intelligence of these three columns of the future church, it was not to be talked about before the Lord's resurrection, and Jesus forbade the disciples to tell the things they had seen until the Son of man should be raised from among the dead. Notice the expression, "The disciples kept these

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words to themselves, asking one another what the rising from the dead should mean." This indeed throws quite a new light upon the resurrection. Christ rose alone from amongst the dead, and left all the others in the grave; and His resurrection is a proof that the God of righteousness has accepted His work—His sacrifice—as a full and entire satisfaction given to His righteousness and His holiness; and the man who believes in Him is accepted according to the value of Christ's sacrifice.

The resurrection of the faithful also takes place, because God is fully satisfied as to them because of Christ's work. These alone will be raised when the Lord comes, to be for ever with Him. All the disciples believed in the resurrection of the dead, having been taught thus by the Pharisees; they were not like the Sadducees, but believed that all the Jews would be raised at once; and they did not understand the meaning of a resurrection which should separate the good from the bad, and should leave the latter behind for a certain time. Christ

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is the first-fruits of the resurrection of the saints, not of the wicked. Those who are Christ's shall rise at His coming and their vile body shall be changed and made like unto His glorious body. There are many Christians who, like the disciples, do not understand the Lord's words. One finds many Christians who have a faith like that of the Pharisees ; they believe indeed that there will be a resurrection, and, like Martha, that all will rise at the last day. The only difference is that Martha and the Jews believed in the resurrection of the Jews only ; and these Christians believe in a resurrection where good and bad will be raised together.

It is quite true that all will rise, but true faith in Christ (notice, dear reader), true faith makes the distinction already. The unbeliever remains in his sins, and will rise for the judgment, and the true believer will rise for the resurrection of life ; he will rise (as we find in 1 Cor. xv.) in glory. When the Lord comes, He will change our vile body and fashion it like unto His glorious body. Christ

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is the first-fruits of the resurrection, but certainly not of the wicked: in no part of the word do we find a common resurrection of good and bad: we find in Luke xiv. 14, a resurrection of the *just*, and again (xx. 35), "they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from among the dead." Thus we find expressly in 1 Corinthians xv. "Every man in his own order, Christ the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming."

Thus also in 1 Thessalonians iv. "The dead in Christ shall rise first:" it is always thus. People quote Matthew xxv., but in that chapter it is no question of resurrection, nor of raised bodies; it is not a universal judgment, but a judgment of Gentiles upon the earth, of those to whom the everlasting gospel of Revelation xiv. had been sent at the end of the age. There are not two classes only here, but three; the sheep, the goats, and the brethren of the Judge. The principle of the judgment here is not the principle of a universal judg-

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ment. It is just according to the manner in which they have received and esteemed the Judge's brethren; that is the messengers of the everlasting gospel, called in chapter xxiv. "this gospel of the kingdom."

The principles of the general judgment of the nations are explained in Romans i., ii.; these are quite different. I speak of Matthew xxv. because it is the only passage that is quoted as a reply to the uniform testimony of the holy scriptures to a distinct resurrection of believers, according to the declaration of John v. 24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life." We shall all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, certainly, and every one will give account of himself to God. But when the believers shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, they will have been glorified already, raised in glory, and made like unto the glory of Christ, as man.

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“When he shall appear, we shall be like him”—it is for this that “every one who hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

The first coming of Christ put away sin as regards judgment; for believers He will appear the second time unto perfect salvation to receive them to Himself, to glorify them. Their spirits are with Him in heaven, whilst they await this hour—the resurrection of their bodies will take place when He shall return, and then we shall all be for ever with the Lord. When glorified however, we shall give account of everything; we shall know as we have been known. There is thus a resurrection from among the dead.

The difficulty of which the scribes talked (that Elias ought to come before the Messiah) presents itself to the disciples. Now the scribes still exercised great influence over the disciples. And in truth, this is to be found in Malachi's prophecy; it will be surely fulfilled, whatever the manner of fulfilment may be, before the Lord's coming in glory.

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But He came first in humiliation, and hidden, as it were, as to His external glory; He entered by the door as the shepherd of the sheep, in order that faith seeing through the darkness of His position and of His daily life, might discern not merely a Messiah, come to Israel according to the promises, but the love and power of God Himself—and might find itself in the presence of His holiness.

The Jews would have received with joy a Messiah who should liberate them from the Roman yoke; but the presence of God is unsupportable for men, even when He appears amongst them in goodness. To the coming which is still future, the Lord alludes when He says in Matthew x. 23, "For I tell you ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel until the Son of man be come." But now He appears in humility, made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death; that is, in order to be able to suffer. Thus also John the Baptist comes in the spirit and power of Elias, according to Isaiah xi. and

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Malachi iii., to prepare the way of the Lord. Thus the Lord answers ; John must come ; the scribes are right ; John shall come and restore all things. But it was necessary too that the Son of Man should suffer, and that He should be thoroughly despised. “ But I tell you that Elias hath already come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed.”

But if the Lord was manifested in His glory before the disciples' eyes in the transfiguration, He occupies Himself now with the misery of the earth ; and that which took place is very remarkable for the display of His patience, and of the ways of God. When He comes down from the mountain, He finds a great crowd, and the scribes reasoning with His disciples. It is blessed to notice that if the Lord is recognized as Son of God, and will be manifested in glory, and we with Him, He nevertheless comes down into this world—as He does still by His Spirit—and meets with the crowd and the power of Satan for us ; and again (it is well



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for us to notice it) He speaks as intimately with His disciples as He does with Moses and Elias. Oh, how great is His grace! But the exercise of this grace develops the position and state of man and of the disciples.

A poor father has recourse to the Lord for his suffering son, who is possessed of an evil spirit, and cannot speak. He tells the Lord that he had brought him to the disciples, and that they could not cast out the unclean spirit. This is their position; not only does the Lord encounter unbelief, but although divine power be in the earth, believers even do not know how to use it; it was in vain then that the Lord was present in the world. He could work miracles, but man did not know how to profit by this, or to use it by faith. It was a faithless generation; and He could not stay down here. It was not the presence or the power of the devils that drove Him away, for indeed it was this that brought Him down here; but when His own do not know how to profit by the power and

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the blessing which He has brought into the world and placed in their midst, the dispensation characterized by these gifts must be drawing to its close. And this, not because there is unbelief in the world, but because His own cannot realize the power placed at their disposal; and in consequence, the testimony of God falls to the ground destroyed, instead of being established; since the followers of this testimony meet with the power of the enemy and cannot do anything—the enemy is too strong for them.

“O faithless generation,” says the Lord, “how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?” His service upon earth was finished. But see the patience and goodness of the Lord; He cannot deny Himself. All the time He is down here upon earth, He works according to His power and grace, and that notwithstanding the unbelief of His own. He finishes the sentence in which He reproves their unbelief in this manner—“Bring him to me.” Faith, however small it be, is never left without an answer from the

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Lord. What a consolation! whatever be the unbelief, not only of the world, but of Christians—if only one solitary person were left in the world who had faith in the goodness and power of the Lord Jesus, he could not come to Him with a real need and simple belief without finding His heart ready and His power sufficient.

The church may be in ruins, as was Israel, but the Head is sufficient for everything, knows the state of His own, and will not fail to supply their needs. The child's state was very dangerous, and the devil had possessed him from his infancy. The father's faith was feeble, but sincere; he says to the Lord, "If thou canst do anything, have pity upon us, and help us." The Lord's reply is remarkable: "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Power connects itself with faith; the difficulty is not in Christ's power, but in man's believing; all things were possible if he could believe. This is an important principle; Christ's power never fails to accomplish

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all that is good for man ; faith, alas, may be wanting in us to profit by it. ' However the Lord is full of goodness ; the poor father says with tears, " I believe, help thou mine unbelief : " sincere words from a moved heart in which the Lord had already awakened faith. It was the anxiety for his son that weakened this faith.

Now the Lord, avoiding the empty curiosity of the people, thinking rather of the needs of the father and son, commands the unclean spirit with authority to come out and not to enter again into the child. And he comes out of him, shewing at the same time his power (tearing the child, so as to leave him as dead), but absolutely subject to the Lord's authority. It is very beautiful to see that the Lord upon leaving the glory went to meet the unbelief of the world and of His own, and the weakness of the faith of those who have need of it, and that too in the presence of the enemy's great power. The Lord does not keep at a distance from us, He takes part in our sorrows,

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He encourages our weak faith, and with a single word drives away all the power of the enemy. Neither His own glorious state, nor the unbelief of the world which rejected Him, prevented Him from being the refuge and the remedy for the poorest faith. He interests Himself in us, thinks of us, and helps us.

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 PSALM XCI.

*“What’s in a name?”*—is a question which has often been on the lip of man.

*“What’s in a name?”* in God’s mind, is wonderfully but blessedly set forth in Psalm xci.

It opens with a statement simple enough, though containing, for height and depth and breadth, that which none but He who is the Wisdom of God could apprehend or explain. *“He that dwells in the secret place of Gnelion (the Most High, the Supreme) shall lodge in, under the shade of Shaddai (that is the Almighty supplier).”* (Ver. 1.)

If any fallen man reads this, he will,

## PSALM XCI.

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like the Jew, think that it *concedes* that any one may dwell, through his own will and power, in the secret presence of the Most High, and so get the blessing (afterwards referred to) of the Almighty supplier being so to him of everything needed, known or unknown.

The Lord Jesus thought not so about it—for it is He who speaks in verse 2.

“I say of JEHOVAH, my refuge and my fortress; my Elohim, in him do I trust.” Observe “JEHOVAH ELOHIM” is first brought before us in Genesis ii., where God is setting Himself forth as in relationship with man in blessing. That is the force or meaning of Jehovah Elohim, where found used, I think I may say, in scripture.

But if that be the first place in which it was presented to man on earth, it had been known and thought of in heaven in its eternity—and the Son of God knew the counsel and the plan referred to in Ephesians i. 10, and Colossians i. 20, of how He, as the Son of God, was to gather together in one, in heaven above and on earth beneath, a

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heavenly and an earthly family from among the children of Adam. And this would be the proof of how the Creator would have man, not as a creature only upon earth in mere human nature, and with natural blessings, but had a secret mystery in grace, namely, through His Son, become a man and doing works past all finding out, He would fill heaven above and earth beneath, when made anew, with redeemed creatures, brought into blessed relationship with Himself in grace and for eternity. The one perfect Man the head of a new race !

“Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust : his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day ; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness ; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right

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hand ; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked." (Ver. 3-8.) This forms a proclamation of how all deliverance for man as men, is found *alone* in Him who could reply to the first verse as He does in the second. A solemn sweeping away of all man's thoughts of his own competency to get blessing ; a most precious opening of the Lord's bosom, as the place of rest and repose for the weak and incompetent.

"Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation ; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder : the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet." (Ver. 9-13.) These are addressed to Him, Messiah, who (as in Ver. 2) shews that He knows, amid all



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God's names and displays of Himself, whereabout He is, and under what name He has to act at each time, and how *the purpose* of the Lord shall stand. To Him the oracle, or the Holy Spirit through it, then speaks; for He could not deny either that the counsel and plan were of Gnelion, the Most High—the Supreme—or that competent was He to whom it had allotted the accomplishment of the work. (Eph. i. 10, and Col. i. 20.)

And then the Psalm closes—shewing the moral glory of the Lord, who in love to God stooped from the supreme glory on high to become a man and be obedient unto death, the death of the cross, in order that the good pleasure of God might be accomplished.

“Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.” (Ver. 14—

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 183

16.) What a blessed one He is! and how precious the counsel and plan about Him, and His being charged to bring a people for the heavens and a people for the earth into everlasting blessing, which shall be as fit and suited for God's own presence, as fit and suited for their renewed hearts. The primary bearing of the Psalm is about blessing *on the earth*; but as it brings in the *person* of the Lord, and what is in Him of wisdom and power, it is, in principle and in truth, very wide.

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## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

## OUTSIDE THE CAMP.

THERE are two things indispensable to ensure the believer's true happy and holy course while here. The first is the place in which through grace (because of the work of Christ) I am set with God. It is first what Christ is for me; and secondly, what I am for Him. If I have not, through the Spirit,

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“HE HATH OPENED MINE EYES.”

GAZING upward, Lord, I see  
Thee in glory, I in Thee;  
Looking downward, then I trace  
All Thy ways for me in grace.

Gazing onward, Lord, I see  
All my blessing link'd with Thee;  
Looking back, I see Thee break  
Every link my heart would make.

Be it upward, onward, round—  
Oh, what grace and love abound!  
Lighting here Thy wondrous story,  
Lending radiance to Thy glory.

“Within the veil” that love and grace  
Have won for me a blissful place;  
“Without the camp,” then would I dare  
Reproach, contempt with Thee to share.

Abiding in Thee, *there* my part,  
Oh, what deep repose of heart!  
Dwelling in me, *here* be Thine,  
Blessed Lord! in power divine.

Thus, Lord Jesus, would I be  
Made a vessel meet for Thee;  
All my life, my words and ways,  
Ever telling out Thy praise.

## MARK'S GOSPEL.

### CHAPTER IX. 30-50.

ALTHOUGH the Lord be placed in glory according to His rights, these do not weaken His love for poor human-kind. But again we find an important lesson at the end of this history. Energetic faith which works (whether the miracles which happened at that time or the great things of the kingdom of God) is sustained by intimate communion with God, by prayer and fasting. The heart comes out from God's presence to drive away the enemy's power; but whatever might be the Lord's grace, whatever His power, a greater work had to be accomplished, a great work for the Lord Himself, a work of which He alone was capable—difficult indeed for the heart of man to learn, but absolutely necessary for the glory of God and for our redemption and salvation: a lesson which one must learn in order to walk in the Lord's ways. This is the work of the cross; and the wholesome

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lesson it teaches us is this—that we must bear our own cross.

Now that the future glory, the glory of the kingdom, has been revealed;—now that the Lord has shewn forth His power and His perfect goodness in spite of the unbelief of the world, and of His departure after having been rejected by the world—He takes His disciples aside, passing through Galilee to make them understand that the Son of man would be given into the hands of men who would put Him to death. He speaks of His title as Son of man, because He could not any longer remain upon earth as the promised Messiah, but He must accomplish the work of redemption. However after that He should have been put to death, He would rise again on the third day. Behold then redemption completed and everything made new: man is put upon an entirely new footing, at least the believer in Jesus.

Risen man does not stand upon the same footing as Adam in his innocence (I do not speak now of the lost, although it be true for them, but it is quite a dif-

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ferent thing). He was in the natural blessing of a creature, but his faithfulness was put to the proof, a proof in which he failed. True enough the sinner is not in the condition of the redeemed; but in Adam's case all depended upon his responsibility. In Christ risen man had been fully tried and shewn to be perfect, proved even unto death, where He glorified God Himself. Further He bore our sins and put them away for ever; He submitted to death, but has conquered it, and has come forth out of it; He has borne the stroke of God's judgment against sin. Satan had already employed all his power as the prince of this world, in the death of Jesus, although it was not possible that He should be holden of death: so that instead of being under trial where He had placed Himself in His love for us and in order to glorify His Father, Jesus risen (and we in Him by faith and by the hope which the Holy Ghost who unites us to Jesus inspires) is beyond the reach of all these things.

Death to which Adam subjected him-

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self through sin, is conquered, our sins are abolished before God ; we are perfected for ever as to our conscience ; a new state of life has begun for us, a life which is entirely new and heavenly ; and heavenly glory at the end, already realized for Christ there where He was with the Father before the foundation of the world. "As He is," says John, "so are we in this world : " (that is as in the presence of God's judgment)—and we await the resurrection of the body. But Christ's position as a glorified man, is the fruit of having fully glorified God ; and we sharing His life by the operation of the Holy Spirit, participate in the fruit of His work already at this present time, as to our position before God ; and later we shall be like unto Him perfectly. Adam's state when innocent was happy, but it depended upon his obedience. Christ's state as man is the fruit of an obedience perfectly complete, after it had been proved even to the point of drinking the cup of death and of malediction, when He was made sin for us.

The first state was exposed to change,

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and complete ruin came in by the fall ; the other remains unchangeable established upon a work that can never lose its value. We are already brought, by participating in the life of Jesus, into the relationships into which He introduces us with the Father. "I ascend," said He after His resurrection, "to my Father, and to your Father, to my God and to your God." Only in order to accomplish all this it was necessary for Him to pass through death, to bear the cross in order to drink the cup which His Father had given Him. He engages them then with the cross, and teaches them to expect it. But what a thing man is ! We learn it in what follows.

The Lord, having the consciousness of His glory in which the Father had recognized Him a little while ago as His beloved Son, and knowing at the same time that this glory made the cross absolutely necessary to bring many sons to glory, speaks of it to His disciples ; He insists that it will be necessary for them to carry it. Such was the path of the glory of which His own death was



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the foundation. The Lord's heart was full of the thought of the sufferings which accompanied it; of the cup He had to drink, and of the necessity of His disciples' understanding this path, and of taking up their cross. But of what were the disciples' hearts full? They were thinking who should be the greatest. Alas, how incapable our heart is to receive God's thoughts, to think of a Saviour humbled unto death for us! It is true that the Spirit of God puts in contrast here the reign of Messiah which the Jews expected, and the glorious heavenly reign which the Lord was establishing, and for which His death was necessary; but the contrast comes out strongly thus in the heart of man. He would like to be great in a kingdom established according to man's glory and man's power; he esteems it a good thing that God should condescend to this; but that His glory should be morally exalted and established, and the vain glory of man brought to nought, the manifestation of what man is; the love, holiness, and justice of God

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brought to light—all this is what man neither seeks nor desires ; and when the Lord's heart, full of these solemn truths and of the sufferings by which He must needs pass to fulfil them, speaks of them to His disciples, the latter dispute as to who shall be greatest. How poor and wretched a thing is man's heart !

What incapacity to understand God's thoughts, and to feel the tenderness and faithfulness of the heart of Jesus, and the thoughts passing through it ; divine love manifesting itself in the heart of a man, and as a man in the midst of men, in which is found a moral incapacity to enter into His thoughts ; but this opens the way at the same time to the manifestation of our thoughts which are in full contrast with those of Jesus. May God grant us in His grace to hold the flesh so entirely subject, that the Holy Spirit may be the source of all our thoughts and of the movements of our hearts. Nevertheless the conscience does not keep silence if the Lord's word touches us : we know well that the desire of vain glory is a bad thing, that

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it is not meet for Christ, for Him who speaks and we are ashamed. The disciples are silent because their conscience speaks.

Now the patient love of the Lord sets itself to teach them; He sits down (ver. 35), and calls the twelve: He always thinks of us. He then teaches several principles, in which we see the consequences of the world's opposition to Christ, and the introduction of a new relationship with God in Christ risen; these principles demand some explanation. The important point here, the foundation of all the Lord's exhortations, and of all He says is this, that the glory of the kingdom to come has been revealed, and with this revelation comes the cross. It is the end of all the relationships between God and Israel, and indeed between God and man, except indeed that of sovereign grace, and the principle of a new and heavenly relationship by faith. But Christ, the Messiah according to the promises in Israel, God manifest in flesh, the last hope for man as he was upon earth, was

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rejected. The relationship between God and man was broken. Could one seek glory upon an earth of this kind? What kind of disposition is fitting for a disciple of Christ? Humility; he who would be first shall be the last and servant of all. Then He takes a child and declares that he who receives such an one in His name, receives Christ; and he who receives Christ, receives the Father who sent Him. The name of Christ is the touch-stone, the only thing upon earth really great by faith.

Then we find a reproof for a thing which in itself was love, though rough and coarse, but which dresses itself in very deceitful forms, and seems to consider Christ's glory; for love in itself is not upright: it is quite disposed to maintain the glory of Christ's name, if it can attach itself to this glory. "We saw one casting out devils in thy name who doth not follow us, and because he followeth not *us*, we forbade him." See here the word *us* betrays the most subtle love of self: subtle it is true, but none the less dangerous. But the Lord's

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answer shews how absolute is His rejection: "He who is not against us is for us," because the whole world in its natural state was against Christ, and is still against Him; and no one could perform miracles in His name and at the same time speak evil or lightly of Him. The name of Christ is everything. Let us avoid this wretched *us*, and hold fast Christ. Verse 41 shews how the name of Christ is everything in a world which has rejected Him.

But what a testimony to man's state, and to his inward opposition to God revealed in Christ! If any one was not against Him, he was for Him, and thus he was completely God's enemy. Some important consequences follow this state: first of all the least manifestation of love for Him, which interested itself in Him, having the power of His name at heart, should not be forgotten before God. What a picture of the state of things and of the patience of Christ, who humbled Himself even to being rejected and despised, yet does not forget the

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least token of affection for Him, and of desire for His glory !

Now we see another consequence of this position. The Lord does not wish that a little child who believes in Him should be despised ; He esteems these, because their hearts recognize His name, believe in Him ; and hence they have a great value before God. Woe be to him who despises them and who places a stone of stumbling before their feet ; it would have been better for such an one to have been drowned in the depth of the sea. And nevertheless, as regards themselves, all depends upon the faithfulness of Christ ; and on this account they need free themselves from all the things which tend to separate from Christ, which lead into sin, and bring on apostasy in the heart as well as outward apostasy. God will keep His own, I believe, but He will keep them in making them obedient to His word.

However much it may cost us, if it should be an eye that offends us, we must pluck it out ; if a hand, we must cut it off ; in a word, the most valuable

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thing possible ; for an eternity of blessing with Christ is better than to keep a right hand and to find oneself in eternal torments, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. Besides this, God puts all to the proof : the fire of His judgment is applied to all, both to saints and sinners. In the saints, it consumes the dross, in order that the pure gold may shine in its true lustre ; in the case of the sinners, the fire of God and the eternal pains according to His just judgment, fire that is not quenched. “ Every sacrifice must be salted with salt ; ” this refers to Leviticus ii. 13. The salt represents the power of the Holy Spirit, not exactly to produce grace alone, but to keep us from all that is impure, and to produce holiness in a heart devoted to God, and which introduces God into its path ; and in the heart there is a link with Himself which keeps us from all corruption. We are called to keep this in the heart, and to apply the sense of His presence to all that passes within us, and to judge by this means all that is within us.

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But observe that the believer is the true sacrifice offered to God. "I beseech you" (says the apostle, Rom. xii.) "then, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies, a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." Here we see the true sacrifice, a reasonable service: and besides, this holy grace which keeps us from all that is evil and impure, makes good its influence within us; and the christian filled with practical holiness is a witness in the world. This indeed is the true state of Christians in this world; a witness in the midst of the world of a power which not only purifies but which keeps from the corruption found in it. Salt influences other things and is apt to produce this effect; but if the salt itself lose its savour, wherewithal can it be seasoned? If Christians lose their practical holiness, what can they be good for? "Have salt in yourselves," said the Lord. He wishes us to exercise diligence in order that our souls, in our walk, may be thus sanctified before God, and then manifest them-



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selves before the world ; that we should judge in ourselves all that might diminish in us the clearness and purity of our testimony ; and that we should walk with others in peace, governed by the spirit of peace in our relationships with them.

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WISDOM AND FOLLY:  
HOW TO DISTINGUISH THEM.

PROVERBS IX.

THERE are two great influences on the earth, and I am under either the one, or the other. One is Wisdom, that is, Christ ; the other, is the Foolish Woman, that is, the world ; and it is of the last importance for the saint to be able to ascertain which of these two influences he is under. There really can be no difficulty in discovering this, when we simply bear in mind the effects proposed by each, and watch for them. Each offers something to revive and invigorate. Wisdom says, "Eat of my bread, and drink of my wine which I have mingled."

The Foolish Woman saith, "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." Both offer something to cheer and to invigorate, but with Wisdom it is offered with this counsel, "Forsake the foolish and live, and go in the way of understanding;" while the other, the world, limits its offers to what is merely natural gratification. It ministers simply to pleasure; offering you what you have no right (according to God) to—"stolen waters;" and what is all for yourself, and therefore "bread eaten in secret."

Now in watching the effects produced by yielding to any influence, we cannot fail to see whether it is Wisdom or the world which controls us. It was the world which influenced Eve when "she saw that the tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, and to be desired to make one wise." Had she been led by Wisdom, she would have turned away from the serpent. "Forsake the foolish and live," was the only path of safety for her.

Noah was under the influence of the

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Foolish Woman when he "planted a vineyard and drank of the wine thereof." Alas! he found that "the dead was there," her guests go down to hell.

The builders of the tower of Babel were led by the world, in its most insinuating self-dependence, when they said, "Let us build us a city, and a tower which may reach to heaven."

Abram on the contrary was led by Wisdom, when he separated from kindred and country to go into the place which the Lord should shew Him. The great characteristic of Wisdom, is that it enjoins separation, presenting to me a path new and unchosen by men, while the world is characterized by offering me something to gratify, though the real right to it is not assured, and something that I must entirely and exclusively enjoy. It is generally some one who naturally is near you, and in whom you have great confidence, who works on your self-consideration, in order to lead you into the world's way. Thus Jacob's mother worked upon him to make him surreptitiously obtain his father's bless-

ing. Thus Joab worked upon David in order to bring Absalom back. After the same manner, Peter attempted to dissuade the Lord from the cross, but Wisdom rebuked him, saying, "Get thee behind me Satan, thou art an offence unto me."

If we can refuse the influence of persons who are naturally near us, and who are really interested in us, we know what it is to be led by Wisdom. Hence it is written, "a man's foes are the men of his own house." Once the principle of Wisdom is accepted, it becomes easier every day, and our separation more stringent from every one not in accordance with the mind of the Lord. The senses are daily more and more exercised to discern good and evil; producing, not only the renunciation of evil in oneself, but hating even the garment of another spotted by the flesh. The man of the world is then feared as pitch, for "who can touch pitch and not be defiled therewith?" "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Paul will break with Barnabas, sooner than accept the companionship of Mark. (Acts xv. 38.)

## “ I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE.”

JOHN VI.

IF a person is neither feeding, digesting, nor hungering, he is in an unhealthy condition; if he feeds, and the process of digestion follows in natural order, he hungers again. Just so is it with things of God and the child of God, and in order to health, each of these three operations has its proper time and place.

A man that eats nothing must sink in decay, while another who cannot digest his food suffers from a train of attendant maladies, not one of the least (because of the bad effect it has around) is *discontent*; he is discontented with himself, and with all about him. So is it with divine things; if I cannot digest what I have taken, the food does me no good; not that the fault is in the food, it is *in myself*.

A hungry man does not find fault with his food, because he is hungry, and the plainer the food, the more easy is it of digestion, and even a crust is acceptable to a hungry man. To be complain-

## “I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE.” 211

ing of my food is neither hungering, digesting, nor feeding; and a saint in a healthy condition of soul himself, will not be finding fault with others, or with the meetings, he will be helping them both by the flow of health in himself.

It is not a sign of a healthy state for the appetite to need “pampering,” or for us to desire that the manna should be made up into pleasant morsels by *natural skill*. (See Num. xi.) It is a sign of health to be hungry, and the soul that digests most regularly is the one you will most frequently find again hungry.

If you see a saint who is never hungry, may you not conclude that something is wrong? If all were right would he not digest? would he not then hunger again and again? And if we are in secret with God, we shall be found at that place where food is dispensed.

Only such souls “grow,” according to 1 Peter ii. 2, 3, and only such help others. The manna was to be gathered *each day*. Your supplies must come directly from the Lord Himself, and what

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you were supplied with yesterday gives you no power for to-day, and if the Lord did supply us with more than was necessary for each day, such are we that we should immediately become independent of Him; it would take us out of the path of faith. He does not do this; He will have us dependent on Himself.

This world is as really destitute of food in itself for the redeemed, as was the wilderness for Israel; hence the need of "bread from heaven." Like a humming bird plunged under the water, they have come down into an element that is not only foreign to them, but that ministers death to the soul that imbibes it; and it is by a strength ministered from above, they are enabled to live, because they partake of a suited supply from thence. If I am longing for cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic" (Num. xi.), I am sighing for Egypt's food, and not for the supplies of God. These feed *the flesh*, while the word feeds the *new man*, and judges the flesh, with all its desires,—condemns it, and no longer owns it.

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 213

“As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, even so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.” (John vi.) But as Israel needed the manna, so do you and I need a *daily* supply. Be careful that you do not loathe this “light food;” if you do, be assured that your heart has already gone far into the land where *you* will presently be—“among the flesh-pots of Egypt,” where you may, alas! “eat bread to the full,” but where all you get can only minister to and nourish *the flesh*. “For to be carnally minded is *death*.” (Rom. viii.)

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## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE MODE AND OBJECT OF THE LORD'S  
PRESENT MINISTRY.

THERE are two services of our Lord for His people, one which He has perfectly accomplished, the other with which He is at present occupied. The first is, He has placed us in His own acceptance before God, so that the soul knows that



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Laodiceans, He says, "I stand at the door and knock, if any man open to me I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me ;" or as He teaches the sleeping bride in Canticles, that though He arouse her by His voice and hand, and though her affections in the deepest way are awakened and revived, yet she does not find Him, He has withdrawn Himself and is gone, until He is portrayed to her in rapt contemplation, and then she finds out where He is, and can say, I have part with Him, "My beloved is mine and I am his."

The Lord lead us to understand the inconceivable love of our Lord in washing our feet, that we may have part with Himself, and nothing less.

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 FRAGMENT.

It is an accident that I am down here. It is a reality that I am up there in Christ in heaven. Any little thing might take me out of the body. Where am I then ? Up there with Christ.

## THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON. 223

People are talking now-a-days of being perfect. I do not know what they mean. You may be perfect in doctrine, but are you perfect in practice? You may walk blamelessly as a Christian, but then Satan is ever ready to get in, and there are all sorts of things within you to answer to him. I am told to walk in the light; and if I do, what then? It is not that I am perfect. I have not got up there yet, and till I have, I cannot be perfect. I defy any to compare themselves with Christ and say they are perfect. He never had a will of His own. He has now a glorified body, and blessed be God, I shall always know the contrast between Himself and myself.

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## THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON.

Our Man, God-Man ! the peerless Man !  
 Jesus, My Lord ! God's Son,  
 Perfection's perfect in its height,  
 But found in Thee alone.

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Of Abba's love, of God's great claims,—  
Thou com'st not short at all :  
Perfect in everything art Thou,  
Alone since Adam's fall.

O matchless, peerless Man ! shall we  
Begrudge to Thee this praise ?  
*Perfect alone*, Thou cam'st in love,  
From ruin us to raise.

Peerlessly *spotless* Man ! 'twas Thou  
Wrath's cup didst drink for me.  
Peerlessly *righteous* Man ! I'm made  
God's righteousness through Thee.

Peerlessly *glorious* Man ! how soon  
Shall I be like to Thee !  
Thy very glory then reflect,  
Thy matchless beauty see.

(*A leaflet from the Surat, 1875.*)

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## MARK'S GOSPEL.

### CHAPTER X. 1-28.

WE find some important principles in this chapter, which terminates the history of Christ's life. In the first three Gospels the account of the circumstances attending His death begins with the healing of the blind man near Jericho, which we find in verse 46 of this chapter. The first principle we find here is the corruption and ruin of that which God created down here; and in the relationships even which He has established, sin has entered and exercises its pernicious influence. The very law of Moses was obliged to permit things, in the relationships of life down here, which are not according to the thoughts and the actual will of God, for the hardness of the heart of man.

But if God bears with men, incapable as they are to live up to the height of their relationships with Him, in things which are not according to His will and the perfection of the relationships which

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He has established, He does not condemn them, nor does He ever cease to recognize them as being that which He had established in the beginning. That which was established from the beginning by God Himself always holds good, and He maintains these relationships by His authority. Creation itself is good, but man has corrupted it; nevertheless God recognizes that which He has made, and the relationships in which He has placed man, who is responsible to maintain their obligations. It is true that God has brought in a power after the death of Christ which is not of this creation; that is, the Holy Spirit; and by means of this power, a man may live outside all the relationships of the old creation, if God calls him to this; but then he will respect the relationships where they exist.

The Pharisees drawing near ask Jesus if it is permitted that a husband should put away his wife. The Lord takes the occasion to insist upon this truth, that that which God had established from the beginning of the creation was always

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valid in itself. Moses had allowed a man to put away his wife in the law : but this was only the patience of God with the hardness of man's heart ; but it was not according to God's own heart and will. In the creation at the beginning God made that which was good,—weak, but good. He allowed other things when He ordered provisionally the state of His people, of fallen man ; but He had made things differently when He created them. God had united husband and wife, and man had no right to separate them. The bond is not to be broken.

Again they bring little children unto Him : and the disciples forbid those who bring them. But Jesus is displeased at this : although the root of sin be found in the children, nevertheless they were the expression of simplicity of confidence and of the absence of the craftiness and of the corruption caused by the knowledge of the world, of the depravity of nature. They present to the heart the simplicity of uncorrupted nature, which has not learned the deceit of the world. And the Lord being a

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stranger in the world recognizes in them that which His Father has created.

Now is there really any good in man? The remains of what God created are found in that which is purely creature; that which is beautiful and pleasant; that which comes from God's hand is often beautiful and should be recognized as coming from Him. Nature around us is beautiful; it is God who created it, although thorns and thistles be found in it. We find that which is lovely sometimes in a man's character, and also in the disposition of an animal even. But if it is a question of man's heart, of his will, of what he is toward God—and not of what is natural, the fruit of creation—there dwelleth in him no good thing; there is nothing for God; but all is against Him; and this was manifested in the rejection of Christ.

This is the lesson we learn in the account which follows of the young man who runs and kneels at Jesus' feet, asking Him, "Good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He was amiable, well disposed, and ready to learn that

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which is good ; he had witnessed the excellence of the life and works of Jesus, and his heart was touched at what he had seen. He had all the fine ardour of youth, he was not depraved by the habit of sin, for sin depraves the heart. Outwardly he had kept the law, and believed that Jesus could teach him the highest precepts of the law : for the Jews even believed that some commandments were of greater value than others.

The young man neither knew himself, nor the state in which man really was before God. He was under the law ; and Jesus sets forth the law first as the rule of life, given by God as the measure of righteousness for the sons of Adam. The young man does not ask how he may be saved, but how he may inherit eternal life. The Lord does not speak of eternal life, but takes up the young man at the point where he places himself ; the law said, " Do these things, and thou shalt live." The young man declares that he has kept all these things from his youth up : the Lord neither denies nor disputes it ; and we read that He looked upon



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him, and loved him. We see here that which is amiable and loved of the Lord. But what is the true state of this young man? The Lord draws the veil, and man stands before God in his nakedness; and God stands before man in His holiness. *Doing* anything is out of the question: how to be saved is another thing.

Let us examine what the Lord says about the state of man. The young man addressed the Lord not as the Son of God, but as a rabbi, that is, as a teacher in Israel: he calls Him "Good master." The Lord will not admit that man is good; not one righteous man can be found amongst men,—no, not one. He says, "Why callest thou me good? No one is good except one: that is God." Certainly Christ was good, but He was God, although He made Himself man in His perfect love. He was always God, and God became man without ceasing to be, or being able to cease being, God; only he had hidden His divinity in human nature (at least His glory) in order to come nigh unto us; for by faith divine

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power and love are more clearly manifested than ever. But here the young man comes as to a human teacher, a rabbi; and the Lord answers him in the same manner as he asks; but He establishes this important principle, that no one amongst the sons of fallen Adam is good; it is a humiliating truth, but one of immense weight. We cannot now find a man who is good by nature; we have seen that certain qualities remain of the first creation, but that which God had created good and declared to be good, has been corrupted by the fall. Man goes in quest of his own pleasures, of his own interests, and not of God and His glory; he may seek these things honestly or dishonestly in the quagmire of sin, but he always seeks to satisfy his own will; he has lost God, and looks after himself.

Then the Lord, after having presented to him the commandments of the law, in which a man has life whilst he keeps them, adds in an exhortation the commandment which made Paul feel what the law produced, in the state in which

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man was—in death. “One thing thou lackest,” says the Lord: “Go, sell that thou hast, and come and follow me.” Here we see the lust of the heart exposed; the young man’s true state laid bare by the Lord’s powerful but simple word, which knows and tries the heart. The fine flowers of the wild tree are worth nothing; the fruits are those of a heart alienated from God; the sap is the sap of a bad tree. The love of riches ruled this young man’s heart, interesting as he was as to his natural disposition; the base desire of gold lay at the bottom of his heart; it was the main-spring of his will, the true measure of his moral state. If he goes away grieved and leaves the Lord, it is because he prefers money to God manifested in love and grace.

How solemn a thing it is to find oneself in the presence of Him who searcheth the heart. But the thing that governs the heart, its motive, is the true measure of man’s moral state, and not the qualities which he possesses by birth, however pleasing these may be. Good

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qualities are to be found even in animals: they are to be esteemed, but they do not at all reveal the moral state of the heart. A man who has a hard and perverse nature, who tries to control his bad disposition by grace, and to be amiable to others and pleasing to God, is more moral and better before Him than a man who, amiable naturally, seeks to enjoy himself with others in a pleasant way but without conscience before God: that is, without thinking of Him; loved by men, but displeasing to the God whom he forgets. That which gives moral character to a man is the object of his heart; and it is this the Lord shews here in so powerful a manner, that it touches to the quick the pride of the human heart.

But the Lord goes further: the disciples, who thought that men could do something to gain eternal life, like all the Pharisees of every age, and that man ought to gain heaven for himself, although they recognized the need of God's help, were astonished. What! a rich man of a very good disposition, who

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had kept the law, and who only sought to know what was the most excellent commandment from their Master in order to perform it,—could such an one be far from the kingdom of God?—Could it be extremely difficult for such an one to enter into it? If we do not understand that we are lost already, that we need to be saved, that it is a question of the state of the heart, and that all hearts are naturally at a distance from God, and that they seek an object, the object of their own desire far from Him, that they do not wish Him to be present, because the conscience feels that His presence would hinder the heart in following this object; if we do not learn this truth by grace, we are altogether blind.

At the moment at which we have arrived in this passage, it was too late to keep concealed from man (at least from the disciples) the true state of his heart. This state had been manifested; man had been unwilling to receive the Son of God. Thus it had been proved that with the best natural disposition, man, even whilst preserving outward morality, pre-

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ferred to follow the object of his desire, rather than the God of love present upon earth, or a master whom he had recognized as having the highest knowledge of the will of God. Man was lost; he had shewn this fact in rejecting the Son of God: and he must learn it, and that with all his most excellent qualities he cannot save himself. "Who then can be saved?" The Lord does not hide the truth: "With men it is impossible." Solemn words, pronounced by the Lord, pronounced by Him who came to save us. He knew that man could not save himself, that he could not emerge from the state into which he had fallen, without the help of God. With men it is impossible; but then God comes in His boundless love to save us, and not to conceal our state, and the need of this free salvation.

We must know our state; it is not a thing to be lightly esteemed that the glorious Son of God should have made Himself of no reputation and have died upon the cross; the only means of redeeming and saving lost man. We must

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know ourselves, and know that we are condemned, in our own hearts, in order to be able to understand that Christ has borne this condemnation in our place, and that He has accomplished the work of our salvation, according to God's glory; let the state of condemnation and sin be proved; and let the love, the perfect righteousness, and the holiness of a God who cannot tolerate the sight of sin, (however patient He may be,) be brought out clearly and glorified. "With men it is impossible . . . with God all things are possible." By the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by this work alone, a work which the angels desire to look into, all this can be done; salvation is obtained by faith,—by faith, because all is accomplished. To God be the praise! The Lord is glorified as man in heaven, because this work has been done, and because God has recognized its perfection; it is on this account that He has placed Christ at His right hand, because everything has been done. God is satisfied, glorified in the work of Christ.

## THE PROCESS OF SANCTIFYING.

IF we were holy and surrounded with holy things, there would be no need for our being sanctified. The subject is introduced in John xvii. 15, where the Lord says, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. . . . They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." The fact of their true standing is first stated, and then, in connection with the Lord's request that they should be kept from the evil, He says, that the saints are not of the world, even as He is not of the world. If they were of the world, they would not be of the same mind and spirit with Him; they literally would not be Christ's. If Christ and the world are not alike, the saints and the world cannot be alike. There is the nature of Christ in the saint, for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

But the saint has the flesh in him; and hence, the Lord prays, that he may



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be kept from evil, and true to his proper standing, which is, not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world. And then, He adds, "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth." This is part of the process of sanctifying. "Thy truth" means the revelation of the Father; "Thy word is truth,"—the new relation in which the saint was set. "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law; that we might receive the adoption of sons; and because ye are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father."

As you are assured, that you are of an entirely different origin to all mankind around you, that you are of a divine birth and nature, there necessarily is a sense of separation, and insulation, from man, and all of him as man, in a very peculiar way. It is not that you are trying to avoid anything, or to surrender anything; but that you are not of the nature, or order, of the race among which

## THE PROCESS OF SANCTIFYING. 289

you dwell ; and that while naturally you are of the human race, yet now, through grace, you are of the highest nature, and in the closest relationship to Christ the Head of the new race ; and as this truth is insisted on, you are the more conscious that He hath given us of His Spirit. We are sensibly not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world ; our dissociation from man,—the old order, is more distinctly felt ; and his resources in the world are more definitely distanced, because we turn to the Father for everything, while in this scene, be it for cheer or for care ; because we are not of man, nor behoven to man's resources.

This is the first part in this wondrous process ; the second is connected with our being sent into the world. It is evident we must be first out of it, before we can be sent into it. “As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world.” And then He adds, “For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they may be sanctified through the truth.” Our relation to God, and our nature, are entirely different

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from man naturally ; and hence, our resources are also different and superior. But now, the One who is our life, and the delight of our hearts ; and who, were He here, would give a charm and attraction to the place, is *not* here. He has gone to God. He liveth unto God ; and our hearts, as we are true to Him, follow Him to the scene of light and purity where He is ; and thus, we are in our affections dissociated from the present scene or place, because our hearts are with Him where He is. Thus, the process of sanctifying is completed. We are sanctified through the truth, or in the power of it. There is no object for our hearts here. We are of the Father, and as such, apart entirely from man and his resources ; and though in the scene of both, there is nothing really to fix our hearts here, because the One who controls them is, as to place, entirely apart from this place ; so that, I am not only apart from man and his resources, but the object of my heart is in another place. Hence, though we continue here, there is nothing really to engage our

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hearts, which are already fixed on another, who has left it, except to be occupied with what remains of Him here. We are, on account of nature and resources, apart from all of man unto God. because the One we love is not here, We are in the most distinct separation, without any act of ours to produce it; we are by *nature* so; and secondly, we are, while here, with one mind set on things above; our hearts with the One who is there; and hence, we are proof to every invitation here. We are not trying to find something to satisfy unoccupied affections, but with hearts so devotedly set on Him, where He is, that we only remain to do His pleasure; and we can say, this is not our rest, it is polluted; my heart is in heaven, my heart is not here. Thus, as we have seen, I am here, not only by the highest nature apart from everything; but my heart is engrossed with the One who is the brightness of the Father's glory; so that in this double way, I am sanctified—proof against every attraction here.

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## THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON.

1 Kings iii. 16-28.

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“Behold I will make them of the synagogue of Satan which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.” Rev. iii. 9.

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IN this parabolical history, the two infants express the ONE CHRIST; the true mother being in figure the true church, while the false one shews the apostasy, Babylon, corrupt Christianity. Then the fact of the latter (unwittingly it is true) causing the death of her infant, and then pretending that the child of the other was hers, expresses the world guilty of the murder of Christ, and then, in the face of its sin, professing His name, making a boast of belonging to Him. The true mother, on the other hand, knowing the child to be hers, and yet willing, in order to save his life, to renounce her claims, shews that which is really Christ's, those who

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for the present are willing to be ignored by the world, branded as deceivers, heretics, antinomians, anything, provided that the name, the glory, the person of Him whom she loves, are left untouched by the profane hand of the enemy. The very thought of dishonouring Him, of *crucifying the Son of God afresh*, is agony, death itself, to the heart of this faithful and loving one.

Then, turning again to the type, mark the word of the broken-hearted mother, in approaching the king, weighed down, as she was, by her sense of the wrong done to her by her wicked companion. "O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house." So is it with those to whom the name of Jesus is dear, encompassed as they find themselves to be by the abomination and horrors of Christendom, doomed to hear that name which is above every name, treated on all sides with contempt, or, at best, with indifference.

Then again, observe that touching word of the king, "Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it ; she is the

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mother thereof." Thus Solomon speaks, shewing how "wisdom is justified of all her children" by *pointedly and designedly quoting what the real mother had said*, when in order to save the life of her infant, she cries out in agony of soul, "O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it." This however was not to be. The child was hers, and she was to have it. So will it be at last with all the faithful disciples of Christ, with those who are lovingly waiting and watching for Him.

"They who see and know Him,  
Shall have Him for their own."

Yes, they shall have him—have Him for ever, and that without finding their enjoyment of Him in any way interrupted or marred by the clamorous pretensions of such as claim to be His, without any title to do so.

What divine, what marvellous wisdom Solomon displayed in this judgment of his! And yet the whole thing is so simple, so natural, so self-evident, so exactly what it ought to have been, that we are tempted to think that we our-

## THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON. 245

selves should have decided exactly as he did. How well he knew how the true mother would act, as well as the false one ! that the life of her child was everything to the one ; her own glory all that the other was seeking.

Then as to the two women, how little either of them entered into his mind. For see the wicked folly of the one displayed in her hoping to cheat the king into the belief that she was the mother, so fearfully does sin blind both the mind and the conscience. Then again mark the feeble faith of the other, in supposing that he would not at once decide the case in her favour, that he would be slow to discover in her the unselfish unjealous love of a true—a genuine mother. Truly the sword of the king in this case was as the sword of the Spirit, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart, exposing that which was false, vindicating that which was true.

Then there is another point. It is this : that her love to her child is the sole thing that commends the real



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mother, either to God or the king, she as well as her companion being *a harlot*. So is it with us : in ourselves we are nothing, yea, fallen, corrupt, at an immeasurable distance from God ; all that commends us to Him being our faith, our estimate of Him in whom He takes perfect delight, in whom He is infinitely well pleased.

“And now we watch and struggle,  
And now we live in hope,  
And Zion in her anguish  
With Babylon must cope.\*  
But He whom now we trust in  
Shall then be seen and known,  
And they who know and see Him  
Shall have Him for their own.”

Such we believe to be the true interpretation of this interesting story, in connection with which we have quoted a few lines from “The Rhythm of Bernard de Morlaix,” wherein the saints are seen in conflict with Babylon, and yet at the same time rejoicing in the hope of eternal deliverance and rest.

\* “O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house !” (1 Kings iii. 17.)

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## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

### THE LAODICEAN STATE.

THE last phase of the church as the vessel of testimony for God on the earth is the Laodicean; hence what that state is, and how produced, must be of great interest to us. The four latter churches run down to the coming of the Lord. Philadelphia is the church in light and power before the end, when it will be spued out of Christ's mouth as entirely unfit for the testimony. In the varied phases of the church we find gross evil and painful departure from the truth; but it is in the church of the Laodiceans only, we hear of boastfulness because of their acquisitions, and yet with this intelligence Christ is not their object nor pursuit. Scriptural intelligence so great as to be a matter of boast has been attained to, but it is ineffectual to form Christ *in* them. They boast of great intelligence about Christ and His things, but it is not Christ Himself they seek or cultivate. The truth is shewn to be powerless because it is man as he is

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none effect ; that is, man is not ignored. They may argue for it, their success in arresting and winning souls ; but the end can never justify the means, and certainly the work of those servants bears the marks of the workmen. Though their converts have received grace from Christ there is no thought or intention of living Christ here, but they go on in the world as usual, only more morally and respectably.

When a soul is converted or taught by one who acts on the affections by human means, the more light that preacher or teacher has, the more does he indirectly sanction the human thing, so the truth he has is proved inoperative to ignore the old man ; consequently, the church becomes "the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me." When there is boastful self-satisfaction as to possession of light and knowledge, but all directed to the benefit of man, and when even unintentionally Christ is not the object or aim of their hearts, this is the Laodicean state ; and when this state characterizes the church,

“ THAT SIGHT.”

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it is evident it can no longer be used by Christ as a vessel of testimony, and then, alas ! it is fit and suited for the beast to carry, in order to consummate Babylon.

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“ THAT SIGHT.”

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“ And all the people that came together to *that sight*, beholding the things<sup>1</sup> that were done, smote their breasts.” Luke xxiii. 48.

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BEHOLD that sight ! Heaven gave no light,  
And earth let fall  
A funeral pall  
Upon “ that sight.”

Men smote their breast, and earth's unrest  
In sighs gave vent,  
And rocks they rent  
Beneath “ that sight.”

Some dared to scoff, friends stood far off,  
While men of war  
In terror saw  
That awful sight.

Graves could not hide the saints who died,  
The bars of death  
Were loosed beneath  
That wondrous sight.

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O! what a cry when Thou didst die,  
    Bow down Thy Head,  
    And in our stead  
        Give up the ghost.

Thou Son of God! who by Thy blood  
    Hast brought us near,  
    We do not fear  
        Before "that sight."

Our hearts rejoice to hear that voice,  
    Once lifted high  
    In agony,  
        Now speaking peace.

And for Thy sake the bread we break,  
    The wine we drink,  
    The while we think  
        Upon that sight.

Thy woe is o'er; but never more  
    Thy love would let  
    Thy saints forget  
        That blessed sight.

And this we do, Thy death to shew,  
    Till in Thy grace  
    We see Thy face,  
        O, blissful sight!

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## MARK'S GOSPEL.

### CHAPTER X. 32-52.

“WITH men it is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” But what an immense grace which shews us what we are and what God is. “Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” Think of this, brethren : this means that we must expect a cross in this world. Be ready to receive the Lord’s words, to take up the cross, in order to have the true knowledge of yourselves ; that is, that you are lost in sin, that salvation is purely of grace, impossible for man—but that the work of salvation is perfect and complete, and the righteousness of God is upon all men who believe in Him who has accomplished it. In no part of scripture is the fundamental truth of the need of God’s salvation and of man’s state more clearly stated.

Now the Lord adds His teaching about the path of the cross, and the promises which accompany it : let us look at these.

It is easy to see how much this story

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resembles that of the Apostle Paul; only grace had changed everything in him. As to the righteousness which is by law, he was blameless; but when the spirituality of the law had operated in his heart lust was discovered. Then he found out that in him, that is in his flesh, there dwelt no good thing. But being convinced of sin, God revealed His Son in Him, and then he understood that what was impossible with man was possible with God; God had done for him that which he could not do himself; that is, to gain a righteousness according to the law; and this sin in the flesh is found to be condemned in the cross of Christ, and a sacrifice for sin accomplished by Him; instead of finding himself to be lost in this state of sin, he becomes a new man.

But the young man remains in his former state, and abandons the Lord, in order to keep his riches; whilst in Paul's case, the things which he counted gain, he counted them loss for Christ. "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge

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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."

See here the difference between the effect of grace and human nature. There was wisdom to be found in Paul ; and notice, he did not only count all things as dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, from the outset, when first Christ was revealed in him, but he continued, whilst walking in communion with Him, to count all things as dung for Him.

Now follow the promises made to those who have walked thus, and the path itself, as the Lord Himself represents it. Peter suggests that they had left all in order to follow Him, as He had proposed to the young man : what should they have ? The Lord declares in His answer that no man who had left house, or brethren, or sisters, &c., for His sake and the gospel's, who should not receive an hundredfold such in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting. They shall enjoy much more than the



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wretched things of this life, but with persecutions: and thus they have the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come; not of riches, perhaps, but the true enjoyment of all that is in the world according to God's will, and as gifts from God; but they will have to do with the opposition of a world that does not know God. But those who were the first in Judaism shall be the last amongst Christians.

The Lord now sets Himself in the way going up to Jerusalem. The heart of the disciples was full of presentiments of the danger which awaited them in this city. They followed the Lord in fear and trembling, because the flesh fears the malice of a world, which, if it cannot do anything against God, can persecute those who serve Him down here. Here again we see the difference of the effect of grace in Paul, who, having given up everything for the love of Christ, rejoices in the thought of the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, knowing

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and wishing to know the power of His resurrection. This the disciples did not know, and the flesh can never understand. But the Lord does not wish to hide the truth ; He wishes the disciples to understand the place He was just going to take, and which they would have to take. He begins to tell them the things that should happen to Him, and what should be the lot of the Son of man. He should be given into the hands of the priests, condemned, and delivered into the hands of the Gentiles, who would treat Him with the greatest ignominy, and would put Him to death ; but the third day He would rise again. Thus ends the story of the Son of man amongst men. His own people were the first to condemn Him ; and the Gentiles, by their indifference, were ready to complete the terrible act of the Saviour's rejection in this world. The people of God (the Jews) joined with sinful man to cast out the Son of God, come down here in grace. It was important for the disciples to know what should be their Master's end. The Son of man must

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die. This is the teaching, the foundation, of all blessing ; but it was a foundation which destroyed all the hopes and all the expectations of the disciples ; and shewed also that man was bad, and God infinitely good.

Now these thoughts of the disciples manifest themselves at once, and are put in contrast with that which the Saviour solemnly announces. Indeed, the disciples seemed to be impenetrable to the truth up to the last ; by grace they loved the Saviour, they rejoiced in the thought that Jesus possessed the words of eternal life ; even the Pharisees' system spoke of eternal life. Now all this was not enough to drive away thoughts of a kingdom which they believed would be established upon earth, nor a carnal desire of a high position close to the Lord's person in this kingdom. The Lord could not find a single person who could understand Him, who could enter into the thoughts of His heart, and could be touched by His sufferings ; or could comprehend what He was explaining to His disciples about

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His death at Jerusalem, when He had led them by themselves apart.

James and John ask to sit, one at His right hand, and the other at His left, in His glory. There was faith in this, for they believed that He would reign, but the desire of the flesh was always at work. But the answer of the Lord, who is always full of goodness for His own, turns the fleshly question into an occasion for instruction for His disciples. He was not the only one who was to bear the cross. He alone could accomplish redemption by the offering of Himself: the Son of God who gave Himself in His love to be the Lamb of God. But as to the path, it was necessary that the disciples should enter into the same path in which He was going, if they wished to be with Him. Here the Lord shews His deep humility and submission to the place He had taken.

He had made Himself of no reputation; and He accepts this place with a willing heart, not insensible to the humiliation and the sufferings of the cross, but accepting everything from the hand

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of His Father, and submitting to all that should be found upon this path.

“To sit at my right hand and my left is not for me to give, but for those for whom it is prepared.” He does not possess the right of preferment in His kingdom. He leaves to the Father the right of choosing, and gives the special glory appointed to special work to those for whom it is prepared, and whom grace has prepared for this glory. His portion is the cross; and the cross can give the glory, if any one will follow Him as His disciple: this is now the lesson which His people must learn. He was subject to His Father, and received from His hand all that was prepared for Him according to His will; and if the disciples wished to follow Him, they must take up the cross which was in this path, and which is always in it. Besides, to follow the Lord Jesus, the disciple must humble himself like the Lord; not to be like the great of this world, which makes itself great apart from God, but to be the servant of all in love, as the blessed Saviour was, al-

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though by right the Lord of all. Love is the most powerful of all things, and loves to minister, and not to be ministered to. It is thus that God manifested Himself, in the Man Jesus, in this path: it is our duty to follow Him. He who is smallest in his own eyes is the greatest.

Here ends the history of the Saviour's life upon earth: the account of the events attending His death begins. He presents Himself again, and for the last time, at Jerusalem both as Son of David, the object of the promises made to Israel, and also in order to be received by His people, and by the beloved city: but in fact to be rejected, and put to death. Up to this time (ver. 45) He spoke of "the Son of man who had come to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." But now He presents Himself in *the only relationship in which He could be with His people according to the prophecies.*

He enters by Jericho, the cursed city, but He enters it according to the grace which surpasses the curse; in-

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deed, He was going to bear it Himself. The Son of David comes in grace, with divine power, able to accomplish all things, but in humility and lowliness. He answers, therefore, to this name of Son of David, shewing forth His power in grace in healing the blind man. The crowd accompanying Him does not wish Him to be disturbed, but He stops, and listens to the needs of His people in His grace. He orders him to be brought to Him ; and he runs to Him with joy. His felt needs make him run to Christ, who is just the One to meet His needs, and to apply an effective remedy.

The blind man was a speaking picture of the dark state of the Jews ; but in that which took place we see the Lord's work in producing by His grace the feeling of need in the heart of a Jew at that time. No doubt it is true for every time, but especially in this case, of the Jews, in their state at that moment. The crowd, when Bartimeus asked what the noise was, said to him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. This was a name which did not convey any idea to

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the Jews; Nazareth was rather a name with which reproach was connected. But there was faith to be found in the blind man's heart, according to the place that Jesus took with regard to His people: the man says, "Son of David." He recognizes the truth that Jesus of Nazareth had the right to this title. Jesus responds to this faith, and heals the blind man. He receives His sight, and follows Jesus in the way.

This is a touching picture of Israel's position, and of the work which was going on in the midst of this people. The Son of God, the Son of David according to the flesh, the fulfilment of the promises was come in grace, and was able to heal Israel. There in the place where the Son of David was recognized, the power which He brought with Him, and which was in Him, took away blindness. Israel was totally blind; but divine power was present to heal; and if there was faith enough to recognize the Son of David in Jesus, the blindness vanished. It is beautiful to see grace enter there where the curse had fallen;



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but it is grace which works there where Jesus is recognized as Son of David; grace which opened the eyes of the blind man, from henceforth made His disciple.

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### CONTENTMENT AND SATISFACTION.

THESE are two things which the Christian is entitled to experience; contentment here in this world; satisfaction hereafter in heaven. But neither of these are known by the natural or the worldly man. The human heart and mind are incapable of contentment, and the world, in which they find their sphere of existence, is incapable of giving satisfaction. Nothing short of perfectness, whether as to the state of the individual and in his circumstances and surroundings, can satisfy; and nothing short of the anticipation, and sure prospect of perfectness, can give contentment. Contentment and satisfaction (we speak of them only in an absolute and positive sense) both imply a perfect

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state, and a perfect moral condition, and though differing from each other, yet are they closely linked together. I may be contented where I am not satisfied, but I never can be contented except in the anticipation of satisfaction.

The natural man, as we have said, knows not contentment; "the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy." Discontent is the normal state of even the most contented, most easy-going, and unambitious; that is, their present circumstances, whatever they may be, good, bad, or indifferent, are not those in which any man desires permanently to remain. In youth or age, in poverty or riches, in sickness or in health—in circumstances, personal, domestic, or social—you will not find a living man, woman, or child, upon the earth, who does not covet, and who does not expect in some respect or other, a change for the better. This state then of desire or expectation, is not contentment; and we need hardly say that it is not satisfaction; for the latter involves a fuller measure of supply than the former. For

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to be satisfied, is not merely complacency in, and submission to, present circumstances, but it is the having every desire and every need complied with to the full.

This is not the lot of any one here below. The divine record concerning that man, who drank deeper of earth's riches, gifts, and pleasures, than any before him, or after him, is, that "the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing." (Eccles. i. 8.) The conclusion to which his experience led him, was that "under the sun" all is vanity and vexation of spirit; that in fact nothing endures, and that everything that occurs on the earth is followed by sorrow in its train.

But "the things that are impossible with men, are possible with God," that which is unattainable by man, and which all creation cannot accomplish in the human heart, is conferred by God upon the believer. God, when known and trusted, can give to man contentment here, and satisfaction hereafter; contentment on earth, and satisfaction in heavenly glory.

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In order to be content one must be delivered from, and placed beyond, the reach of the causes of discontent. It is impossible for one to be contented in a state and circumstances in which nothing is ministered in perfection, and in which the best anticipations and most earnest longings of the heart and mind are liable to disappointment. Such is the state of the natural man in the world; as one has truly expressed it, "a sinner in a world of care." But the Christian has learned that he belongs to another scene and sphere. The cross and death of Christ have closed to him his connection with sin as the cause, and the world as the sphere of judgment; in the grave of Christ he has by baptism taken his place in death; in the resurrection of Christ, he finds himself alive again from the dead, alive unto God; and now, though in the flesh, living by the faith of the Son of God, who has loved him, and given Himself for him. In the glory of Christ he learns the place and the measure of his sanctification, before God, and of its practical exhibition in the

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world. "Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creation, old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new, and all things are of God." Now it is evident that as these things which are true of every Christian, are held in the heart by faith, the believer finds that he is in a sphere in which disappointment is unknown, and discontent is impossible. "A new creation" is his state ; "all things of God" are his circumstances. True he is left in this world, and as regards his body and its necessities, there is yet a link with it, and with the old creation. But when on one side, the end of the flesh, and the character of the world, are learned and seen in God's own presence ; and on the other, the grace of God in Christ, and all that that grace has brought to him, are believed and known in the heart ; such an one ceases to expect from the world, and expects everything from God, and the expression of his heart is, "what can I expect from myself a sinner, from men, sinners ?—from the world, their sphere of existence, and the scene in which all

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that man is as a sinner has been developed and is shewn forth? Therefore let me turn away from these, as in any sense the means, or as having the ability to minister one pure and unmixed feeling of content or satisfaction to the soul, and let me turn to God, the living God, the Holy One, and the True, yet God of all grace and Father of mercies, and have to do with Him alone, while sojourning here below. "My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock, and my defence; I shall not be moved." (Ps. lxii. 5, 6.)

To one who has thus learned to distrust the things that are seen, and to lean on Him who is not seen, disappointment is unknown and discontent impossible. He may or may not have of the things here below which minister to flesh or sense, to comfort or to ease, but he has God who knows him and his necessities, and will never leave nor forsake him. Therefore circumstances do not move him, for he has learned God in Christ, in the cross, the grave, and the glory. "He

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that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" It is "God for" him here. It is Christ in glory to whom such an one is passing on. That he has an unattained goal before him does not render him *discontented*, though until that goal is reached he is not *satisfied*. He learns in whatever state he is, to be content, for the circumstances in which he is, who walks by faith, are of God's making, and not of his own; therefore if he murmurs at his circumstances, he murmurs against God; and even if through failure or self-will he "make his own bed," as men say, and that an uneasy one, yet then his wisdom and blessing is in turning to, and accepting, the results of his actings from the hand of the Lord, with whom it is an eternal principle, that "he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." A self-judged saint is therefore as contented in such a case, as in some other in which he may see God

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alone acting, and self in no way the procuring cause. Who could be more contented than Paul in the Roman prison, addressing the Philippians, in whose very city he had formerly also sung praises at midnight, with his "feet fast in the stocks?" Whether in Rome through his own act, he sees God causing the things that happened to him to fall out for the furtherance of the gospel, or whether in Philippi for the testimony of Christ, he is so thoroughly at home with God that when the doors of the prison are burst open by miracle, the last thing he thinks of is to escape. What dignity and peace is thus given to a man, who thus "sets the Lord always before him : his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord."

This however by the way, for it is not needful that we should learn contentment in failure, but rather contentment in the full sense of His love, whose favour is better than life, whose way is perfect, who keeps the feet of His saints. Christ before the soul, Christ dwelling in the heart by faith, the manna for the wilderness journey, Jesus in whom we learn the



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perfect path of a man upon the earth—contains every essential for the necessity of the saint and servant here in the world; and satisfaction of heart, mind, and spirit, the satisfying of all that the renewed man in resurrection power and glory is capable of, will surely be the portion of such an one in God's own time. "As for me, I shall behold thy righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." Then will he find rest, and rejoicing in His presence, where is fulness of joy.

The conclusion of the matter then is that God only can content the heart of man on earth. It is not merely that He gives a contented spirit to a man, so that he can be patient and self-restrained; He does this, but He does more; for it is He Himself who is the source of content. Habakkuk in his day knew the secret of content. Though every earthly solace and resource failed him, "yet," says he, "I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation." (Chap. iii. 17, 18.) Paul in his day had the same spring of joy in his soul—God,

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in whom he had believed, whose he was, and whom he served. Thus he can say to the Philippians, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, to be content;" "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." "I have all things and abound." In no place does this true and suffering servant of Christ more earnestly exhort the saints to "rejoice in the Lord," than from his prison in Rome. The Lord teach our hearts the same lesson: contentedness with Himself. Thus and thus only can the believer rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, and above all, "joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation." Mercies take wings and flee away, but the soul that rests and joys in God is independent of them all. Marvellous the grace that will allow a poor and trembling heart to be contented even now with that God, who in the eternity to come will be "all in all!"

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the sight of God. There must be suffering in the flesh, or there will be no ceasing from sin.

If I see fruit, and feel pleasure in finding that I could take it without being detected, then, even though I have not taken it, I have sinned; lust has conceived. But if, when I see it, I have a sense of pain instead of pleasure in seeing what I might do, I suffer in the flesh, I have ceased from sin therein.

It is very evident that there is not a sense of the darkness or unholiness of lust of any kind, but as there is a ruling sense of the beauty of the contrast of the nature which was in Christ, which could not see anything to draw it aside, in the most inviting object here to which, as man, He had no right; and we know that even what He had a right to He would not accept from any one but God, who only is good.

Next, as to the ways of the flesh. It is not enough to condemn them as they arise, but they must be *put off*, not corrected, in order that the grace of Christ may appear in their place.

**HIS LIFE WAS TAKEN.****287**

Lastly, as to thoughts, which are doubtless the most tormenting and infectious of all, because the beginning of all evils; for every temptation begins with a thought. If Satan can succeed in getting attention to his suggestion, the ground is prepared for him to help you to the evil act. Hence, lust has to conceive before it is sin; the thought enters like a flash, but if you have suffered in the flesh you drive it away, as you would a wasp. If you entertain it, it is sin. Associations, books, stories, circumstances, tend to present thoughts of their own stamp to our minds; and hence the need of watchfulness as to all these things, because it is no use to say that the flesh is to be reckoned dead, while we minister to it in any of these ways.

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**HIS LIFE WAS TAKEN FROM THE  
EARTH.**

Acts viii. 26.—39.

Oh! what a tale that day was told,  
In Gaza's distant, lonely waste,  
As Philip "Jesus" did unfold  
And all His blessed path retraced.

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He "preaches Jesus," what a theme!  
God's tender plant, God's stricken Lamb;  
No painter's fancy, poet's dream,—  
But Heaven's one eternal psalm.

That name for every page unrolled—  
Is found the only fitting key,  
'Tis His—this bitter path foretold,  
The Man of grief and sorrows,—HE.

The weary heart which sought repose  
In Jewish rites, but sought in vain,  
Has found the stream of life that flows  
From smitten rock through desert plain.

With Him,—that smitten One, henceforth—  
Boldly his place, his part he takes,  
"*His life was taken from the earth,*"  
Then every link with earth he breaks.

Death's shadow rests on all around—  
But joyful now he onward speeds,  
For ah! his heart in Christ hath found  
Its life, its home, yea, all it needs.

And shall we hear, with hearts unmoved—  
And clinging still to earthly things,  
This matchless tale of God's Beloved,  
From whose deep woe our blessing springs?

Forbid it, Lord! to earth we die,  
As those who crucified with Thee  
Can say, "I live, and yet not I—  
But (wondrous truth!) Christ lives in me."

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## MARK'S GOSPEL.

### CHAPTER XI.

WE have already seen that the Lord assumes here the title of Son of David, a name which spoke of the accomplishment of the promises and constituted Him true king of Israel. The name which He took habitually and by preference was that of Son of man. This name had a much wider signification and announced the right to a power and a lordship much more extensive than those of the Son of David; it put Christ into strict relationship with all men, but asserted His right and all the glory that belonged to the Son of man according to the counsels of God. In Psalm ii. we find the two titles of the Son of God—the one which was given to Jesus as born down here in this world, and that of King of Israel, though in rejection. Then in Psalm viii. (after shewing forth the state of His people in Psalms iii., iv., v., vi., vii.) we see His glory, the extent

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of His power, as Son of man. He is set over all things; and in Daniel vii. we find again the Son of man brought before the Ancient of Days, from whose hand He receives dominion over all nations.

In chapters xi., xii. of the Gospel by John, Christ being rejected by man, God wills that a full testimony should be rendered to Him in the three characters of Son of God, Son of David, and Son of man. The first is the resurrection of Lazarus; the second at the entry into Jerusalem, seated upon the ass; the third when the Greeks come to ask to see Jesus: then the Lord says, "The hour is come for the Son of man to be glorified; if a grain of wheat fallen into the ground die not, it abideth alone; if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." In order to take possession of these titles, He must have His co-heirs with Him;—He must die.

In our chapter He takes the second title, and presents Himself to the Jewish nation for the last time upon earth according to the prophecy of Zechariah. He will present Himself later in the

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glory and take possession of the throne of His father David; but now all He does is to present Himself to His people as the One who fulfils all the promises made to them. He knew well what would be the result, and that He was about to take the larger title of Son of man; and this in order to have His co-heirs with Himself; when, according to His Father's counsels, He should take His great power and reign. But it was necessary that this last testimony should be rendered to the people on the one hand, and to the Lord on the other, on God's part; that is, by the mouth of little children and sucklings He would take His glory, anticipating thus the establishment of the kingdom in power.

Now this king was Emmanuel, the Lord Himself, and Jesus acts here in this character. He sends His disciples to take an ass with its foal in a neighbouring village, and when its owners asked what the disciples were doing in taking it, they answered according to the Lord's command: "The Lord hath need of him;" and the man sent him at



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once. All was done in order that the word of the prophet might be fulfilled ; because in this Gospel we have always facts presented not only as the effects of sovereign grace, as indeed they were, but as the accomplishment of the promises made to His people. Notice that a part of the verse quoted is left out ; that is, two expressions which have to do with the Lord's coming in power to take possession of His kingdom. These are the words, "just" and "having salvation : " as the "*just,*" Christ will execute vengeance upon His enemies : as *Saviour*, He will deliver the remnant ; it was not yet time for these two things.

The disciples therefore brought the ass and colt ; and then the Lord Jesus entered into Jerusalem as King. A very great multitude, moved by the power of God, having also seen His miracles, and especially the resurrection of Lazarus, go before and surround Him, spreading their garments in the way, and cutting down branches from the trees in order to cast them upon His path, giving Him

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the place and glory of a king, and in fact recognizing Him as the royal Messiah. An admirable scene in which it is not the cold reasoning of man's intellect which is in question—nor is it merely the effect of His miraculous deeds, although a fruit of this—but the mighty working of God upon the minds of the crowd, compelling it to give testimony for a short time to the despised Son of God. The testimony also of Psalm cxviii. is cited; a remarkable prophecy of the last days in Israel, often quoted. The Lord Himself spoke of the verses which precede those which God put into the mouth of the crowd: “The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner.”

There the crowd used the verse which announced the recognition of the Son of David by the remnant of the people Israel: “Hosannah!” (a Hebrew word meaning “*Save now!*” which becomes a kind of *formula* for asking the Lord's help when the true Christ or Messiah is recognised), “Hosannah to the Son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; hosannah in the high-

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est.” Now this cry recognized Jesus as the Son of David, the Messiah. Such was the will of God; that His Son should not be left without this testimony, without being honoured in this manner. Now He acts in Jerusalem according to this position.

All the city was moved, asking who this could be; and the crowds said that He, Jesus of Nazareth, was the prophet who was to come. Jesus enters the temple, and purifies it with the actual authority of Jehovah, driving out those who profaned it. He judges the nation and its rulers, saying, “It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.” But if He is Jehovah present in the temple, He is always Jehovah present in grace for all the needs of His people: He heals the blind and the lame. But no testimony is sufficient to penetrate the hard covering of unbelief which envelopes the hearts of the chief of the people, when they see the miracles. Hearing the children crying “Hosannah!” they become indignant. The

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Lord teaches here that the time for convincing them is past, and appeals to the testimony of Psalm viii. as to this. God had foreseen and foretold these things: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained praise." If the people refused Him, God took care that He should have the praise which became Him.

But all is over for the people, until the sovereign grace of God shall act to awaken a part of it in the midst of the tribulation which its unbelief will have brought upon it; and this remnant, awakened to repentance, will cry like the children, "Hosannah to the Son of David!" but then all will be grace. According to man's responsibility all was over, and the people judged: and this is what the Lord shews in the incident which follows. He will not stay in rebellious and unbelieving Jerusalem, but goes to Bethany where the power of the resurrection had been manifested; where He can find an object and a refuge for His heart amongst men, after that His people have rejected Him.

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Then when He returns to the city he is an hungred, and seeing a figtree upon the road-side, He seeks fruit, but finds none at all upon it—nothing but leaves. He curses the tree, saying, “No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever;” and the figtree is dried up at once. This is Israel according to the old covenant, man according to the flesh: this is man in the place where God has spent all His pains and employed all His means. Man for whom God could give up even His only begotten Son, in order to get some good from his heart, and to reach him to gain him over to that which is good, and to Himself. All was in vain; He had spared the tree this year also, upon the intercession of the dresser of the vineyard (Luke xiii.); He had digged about it and dunged it, but it had produced no fruit. What could He have done to His vineyard which He had not done? It is not all that we are sinners; we are still sinners after that God has done all that is possible to gain man’s heart. This shews us the importance of Israel’s history, and our history as told by God,

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and that of His patience and of all His ways, except that we have afterwards the supreme testimony of His love in the death of Christ, so that we are still more guilty. Plenty of leaves, but no fruit ; pretence to piety—religious forms, but the true fruit according to God's heart, that which He seeks in His own, is not to be found in man.

Israel according to the old covenant, that is, man according to the flesh, cultivated by God's care and set aside for ever, will never bear fruit for God. It has shewn itself to be useless and to have been unable to repay all the care God bestowed upon it ; man, naturally, is condemned to everlasting barrenness. This miracle is all the more remarkable, as all Christ's miracles were not only signs of power, but a witness of the love of God. Divine power was there, but to heal, to cure, to free from the power of Satan and from death, to destroy all the effects of sin in this world. But all this did not change man's heart ; on the contrary, by the manifestation of God's presence, it awakened the enmity of his

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heart against Him—too often hid from man himself in the depth of his heart. Here only do we find a miracle which bears the character of judgment.

Now all is brought out clearly ; man can be born again, can receive the life of the Second Adam. Israel can be restored by grace according to the new covenant ; but man in himself, man in the flesh who is judged, after all that has been done to bring forth fruit, is shewn to be incapable of bearing anything good. God saves men, God gives them eternal life ; man in receiving Christ receives a life which brings forth fruit ; the tree is grafted, and God seeks fruit on the grafted branch, but He has done with man in the flesh, except as concerns the judgment which must come upon him for his sins ; and thanks be to God, He is free to liberate him from this state by grace, to save him by the blood of Jesus Christ, to beget him again, to reconcile him with Himself, to adopt him as His child, and make him the first-fruits of His creatures. Israel is left, and man judged ; but the grace of God remains,

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and Christ is the Saviour of all those who believe in Him.

But what a scene is this in which Christ, the Messiah, the Son of David, Emmanuel upon earth, enters His house, and who with His holy eyes looks upon all that which man does in it, and shews His indignation against the sacrilege which had made it a den of thieves. He vindicates the glory and the authority of Jehovah in driving out those who desecrate the temple. Then He finds Himself face to face with all His adversaries, who come, one set after another, to condemn Him ; but they find the light and wisdom which shew clearly their position ; so that in wishing to condemn, they find themselves all condemned ; and the Saviour is left free to follow up His work of grace and redemption in the presence of His adversaries now reduced to silence. But before judging them by His answers, each class of the people shews forth the fundamental principle which would give His disciples the power to overcome the obstacles which these condemned classes of Jews would



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bring up against them ; since outwardly the power and established order were in their hands.

“ Have faith in God,” says the Saviour, when Peter wonders that the figtree is so soon dried up. All the power which presented itself to the weakness of the disciples would vanish before faith. A most important principle in a Christian’s walk and service ; only this faith must be exercised without any doubt at all, bringing God into the scene ; and must not be the motion of the will, but the consciousness of the presence and of the intervention of God. Thus it happens that where faith is found, and that requests are made by faith, the effect follows surely. Yet with all this, the presence of God is the presence of a God of love ; and when we pray asking that our desire may be accomplished, we must be in communion with Him, and then we realise His power in answer to faith, and then the spirit of forgiveness towards others is found in the heart. For example, if I were to cherish revenge upon my enemies, I could not hope that

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my prayers should be answered; and even if I were heard, I should be punished. God would not intervene in this manner, for He would refuse such an evil desire; or even if He found it well to answer the prayer, we should draw down the chastisement upon ourselves. For God in His government always acts according to His character.\*

Now He enters again into Jerusalem; He will not lodge in the city now given up by God. Here He begins to pass in review, to examine all the heads of the people, of which I have spoken; and

\* As this thought may be a little obscure for some, it may be presented thus in other terms: "Faith, which finds an answer to its prayer, must have found God, and be in the enjoyment of communion with Him; but then God is love; and in order to realise His power to get the answer, one must know what it is to be in His presence, which faith has discovered; but this communion cannot be known if there is no love. Consequently, when we present ourselves in faith to ask for the fulfilment of our desire, we must forgive our brother that which we may have against him; otherwise, we are in God's presence as regards His government and thus subject to the effect of our sins."

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first of all we find the examination of the authority which sets itself up against His own.

He walks in the temple, where the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders come, and ask Him by what authority He does these things, and who has given Him this authority. Thus we see them set one against the other; the authority of either is questioned. The official authority, that which is outward, was in the hands of the priests; the truth and obedience to God were in Jesus. If His power had been manifested already, it shewed no sign of avenging itself at present: it was useless to shew any more signs of power; they were already condemned; having seen sign after sign, and having hardened themselves in unbelief, it was now high time for judgment, not indeed of its execution, but of moral judgment; they were left without an answer.

The heads of the people ask by what authority He had purified the temple. There was no zeal for the holiness of God to be found in them, plenty of zeal

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for their own authority; and this is characteristic of prelates, they think about their own authority and not about God. The Lord Jesus thought only about the authority of God; and that which He did was the effect of it. If the conscience of the rulers had not been hardened, even though they had not been pleased with that which the Lord had done, they would have kept silence, ashamed of the state in which the temple was found to be whilst under their care. Having rejected the Lord, they could not recognize His authority; proofs were useless, from this time forth. But the Lord's divine wisdom makes them recognize their own incapacity to resolve questions relating to authority and divine testimony.

He asks if John the Baptist's mission were divine. If they said Yes, then John had witnessed to Jesus; if No, their authority was compromised before the people. Where was their right to ask, "What is the truth?" They knew it; yet they were glad enough to have the honour, long lost, of having a prophet in

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the midst of Israel. To own their sins did not suit them ; and so the light was soon put out for their hearts ; but the people always accounted John to be a prophet. Thus they dared neither say Yes nor No. This was their confession, that they were not able to judge of the claims of a man who professed to have a mission from God ; because they could not say whether John was a prophet or not. If this was the case, Jesus need not answer them, nor satisfy them about His mission, as persons armed with God's authority, to which one is bound to tell the truth.

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## CONSECRATION.

THERE are two questions which must arise in the mind of every saint who is true of heart to Christ. The first is—‘Why am I left here?’ This for the most part is easily answered. I am to be here for Christ. The other, namely, ‘*How* am I to be here for Him?’ is not so easily answered. Consecration is, I

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consider, the correct answer to the second question.

Aaron and his sons were consecrated, and in imitation of this, it has been too generally thought that only ministers and one here and there who were more especially devoted were to consecrate themselves to the Lord. This ignorance has of late very much disappeared, but with the removal of the limitation of consecration to a few, there has come in another misapprehension; and that is the notion that something is to be made of oneself; that is to say, that one is to assume some form or mere manner of life, as if the consecration were some kind of self-surrender or self-imposition; and thus, while consecration may be admitted to be Christ's claim on the youngest lamb in His flock, there is no correct idea of what it really is, according to scripture.

Consecration as we see in Exodus xxix. follows the robing of the priests, and there it is in figure, and in type, set forth. The ground of acceptance is first assured. There is the bullock for the

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atonement. First of all guilt is cleared away. There must be an atonement. "He gave himself a ransom for many." We are saved from judgment by the blood, as the Israelites were in Egypt. This necessarily comes first in divine order: but the sins having been atoned for is not the only thing. This the bullock typifies. Then there are two rams. These rams typify Christ as He now is before God, and as He is with His people on earth. The one (see ver. 18,) goes up *whole*. Christ in the presence of God in all the fulness and perfection of Himself; and there our acceptance is, as He is. When in spirit we pass through the rent veil into the holiest of all, we have the sense in our souls of the full beauty and perfection of Christ in the presence of God. Not only has the blood of His cross freed us from everything which would hinder, but we have entered on new ground; not a carnal ground, but by the Spirit, we are in fellowship with the Father and the Son. This is the ram which has gone up whole,

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But there is another ram; and this is called the ram of consecration. This ram was divided into three parts; the first part consisted of the fat and the right shoulder—the excellency of Christ and His strength. This part was placed on the hands of Aaron and his sons, and sets forth, I apprehend, the perfections of Christ in nature and power, which we ever contemplate in communion with Him as our High Priest: and which we wave before God, by whom it is all appropriated, as the fire indicates. The filling of the hands of the priests, sets forth that the only thing to be offered is Christ; the only consecration fit for God, is entire and exclusive occupation with Christ; with no thought at all about oneself. It is simply what was most excellent and powerful in Him and this we present to God by Him; therefore “Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.” (Heb. xiii. 15.)

The second part was the wave breast, that was Moses' part, and I suppose



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typifies the sympathy of Christ; the remainder was then food in the holy place. Thus, we in spirit in the holiest of all, have the sense of Christ being there in all His perfection and fulness; and we taste of what it is to be accepted in the Beloved. But as we are here on earth, left here to be for Him, we are consecrated, when we are waving Him in our hearts and works before God, when nothing comes from us in our contemplation or offering to God but the ram gone up, or the ascended Christ; and this with the sense of His sympathy, and then there is also the feeding upon Him. We must maintain the *three* in order adequately to be for Christ here. Our secular employments or relations, when ordered of God, are only a continuous discipline, subserving to a more effectual consecration.

We may all be painfully conscious how imperfect is our consecration, but yet it is a great thing to understand clearly what it is, and when we know what it really is, we can comprehend the apostle's prayer that "Christ may

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dwell in our hearts by faith, that we being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all saints the length and the breadth, and the depth and the height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge that we might be filled with all the fulness of God." All the devotion and self-surrender possible is not consecration; no doubt consecration will lead to devotedness and self-surrender; but consecration is acquired and derived from Christ, and from no treatment or adjustment of myself.

May our hearts so delight in Christ that we may think of nothing but Him, and while sustained by the assurance that He is thinking of us, sympathizing with us, may we so feed upon Him, that His life may be manifested in our bodies.

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## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

## THE HIGHEST POSITION ON EARTH.

In every case of energy and for all progress, there must be an aim, or a goal,

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Christ's own joy must be tasted there ; as He said, "My joy is fulfilled in them ;" not yet in connection with glory, but in the very pathway He had trodden here.

There are two phases more of this interesting subject which I may mention. First, there is nothing which so draws the line between the true servant of Christ and the human imitation of service in any form, as suffering for Christ. Thus the apostle recounts his sufferings "as a fool" that (as he says) "I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion, that wherein they glory they may be found even as we." (2 Cor. xi. 12.) And finally, what more distinguishes between the saint and the world than suffering ? "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword : they wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. Of whom the world was not worthy." (Heb. xi.)

The Lord give us to see and to accept the greatness of the privilege and dis-

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inction of being counted worthy to suffer shame for His name, that we may enter more fully into the blessedness of union with Him, because, as it is true, and known in one sphere, it must be true and known in any other.

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## FRAGMENT.

It makes one very restful to feel that even such little matters as a day here or there are all settled for us, we are not forgotten or neglected in God's arrangements; and He has settled the best thing for us, and He will give us the best. I like so to think that when His ways are not our ways, they are higher and better than our ways. But one wants to be so in His mind about everything, so in the secret of his thoughts, that we may drop our ways and wills altogether; and have only His. How is one to get this? We must have perfect confidence in Him, and for this we must know Him. The Son reveals Him. If we want to know the Father, it can only be through the Son. How every

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thing leads us back to Christ! That is God's way. He will only be known through the Son. Whatever we want, the Father has laid it up for us in the Son. All fulness dwelling in Him, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid in Him; and not only everything for *us* laid up in Him, but God has made Him the storehouse of all *His* heart-needs too. On earth He found His delight only in His beloved Son, now in heaven He has His people hidden in Christ. Our eyes and God's eyes meet there; our hearts and God's heart find rest and satisfaction only in Him. And so the Father brings us into companionship with Himself; into fellowship in His own joy; the spring and source of our joy must be the same as His own. Nothing less could satisfy His love for us. He will have us drink from the same fountain, in which He has found His eternal joy. One feels rebuked to think how little one has entered into that fellowship, but there must be a beginning. Have we begun to be merry with Him?

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## MARK'S GOSPEL.

### CHAPTER XII.

THE incapacity and incompetency of the governors among the Jews is clearly shewn forth. They had pretended to judge the Lord, but the word of divine wisdom in His mouth had judged them, and compelled them to confess their incompetency. Now the Lord begins in His turn to shew all the classes of the Jews the state in which they were, and first that of all the people. Israel had been Jehovah's vineyard; He had let it out to certain husbandmen in order to receive its fruit in due season. He had done all He could for His vineyard; it was impossible to do more than He had done. Israel enjoyed all the privileges which a nation could enjoy. At fruit-time, the Master sends His servants to receive the fruit of the husbandmen.

The prophets sought these fruits from the people on God's part, for He was Master of the vineyard; but the hus-

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bandmen took one servant and beat him, they killed another, and rejected all of them. Thus Israel treated all God's servants sent by Him to call him back to his duty. At last, having yet one Son, His well-beloved, He sent Him also to them, saying, "They will reverence my Son." But they took Him, killed Him, and cast Him out of the vineyard. They wanted to take possession of the vineyard by killing the rightful heir.

Let us look a little into this parable. With what dignity and calmness the Lord exposes the past conduct of the people Israel, and also their conduct at that very moment! He was ready to suffer, He had come to die; but His enemies' acts must be clearly shewn forth; they filled up the measure of their iniquity with their eyes open. Poor Jews! God in His sovereign grace will have compassion upon them, and will restore His people (by a new covenant) to its place of the people of God owned of Him. St. Mark always narrates everything rapidly. The consequence of Israel's sin is shewn; but we know

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from the other Gospels that the Jews in their answer were obliged to pronounce their own sentence ; and that they understood well what the parable meant. Here the simple fact of their ruin is told and that of the rejection of the Christ, the Son of God. The Master of the vineyard, the Lord of Hosts, would come and destroy the wicked husbandmen and would give His vineyard to others.

Then He quotes once more Psalm cxviii., and asks the chief of the people (a question which applied directly to Himself), "Have ye not read this scripture?—the stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner : this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." What a plain prophetic declaration of the position of Israel and its consequences ! All Israel's history presented in brief, perfectly described in a few verses ; all their conduct from Moses' time till the cross set forth in a few words ; their sin towards Jehovah, towards Christ, towards the prophets, and the fearful consequences for the nation, and God's ways



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towards it : God takes away all its privileges, and gives over His vineyard (where He would seek for fruit) to others. Thus with this great fact of man's sin and Jewish unbelief—that is, with the rejection and crucifixion of the Lord—He would be exalted to the right hand of God, and would become the head of the corner. Here also we have the key of Old Testament scripture by prophecy : for with a single glance we see all God's ways communicated to spiritual intelligence. It is only divine wisdom and divine revelation which can reveal to us God's thoughts and man's deeds, and which can announce them to us.

We have seen that all the classes of the Jews come, one after the other, to judge the Lord ; but in fact to be judged. The Pharisees and Herodians present themselves first to catch Him in His words. They did not dare to lay hands upon Him, although they would willingly have done so, because they had fully understood that the parable of the vineyard and husbandmen had been spoken

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against them ; but the people were still under the influence of His words and His works. The rulers feared the people, slaves, not merely to their own passions and unbelief, but to the people itself ; and they feared still more to do anything against the Lord, believing that the people would favour Him, since they had neither the power of faith, nor the freedom which is the result of uprightness, —but they were dependent on the favour of the people.

The Lord's hour was not yet come. They send certain spies to catch Him in His words : the Pharisees, filled with pride as to the privileges of the people, and ever ready to stir it up against the Romans, flattered its passions. They were subjected to the Gentile yoke on account of their sins, and were no longer recognised as God's people. The promised Messiah had been sent in the person of the Lord, and they had not been willing to receive Him, because He manifested God upon earth, and their hardened heart did not wish for God ; they wished to possess the glory of

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being God's people but not to receive God and submit themselves to Him. The rebellion of their heart against God was united to the rebellion of their national pride against the Gentiles.

The Herodians, on the contrary, accepted the Roman authority and did not trouble themselves about Israel's privileges ; but they were ready at all costs to seek the good favour of that powerful people, who held the people Israel under its heavy yoke by God's judgment. Now if the Lord had said that they ought not to pay tribute, He would shew Himself hostile to the Roman sway, and the Herodians would be ready to accuse Him ; if He said that they ought to pay, He was not the Messiah who should free His people from the hated Roman yoke. They did not think of any other deliverance ; and hence He would have lost the favour of the people. The Herodians and Pharisees were reconciled for the purpose of getting rid of the Lord : but divine wisdom answers to every difficulty.

The Jews ought to have submitted to

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the yoke which God Himself had placed upon their neck until the time when grace should free them, and they should receive the Deliverer who should come according to God's promises; and until these should be fulfilled they must humbly render to God His due, always accepting their chastisement at His hands. But they did neither the one thing nor the other—they were hypocrites before God, and rebellious towards men. The Lord asks them to give Him a coin with the emperor's head upon it, and asks, "Whose image and superscription is this?" The Jews reply, "Cæsar's;" and Jesus says, "Render to Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and to God the things which be God's." And the Jews go away astonished. A just reply, which not only answered their accusation, but which recognized at the same time Israel's true state and the judgment of God.

Next come the Sadducees, another sect of the Jews, which did not believe in the invisible world, nor in angels, nor in the resurrection: God had given a law to

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His people Israel, that was all. Accustomed to the arguments of men, they did not expect to meet with divine wisdom, nor with the irresistible force of the word of God. They present a case which (supposing that to be true which their folly imagined) rendered the resurrection ridiculous and impossible ; for they suppose that the relationships and state of this world continue in the other. This is what men do ; they mix up their thoughts with God's word, and since these thoughts do not agree with it, they think it unintelligible and reject it. But in this case a vital and fundamental truth is in question ; and the Lord not only reduces His enemies to silence by the wisdom of His answer, discovering their hypocrisy, but clearly reveals the truth itself which is taught in a hidden manner in the Old Testament, and furnishes it with His own authority.

Everything depends upon this truth ; it is the evidence that Jesus is the Son of God, and that God has accepted His sacrifice. It is the victory over death ; all that belongs to man's wretched con-

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dition is left behind; it is the entry into man's new state according to God's counsels; the introduction into the eternal state of glory and full conformity to Christ. It is true that the wicked will be raised for judgment, but the Lord looks upon His own and their state, as also does 1 Corinthians xv. The Lord means to say that the Old Testament contains the revelation of this truth. As to His person it is clearly taught in Psalm xvi.; but it is said that the Sadducees only received the law of Moses; now this law first of all has to do with that which God had established upon earth for His earthly people; and life and incorruptibility have been brought to light by the gospel and by the resurrection of the Lord Himself. And although this light was clouded in Old Testament times, nevertheless it was not wanting to those who, pilgrims and strangers upon earth, sought a better country and a heavenly city. The immediate teaching referred to God's government upon earth, but by faith the hearts of the faithful could amply find

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in it that which they needed to point them towards an eternal and heavenly country.

The Pharisees believed in the resurrection, and as to this, they had the understanding of the truth, but the Lord wished to shew that if the Sadducees only received the law, the law itself, God had at all times given that which was enough to lead the spiritual understanding to expect better things than the earthly, and by faith to bring it into closer relationship with God than could be enjoyed in His government either of the world, or of His people, however real this government might be. The Lord then condemns the Sadducees entirely; they were quite ignorant of the scriptures and of the power of God. The Lord first reveals the truth; as soon as a person is raised from the dead, he is like the angels and it is no longer a question of marrying or giving in marriage. Then he shews that in its first elements, the first expression of the relationships of God with men (when God spoke to Moses) contained a life beyond

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death, and consequently the resurrection ; since man consists of body and soul, according to God's counsels. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had been dead a long time, but God was always their God ; and yet they were still alive ; and they would not consequently remain always under the power of death, but would rise again.

The Sadducees, who only believed in the law, needed a clear proof of the truth taken from the law itself. And whatever may be the truth as to the Sadducees, it is important for us to understand that from the beginning, when God enters into relationship with man, sin and death having entered, God always takes resurrection ground. There is no other true foundation of blessing. The very promises made to Israel are founded upon this truth ; at least the fulfilment of them. (Acts xiii. 34.) Thus the first thing which the gospel reveals is rooted in the first distinct manifestation of God in relationship with men, a relationship founded upon redemption (an external thing in Israel it is true, but eternally



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accomplished in Christ). But as the great truth of Christianity, the new state of man, is established by the Lord's words, so also the perfection of the law, as the standard of man's duty, is brought into light.

One of the scribes, who had heard the Lord's reasoning with the Sadducees and perceived that He had answered with true and divine wisdom, drew near and asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?" The scribes believed that the commandments differed in value, and that some were worth more than others to make up the sum of righteousness to which a man ought to attain. The Lord answers again in this instance without turning back the question upon those who asked it to their confusion, but He establishes the two great pillars of man's responsibility: the unity of God, and man's duty towards Him, and towards his neighbour. This was Israel's faith, and his duty towards all. The Lord does not quote the ten commandments, but the great principles of the law as to the whole duty of man. The Lord

knew how to bring them out, divinely hidden as they are in the books of Moses. (Deut. vi. 4, 5 ; x. 12 ; Lev. xix. 18.)

The sense of duty was perfect in Him, as also grace and divine love ; one cannot find two other commandments greater than these. It is beautiful to see this perfection in the Lord ; the grace and the love of God were manifested in all His life ; we have seen them. But here we find also the perfect rule of walk and of the duty of man upon earth according to the law ; not that which was evident to all men (that is, the ten commandments, which are the first thing to come to mind), but principles scattered here and there throughout the books of the Old Testament, which shone out everywhere for Him—for a heart which understood and possessed the perfection of manhood before God ; for He shewed forth divine perfection before men. His heart saw the one, and understood it, whilst the expression of the other sprang naturally from the same heart.

The conscience and heart of the scribe are touched : he gives testimony to the

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perfection of the Lord's reply, adding that to do thus was worth more than sacrifices and burnt-offerings. He was not far from the kingdom of God. A heart which understands God's thoughts about man, loves that which God loves; the moral difference of that which is good is not far removed from the capacity of receiving that which God reveals for the blessing of His people. Now from this time forth they durst ask Him no question. The Lord's wisdom was too great for their hearts.

But the Lord in His turn asks them a question, and all the truth relating to His and to their own position depended upon its answer: "Whose son is Christ?" The Jews said, "David's." It was true, but then the Lord said, "How then does David call him his Lord if he is his son?" Jesus was the Son of David, but He must sit upon the right hand of God as Lord in man's nature. This was the key to the situation. But the Lord's relationships with the Jews were at an end; each class had presented itself before Him and had been judged.

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Verses 38-40. Here the Lord denounces the scribes who corrupted the word of God which they pretended to explain; they took the form of godliness, and sought their own glory and other people's money, even that of widows, to whom they obtained access under the pretext of piety. For this cause their judgment would be all the more terrible: but God does not forget His own in the midst of the hypocrisy of the seeming religious. They may make mistakes; perhaps the widow's mite helped to pay Judas; but it was given to the Lord, and the widow's heart which was occupied about the mite did not escape the Lord's eyes, nor the notice of His love. The rich had given much, but the widow offered herself as a living sacrifice to the Lord; she gave all her substance. Perhaps she might have employed better means, but she gave her mite from the bottom of her heart to the Lord, and it was received on His part: we should think of this.

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## SATURDAY NIGHT.

Yes, indeed, these six thousand years which lead on to the world's Saturday night, are fast numbering up—and the multitudes who are daily registered on its records, as having entered in by birth, are in time duly registered as having departed out of it by death. Solemn thought it is, that all these are numbered up elsewhere, as the lost ones, or the saved ones, to re-appear “at the resurrection of the just, and of the unjust.”

When the vials and the thunders, and the trumpets of the Apocalyptic visions have accomplished their work, they will but usher in the seventh-thousand-day, or the happy period of millennial rest and blessing—when Christ will come the second time, and take to Himself His great power, and fill the whole earth with the glory of God. The risen saints will then live and reign with their Lord a thousand years, “and righteousness and peace be the stability of the times.”

## SATURDAY NIGHT.

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Like the six days of creation work which closed with a seventh-day *rest*, before the fall of man—so these prophetic thousand-year-days are six, and have been so divided by the world's own computation upon its Anno Mundi line, and Anno Domini line, into these two periods.

From the creation of the first man, to the incarnation or nativity of the last Adam is counted, and completed on this *descending* scale, four thousand years and four—and now upon the *ascending* scale, from the birth of our Lord, to His appearing again in power and glory for the establishment of His kingdom on the earth, are computing these other momentous two thousand-year-days, some few of which remain to finish up these two epochs—or an aggregate of six thousand years, and then its jubilee.

One day is thus with the Lord as a “thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” Yes, it is in truth the Saturday night of this world's history, and moreover pointing to a late hour on its dial-plate, the world into which

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sin and death have entered, and where the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, waiting too for its "deliverance into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

What a seventh day, "Sabbath of rest" and universal blessing for the world, is about to dawn upon it, at the rising of its millennial sun! What a Lord's day for the heavenly saints, when the Jerusalem which is above will descend from God out of heaven, having the glory of God and prepared as a bride, adorned for her husband! "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

Modern history, in relation to these events, can only be as a voluminous Saturday review, of things as they have been, and are, till this new era of a seventh thousand-year-day's *rest* (which remaineth for God, and His people) lays the foundation for things as they will be, in their brighter developments and fairer records.

## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

### "I ABHOR MYSELF."

To a man without grace or Christ in his soul there would be no incentive or heart to amend, were he consciously to lose all self-respect in the eyes of others ; and generally when it is so, he either becomes more reckless, or not unfrequently destroys himself in despair. It cannot in any way tend to retrieve a man to convince him that he is irrevocably bad unless you can assure him of that which is infinitely good in place of that which is worthless.

We press on the unconverted their guilt and inability to meet the claims of God, and that as guilty they are lost, unless saved by Christ ; and the more unflinchingly and distinctly this is pressed and received, the more is the moral distinction between Adam and Christ made known. When the conduct is bad, there is no difficulty in convincing of guilt ; so much so, that the conversion of the wicked is often brighter,



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of his own mind, to see that he, such an one among men, and before men, and with such a laudatory feeling of himself, can arrive at the most opposite and humiliating conviction when he changes from the level of man to that of God, and is really confronted before God. When he can say, "now mine eye seeth thee," then he exclaims, "*I abhor myself.*" And then he realizes for the first time that he is in himself entitled to nothing, yet God is the one he can turn to; and he prays for his friends, in evidence that his selfishness is gone, and his dependence on God unqualified. He is thus led to the deepest, truest, happiest ground ever known to the soul—God known as everything and himself nothing.

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## SHALEM OR BETHEL?

YOUR OWN BLESSINGS OR CHRIST'S  
INTERESTS?

THE removal of one cause of anxiety or pressure here, introduces us into a

new bit of the journey, and in it we either find that we are better fitted to go on with the Lord, or that there must come some other pressure in order to subdue what still blocks the way and binds us. After the night of wrestling we should have expected that Jacob would have gone on vigorously, but on the contrary he requires more pressure, and it is not until he goes to Bethel that his name Israel, which was first obtained at the wrestling, is confirmed to him. This is instructive, shewing us that relief from pressure, even with conscious favour from God, which is conferred in the setting aside of ourselves, as the wrestling indicates, does not ensure a realization of the blessing conferred, unless Bethel (typically Christ and His interests) be our object. God in His grace and goodness confers blessing in every true exercise, and there may be a long night of wrestling, for the Lord must set aside our nature in order to bless us; and this He does in various ways known to Himself, and then He comforts the heart in the assurance that one can pre-

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vail with Him. But this being so, the question is, What next? Will it be Shalem or Bethel? Will self be an object to me; or will Christ be simply my object? If the latter, the name Israel will be confirmed to me, and I shall find that God cares more for me than I could possibly care for myself, and that in the circle of His things there is far more of every blessing and advantage than at Shalem, where one is occupied with oneself as an object for blessing. Occupation with the Blessor ensures a far deeper and fuller blessing than any attention to our own blessing. The danger after being blessed is, that we should rest in the blessing and not in the Blessor. Our own sphere and interests engross our hearts because the mercy of God has visited us therein. Instead of leaving the ship, like Peter, (the ship filled with fish is the earthly mercy), to follow the One who is greater than the mercy, the mercy may become our object, and then we turn in on ourselves and our little circle, and soon drop into the snare of seeking everything

for ourselves. Mercy teaches me what God is, but it is in order that I may abandon everything for Him. After a long weary night of wrestling we halt, under the sense of our own weakness, but are we set for Bethel, or would a little rest in this scene draw our hearts aside ?

The only path of pleasantness and peace now is following Christ. Ruth's devotion in following Naomi upbraids us for not more fully cleaving unto One infinitely greater. It is hard to point out to any one how to cleave more unto Christ because it must begin within, and as it grows, there is a shaking off of every hindrance or entanglement here. Make Him first go up to Bethel, and you will then find what intercepts, and the more fully you follow Him the more will you have strength to drop everything which hinders you in running the race set before you.

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## FRAGMENT.

GOD will give surely according to His own thoughts and purposes, and He allows us to have a part in carrying them out, first by prayer, and then by service. And while I doubt not all is foreknown, and surely ordained for them for whom it is prepared of the Father, yet herein comes our responsibility, the place of a single eye that does not confer with flesh and blood. There was once one so wrought from the beginning,—holding himself dead from that time, and always bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus. *We*, alas have often to learn how to do it, at least after much mixture of the living and dead; yet even he had to be helped, and to have a thorn in the flesh, and to be delivered to death, but then it was from God, and for Jesus' sake. The flesh was not different but the man was. However the Lord is all we need and He is perfect.

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## MARK'S GOSPEL.

### CHAPTER XIII.

WE have seen the people judged ; each class brought by God's hand into the Lord's presence to receive their judgment ; we have seen them morally condemned by the word of God and by the blessed Lord's wisdom. But the iniquity which drew forth the execution of this judgment, and this execution itself must cause many difficulties to the disciples. They would have to walk in a way full of dangers, and they are warned themselves here how they may escape the judgment which was about to fall upon the beloved people for their sins. The Lord would no longer be present to guide them ; but His heart could not leave them in ignorance either as to the path or as to the difficulties they would have to encounter. And the testimony which Jesus gave of it would make the difficulties and dangers a proof of the truth of His words, and an encouragement for their hearts when they should find themselves in the trouble.

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But the Lord does not stop at the fulfilment of the judgment soon to be realized, but opens up the ways of God up to His coming, when Israel shall be blessed again after having passed through such a judgment that a little remnant only of the people will be left; and the power of the beasts (that is, of the Gentile empires) will be destroyed, Satan bound, and the world will rest in peace. Nevertheless it is more as a warning to His disciples that the Lord speaks here than as an announcement of the peace and rest of the world after the execution of judgment.

The disciples, accustomed to see in the temple the house of God and the glorious centre of their religion, full of wonder, point out to the Lord the beauty of the buildings and the size of the stones, and, as often happened, they give to the Lord the opportunity to communicate God's thoughts to them about the times and the state of the guilty nation. He announces to them clearly the destruction of the temple as a certain fact; but when the disciples asked when that

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should happen, He speaks of the people's state up to His coming, as far as this history has to do with the service of His disciples. In general that which is said is similar to that contained in Matthew's Gospel; but the Holy Spirit here presents the Lord to us as being more occupied with teaching His disciples.

As in Matthew we have general teaching here, which goes on to the end of the period of the proclamation of grace; then the especial sign of the final ruin of Jerusalem, which immediately precedes the Lord's coming in glory. This interest in the disciples as to their testimony and service answers to the character of this Gospel, which gives us a history of the service of the Lord Himself. The Lord does not immediately answer the disciples' question, but warns them of the dangers they would encounter in their service, after His departure. Satan would raise up false Christs to deceive the Jews, and many should be deceived. They would have to be on their guard. Wars and rumours of wars would take place, but they were not to be troubled



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about this ; these things must happen, but the end should not be yet. These were the beginning of sorrows, but not the end.

He does not speak of the mission of the apostle Paul, but of that of the twelve in the midst of the Jews ; only the gospel must be preached to all the nations before the end. The fact is asserted, without its being said how it ought to be fulfilled. We know that it will be the gospel of the kingdom, as it might have been preached during the Lord's lifetime. Here is the simple announcement of a testimony of the gospel sent to the nation before the end should come. But the consequence of this testimony, as far as the disciples were concerned, would be persecution ; they would be beaten in the synagogues and accused before kings and governors for a testimony to them. This is the means which the Lord uses to carry the gospel to kings and to the great of the earth. The preachers are not the great of the earth, and His disciples would have always to preserve their true cha-

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racter; in this they would appear before kings and rulers as prisoners to give an account of their faith.

Thus the apostle Paul appeared before the Jewish council, before Festus, Agrippa, and finally before Cæsar. But the possible result of the preaching of the gospel was not all. The revelation of God in the person of Christ, or in the preached word, awakens the enmity of the human heart. So long as God is not revealed, everything is tolerated; but when He is revealed, man's will rises up against His authority, and against the pressure which this revelation exerts upon a conscience not at rest; and the closer the revelations are, the greater is the hatred. This hatred breaks all the ties of nature: brother would give up brother to death, and the father his son; the children would rise up against their parents and would put them to death; and the disciples would be hated of all men for the Saviour's name.

What a testimony to the state of man's heart! If one speaks of the name of Jesus, and of His love, of the love of Him

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who came to save us, the hatred of man's heart breaks all barriers ; it refuses to recognize, and tramples down all natural affections. But the time of deliverance will come, and here it is an earthly deliverance that is in question. It is still better for us ; if we are killed, we go to be with the Lord ; if He comes we shall be glorified with Him. But here the Lord speaks of the testimony and service of the apostles in the midst of the Jews. In whatever way we look at it, there remaineth a rest for the people of God. But there is more ; God would be with them in the way. When the disciples should be in the presence of the magistrates, they were not to meditate upon that which they ought to say ; it would not be necessary to prepare discourses ; the Holy Spirit would be with them ; and it should be given them what to say at that very moment.

Here is the picture that the Lord draws of the service of His people in the midst of the Jews up to the end ; He adds that the gospel shall be preached to the ends of the earth. But now in

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verse 14, He comes to a more precise and definite notice of the events which should happen in Jerusalem at the end. "When," He says, "ye shall see the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not (let him that readeth understand), then let those who are in Judæa flee to the mountains." Here we must look at Daniel's prophecy which speaks of this abomination: we find it in chapter xii. The word 'abomination' simply means *idol*; and it is called abomination of desolation because it is the cause of the desolation of Jerusalem and of the Jewish people.

The Jews will receive the Antichrist. The Lord said, "I have come in my Father's name, and ye have not received me; if another come in his own name, him will ye receive." Then under the influence of Antichrist they will turn to idolatry again. The unclean spirit which came out of them after the Babylonish captivity will enter into them again with seven spirits worse than itself, and the last state will be worse than the first. (Matt. xii. 43-45.) They will then set

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up an idol in the most holy place, where it ought not to be placed, and God's judgment will fall upon the people and city. The desolation will be complete: "There shall be trouble such as never was." And Daniel says, "At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people, and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was . . . ." This trouble must last for a time, times and a half, that is three and a half Jewish years, or 1260 days, or 42 months. Then those who are written in God's book shall be saved; those who shall have endured to the end in spite of the difficulties, sufferings, and the oppression of the Antichrist and Gentiles as the Lord had foretold.

In the meantime, during the time of their general service, the Holy Ghost would give them all wisdom, and even the very words they would need. The Lord's goodness here is very remarkable; we find the Lord thinking even of the weather in the midst of this terrible judgment, so terrible indeed that nothing

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like it has been known in the world's history. He tells them to pray that their flight be not in the winter. He does not speak here as in Matthew of the sabbath, because Jewish things are not so much in view here as in that Gospel. He thinks of those who are with child and with those who give suck in those days. Ah! how great is the Saviour's compassion; nothing escapes His gracious memory. Whilst warning His disciples of the most terrible judgment, He thinks of all the difficulties they would meet upon the road He teaches them to take.

But the Lord has shortened these days, or no flesh could be saved; but He has shortened them for His own elect's sake. Then to give a hope of deliverance and of escape from sufferings, false Christs and false prophets would arise and would perform miracles and signs (so great is Satan's power when God permits) to seduce if possible the very elect. But they had been warned; and now after this unparalleled tribulation which should come upon Jerusalem, the end of the dispensation

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would come; all established authority should be overturned by God's judgment. The order which He had established for the government of the earth shall be thrown into confusion. The signs of His judgment appear.

Then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. The Lord appears to take possession of the earth, which He not only has created, but which He has acquired as His own as Son of man by His death. But that which is specially announced here is that He will send His angels to gather together His elect from all parts of the world. It is always a question here of the land and of Israel: the blessing of the Gentiles and of the whole world will take place, but it is not the question here. Our place is a far higher one: when Christ shall appear, we shall appear with Him. (Col. iii. 4.) The Lord will have already gathered us to Himself in the air, He will have glorified us already and made us like Himself, according to His boundless grace which has acquired this glory for us

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according to the eternal counsels of a just God ; we shall be like His Son and with Him for ever, the firstborn among many brethren ; but here He speaks of the elect in the midst of Israel, dispersed amongst the Gentiles.

All here has to do with the earthly people. "This generation," of which verse 31 speaks, is the perverse and unbelieving generation of the Jews, which indeed remains even to our day a race separated from all the others. They dwell amongst the nations, but they remain ever a separate people, kept for the fulfilment of the counsels of God. We find this fact and the force of the word *generation* in Deuteronomy xxxii. 5, 20 : "It is a perverse and crooked generation." And as regards the judgment under which the nation lies, after that the Lord has pronounced these words, it is said in verse 20, "I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be ; for they are a very froward generation, children in whom there is no faith."

The three times and a half make up



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the time which the goodness and mercy of God have shortened, the last half week of Daniel which remains still unfulfilled. After that the abomination shall have been set up in the most holy place, where it ought not to be, there shall be three years and a half; and after that, some days to purify the temple. Thus the remnant of the Jews will have the consolation of knowing in the midst of the great tribulation that it will only be for a short time. But we are quite ignorant as to when this solemn moment will come; it is not revealed; God alone knows when it will be. The Lord sends out the disciples in connection with the Jews; and when they should see that these events were beginning to be fulfilled, then should they know that the time was drawing near.

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THE WAY AND MIND OF A  
SERVANT.

A SERVANT has the sense of being one: that he has been appointed to a certain work. He may often fail in it, and may

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often be corrected by others in his way and mode of discharging his duty, but still the fact that he is a servant, appointed to a certain service, remains assured. He has derived his appointment from the Lord, and however he may fail in execution he must go on. His blunders are only to make him more efficient, as they surely will if he keeps his eye simply on Him who has chosen him ; so that whether praised or blamed he must determine about either with the Lord, for if either divert him from his master he has lost the great secret of power and blessing in his service.

It is really nothing to him to be either commended or condemned by man. He has to commit everything to Him who judges righteously. The praise is not to elate him any more than the censure is unduly to depress him. Both the one and the other when referred to the Lord will be an item to his advantage in his service. The praise, as to what elicited it. If it were his natural powers, then that praise would be a censure, and the censure, if for being too strict or ex-

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clusive, would before the Lord be commendation. If the praise were for what was of the Lord, then the Lord would be entitled to it, and it would do the servant no harm. And the censure if to correct some fault or misinterpretation, surely would be unspeakable gain.

There is never any room for seeking or acquiring eminence as a servant except in suffering; and this is to be diminished among men. The more Christ-like the servant is, the more faithfully he inculcates the doctrine of Christ the less popular he will be; the less there will be any point of contact or link with the human side. He has increased power according as he is in the mind of Christ.

His power is not visible. There is something in his words which reaches souls: it is by an unseen power. The charm or value of his teaching is always in proportion to this. If there be anything to which the natural mind can cling, that weakens, and is a detriment to his spiritual power.

The more unseenly he works, the

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more divinely effective he is. The more he obtains a popular place, the more proportionately is he losing the force and influence of the incommunicable secret of his power. It is not to be revealed. It is to be felt, but not communicated. This service is like the rain, which comes from above, and falling on the mountain top penetrates through the soil and rock, until it makes its way by drops, into the spring-well, where the weary and needy may drink and be refreshed.

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## THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

KNOWING CHRIST AS GREATER THAN  
JONAH AND GREATER THAN  
SOLOMON.

To "know him that is from the beginning" is the highest knowledge we can ever attain to, and it is to this knowledge that we are growing, if we are really progressing. "If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in

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beauty of Solomon's things, throw everything of her own kingdom into the shade. There is no sacrifice in the surrender because she has consciously gained so much. When there is an *effort* to surrender, and the feeling of sacrifice, it is an evidence that the heart has not known Christ as Solomon, has not seen Him in glory. Many a one who walks on in the assurance of the forgiveness of his sins, and even in the certainty of the Father's constant care, and the enjoyment of the Lord's tender sympathy, still cannot rise superior to the natural beauties and the attractions here ; simply because he has not, like the Queen of Sheba, seen Solomon, he has not seen Christ in glory. Many a saint who truly enjoys Christ in His Jonah aspect, has not as yet learned Him in the Solomon ; and until we have learned the latter, there is really no full setting aside of man, and of his things in the assured and ever deepening conviction of how immensely superior Christ is to everything,—to any and everything given to the first man. But

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when one truly learns this, while there is a due appreciation of natural blessings there is independence of them, because of the greater and more perfect ones disclosed to the heart, through Him who secures to us all blessing, to whom be glory for evermore.

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## FRAGMENTS.

WHEN Christ was here it did not signify what He went through, so that His Father's name was glorified; and when His life took hold of Saul of Tarsus, Saul learnt to feel that it did not signify what *he* went through, so that Christ was magnified in his body whether by life or by death. He was altogether for Christ. If Christ up there be wholly for me, cannot He make me to be entirely for Him down here? I would not shut out the thought of Christ being magnified through everything in my course. The bitterest things need the sweetness of it most.

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WATCH yourself amid all the rubs of life and see if you are ready to put off your full satisfaction until your Lord comes into the scene. In the measure in which the Lord fills your heart, will you be satisfied to let the clouds and troubles roll on, and wait for your joy until He is there ?

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**THE NEW DAY.**

“THE former things are passed away,  
And all things are made new!”  
For us the children of the day,  
Oh faithful word and true!  
In Him who is at God’s right hand  
Alive for evermore,  
“The firstborn from the dead” we stand  
On heaven’s eternal shore.

The former things are passed away  
Our God has wiped our tears,  
For us has dawned the cloudless day,  
The glorious year of years.  
With Christ the golden courts we share,  
His glorious face we see—  
Death, sorrow, crying, are not there,  
Nor ever there can be.

There all things new our eyes behold,  
And all of God alone

THE NEW DAY.

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The half that joy had not been told  
To man unseen, unknown.  
There by the Spirit of the Son,  
Christ glorified we know  
In Him, our glory now begun,  
Though still we walk below.

As is the heavenly One on high,  
So we, the heavenly ones  
Brought nigh to God, as Christ is nigh  
His well-beloved sons.  
Here, citizens of heaven above,  
Whilst strangers here we roam  
Through scenes of change and death to move  
Whilst changeless is our home.

Ere yet the glorious noonday light  
Shall fill the heavens afar,  
With songs to hail the radiance bright  
Of Him, our morning star.  
We hail the dawning of the day  
-Of God's unsetting sun,  
The day that passes not away  
In Christ for us begun.

For us the old things passed away,  
Sin, darkness, sorrow, fled,  
Yet more, ourselves are passed away,  
And Christ is in our stead.  
Christ in His raiment glistening white,  
Before His God for me ;  
His raiment shining as the light  
Where shade can never be.



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Christ filling all the Father's heart  
Before His face alone,  
Lord, we can claim that better part,  
Can claim it as our own.  
We, past away for evermore,  
In Christ for ever thine,  
O depths of God's unfathomed store,  
Of love and grace divine!

To know no place save only His,  
Alone in Him to be,  
Our God's delight, His endless bliss,  
Lord *thus* brought near to Thee!  
And here, as Eshcol's grapes to tell,  
Ere desert days are done,  
Of Canaan's fresh exhaustless wells,  
Of Canaan's blessed Sun.

A growth the desert knoweth not,  
To tell of other skies,  
Where in the glorious light of God  
The land of promise lies.  
Thence sent across the barren waste  
As Christ was sent before,  
O God, we own Thy wondrous grace,  
We worship and adore.

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